

MARY ELLEN GUFFEY  DANA LOEWY

Essentials of Business Communication

9e



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Dear Business Communication Student:

The **Ninth Edition** of *Essentials of Business Communication* offers you a four-in-one learning package including (a) an authoritative textbook, (b) a convenient workbook, (c) a self-teaching grammar/mechanics handbook, and (d) a comprehensive student Web site at www.cengagebrain.com.

Although much copied, *Essentials* maintains its leadership at the college level because of its effective grammar review, practical writing instruction, and exceptional support materials. In revising this Ninth Edition, we examined every topic and added new coverage with two themes in mind: technology and social media and their relevance to your future career success. Let us describe a few of the major improvements and features in the Ninth Edition:



- **Workplace relevance.** This edition continues to stress the practical and immediate importance of this course to your career success.
- **Integrated, cutting-edge coverage of digital tools and social media.** The Ninth Edition prepares you to become an effective communicator in today's challenging, wired, and mobile workplace. Every chapter has been thoroughly researched and updated to acquaint you with the latest trends in workplace communication technology.
- **More figures and model documents.** The Ninth Edition has been enhanced with numerous new figures and model documents that show the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, instant messages, podcasts, blogs, and wikis.
- **New *Technology in the Workplace* video.** Using humor to compare appropriate and inappropriate uses of social media, this new video helps you distinguish between professional and social uses of the Internet.
- **New application activities throughout.** Every chapter has 40 to 100 percent new activities including many recent and highly topical examples to prepare you for the high-stress modern workplace dominated by information technology.
- **Job search and interviewing coverage.** The Ninth Edition covers the latest trends and tips in preparing résumés and successful employment interviewing.
- **New grammar and writing improvement exercises.** One of the best ways to improve your writing skills is to revise poorly written messages. This edition provides many new grammar/mechanics exercises and new writing activities for you to hone your skills.
- **Premier Web site at www.cengagebrain.com.** All students with new books have access to chapter review quizzes, PowerPoint slides, and a wide assortment of learning resources.

The many examples and model documents in *Essentials of Business Communication, 9e*, including résumés and cover letters, have made this book a favorite to keep as an on-the-job reference.

We wish you well in your studies!

Cordially,

Mary Ellen Guffey & Dana Loewy

Guffey has updated tools and created new ways to keep you interested so you achieve success in this course and in real-life business communication. The following four pages describe features that will help make learning with Guffey... just that easy!

NEW AND KEY FEATURES

NEW **Integrated Coverage of Digital Tools and Social Media**
 New Chapter 5, *Electronic Messages and Digital Media*, offers expansive coverage of digital tools in today's increasingly connected workplace. Plus, every chapter has been thoroughly researched and updated to acquaint you with the latest trends in workplace communication, including social media.

because they enable them to get answers quickly and allow multitasking. Despite its popularity among workers, some organizations forbid employees to use instant messaging for a number of reasons. Employers consider instant messaging yet another distraction in addition to the interruptions caused by the telephone, e-mail, and the Web. Organizations also fear that privileged information and company records will be revealed through public instant messaging systems, which hackers can easily penetrate. Organizations worry about *phishing* (fraudulent) schemes, viruses, malware, and *spam* (IM spam). Like e-mail, instant and text messages are subject to discovery (disclosure); that is, they can become evidence in lawsuits. Moreover, companies fear instant messaging and texting because businesses are required to track and store messaging conversations to comply with legal requirements. This task may be overwhelming. Finally, IM and texting have been implicated in traffic accidents and inappropriate uses such as the notorious *sexting*.

Organizations may ban instant messaging because of productivity, security, litigation, and compliance fears.

OFFICE INSIDER

"[B]ear in mind that messaging sessions can be stored, then copied and pasted elsewhere. . . . The term 'confidential' is somewhat rubbery these days, so . . . think before you hit that enter key."

—Michael Bloch, Taming the Beast, E-commerce development & Web marketing consultancy services

Best Practices for Instant Messaging and Texting
 Instant messaging can definitely save time and simplify communications with coworkers and customers. Before using IM or text messaging on the job, however, be sure you have permission. Do not use public systems without checking with your supervisor. If your organization does allow IM and texting, you can use it efficiently and professionally by following these best practices:

- Learn about your organization's IM policies. Are you allowed to use instant messaging? With whom may you exchange messages?
- Don't text or IM while driving a car. Pull over if you must read or send a message.
- Make yourself unavailable when you need to complete a project or meet a deadline.

Chapter 5 Electronic Messages and Digital Media

NEW **Social Media Figures and Model Documents**
 New figures and model documents show the professional use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter as well as highlight new communication tools such as instant messaging, podcasts, blogs, and wikis.

FIGURE 5.5 How Companies Use Twitter

Companies such as the airlines below use Twitter to broadcast to their "followers" up-to-the-minute information, announce special offers, and address customer-service mix-ups. If a request or complaint is unique, the representative may request that the customer send a "direct message" (DM) to handle the inquiry out of the tweeting public's eye, not least to contain potential PR damage.

Twitter users who follow JetBlue Cheeps gain access to low fares.

Whether bad weather or civil unrest, in a crisis Twitter allows fast updates to inform and reassure customers. Here a Delta example:

Most corporate tweets are professional, but the 140-character posts may show a greater laxness in punctuation, spelling, and other conventions than other business messages. Sometimes, company reps employ humor.

Southwest Airlines has a stellar reputation for listening to the public. Five "tweet watchers" manage the carrier's huge online presence.

NEW



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TEAM

WEB

5.15 Social Networking: Preparing a Professional LinkedIn Profile

Virtual networking on a professional networking site such as LinkedIn is an extension of seeking face-to-face contacts—the most effective way to find a job to date. Consider creating a credible, appealing presence on LinkedIn to make yourself attractive to potential business connections and hiring managers. Your LinkedIn site should serve purely to build your career and professional reputation.

Your Task. Go to <http://www.linkedin.com> and sign up for a free account. Follow the on-screen directions to create a profile, add a professional-looking photograph, and upload a polished résumé. You will be prompted to invite contacts from your e-mail address books. If your instructor directs, form teams and critique each other's profiles. Link to those profiles of your peers that have been prepared most diligently and strike you as having the best eye appeal.

NEW

Abundant Exercises and Activities

Extensively updated end-of-chapter exercises and activities provide a plethora of fresh, relevant activities for you to develop new skills. These exercises help you polish writing skills while creating an understanding of workplace communication challenges.

NEW

Expanded meguffey Premium Web Site for Students

A long-time leader in providing innovative, online resources, Guffey and Loewy have expanded the premium Web site to include robust resources that enhance learning.

Student Resources:

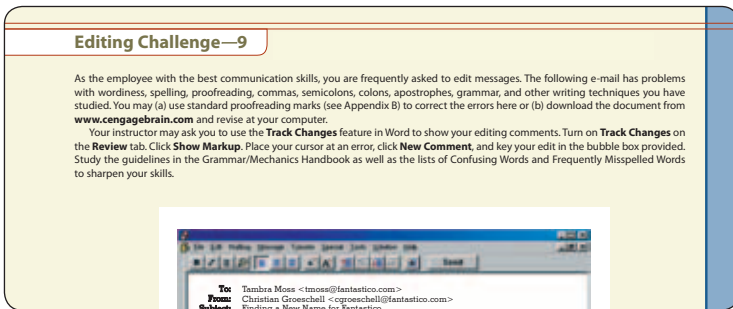
- Abundant Grammar/Mechanics Resources
- Beat the Clock Game
- Chapter Review Quizzes
- Personal Language Trainer
- PowerPoint Chapter Reviews
- Workplace Simulations
- And More!



NEW



From headlines to hands-on, KnowNOW! brings you news that's making a difference in the world and in your course. Business communication-specific, digital online pages provide instant access to timely news with immediate applications for this course. News stories, organized by chapter and topic, include discussion questions and assignments.



NEW

Editing Challenge
(formerly Grammar/Mechanics Challenge)
These new exercises, at the end of each chapter, sharpen your skills in editing. You'll learn to apply writing techniques (such as conciseness, parallelism, and organization) as well as edit for grammar, spelling, punctuation, proofreading, and other potential writing challenges.

NEW

Workplace Simulations

Gain real-world training through these interactive case studies. Available at the premium student Web site, these simulations challenge you to use a variety of communication media to solve workplace problems.

WRITING PLAN

WRITING PLAN FOR REFUSING TYPICAL REQUESTS AND CLAIMS

- **Buffer:** Start with a neutral statement on which both reader and writer can agree, such as a compliment, appreciation, a quick review of the facts, or an apology. Try to include a key idea or word that acts as a transition to the reasons.
- **Reasons:** Present valid reasons for the refusal, avoiding words that create a negative tone.
- **Bad news:** Soften the blow by de-emphasizing the bad news, using the passive voice, accentuating the positive, or implying a refusal. Suggest a compromise, alternative, or substitute, if possible. The alternative may be part of the bad-news section or part of the closing.
- **Closing:** Renew good feelings with a positive statement. Avoid referring to the bad news. Include resale or sales promotion material, if appropriate. Look forward to continued business.

Writing Plans

Clear, step-by-step writing plans structure the writing process so that you can get started quickly and stay focused on the writing experience.

Communication Skills: Your Ticket to Success

Workplace surveys and studies confirm that recruiters rank communication skills at the top of the list of qualities they most desire in job seekers. Such skills are crucial in a tight employment market when jobs are few and competition is fierce. In a recession, superior communication skills will give you an edge over other job applicants. A powerful career filter, your ability to communicate will make you marketable and continue to be your ticket to success regardless of the economic climate.

Perhaps you are already working or will soon apply for your first job. How do your skills measure up? The good news is that effective communication can be learned. This textbook and this course can immediately improve your communication skills. Because the skills you are learning will make a huge difference in your ability to find a job and to be promoted, this will be one of the most important courses you will ever take.

Why Writing Skills Matter More Than Ever

Today's workplace revolves around communication. Workers communicate more, not less, since information technology and the Internet have transformed the world of work in the last two decades. The modern office is mobile and fast paced. Technology enables us to transmit messages faster, farther, to potentially larger audiences, and more easily than in the past. Many people work together

Small superscript numbers in the text announce information sources. Full citations appear at the end of the chapter. This edition uses a modified American Psychological Association (APA) reference format.

2 Chapter 1 Communication Skills as Career Filters

Career Relevance

Because employers often rank communication skills among the most requested competencies, this text focuses on the link between excellent communication skills and career success—helping you see for yourself the critical role business communication plays in your life.

Bridging the Gap Videos

These video cases take you inside real companies, allowing you to apply your understanding of business communication concepts to actual business situations. Most videos conclude with a series of discussion questions and an application activity.

- **Understanding Teamwork: Cold Stone Creamery**
- **Writing Skills: The Little Guys**
- **Happy Cows in Harmony With Nature: Organic Valley**
- **Bad News: BuyCostumes**
- **Persuasive Request: Hard Rock Cafe**

Building Workplace Skills Videos

This video library includes high-quality videos to introduce and reinforce text-specific concepts such as building teamwork skills, applying writing techniques, delivering good and bad news, and making persuasive requests.

- **Career Success Begins With Communication Foundations**
- **Intercultural Communication at Work**
- **Guffey's 3-x-3 Writing Process Develops Fluent Workplace Skills**
- **Technology in the Workplace**
- **Smart E-Mail Messages and Memos Advance Your Career**
- **Effective On-the-Job Oral Presentations**
- **The Job Search**
- **Sharpening Your Interview Skills**

Office Insider

To accentuate how excellent communication skills translate into career success, the *Office Insider* demonstrates the importance of communication skills in real-world practice.

Communication Workshops

Communication workshops develop critical thinking skills and provide insight into special business communication topics such as ethics, technology, career skills, and collaboration.

OFFICE INSIDER

"Rare is the new college hire who lacks skills involving Facebook, texting or any other form of electronic communication. But face to face, many of these same people have difficulty reading interpersonal signals and communicating, especially in the increasingly multigenerational workplace. Most of the gaps I see are on the social, soft skills side."

*—Cindy Warkentin, CIO,
Maryland Automobile
Insurance Fund*

Ethics

Communication Workshop
Should Employers Restrict E-Mail, Instant Messaging, and Internet Use?

Most employees today work with computers and have Internet access. Should they be able to use their work computers for online shopping, personal messages, and personal work, as well as to listen to music and play games?

But It's Harmless
Office workers have discovered that it is far easier to shop online than to race to malls and wait in line. To justify her Web shopping at work, one employee, a recent graduate, said, "Instead of standing at the water cooler gossiping, I shop online." She went on to say, "I'm not sapping company resources by doing this."³¹

Those who use instant messaging say that what they are doing is similar to making personal phone calls. So long as they don't abuse the practice, they see no harm. One marketing director justified his occasional game playing and online shopping by explaining that his employer benefits because he is more productive when he takes minibreaks. "When I need a break, I pull up a Web page and just browse," he says. "Ten minutes later, I'm all refreshed, and I can go back to business-plan writing."³²

Companies Cracking Down
Employers, however, see it differently. A recent survey reported that more than one fourth of employers have fired workers for misusing e-mail, and nearly one third have fired employees for misusing the Internet.³³ UPS discovered an employee running a personal business from his office computer. Lockheed Martin fired an employee who disabled its entire company network for six hours because of an e-mail heralding a holiday event that the worker sent to 60,000 employees. Companies not only worry about lost productivity, but they fear litigation, security breaches, and other electronic disasters from accidental or intentional misuse of computer systems.

What's Reasonable?
Some companies try to enforce a "zero tolerance" policy, prohibiting any personal use of company equipment. Ameritech Corporation specifically tells employees that computers and other company equipment are to be used only to provide service to customers and for other business purposes. Companies such as Boeing, however, allow employees to use faxes, e-mail, and the Internet for personal reasons. But Boeing sets guidelines. Use has to be of reasonable duration and frequency and can't cause embarrassment to the company. Strictly prohibited are chain let-

Guffey helps you learn to communicate effectively and professionally in today's workplace, no matter what career path you choose to follow. The exciting, new *Essentials of Business Communication, 9e*, is packed with resources to make learning business communication easier and more enjoyable. The premium student Web site houses powerful resources to help make learning with Guffey ... just that easy.

The screenshot shows the student support website for *Essentials of Business Communication, 9e*. The page is designed with a clean, professional layout. At the top, the authors' names, Mary Ellen Guffey & Dana Loewy, are displayed. A navigation bar provides quick access to various resources: Quizzes, Simulations, PowerPoint Review, Grammar Mechanics, Writing Improvement Cases, Language Exercises, Writing Resources, Business Activities, and Videos. The main content area is divided into several sections. On the left, there's a 'Chapter Quizzes' section with a 'Take a quiz now!' button. In the center, a 'Welcome to Essentials of Business Communication, 9e' message is accompanied by a list of features: Chapter review quizzes, PowerPoint review slides, Flashcards, and the Personal Language Trainer. On the right, there's a 'Boost Grammar Skills' section with a link to 'View Personal Language Trainer now!'. The page also includes a 'A Note from the Authors' section and a 'Check out these other products from Dr. Guffey and Cengage' section.

NEW**Student Support Web Site**

Guffey and Loewy's premium student Web site gives you one convenient place to find the support you need. You can study with self-teaching grammar/mechanics activities, PowerPoint® slides, chapter review quizzes, Beat the Clock games, and other valuable study tools.

Access the meguffey Web site through www.cengagebrain.com.

The following features are all part of the Guffey and Loewy Premium Student Web site. Visit www.cengagebrain.com to use these tools today!

Beat the Clock Interactive Games

These fun but challenging interactive games give you an opportunity to review chapter concepts and make quick decisions in a game-like environment.

Chapter Review Quizzes

Chapter review quizzes help you prepare for tests and check your understanding of the most important concepts in each chapter. Plus, each question includes feedback to help you understand why your answers are right or wrong.

Grammar/Mechanics Checkups

Improve your grammar skills by completing these Grammar/Mechanics Checkups. Available in the textbook and at the student Web site, these Checkups review all sections of the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook.

Grammar/Mechanics Challenge Documents

Build your language skills by finding and correcting errors in the Grammar/Mechanics Challenge Documents. Save time re-keying these documents by downloading them from the Web site.

Personal Language Trainer

The Personal Language Trainer strengthens your language skills through a three-part program that reviews, strengthens, and measures your knowledge. You will begin with a diagnostic quiz to determine your personal fitness profile.

Online Writing Labs

This rich collection of Web sites provide relevant and publicly accessible online “handouts,” style guides, and writing tips to help you in this course. You will find a variety of topics including citation formats, test-taking tips, grammar, and the writing process.

Dr. Guffey’s Business Etiquette Guide

Do your table manners need to be polished before your next business dinner? Dr. Guffey explores 17 different business etiquette topics, including business dining, of interest to both workplace newcomers and veterans.

PowerPoint® Slides

You can review the most important topics of each chapter in these professionally designed PowerPoint slides. Study them before tests to check your understanding of key concepts.



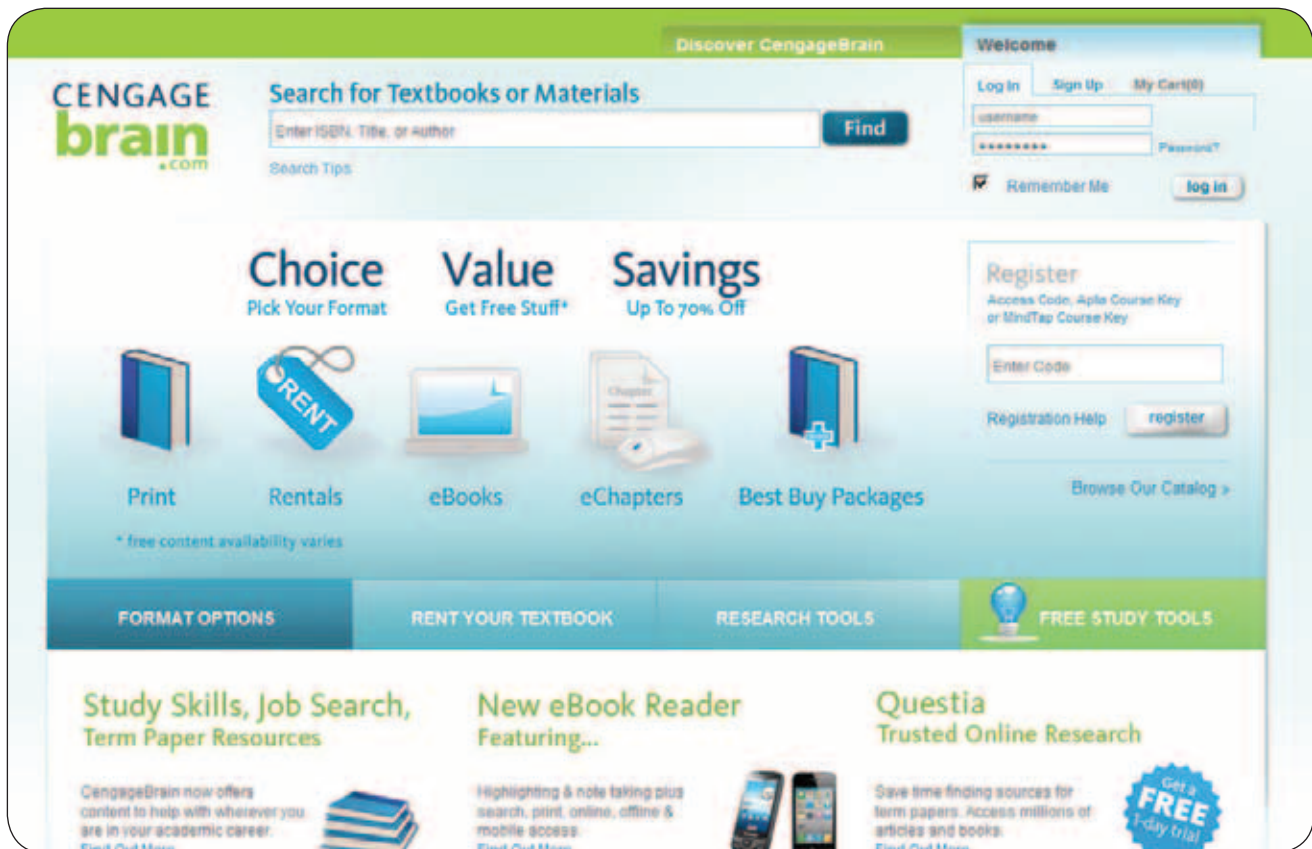
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- 2** Register as a new user or log in as an existing user if you already have an account with Cengage Learning or **CengageBrain.com**.

- 3** Follow the online prompts.

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Dr. Mary Ellen Guffey

A dedicated professional, Mary Ellen Guffey has taught business communication and business English topics for over thirty years. She received a bachelor's degree, *summa cum laude*, from Bowling Green State University; a master's degree from the University of Illinois, and a doctorate in business and economic education from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). She has taught at the University of Illinois, Santa Monica College, and Los Angeles Pierce College.

Now recognized as the world's leading business communication author, Dr. Guffey corresponds with instructors around the globe who are using her books. She is the founding author of the award-winning *Business Communication: Process and Product*, the leading business communication textbook in this country and abroad. She also wrote *Business English*, which serves more students than any other book in its field; *Essentials of College English*; and *Essentials of Business Communication*, the leading text/workbook in its market. Dr. Guffey is active professionally, serving on the review boards of the *Business Communication Quarterly* and the *Journal of Business Communication*, publications of the Association for Business Communication. She participates in national meetings, sponsors business communication awards, and is committed to promoting excellence in business communication pedagogy and the development of student writing skills.

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Dana Loewy has been teaching business communication at California State University, Fullerton for the past fifteen years. She enjoys introducing undergraduates to business writing and honing the skills of graduate students in managerial communication. Most recently, she has also taught various German classes. Dr. Loewy is a regular guest lecturer at Fachhochschule Nürtingen, Germany. Having earned a PhD from the University of Southern California in English with a focus on translation, she is a well-published freelance translator, interpreter, brand-name consultant, and textbook author. Dr. Loewy has collaborated with Dr. Guffey on recent editions of *Business Communication: Process & Product* as well as on *Essentials of Business Communication*.



Fluent in several languages, among them German and Czech, her two native languages, Dr. Loewy has authored critical articles in many areas of interest—literary criticism, translation, business communication, and business ethics. Before teaming up with Dr. Guffey, Dr. Loewy published various poetry and prose translations, most notably *The Early Poetry* of Jaroslav Seifert and *On the Waves of TSF*. Active in the Association for Business Communication, Dr. Loewy focuses on creating effective teaching/learning materials for undergraduate and graduate business communication students.

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Mary Ellen Guffey and Dana Loewy

UNIT

1



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Workplace Communication Today

CHAPTER 1

Communication Skills as Career Filters



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OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- Appreciate how solid communication skills will improve your career prospects and help you succeed in today's changing workplace.
- Understand the process of communication.
- Begin practicing your listening skills and confront barriers to effective listening.
- Explain the importance of nonverbal communication and of improving your nonverbal communication skills.
- Recognize how culture influences communication and explain five common dimensions of culture.
- Discuss strategies that help you overcome negative cultural attitudes and prevent miscommunication in today's diverse workplace.

Communication Skills: Your Ticket to Success

Workplace surveys and studies confirm that recruiters rank communication skills at the top of the list of qualities they most desire in job seekers. Such skills are crucial in a tight employment market when jobs are few and competition is fierce. In a recession, superior communication skills will give you an edge over other job applicants. A powerful career filter, your ability to communicate will make you marketable and continue to be your ticket to success regardless of the economic climate.

Perhaps you are already working or will soon apply for your first job. How do your skills measure up? The good news is that effective communication can be learned. This textbook and this course can immediately improve your communication skills. Because the skills you are learning will make a huge difference in your ability to find a job and to be promoted, this will be one of the most important courses you will ever take.

Why Writing Skills Matter More Than Ever

Today's workplace revolves around communication. Workers communicate more, not less, since information technology and the Internet have transformed the world of work in the last two decades. The modern office is mobile and fast paced. Technology enables us to transmit messages faster, farther, to potentially larger audiences, and more easily than in the past. Many people work together

Small superscript numbers in the text announce information sources. Full citations appear at the end of the chapter. This edition uses a modified American Psychological Association (APA) reference format.

but are physically apart. They stay connected through spoken and written messages. Writing skills, which were always a career advantage, are now a necessity.¹ A survey of American corporations revealed that two thirds of salaried employees have some writing responsibility. About one third of them, however, do not meet the writing requirements for their positions.²

“Businesses are crying out—they need to have people who write better,” said Gaston Caperton, business executive and College Board president.³ The ability to write opens doors to professional employment. People who cannot write and communicate clearly will not be hired. If already working, they are unlikely to last long enough to be considered for promotion. Writing is a marker of high-skill, high-wage, professional work, according to Bob Kerrey, president of The New School university in New York and chair of the National Commission on Writing. If you can’t express yourself clearly, he says, you limit your opportunities for many positions.⁴

Not surprisingly, many job listings explicitly ask for excellent oral and written communication skills. In a poll of recruiters, oral and written communication skills were by a large margin the top skill set sought.⁵ Employers consistently state that communication skills are critical to effective job placement, performance, career advancement, and organizational success.⁶ Among the top choices in two other polls were teamwork, critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and oral and written communication skills.⁷

If you believe that you will not need strong communication skills in a technical field such as accounting or information technology, think again. A recent poll of 1,400 chief financial officers sponsored by Accountemps revealed that 75 percent said that verbal, written, and interpersonal skills are more important today than they were in the past.⁸ Even technical specialists must be able to communicate with others and explain their work clearly. A survey of Web professionals showed that those with writing and copyediting skills were far less likely to have their jobs sent offshore.⁹ Another survey conducted by the Society for Information Management revealed that network professionals ranked written and oral communication skills among the top five most desired skills for new-hires.¹⁰

Businesses today generate a wide range of messages in a variety of media. In addition to traditional letters and memos, expect to communicate with the public and within the company by e-mail*, instant messaging and texting, company blogs, collaboration software such as wikis, and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. You will learn more about workplace communication technology in Chapter 5.

Regardless of career choice, writing is in your future. You will probably be sending many digital messages, such as the e-mail shown in Figure 1.1. In fact, e-mail is “today’s version of the business letter or interoffice memo.”¹¹ Because electronic mail and other digital media have become important channels of communication in today’s workplace, all digital business messages must be clear, concise, and professional. Notice that the message in Figure 1.1 is more businesslike and more professional than the quick e-mail or text you might dash off to friends. Learning to write professional digital messages will be an important part of this course.

What Employers Want: Professionalism

In addition to technical knowledge in business, your future employer will expect you to show professionalism and possess what are often referred to as “soft skills.” Soft skills are essential career attributes that include the ability to communicate, work well with others, solve problems, make ethical decisions, and appreciate diversity.¹² Sometimes also called employability skills or key competencies, these soft skills are desirable in all business sectors and job positions.¹³

As much as businesses expect employees to act in a businesslike and professional manner, many entry-level workers are not ready or have the wrong attitudes. One employer was surprised that many of her new-hires had no idea that excessive absenteeism or tardiness was grounds for termination. The new employees also didn’t seem to know that they were expected to devote their full energy to duties when on the job.

* The usage standard in this book is *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition. Words such as *e-mail* and *Web* are in a state of flux, and a single standard has yet to establish itself. *Merriam-Webster’s* continues to show conventional usage patterns.

OFFICE INSIDER

The founder of a New York public relations firm was shocked at how many college graduates failed the writing test he gives job applicants. He said, “We don’t have the time to teach basic writing skills here.”

Looking and sounding professional gains you credibility on the job.

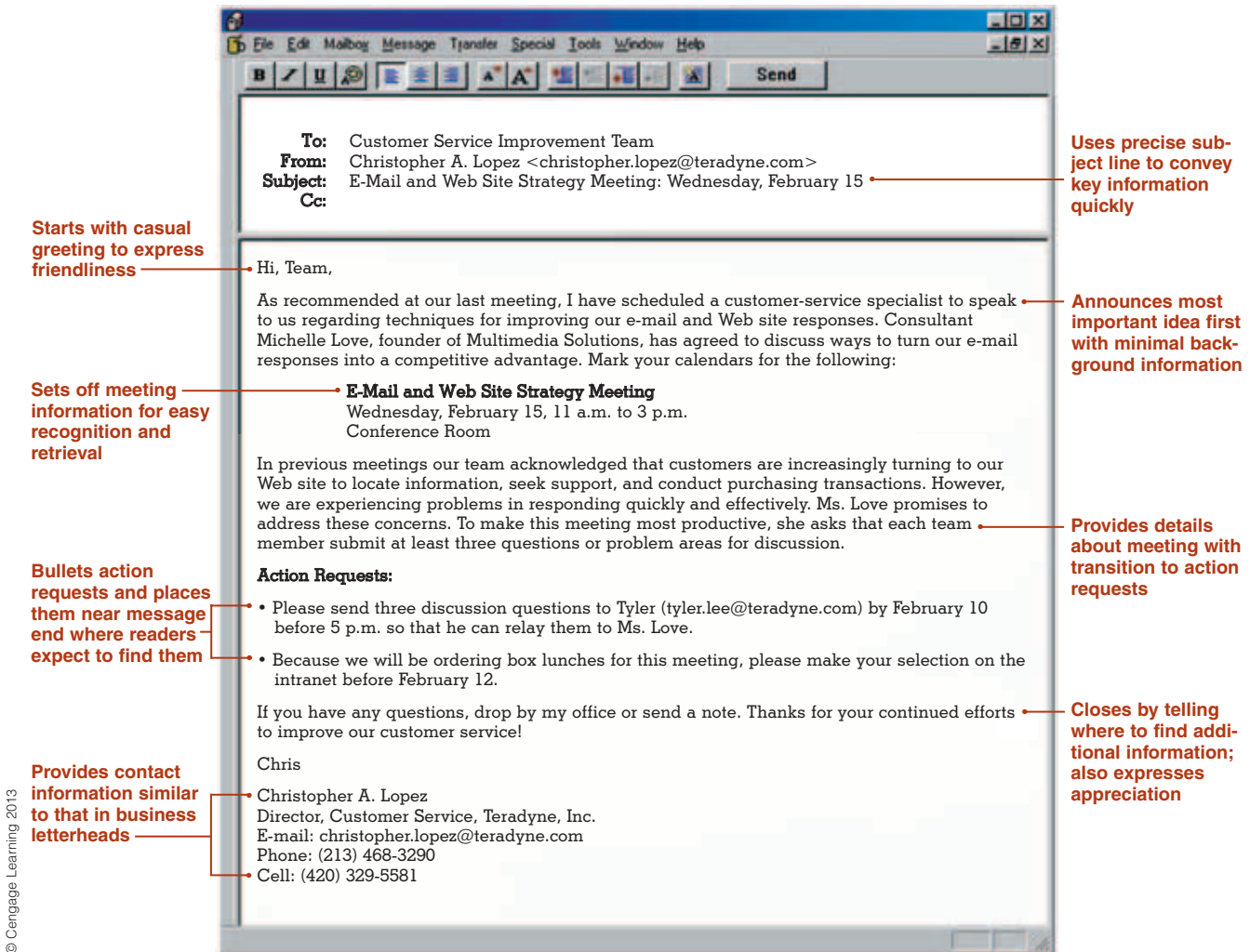
OFFICE INSIDER

“Rare is the new college hire who lacks skills involving Facebook, texting or any other form of electronic communication. But face to face, many of these same people have difficulty reading interpersonal signals and communicating, especially in the increasingly multigenerational workplace. Most of the gaps I see are on the social, soft skills side.”

—Cindy Warkentin, CIO,
Maryland Automobile
Insurance Fund

FIGURE 1.1 Businesslike, Professional E-Mail Message

Because e-mail messages are rapidly replacing business letters and interoffice memos, they must be written carefully, provide complete information, and sound businesslike and professional. Notice that this message is more formal in tone than e-mail messages you might send to friends.



One young man wanted to read Harry Potter novels when things got slow.¹⁴ Other recent graduates had unrealistic expectations about their salaries and working hours.¹⁵

Projecting and maintaining a professional image can make a real difference in helping you obtain the job of your dreams. Once you get that job, you are more likely to be taken seriously and promoted if you look and sound professional. New-hires can sabotage their careers when they carry poor college habits into the business world. Banish the flip-flops, sloppy clothes, and IM abbreviations. Think twice about sprinkling your conversation with *like*, *you know*, and uptalk (making declarative sentences sound like questions). You don't want to send the wrong message with unwitting and unprofessional behavior. Figure 1.2 reviews areas you will want to check to be sure you are projecting professionalism. You will learn more about soft skills and professionalism in Chapter 11.

How Your Education Drives Your Income

The effort you invest in earning your college degree will most likely pay off. College graduates make more money, suffer less unemployment, and can choose from a wider variety of career options than workers without a college education.

College graduates with bachelor's degrees will earn nearly three times as much as high school dropouts.

FIGURE 1.2 Projecting Professionalism When You Communicate

	Unprofessional	Professional
Speech habits	Speaking in <i>uptalk</i> , a singsong speech pattern that has a rising inflection making sentences sound like questions; using <i>like</i> to fill in mindless chatter; substituting <i>go</i> for <i>said</i> ; relying on slang; or letting profanity slip into your conversation.	Recognizing that your credibility can be seriously damaged by sounding uneducated, crude, or adolescent.
E-mail	Writing e-mails with incomplete sentences, misspelled words, exclamation points, IM slang, and senseless chatting. Sloppy, careless messages send a nonverbal message that you don't care, don't know, or aren't smart enough to know what is correct.	Employers like to see subjects, verbs, and punctuation marks. They don't recognize IM abbreviations. Call it crazy, but they value conciseness and correct spelling, even in brief e-mails.
Internet	Using an e-mail address such as <i>hotbabe@hotmail.com</i> , <i>supasnugglykitty@yahoo.com</i> , or <i>buffedguy@aol.com</i> .	An e-mail address should include your name or a relevant, positive, businesslike expression. It should not sound cute or like a chat room nickname.
Voice mail	An outgoing message with strident background music, weird sounds, or a joke message.	An outgoing message that states your name or phone number and provides instructions for leaving a message.
Telephone	Soap operas, thunderous music, or a TV football game playing noisily in the background when you answer the phone.	A quiet background when you answer the telephone, especially if you are expecting a prospective employer's call.
Cell phones and smartphones	Taking or placing calls during business meetings or during conversations with fellow employees; raising your voice (cell yell) or engaging in cell calls that others must reluctantly overhear; using a PDA during meetings.	Turning off phone and message notification, both audible and vibrate, during meetings; using your cell only when conversations can be private.

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Moreover, college graduates have access to the highest-paying and fastest-growing careers, many of which require a degree.¹⁶ As Figure 1.3 shows, graduates with bachelor's degrees earn nearly three times as much as high school dropouts and are almost three times less likely to be unemployed.

Writing is one aspect of education that is particularly well rewarded. A *Fortune* magazine article reported this finding: "Among people with a two- or four-year college degree, those in the highest 20 percent in writing ability earn, on average, more than three times what those with the worst writing skills make."¹⁷ One corporate president explained that many people climbing the corporate ladder are good. When he faced a hard choice between candidates, he used writing ability as the deciding factor. He said that sometimes writing is the only skill that separates a candidate from the competition. A recent study confirms that soft skills such

FIGURE 1.3 Income and Unemployment in Relation to Education

Education	Median Weekly Earnings	Unemployment Rate
High school dropout	\$ 440	14.6%
High school diploma	629	9.7%
Some college, no degree	699	8.6%
Associate's degree	761	6.8%
Bachelor's degree or higher	1,138	3.5%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2010). Current population survey: Education pays. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm; and Crosby, O., & Moncarz, R. (2006, Fall). The 2004-14 job outlook for college graduates. *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, 50(3), 43. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/lopub/ooq/2006/fall/art03.htm>

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as communication ability can tip the scales in favor of one job applicant over another.¹⁸ Your ticket to winning in a tight job market and launching a successful career is good communication skills.

Building Your Career Communication Skills With This Book

This book focuses on developing basic writing skills. You will also learn to improve your listening, nonverbal, and speaking skills. These basic communication skills include learning how to write an e-mail, letter, or report and how to make a presentation. Anyone can learn these skills with the help of instructional materials and good model documents, all of which you will find in this book. You also need practice—with meaningful feedback. You need someone such as your instructor to tell you how to modify your responses so that you can improve.

We have designed this book, its supplements, and a new companion Web site at www.cengagebrain.com to provide you and your instructor with everything necessary to make you a successful business communicator in today's dynamic but demanding workplace. Given the increasing emphasis on communication, many businesses are paying large amounts to communication coaches and trainers to teach employees the very skills that you are learning in this course. Your instructor is your coach. So, get your money's worth! Pick your instructor's brain.

To get started, this first chapter presents an overview. You will take a quick look at the changing workplace, the communication process, listening, nonverbal communication, the cultural dimensions of communication, and intercultural job skills. The remainder of the book is devoted to developing specific writing and speaking skills.

Advancing in a Challenging World of Work

The world of work is changing dramatically. The kind of work you will do, the tools you will use, the form of management you will work under, the environment in which you will be employed, the people with whom you will interact—all are undergoing a pronounced transformation. Some of the most significant changes include global competition, flattened management hierarchies, and team-based projects. Other trends reflect constantly evolving technology, the “anytime, anywhere” office, and an emphasis on ethics. The following overview of trends reveals how communication skills are closely tied to your success in a demanding, dynamic workplace.

- **Heightened global competition.** Because American companies are moving beyond domestic markets, you may be interacting with people from many cultures. As a successful business communicator, you will want to learn about other cultures. You will also need to develop intercultural skills including sensitivity, flexibility, patience, and tolerance.
- **Flattened management hierarchies.** To better compete and to reduce expenses, businesses have for years been trimming layers of management. This means that as a frontline employee, you will have fewer managers. You will be making decisions and communicating them to customers, to fellow employees, and to executives.
- **Increased emphasis on self-directed work groups and virtual teams.** Businesses today are often run by cross-functional teams of peers. You can expect to work with a team in gathering information, finding and sharing solutions, implementing decisions, and managing conflict. You may even become part of a virtual team whose members are in remote locations and who communicate almost exclusively electronically. Good communication skills are extremely important in working together successfully in all team environments, especially if members do not meet face-to-face.
- **Innovative communication technologies.** New communication technology is dramatically affecting the way workers interact. In our always-connected world, businesses exchange information by using e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, PDAs or smartphones, fax, voice mail, and powerful laptop computers and netbooks. Satellite communications, wireless networking, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing help workers to conduct meetings with associates around the

Developing career-boosting communication skills requires instruction, practice, and feedback from a specialist.

Trends in the new world of work highlight the importance of communication skills.

Today's employees must be able to work on local as well as remote teams.

world. Even social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter as well as blogs, wikis (multiuser weblogs), and peer-to-peer tools help businesspeople collect information, serve customers, and sell products and services. Figure 1.4, on pages 8 and 9, illustrates many new technologies you will encounter in today's workplace.

- **“Anytime, anywhere” and nonterritorial offices.** Thanks largely to advances in high-speed and wireless Internet access, millions of workers no longer report to nine-to-five jobs that confine them to offices. They have flexible working arrangements so that they can work at home or on the road. The “anytime, anywhere” office requires only a mobile phone and a wireless computer.¹⁹ Telecommuting employees now represent 11 percent of the workforce, and this number increases annually.²⁰ To save on office real estate, a growing number of industries provide “nonterritorial” workspaces. The first to arrive gets the best desk and the corner window.²¹
- **Renewed emphasis on ethics.** Ethics is once again a hot topic in business. Following the Enron and WorldCom scandals in the early 2000s, businesses responded with a flurry of programs emphasizing ethical awareness and training. Despite increased awareness, however, much training was haphazard²² and characterized by lip service only. With the passage of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the government required greater accountability. Nevertheless, a calamitous recession followed, caused largely, some say, by greed and ethical lapses. As a result, businesses are now eager to regain public trust by building ethical environments. Many have written ethical mission statements, installed hotlines, and appointed compliance officers to ensure strict adherence to their high standards and the law.

These trends mean that your writing skills will constantly be on display. Those who can write clear and concise messages contribute to efficient operations and can expect to be rewarded.

After the corporate scandals in the early years of the new millennium and the steep recession that followed the banking crisis, ethics is again front and center in business.

Understanding the Communication Process

The most successful players in the new world of work will be those with highly developed communication skills. As you have seen, you will be communicating more rapidly, more often, and with greater numbers of people than ever before. Because good communication skills are essential to your success, we need to take a closer look at the communication process.

Just what is communication? For our purposes *communication* is “the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.” The crucial element in this definition is *meaning*. Communication has as its central objective the transmission of meaning. The process of communication is successful only when the receiver understands an idea as the sender intended it. This process generally involves five steps, discussed here and shown in Figure 1.5, on page 10.

1. **Sender has an idea.** The form of the idea may be influenced by the sender's mood, frame of reference, background, culture, and physical makeup, as well as the context of the situation.
2. **Sender encodes the idea in a message.** *Encoding* means converting the idea into words or gestures that will convey meaning. A major problem in communicating any message verbally is that words have different meanings for different people. That's why skilled communicators try to choose familiar words with concrete meanings on which both senders and receivers agree.
3. **Message travels over a channel.** The medium over which the message is transmitted is the *channel*. Messages may be sent by computer, telephone, letter, or memorandum. They may also be sent by means of a report, announcement, picture, video, spoken word, fax, or other channel. Because messages carry verbal and nonverbal meanings, senders must choose channels carefully. Anything that disrupts the transmission of a message in the communication process is called *noise*. Channel noise ranges from static that disrupts

Communication is the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another.

The communication process has five steps: idea formation, message encoding, message transmission, message decoding, and feedback.



◀ **Communication Technology Reshaping the World of Work**

Today's workplace is changing dramatically as a result of innovative software, superfast wireless networks, and numerous technologies that allow workers to share information, work from remote locations, and be more productive in or away from the office. We are seeing a gradual progression from basic capabilities, such as e-mail and calendaring, to deeper functionality, such as remote database access, multifunctional devices, and Web-based collaborative applications.

Telephony: VoIP ▶

Savvy businesses are switching from traditional phone service to voice over Internet protocol (VoIP).

This technology allows callers to communicate using a broadband Internet connection, thus eliminating long-distance and local telephone charges. Higher-end VoIP systems now support unified voice mail, e-mail, click-to-call capabilities, and softphones (phones using computer networking). Free or low-cost Internet telephony sites, such as the popular Skype, are also increasingly used by businesses.



communicate using a broadband Internet connection, thus eliminating long-distance and local telephone charges. Higher-end VoIP systems now support unified voice mail, e-mail, click-to-call capabilities, and softphones (phones using computer networking). Free or low-cost Internet telephony sites, such as the popular Skype, are also increasingly used by businesses.



Open Offices ▲

The widespread use of laptops, netbooks, wireless technology, and VoIP have led to more fluid, flexible, and open workspaces. Smaller computers and flat-screen monitors enable designers to save space with boomerang-shaped workstations and cockpit-style work surfaces rather than space-hogging corner work areas. Smaller breakout areas for impromptu meetings are taking over some cubicle space, and digital databases are replacing file cabinets.



◀ **Multifunctional Printers**

Stand-alone copiers, fax machines, scanners, and printers have been replaced with multifunctional devices. Offices are transitioning from a "print and distribute" environment to a "distribute and print" environment. Security measures include pass codes and even biometric thumbprint scanning to make sure data streams are not captured, interrupted, or edited.

Handheld Wireless Devices ▶

A new generation of lightweight, handheld smartphones provide phone, e-mail, Web browsing, and calendar options anywhere there is cell phone coverage or a Wi-Fi network. Devices such as the BlackBerry, the iPhone, and the Android phones now allow you to tap into corporate databases and intranets from remote locations. You can check customers' files, complete orders, and send out receipts without returning to the office.



◀ **Company Intranets**

To share insider information, many companies provide their own protected Web sites called intranets. An intranet may handle company

e-mail, announcements, an employee directory, a policy handbook, frequently asked questions, personnel forms and data, employee discussion forums, shared documents, and other employee information.

▼ **Voice Recognition**

Computers equipped with voice recognition software enable users to dictate up to 160 words a minute with accurate transcription. Voice recognition is particularly helpful to disabled workers and to professionals with heavy dictation loads, such as physicians and attorneys. Users can create documents, enter data, compose and send e-mails, browse the Web, and control the desktop—all by voice.



◀ **Electronic Presentations**

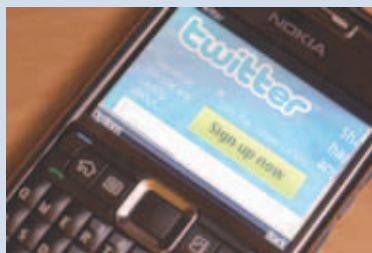
Business presentations in PowerPoint can be projected from a laptop or PDA or posted online. Sophisticated presentations may include animations, sound effects, digital photos, video clips, or hyperlinks to Internet sites. In some industries, PowerPoint slides ("decks") are replacing or supplementing traditional hard-copy reports.



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Collaboration Technology: Rethinking the Way We Work Together ▶

New tools make it possible to work together without being together. Your colleagues may be down the hall, across the country, or across the world. With today's tools, you can exchange ideas, solve problems, develop products, forecast future performance, and complete team projects any time of the day or night and anywhere in the world. Blogs and wikis, also part of Web 2.0, are social tools that create multidirectional conversations among customers and employees. Web 2.0 moves Web applications from "read only" to "read-write," thus enabling greater participation and collaboration.



◀ Blogs, Podcasts, Wikis, and Tweets

A *blog* is a Web site with journal entries usually written by one person and comments by others. Businesses use blogs to keep customers and employees informed and to receive feedback. Company developments can be posted, updated, and categorized for easy cross-referencing. Blogs and other Web sites may feature audio and video files, *podcasts*, for listening and viewing or

for downloading onto the computer and smartphone. A *wiki* is a Web site that allows multiple users to collaboratively create and edit pages. Information gets lost in e-mails, but blogs and wikis provide an easy way to communicate and keep track of what is said. Most companies are still trying to figure out how to harness Twitter for business. However, tech-savvy individuals already send *tweets*, short messages of up to 140 characters, to other users to issue up-to-date news about their products, to link to their blogs and Web sites, or to announce events and promotions.

Web Conferencing ▶

With services such as GoToMeeting, WebEx, and Microsoft LiveMeeting, all you need are a PC and an Internet connection to hold a meeting (*webinar*) with customers or colleagues in real time. Although the functions are constantly evolving, Web conferencing currently incorporates screen sharing, chats, slide presentations, text messaging, and application sharing.



▲ Voice Conferencing

Telephone "bridges" join two or more callers from any location to share the same call. *Voice conferencing* (also called *audioconferencing*, *teleconferencing*, or just plain *conference calling*) enables people to collaborate by telephone. Communicators at both ends use enhanced speakerphones to talk and be heard simultaneously.



▲ Video Phones

Using advanced video compression technology, video phones transmit real-time audio and video so that communicators can see each other as they collaborate. With a video phone, people can videoconference anywhere in the world over a broadband IP (Internet protocol) connection without a computer or a television screen.

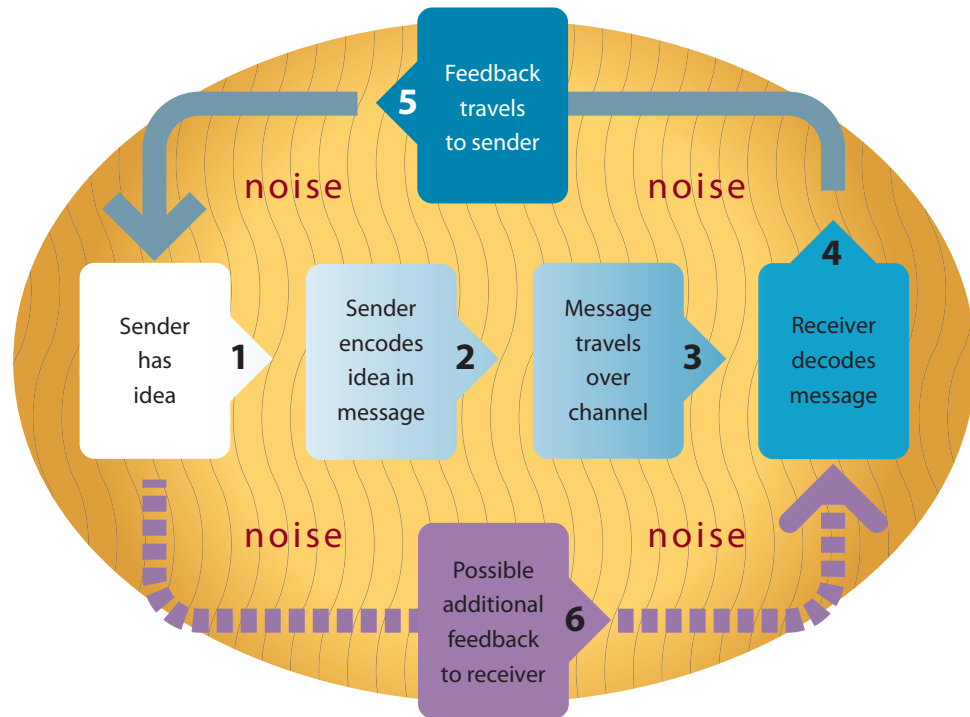
Videoconferencing ▶

Videoconferencing allows participants to meet in special conference rooms equipped with cameras and television screens. Groups see each other and interact in real time although they may be continents apart. Faster computers, rapid Internet connections, and better cameras now enable 2 to 200 participants to sit at their own PCs and share applications, spreadsheets, presentations, and photos.



◀ Presence Technology

Presence technology makes it possible to locate and identify a computing device as soon as users connect to the network. This technology is an integral part of communication devices including cell phones, laptop computers, PDAs, smartphones, and GPS devices. Collaboration is possible wherever and whenever users are online.



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Note: A more comprehensive model of the communication process is available in the instructor's PowerPoint program.

OFFICE INSIDER

Did you know?
 It is estimated that more than 50 percent of our work time is spent listening.
 * Immediately following a 10-minute presentation, average people retain about half of what they hear and only one quarter after 48 hours.
 * Sixty percent of all management problems are related to listening.
 * We misinterpret, misunderstand, or change 70 to 90 percent of what we hear.

—Valarie Washington, CEO, Think 6 Results

a telephone conversation to spelling errors in an e-mail or blog post. Such errors damage the credibility of the sender.

- 4. Receiver decodes the message.** The person for whom a message is intended is the *receiver*. Translating the message from its symbol form into meaning involves *decoding*. Successful communication takes place only when a receiver understands the meaning intended by the sender. Such success is often hard to achieve because no two people share the same background. Success is further limited because barriers and noise may disrupt the process.
- 5. Feedback travels to the sender.** The verbal and nonverbal responses of the receiver create *feedback*, a vital part of the entire communication process. Feedback helps the sender know that the message was received and understood. Senders can encourage feedback by asking questions such as, “Am I making myself clear?” and, “Is there anything you don’t understand?” Senders can further improve feedback by delivering the message at a time when receivers can respond. Senders should provide only as much information as a receiver can handle. Receivers can improve the process by paraphrasing the sender’s message. They might say, “Let me try to explain that in my own words,” or, “My understanding of your comment is. . . .”

Improving Listening Skills

An important part of the communication process is listening. By all accounts, however, most of us are not very good listeners. Do you ever pretend to be listening when you are not? Do you know how to look attentive in class when your mind wanders far away? How about “tuning out” people when their ideas are

boring or complex? Do you find it hard to focus on ideas when a speaker's clothing or mannerisms are unusual?

You probably answered *yes* to one or more of these questions because many of us have developed poor listening habits. In fact, some researchers suggest that we listen at only 25 to 50 percent efficiency. Such poor listening habits are costly in business and affect professional relationships. Messages must be rewritten, shipments reshipped, appointments rescheduled, contracts renegotiated, and directions restated.

To improve listening skills, we must first recognize barriers that prevent effective listening. Then we need to focus on specific techniques that are effective in improving listening skills.

Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

As you learned earlier, barriers and noise can interfere with the communication process. Have any of the following barriers and distractions prevented you from hearing what has been said?

- **Physical barriers.** You cannot listen if you cannot hear what is being said. Physical impediments include hearing disabilities, poor acoustics, and noisy surroundings. It is also difficult to listen if you are ill, tired, or uncomfortable.
- **Psychological barriers.** Everyone brings to the communication process a unique set of cultural, ethical, and personal values. Each of us has an idea of what is right and what is important. If other ideas run counter to our preconceived thoughts, we tend to “tune out” the speaker and thus fail to receive them.
- **Language problems.** Unfamiliar words can destroy the communication process because they lack meaning for the receiver. In addition, emotion-laden or “charged” words can adversely affect listening. If the mention of words such as *bankruptcy* or *real estate meltdown* has an intense emotional impact, a listener may be unable to think about the words that follow.
- **Nonverbal distractions.** Many of us find it hard to listen if a speaker is different from what we view as normal. Unusual clothing or speech mannerisms, body twitches, or a radical hairstyle can cause enough distraction to prevent us from hearing what the speaker has to say.
- **Thought speed.** Because we can process thoughts at least three times faster than speakers can say them, we can become bored and allow our minds to wander.
- **Faking attention.** Most of us have learned to look as if we are listening even when we are not. Such behavior was perhaps necessary as part of our socialization. Faked attention, however, seriously threatens effective listening because it encourages the mind to engage in flights of unchecked fancy. Those who fake attention often find it hard to concentrate even when they want to.
- **Grandstanding.** Would you rather talk or listen? Naturally, most of us would rather talk. Because our own experiences and thoughts are most important to us, we grab the limelight in conversations. We sometimes fail to listen carefully because we are just waiting politely for the next pause so that we can have our turn to speak.

Building Powerful Listening Skills

You can reverse the harmful effects of poor habits by making a conscious effort to become an active listener. This means becoming involved. You can't sit back and hear whatever a lazy mind happens to receive. The following keys will help you become an active and effective listener:

- **Stop talking.** The first step to becoming a good listener is to stop talking. Let others explain their views. Learn to concentrate on what the speaker is saying, not on what your next comment will be.
- **Control your surroundings.** Whenever possible, remove competing sounds. Close windows or doors, turn off TVs and iPods, and move away from loud people, noisy appliances, or engines. Choose a quiet time and place for listening.

Barriers to listening may be physical, psychological, verbal, or nonverbal.

Most North Americans speak at about 125 words per minute. The human brain can process information at least three times as fast.

OFFICE INSIDER

“Listening is hard work. Unlike hearing, it demands total concentration. It is an active search for meaning, while hearing is passive.”

—Alfonso Bucero, consultant and author



- **Establish a receptive mind-set.** Expect to learn something by listening. Strive for a positive and receptive frame of mind. If the message is complex, think of it as mental gymnastics. It is hard work but good exercise to stretch and expand the limits of your mind.
- **Keep an open mind.** We all sift through and filter information based on our own biases and values. For improved listening, discipline yourself to listen objectively. Be fair to the speaker. Hear what is really being said, not what you want to hear.
- **Listen for main points.** Heighten your concentration and satisfaction by looking for the speaker's central themes. Congratulate yourself when you find them!
- **Capitalize on lag time.** Make use of the quickness of your mind by reviewing the speaker's points.

Anticipate what is coming next. Evaluate evidence the speaker has presented. Don't allow yourself to daydream. Try to guess what the speaker's next point will be.

- **Listen between the lines.** Focus both on what is spoken and what is unspoken. Listen for feelings as well as for facts.
- **Judge ideas, not appearances.** Concentrate on the content of the message, not on its delivery. Avoid being distracted by the speaker's looks, voice, or mannerisms.
- **Hold your fire.** Force yourself to listen to the speaker's entire argument or message before reacting. Such restraint may enable you to understand the speaker's reasons and logic before you jump to false conclusions.
- **Take selective notes.** In some situations thoughtful notetaking may be necessary to record important facts that must be recalled later. Select only the most important points so that the notetaking process does not interfere with your concentration on the speaker's total message.
- **Provide feedback.** Let the speaker know that you are listening. Nod your head and maintain eye contact. Ask relevant questions at appropriate times. Getting involved improves the communication process for both the speaker and the listener.

Mastering Nonverbal Communication Skills

Understanding messages often involves more than merely listening to spoken words. Nonverbal cues, in fact, can speak louder than words. These cues include eye contact, facial expressions, body movements, space, time, territory, and appearance. All these nonverbal cues affect how a message is interpreted, or decoded, by the receiver.

Just what is nonverbal communication? It includes all unwritten and unspoken messages, whether intended or not. These silent signals have a strong effect on receivers. But understanding them is not simple. Does a downward glance indicate modesty? Fatigue? Does a constant stare reflect coldness? Dullness? Aggression? Do crossed arms mean defensiveness? Withdrawal? Or just that the person is shivering?

Messages are even harder to decipher when the verbal and nonverbal cues do not agree. What will you think if Scott says he is not angry, but he slams the door when he leaves? What if Alicia assures the hostess that the meal is excellent, but she eats very little? The nonverbal messages in these situations speak more loudly than the words. In fact, researchers believe that over 90 percent of a message that we receive is nonverbal.

When verbal and nonverbal messages conflict, receivers put more faith in nonverbal cues. In one study speakers sent a positive message but averted their eyes as they spoke. Listeners perceived the total message to be negative. Moreover, they

Nonverbal communication includes all unwritten and unspoken messages, intended or not.

When verbal and nonverbal messages clash, listeners tend to believe the nonverbal message.

thought that averted eyes suggested lack of affection, superficiality, lack of trust, and nonreceptivity.²³

Successful communicators recognize the power of nonverbal messages. Cues broadcast by body language might be helpful in understanding the feelings and attitudes of senders. It is unwise, however, to attach specific meanings to gestures or actions because behavior and its interpretations strongly depend on one's cultural background, as you will see.

Your Body Sends Silent Messages

Psychologist and philosopher Paul Watzlawick held that we cannot not communicate.²⁴ In other words, it's impossible to not communicate. This means that every behavior is sending a message even if we don't use words. The eyes, face, and body can convey a world of meaning without a single syllable being spoken.

Eye Contact. The eyes have been called the windows to the soul. Even if they don't reveal the soul, the eyes are often the best predictor of a speaker's true feelings. Most of us cannot look another person straight in the eyes and lie. As a result, in American culture we tend to believe people who look directly at us. Sustained eye contact suggests trust and admiration; brief eye contact signals fear or stress. Good eye contact enables the message sender to see whether a receiver is paying attention, showing respect, responding favorably, or feeling distress. From the receiver's viewpoint, good eye contact, in North American culture, reveals the speaker's sincerity, confidence, and truthfulness.

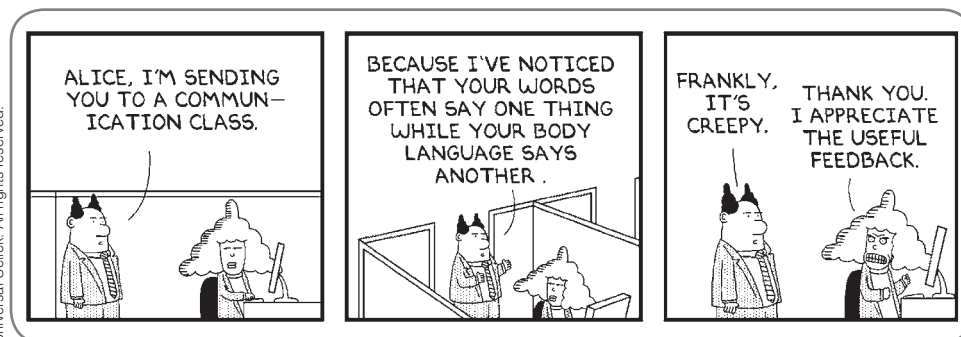
The eyes are thought to be the best predictor of a speaker's true feelings.

Facial Expression. The expression on a person's face can be almost as revealing of emotion as the eyes. Experts estimate that the human face can display over 250,000 expressions.²⁵ To hide their feelings, some people can control these expressions and maintain "poker faces." Most of us, however, display our emotions openly. Raising or lowering the eyebrows, squinting the eyes, swallowing nervously, clenching the jaw, smiling broadly—these voluntary and involuntary facial expressions can add to or entirely replace verbal messages.

Posture and Gestures. A person's posture can convey anything from high status and self-confidence to shyness and submissiveness. Leaning in toward a speaker suggests attraction and interest; pulling away or shrinking back denotes fear, distrust, anxiety, or disgust. Similarly, gestures can communicate entire thoughts via simple movements. However, the meanings of some of these movements differ in other cultures. Unless you know local customs, they can get you into trouble. In the United States and Canada, for example, forming the thumb and forefinger in a circle means everything is OK. But in parts of South America, the OK sign is obscene.

What does your own body language say about you? To take stock of the kinds of messages being sent by your body, ask a classmate to critique your use of eye contact, facial expression, and body movements. Another way to analyze your nonverbal style is to record yourself making a presentation. Then study your performance. This way you can make sure your nonverbal cues send the same message as your words.

Nonverbal messages often have different meanings in different cultures.





Time, Space, and Territory Send Silent Messages

In addition to nonverbal messages transmitted by your body, three external elements convey information in the communication process: time, space, and territory.

Time. How we structure and use time tells observers about our personalities and attitudes. For example, when Warren Buffett, industrialist, investor, and philanthropist, gives a visitor a prolonged interview, he signals his respect for, interest in, and approval of the visitor or the topic to be discussed.

Space. How we order the space around us tells something about ourselves and our objectives. Whether the space is a bedroom, a dorm room, an office, or a department, people reveal themselves in the design and grouping of their furniture. Generally, the more formal the arrangement, the more formal and closed the communication style. The way office furniture is arranged sends cues about how communication is to take place. Israeli diplomat Danny Ayalon caused an international incident after humiliating the Turkish ambassador by making him sit in a chair lower than his own. He also deliberately failed to put the Turkish flag on display.²⁶ Although Ayalon later apologized, his message was clear: He did not want his visitor to feel equal to him.

The distance required for comfortable social interaction is controlled by culture.

Territory. Each of us has a certain area that we feel is our own territory, whether it is a specific spot or just the space around us. Your father may have a favorite chair in which he is most comfortable, a cook might not tolerate intruders in the kitchen, and veteran employees may feel that certain work areas and tools belong to them. We all maintain zones of privacy in which we feel comfortable. Figure 1.6 illustrates the four zones of social interaction among Americans, as formulated by anthropologist Edward T. Hall.²⁷ Notice that Americans are a bit standoffish; only intimate friends and family may stand closer than about 1.5 feet. If someone violates that territory, Americans feel uncomfortable and may step back to reestablish their space.

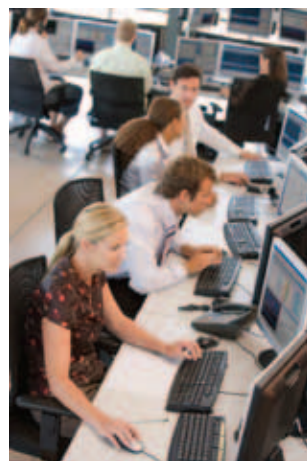
FIGURE 1.6 Four Space Zones for Social Interaction



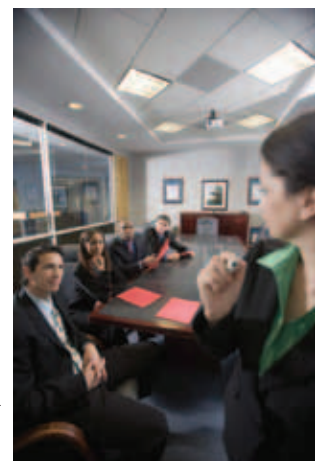
Intimate Zone
(1 to 1.5 feet)



Personal Zone
(1.5 to 4 feet)



Social Zone
(4 to 12 feet)



Public Zone
(12 or more feet)

Appearance Sends Silent Messages

Much like the personal appearance of an individual, the physical appearance of a business document transmits immediate and important nonverbal messages. Ideally, these messages should be pleasing to the eye.

Eye Appeal of Business Documents. The way an e-mail, letter, memo, or report looks can have either a positive or a negative effect on the receiver. Sloppy e-mails send a nonverbal message that you are in a terrific hurry or that you do not care about the receiver. Envelopes—through their postage, stationery, and printing—can suggest routine, important, or junk mail. Letters and reports can look neat, professional, well organized, and attractive—or just the opposite. In succeeding chapters you will learn how to create business documents that send positive nonverbal messages through their appearance, format, organization, readability, and correctness.

Personal Appearance. The way you look—your clothing, grooming, and posture—telegraphs an instant nonverbal message about you. Based on what they see, viewers make quick judgments about your status, credibility, personality, and potential. If you want to be considered professional, think about how you present yourself. One marketing manager said, “I’m young and pretty. It’s hard enough to be taken seriously, and if I show up in jeans and a teeshirt, I don’t stand a chance.”²⁸ As a businessperson, you will want to think about what your appearance says about you. Although the rules of business attire have loosened up, some workers show poor judgment. You will learn more about professional attire and behavior in later chapters.

Building Strong Nonverbal Skills

Nonverbal communication can outweigh words in the way it influences how others perceive us. You can harness the power of silent messages by reviewing the following tips for improving nonverbal communication skills:

- **Establish and maintain eye contact.** Remember that in the United States and Canada appropriate eye contact signals interest, attentiveness, strength, and credibility.
- **Use posture to show interest.** Encourage interaction by leaning forward, sitting or standing erect, and looking alert.
- **Improve your decoding skills.** Watch facial expressions and body language to understand the complete verbal and nonverbal messages being communicated.
- **Probe for more information.** When you perceive nonverbal cues that contradict verbal meanings, politely seek additional cues (“I’m not sure I understand,” “Please tell me more about . . .,” or “Do you mean that . . .”).
- **Avoid assigning nonverbal meanings out of context.** Don’t interpret nonverbal behavior unless you understand a situation or a culture.
- **Associate with people from diverse cultures.** Learn about other cultures to widen your knowledge and tolerance of intercultural nonverbal messages.
- **Appreciate the power of appearance.** Keep in mind that the appearance of your business documents, your business space, and yourself sends immediate positive or negative messages to receivers.
- **Observe yourself on video.** Ensure that your verbal and nonverbal messages are in sync by recording and evaluating yourself making a presentation.
- **Enlist friends and family.** Ask friends and family to monitor your conscious and unconscious body movements and gestures to help you become an effective communicator.



The appearance of a message and of an individual can convey positive or negative nonverbal messages.

Because nonverbal cues can mean more than spoken words, learn to use nonverbal communication positively.

Understanding How Culture Affects Communication

Verbal and nonverbal meanings are even more difficult to interpret when people come from different cultures.

Comprehending the verbal and nonverbal meanings of a message is difficult even when communicators are from the same culture. When they come from different cultures, special sensitivity and skills are necessary.

Negotiators for a North American company learned this lesson when they were in Japan looking for a trading partner. The North Americans were pleased after their first meeting with representatives of a major Japanese firm. The Japanese had nodded assent throughout the meeting and had not objected to a single proposal. The next day, however, the North Americans were stunned to learn that the Japanese had rejected the entire plan. In interpreting the nonverbal behavioral messages, the North Americans made a typical mistake. They assumed the Japanese were nodding in agreement as fellow North Americans would. In this case, however, the nods of assent indicated comprehension—not approval.

Every country has a unique culture or common heritage, joint experience, and shared learning that produce its culture. Their common experience gives members of that culture a complex system of shared values and customs. It teaches them how to behave; it conditions their reactions. Global business, new communication technologies, the Internet, and even Hollywood are spreading Western values throughout the world. However, cultural differences can still cause significant misunderstandings.

The more you know about culture in general and your own culture in particular, the better able you will be to adopt an intercultural perspective. In this book it is impossible to cover fully the infinite facets of culture. However, we can outline some key dimensions of culture and look at them from various points of view.

So that you will better understand your culture and how it contrasts with other cultures, we will describe five key dimensions of culture: context, individualism, formality, communication style, and time orientation.

Context

Context is one of the most important cultural dimensions, yet it is among the most difficult to define. In a model developed by cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall, context refers to the stimuli, environment, or ambience surrounding an event. Hall arranged cultures on a continuum, shown in Figure 1.7, from low to high in relation to context. Our figure also summarizes key comparisons for today's business communicators.

Communicators in low-context cultures (such as those in North America, Scandinavia, and Germany) depend little on the context of a situation to convey their meaning. They assume that listeners need to be briefed exactly and specifically to avoid misunderstandings. Low-context cultures tend to be logical, analytical, and action oriented. Business communicators stress clearly articulated messages that they consider to be objective, professional, and efficient. Words are taken literally.

Communicators in high-context cultures (such as those in China, Japan, and Arab countries) assume that the listener is already “contexted” and does not need much background information.²⁹ Communicators in high-context cultures are more likely to be intuitive and contemplative. They may not take words literally. Instead, the meaning of a message may be implied from the social or physical setting, the relationship of the communicators, or nonverbal cues. For example, a Japanese communicator might say *yes* when he really means *no*. From the context of the situation, the Japanese speaker would indicate whether *yes* really meant *yes* or whether it meant *no*. The context, tone, time taken to answer, facial expression, and body cues would convey the meaning of *yes*.³⁰ Communication cues are transmitted by posture, voice inflection, gestures, and facial expression.

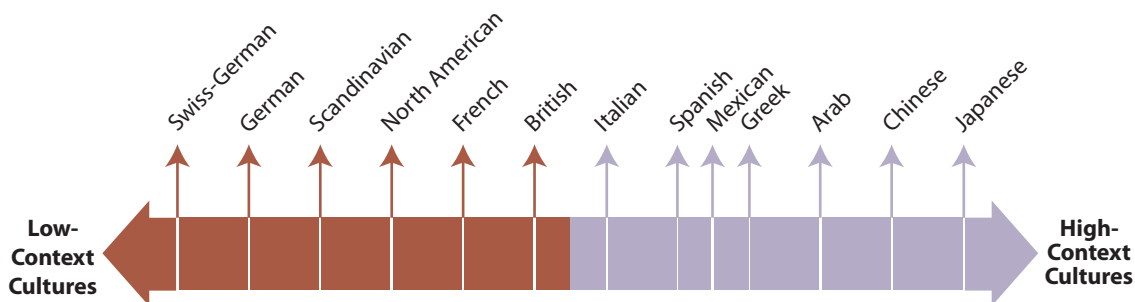
Low-context cultures (such as those in North America and Western Europe) depend less on the environment of a situation to convey meaning than do high-context cultures (such as those in China, Japan, and Arab countries).

FIGURE 1.7 Comparing High- and Low-Context Communicators

Culture has a powerful effect on business communicators. The following observations point out selected differences. Remember, however, that these are simplifications and that practices within a given culture vary considerably. Moreover, as globalization expands, low- and high-context cultures are experiencing change and differences may be less pronounced.

Business Communicators in Low-Context Cultures	Business Communicators in High-Context Cultures
Assume listeners know little and must be told everything directly.	Assume listeners are highly “contexted” and require little background.
Value independence, initiative, self-assertion.	Value consensus and group decisions.
Rely on facts, data, and logic.	Rely on relationships rather than objective data.
Value getting down to business and achieving results.	Value relationships, harmony, status, and saving face.
Keep business and social relationships separate.	Intermix business and social relationships.
Expect negotiated decisions to be final and ironclad.	Expect to reopen discussions of decisions previously negotiated.
Hold relaxed view toward wealth and power.	Defer to others based on wealth, position, seniority, and age.
Value competence regardless of position or status.	May value position and status over competence.
Have little problem confronting, showing anger, or making demands.	Avoid confrontation, anger, and emotion in business transactions.
Analyze meanings and attach face value to words.	May not take words literally; may infer meanings.

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Individualism

An attitude of independence and freedom from control characterizes individualism. Members of low-context cultures, particularly Americans, tend to value individualism. They believe that initiative, self-assertion, and competence result in personal achievement. They believe in individual action and personal responsibility, and they desire a large degree of freedom in their personal lives.

Members of high-context cultures are more collectivist. They emphasize membership in organizations, groups, and teams; they encourage acceptance of group values, duties, and decisions. They typically resist independence because it fosters competition and confrontation instead of consensus. In group-oriented cultures such as those in many Asian societies, for example, self-assertion and individual decision making are discouraged. “The nail that sticks up gets pounded down” is a common Japanese saying.³¹ Business decisions are often made by all who have competence in the matter under discussion. Similarly, in China managers also focus on the group rather than on the individual, preferring a consultative management style over an autocratic style.³²

Many cultures, of course, are quite complex and cannot be characterized as totally individualistic or group oriented. For example, European Americans are generally quite individualistic, whereas African Americans are less so, and Latin Americans are closer to the group-centered dimension.³³

Members of many low-context cultures value independence and freedom from control.

Tradition, ceremony, and social rules are more important in some cultures than in others.

Formality

People in some cultures place less emphasis on tradition, ceremony, and social rules than do members of other cultures. Americans, for example, dress casually and are soon on a first-name basis with others. Their lack of formality is often characterized by directness. In business dealings Americans come to the point immediately; indirectness, they feel, wastes time, a valuable commodity in American culture.

This informality and directness may be confusing abroad. In Mexico, for instance, a typical business meeting begins with handshakes, coffee, and an expansive conversation about the weather, sports, and other light topics. An invitation to “get down to business” might offend a Mexican executive.³⁴ In Japan signing documents and exchanging business cards are important rituals. In Europe first names are used only after long acquaintance and by invitation. In Arab, South American, and Asian cultures, a feeling of friendship and kinship must be established before business can proceed.

In Western cultures people are more relaxed about social status and the appearance of power.³⁵ Deference is not generally paid to individuals merely because of their wealth, position, seniority, or age. In many Asian cultures, however, these characteristics are important and must be respected. Deference and respect are paid to authority and power. Recognizing this cultural pattern, Marriott Hotel managers learned to avoid placing a lower-level Japanese employee on a floor above a higher-level executive from the same company.

Communication Style

People in low- and high-context cultures tend to communicate differently with words. To Americans and Germans, words are very important, especially in contracts and negotiations. People in high-context cultures, on the other hand, place more emphasis on the surrounding context than on the words describing a negotiation. A Greek may see a contract as a formal statement announcing the intention to build a business for the future. The Japanese may treat contracts as statements of intention, and they assume changes will be made as a project develops. Mexicans may treat contracts as artistic exercises of what might be accomplished in an ideal world. They do not necessarily expect contracts to apply consistently in the real world. An Arab may be insulted by merely mentioning a contract; a person’s word is more binding.³⁶

In communication style North Americans value straightforwardness, are suspicious of evasiveness, and distrust people who might have a “hidden agenda” or who “play their cards too close to the chest.”³⁷ North Americans also tend to be uncomfortable with silence and impatient with delays. Some Asian businesspeople have learned that the longer they drag out negotiations, the more concessions impatient North Americans are likely to make.

Time Orientation

North Americans consider time a precious commodity. They correlate time with productivity, efficiency, and money. Keeping people waiting for business appointments wastes time and is also rude.

In other cultures time may be perceived as an unlimited and never-ending resource to be enjoyed. A North American businessperson, for example, was kept waiting two hours past a scheduled appointment time in South America. She wasn’t offended, though, because she was familiar with Hispanics’ more relaxed concept of time.

The perception of time and how it is used are culturally learned. In some cultures time is perceived analytically. People account for every minute of the day. In other cultures, time is holistic and viewed in larger chunks. Western cultures tend to be more analytical, scheduling appointments at 15- to 30-minute intervals. Eastern cultures tend to be more holistic, planning fewer but longer meetings. People in one culture may look at time as formal and task oriented. In another culture, time is seen as an opportunity to develop an interpersonal relationship. In the announcements of some international meetings, a qualifier may be inserted after the meeting time. For example, “The meeting starts at 10 a.m. Malaysian time.” This tells participants whether to expect fixed or fluid scheduling.

Words are used differently by people in low- and high-context cultures.

North Americans value a direct, straightforward communication style.

North Americans tend to correlate time with productivity, efficiency, and money.

Learning Intercultural Workplace Skills

The global economy needs workers who not only master their technical skills but also can thrive on diverse teams and interact effectively with customers and clients at home and abroad. Even if you never seek an overseas work assignment, you will need to be able to collaborate with diverse coworkers right here at home. We will discuss how to overcome barriers to productive intercultural communication, develop strong intercultural skills, and capitalize on workplace diversity.

Conquering Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping

The process of understanding and interacting successfully with people from other cultures is often hampered by two barriers: ethnocentrism and stereotyping. These two barriers, however, can be overcome by developing tolerance, a powerful and effective aid to communication.

Ethnocentrism. The belief in the superiority of one's own culture is known as *ethnocentrism*. This natural attitude is found in all cultures. Ethnocentrism causes us to judge others by our own values. If you were raised in North America, the values described in the preceding sections probably seem “right” to you, and you may wonder why the rest of the world doesn't function in the same sensible fashion. A North American businessperson in an Arab or Asian country might be upset at time spent over coffee or other social rituals before any “real” business is transacted. In these cultures, however, personal relationships must be established and nurtured before earnest talks may proceed.

Stereotypes. Our perceptions of other cultures sometimes cause us to form stereotypes about groups of people. A *stereotype* is an oversimplified perception of a behavioral pattern or characteristic applied to entire groups. For example, the Swiss are hardworking, efficient, and neat; Germans are formal, reserved, and blunt; Americans are loud, friendly, and impatient; Canadians are polite, trusting, and tolerant; Asians are gracious, humble, and inscrutable. These attitudes may or may not accurately describe cultural norms. But when applied to individual business communicators, such stereotypes may create misconceptions and misunderstandings. Look beneath surface stereotypes and labels to discover individual personal qualities.

Tolerance. Working with people from other cultures demands tolerance and flexible attitudes. As global markets expand and as our society becomes increasingly multiethnic, tolerance becomes critical. *Tolerance*, here, does not mean “putting up with” or “enduring,” which is one part of its definition. Instead, we use *tolerance* in a broader sense. It means learning about beliefs and practices different from our own and appreciating them. One of the best ways to develop tolerance is to practice *empathy*. This means trying to see the world through another's eyes. It means being nonjudgmental, recognizing things as they are rather than as they “should be.”

For example, in China, the American snack foods manufacturer Frito-Lay had to accommodate yin and yang, the Chinese philosophy that nature and life must balance opposing elements. Chinese consider fried foods to be hot and avoid them in summer because two “hots” don't balance. They prefer “cool” snacks in summer; therefore, Frito-Lay created “cool lemon” potato chips dotted with lime specks and mint. The yellow, lemon-scented chips are delivered in a package showing breezy blue skies and rolling green grass.³⁸ Instead of imposing the American view that potato chips are fine as a summer snack, Frito-Lay looked at its product through the eyes of its Chinese consumers and adjusted accordingly.

The following suggestions can help you prevent miscommunication in oral and written transactions across cultures.

OFFICE INSIDER

“Not everyone can travel, but since we live and work in a global economy, we should expect undergraduate programs to prepare students with a fundamental understanding of the cultural differences, historical perspectives and common business practices employed by all the major countries within it.”

—Craig Cuyar, CIO,
Cushman & Wakefield Inc.

Ethnocentrism is the belief in the superiority of one's own culture and group.

A stereotype is an oversimplified behavioral pattern applied to entire groups.

Developing intercultural tolerance means practicing empathy, being nonjudgmental, and being patient.

Successful Oral Communication With Intercultural Audiences

When you have a conversation with someone from another culture, you can reduce misunderstandings by following these tips:

To improve communication with nonnative speakers of English, speak slowly, enunciate clearly, observe eye messages, encourage feedback, check for comprehension, accept blame, don't interrupt, remember to smile, and follow up important conversations in writing.

- **Use simple English.** Speak in short sentences (under 20 words) with familiar, short words. Eliminate puns, sport and military references, slang, and jargon (special business terms). Be especially alert to idiomatic expressions that can't be translated, such as *burn the midnight oil* and *under the weather*.
- **Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.** Avoid fast speech, but don't raise your voice. Overpunctuate with pauses and full stops. Always write numbers for all to see.
- **Encourage accurate feedback.** Ask probing questions, and encourage the listener to paraphrase what you say. Don't assume that a *yes*, a nod, or a smile indicates comprehension or assent.
- **Check frequently for comprehension.** Avoid waiting until you finish a long explanation to request feedback. Instead, make one point at a time, pausing to check for comprehension. Don't proceed to B until A has been grasped.
- **Observe eye messages.** Be alert to a glazed expression or wandering eyes. These tell you the listener is lost.
- **Accept blame.** If a misunderstanding results, graciously accept the responsibility for not making your meaning clear.
- **Listen without interrupting.** Curb your desire to finish sentences or to fill out ideas for the speaker. Keep in mind that North Americans abroad are often accused of listening too little and talking too much.
- **Smile when appropriate.** Roger Axtell, international behavior expert, calls the smile the single most understood and most useful form of communication in either personal or business transactions. In some cultures, however, excessive smiling may seem insincere.³⁹
- **Follow up in writing.** After conversations or oral negotiations, confirm the results and agreements with follow-up letters. For proposals and contracts, engage a qualified translator to prepare copies in the local language.

You can improve intercultural written communication by adopting local styles, using short sentences and short paragraphs, avoiding ambiguous wording, and citing numbers carefully.

Successful Written Communication With Intercultural Audiences

When you write to someone from a different culture, you can improve your chances of being understood by following these suggestions:

- **Consider local styles.** Learn how documents are formatted and how letters are addressed and developed in the intended reader's country. Decide whether to use your organization's preferred format or adjust to local styles.
- **Consider hiring a translator.** Engage a professional translator if (a) your document is important, (b) your document will be distributed to many readers, or (c) you must be persuasive.
- **Use short sentences and short paragraphs.** Sentences with fewer than 20 words and paragraphs with fewer than 8 lines are most readable.
- **Avoid ambiguous wording.** Include relative pronouns (*that*, *which*, *who*) for clarity in introducing clauses. Stay away from contractions (especially ones such as *Here's the problem*). Avoid idioms (*once in a blue moon*), slang (*my presentation really bombed*), acronyms (*ASAP* for *as soon as possible*), abbreviations (*DBA* for *doing business as*), and jargon (*input*, *output*, *clickstream*). Use action-specific verbs (*purchase a printer* rather than *get a printer*).



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- **Cite numbers carefully.** For international trade it is a good idea to learn and use the metric system. In citing numbers, use figures (*15*) instead of spelling them out (*fifteen*). Always convert dollar figures into local currency. Avoid using figures to express the month of the year. In North America, for example, *March 5, 2012*, might be written as *3/5/12*, while in Europe the same date might appear as *5.3.12*. For clarity, always spell out the month.

Globalization and Workplace Diversity

As global competition opens world markets, North American businesspeople will increasingly interact with customers and colleagues from around the world. At the same time, the North American workforce is also becoming more diverse—in race, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, physical ability, and countless other characteristics.

No longer, say the experts, will the workplace be predominantly male or Anglo-oriented. The white non-Hispanic population of the United States is expected to drop from 79 percent in 1980 to 64 percent in 2020. The Hispanic population will climb from 6 percent to 17 percent, the African American population will increase from 12 percent to 13 percent, and the Asian population will rise from 2 percent to 6 percent.⁴⁰ In addition to increasing numbers of minorities, the workforce will see a big jump in older workers. By 2020, the number of workers aged fifty-five and older will grow to 20 percent.⁴¹

What do all these changes mean for you as a future business communicator? Simply put, your job may require you to interact with colleagues and customers from around the world. Your work environment will probably demand that you cooperate effectively with small groups of coworkers. What's more, these coworkers may differ from you in race, ethnicity, gender, age, and other ways.

Benefits of a Diverse Workforce

A diverse work environment offers many benefits and makes good business sense. Customers want to deal with companies that respect their values. They are more likely to say, “If you are a company whose ads do not include me, or whose workforce does not include me, I will not buy from you.” A diverse staff is better able to read trends and respond to the increasingly diverse customer base in local and world markets.

At PepsiCo, work teams created new products inspired by diversity efforts. Those products included Gatorade Xtremo aimed at Hispanics as well as Mountain Dew Code Red, which appeals to African Americans. One Pepsi executive said that companies that “figure out the diversity challenge first will clearly have a competitive advantage.”⁴²

In addition, organizations that set aside time and resources to cultivate and capitalize on diversity will suffer fewer discrimination lawsuits, fewer union clashes, and less government regulatory action. Most important, though, is the growing realization among organizations that diversity is a critical bottom-line business strategy to improve employee relationships and to increase productivity. Developing a diverse staff that can work together cooperatively is one of the biggest challenges facing business organizations today.

Tips for Communicating With Diverse Audiences on the Job

Integrating all this diversity into one seamless workforce is a formidable but vital task. Harnessed effectively, diversity can enhance productivity and propel a company to success well into the twenty-first century. Mismanaged, it can become a tremendous drain on a company's time and resources. How companies deal

You can expect to be interacting with customers and colleagues who may differ from you in race, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, physical ability, and many other characteristics.

OFFICE INSIDER

“I need to find the best set of skills to do the assignment rather than someone who looks like me, acts like me, or went to the same school or fits into the old mold.”

—Ken Henderson,
managing director
of IMCOR, a national
executive search firm





www.Cartoonstock.com

with diversity will make all the difference in how they compete in an increasingly global environment. This means that organizations must do more than just pay lip service to these issues. Harmony and acceptance do not happen automatically when people who are dissimilar work together. The following suggestions can help you and your organization find ways to improve communication and interaction:

- **Understand the value of differences.** Diversity makes an organization innovative and creative. Sameness fosters an absence of critical thinking called *groupthink*. Case studies, for example, of the *Challenger* shuttle disaster suggest that groupthink prevented alternatives from being considered. Even smart people

working collectively can make dumb decisions if they do not see different perspectives.⁴³ Diversity in problem-solving groups encourages independent and creative thinking.

- **Seek training.** Especially if an organization is experiencing diversity problems, awareness-raising sessions may be helpful. Spend time reading and learning about workforce diversity and how it can benefit organizations. Look upon diversity as an opportunity, not a threat. Intercultural communication, team building, and conflict resolution are skills that can be learned in diversity training programs.
- **Learn about your cultural self.** Begin to think of yourself as a product of your culture, and understand that your culture is just one among many. Try to stand outside and look at yourself. Do you see any reflex reactions and automatic thought patterns that are a result of your upbringing? These may be invisible to you until challenged by people who are different from you. Remember, your culture was designed to help you succeed and survive in a certain environment. Be sure to keep what works and yet be ready to adapt as your environment changes.
- **Make fewer assumptions.** Be careful of seemingly insignificant, innocent workplace assumptions. For example, don't assume that everyone wants to observe the holidays with a Christmas party and a decorated tree. Celebrating only Christian holidays in December and January excludes those who honor Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and the Lunar New Year. Moreover, in workplace discussions don't assume that everyone is married or wants to be or is even heterosexual, for that matter. For invitations, avoid phrases such as *managers and their wives*. *Spouses* or *partners* is more inclusive. Valuing diversity means making fewer assumptions that everyone is like you or wants to be like you.
- **Build on similarities.** Look for areas in which you and others not like you can agree or at least share opinions. Be prepared to consider issues from many perspectives, all of which may be valid. Accept that there is room for various points of view to coexist peacefully. Although you can always find differences, it is much harder to find similarities. Look for common ground in shared experiences, mutual goals, and similar values. Concentrate on your objective even when you may disagree on how to reach it.⁴⁴

Successful communicators understand the value of differences, seek training, learn about their own cultures, make fewer assumptions, and build on similarities.

In times of conflict, look for areas of agreement and build on similarities.



www.cengagebrain.com

Available with an access code, these eResources will help you prepare for exams:

- Chapter Review Quizzes
- PowerPoint Slides
- Personal Language Trainer
- Flash Cards

Summing Up and Looking Forward

This chapter described the importance of communication skills in today's fast-paced, mobile workplace and challenging economy. Writing skills are particularly important because businesspeople produce more written messages than ever before. Heightened global competition, flattened management hierarchies, team-based projects, constantly evolving technology, the "anytime, anywhere" office, and an emphasis on ethics are all trends that increase the need for good communication skills. To improve your skills, you should understand the communication process. Communication doesn't take place unless senders encode meaningful messages that can be decoded and understood by receivers.

One important part of the communication process is listening. You can become a more active listener by keeping an open mind, listening for main points, capitalizing on lag time, judging ideas and not appearances, taking selective notes, and providing

feedback. The chapter also described ways to help you improve your nonverbal communication skills.

You learned about the powerful effect that culture has on communication, and you became more aware of the cultural dimensions of context, individualism, formality, communication style, and time orientation. Finally, the chapter discussed ways that individuals can learn intercultural skills and businesses can benefit from workforce diversity.

The following chapters present the writing process. You will learn specific techniques to help you improve your written and oral expression. Remember, communication skills are not inherited. They are learned, and anyone can learn to be a good communicator. Writing skills are critical because they function as a gatekeeper. Poor skills keep you in low-wage, dead-end work. Good skills open the door to high wages and career advancement.⁴⁵

Critical Thinking

1. How is the writing that you and your peers are practicing every day by texting, e-mailing, or instant messaging different from the writing business professionals expect in the workplace? Will your employer benefit from your informal writing?
2. Name examples that illustrate the nonverbal cues we send by our use of time, space, or territory. How does our need for personal space or territory, for example, play out in the new, flexible "anytime, anywhere" workplace?
3. How are listening skills important to employees, supervisors, and executives? Who should have the best listening skills?
4. What arguments could you give for or against the idea that body language is a science with principles that can be interpreted accurately by specialists?
5. It is quite natural to favor one's own country over a foreign one. To what extent can ethnocentrism and stereotypes be considered normal reactions, and when do they become destructive and unproductive in the workplace?

Chapter Review

6. In what ways do communication skills act as a career filter?
7. Do business professionals think that college graduates today are well prepared for the communication and writing tasks in the workplace?
8. What are soft skills?
9. Will the time and money spent on your college education and writing training most likely pay off?

10. List seven trends in the workplace that affect business communicators. Be prepared to discuss how they might affect you in your future career.
11. List 11 techniques for improving your listening skills. Be prepared to discuss each.
12. Name at least five techniques that will help you build strong nonverbal skills.
13. Would your culture be classified as high- or low-context? Why?
14. What is ethnocentrism, and how can it be reduced?
15. List seven or more suggestions for enhancing comprehension when you are talking with nonnative speakers of English. Be prepared to discuss each.



Digital Study Tools [or] Premium Web Site

- **Chapter Review Quiz**
- **PowerPoint Slides**
- **Flash Cards**
- **Listening Quiz**
- **Personal Language Trainer**

Activities and Cases

WEB

1.1 Online Communication Skills Assessment: How Do You Rate?

This course can help you dramatically improve your business communication skills. How much do you need to improve? This assessment exercise enables you to evaluate your skills with specific standards in four critical communication skill areas: writing, reading, speaking, and listening. How well you communicate will be an important factor in your future career—particularly if you are promoted into management, as many college graduates are.

Your Task. Either here or at www.cengagebrain.com, select a number from 1 (indicating low ability) to 5 (indicating high ability) that best reflects your perception of yourself. Be honest in rating yourself. Think about how others would rate you. When you finish, see a rating of your skills. Complete this assessment online to see your results automatically!

Writing Skills

	Low	High
1. Possess basic spelling, grammar, and punctuation skills	1	2 3 4 5
2. Am familiar with proper e-mail, memo, letter, and report formats for business documents	1	2 3 4 5
3. Can analyze a writing problem and quickly outline a plan for solving the problem	1	2 3 4 5
4. Am able to organize data coherently and logically	1	2 3 4 5
5. Can evaluate a document to determine its probable success	1	2 3 4 5

Reading Skills

	Low	High
1. Am familiar with specialized vocabulary in my field as well as general vocabulary	1	2 3 4 5
2. Can concentrate despite distractions	1	2 3 4 5
3. Am willing to look up definitions whenever necessary	1	2 3 4 5
4. Am able to move from recreational to serious reading	1	2 3 4 5
5. Can read and comprehend college-level material	1	2 3 4 5

Speaking Skills

	Low	High
1. Feel at ease in speaking with friends	1	2 3 4 5
2. Feel at ease in speaking before a group of people	1	2 3 4 5
3. Can adapt my presentation to the audience	1	2 3 4 5
4. Am confident in pronouncing and using words correctly	1	2 3 4 5
5. Sense that I have credibility when I make a presentation	1	2 3 4 5

Listening Skills

	Low	High
1. Spend at least half the time listening during conversations	1	2 3 4 5
2. Am able to concentrate on a speaker's words despite distractions	1	2 3 4 5
3. Can summarize a speaker's ideas and anticipate what's coming during pauses	1	2 3 4 5
4. Provide proper feedback such as nodding, paraphrasing, and asking questions	1	2 3 4 5
5. Listen with the expectation of gaining new ideas and information	1	2 3 4 5

Total your score in each section. How do you rate?

22–24 Excellent! You have indicated that you have exceptional communication skills.

18–21 Your score is above average, but you could improve your skills.

14–17 Your score suggests that you have much room for improvement.

10–13 You need serious study, practice, and follow-up reinforcement.

Where are you strongest and weakest? Are you satisfied with your present skills? The first step to improvement is recognition of a need. The second step is making a commitment to improve. The third step is following through, and this course will help you do that.

W WEB

1.2 Pumping Up Your Basic Language Muscles

You can enlist the aid of your author to help you pump up your basic language skills. As your personal trainer, Dr. Guffey provides a three-step workout plan and hundreds of interactive questions to help you brush up on your grammar and mechanics skills. You receive immediate feedback in the warm-up sessions, and when you finish a complete workout, you can take a short test to assess what you learned. These workouts are completely self-taught, which means you can review at your own pace and repeat as often as you need. *Your Personal Language Trainer* is available at your premium Web site, www.cengagebrain.com. In addition to pumping up your basic language muscles, you can also use *Spell Right!* and *Speak Right!* to improve your spelling and pronunciation skills.

Your Task. Begin using *Your Personal Language Trainer* to brush up on your basic grammar and mechanics skills by completing one to three workouts per week or as many as your instructor advises. Be prepared to submit a printout of your “fitness” (completion) certificate when you finish a workout module. If your instructor directs, complete the spelling exercises in *Spell Right!* and submit a certificate of completion for the spelling final exam.

E E-MAIL

1.3 Getting to Know You

Your instructor wants to know more about you, your motivation for taking this course, your career goals, and your writing skills.

Your Task. Send an e-mail or write a memo of introduction to your instructor. See Chapter 5 for formats and tips on preparing e-mails. In your message include the following:

- a. Your reasons for taking this class
- b. Your career goals (both temporary and long-term)
- c. A brief description of your employment, if any, and your favorite activities
- d. An assessment and discussion of your current communication skills, including your strengths and weaknesses

For online classes, write a letter of introduction about yourself with the preceding information. Post your letter to your discussion board. Read and comment on the letters of other students. Think about how people in virtual teams must learn about each other through online messages.

Alternatively, your instructors may assign this task as a concise individual voice mail message to establish your telephone etiquette and skills.

T TEAM

1.4 Small-Group Presentation: Getting to Know Each Other

Many business organizations today use teams to accomplish their goals. To help you develop speaking, listening, and teamwork skills, your instructor may assign team projects. One of the first jobs in any team is selecting members and becoming acquainted.

Your Task. Your instructor will divide your class into small groups or teams. At your instructor’s direction, either (a) interview another group member and introduce that person to the group or (b) introduce yourself to the group. Think of this as an informal interview for a team assignment or for a job. You will want to make notes from which to speak. Your introduction should include information such as the following:

- a. Where did you grow up?
- b. What work and extracurricular activities have you engaged in?
- c. What are your interests and talents? What are you good at doing?
- d. What have you achieved?
- e. How familiar are you with various computer technologies?
- f. What are your professional and personal goals? Where do you expect to be five years from now?

To develop listening skills, team members should practice the good listening techniques discussed in this chapter and take notes. They should be prepared to discuss three important facts as well as remember details about each speaker.

E E-MAIL

1.5 Class Listening

Have you ever consciously observed the listening habits of others?

Your Task. In one of your classes, study student listening habits for a week. What barriers to effective listening did you observe? How many of the suggestions described in this chapter are being implemented by listeners in the class? Write a memo or an e-mail to your instructor briefly describing your observations. (See Chapter 5 to learn more about e-mails and memos.)

1.6 How Good Are Your Listening Skills? Self-Checked Rating Quiz

You can learn whether your listening skills are excellent or deficient by completing a brief quiz.

Your Task. Take Dr. Guffey’s Listening Quiz at www.cengagebrain.com. What two listening behaviors do you think you need to work on the most?

1.7 Body Language

Can body language be accurately interpreted?

Your Task. What attitudes do the following body movements suggest to you? Do these movements always mean the same thing? What part does context play in your interpretations?

- Wringing hands, tugging ears
- Bowed posture, twiddling thumbs
- Steepled hands, sprawling sitting position
- Rubbing hand through hair
- Open hands, unbuttoned coat

E-MAIL

1.8 Silent Messages

Becoming more aware of the silent messages you send helps you make them more accurate.

Your Task. Analyze the kinds of silent messages you send your instructor, your classmates, and your employer. How do you send these messages? Group them into categories, as suggested by what you learned in this chapter. What do these messages mean? Be prepared to discuss them in small groups or in an e-mail or memo to your instructor.

1.9 Universal Sign for “I Goofed”

In an effort to promote peace and tranquility on the highways, motorists submitted the following suggestions to a newspaper columnist.⁴⁶

Your Task. In small groups consider the pros and cons of each of the following gestures intended as an apology when a driver makes a mistake. Why would some fail?

- Lower your head slightly and bonk yourself on the forehead with the side of your closed fist. The message is clear: “I’m stupid. I shouldn’t have done that.”
- Make a temple with your hands, as if you were praying.
- Move the index finger of your right hand back and forth across your neck—as if you were cutting your throat.
- Flash the well-known peace sign. Hold up the index and middle fingers of one hand, making a V, as in Victory.
- Place the flat of your hands against your cheeks, as children do when they have made a mistake.
- Clasp your hand over your mouth, raise your brows, and shrug your shoulders.
- Use your knuckles to knock on the side of your head. Translation: “Oops! Engage brain.”
- Cover your eyes with one hand for a few seconds and then smile.
- Place your right fist over the middle of your chest and move it in a circular motion. This is universal sign language for “I’m sorry.”
- Open your window and tap the top of your car roof with your hand.
- Smile and raise both arms, palms outward, which is a universal gesture for surrender or forgiveness.
- Use the military salute, which is simple and shows respect.
- Flash your biggest smile, point at yourself with your right thumb and move your head from left to right, as if to say, “I can’t believe I did that.”

TEAM

E-MAIL

1.10 The Silent Language of Tattoos: How Much Self-Expression on the Job?

Tattoos and piercings have gained in popularity among young Americans over the last two decades. Current findings by Pew Research Center suggest that nearly 40 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds and about one third of 30- to 45-year-olds sport a tattoo.⁴⁷ Employment services firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas reports that job candidates among the Millennials, also called Generation Y, do not particularly try to hide their body art. About 25 percent of this generation also show off piercings in places other than their earlobes.

CEO John Challenger suggests that a generational shift accounts for the changing mores: “Those making hiring decisions are younger and not as adherent to traditions about workplace appearance.” Career expert Andrea Kay agrees, but she warns that acceptance among hiring managers varies by industry: Recruiters in the technology and retail fields may be more forgiving than those in banking and law. Tattoos and piercings send a strong message, and Kay cautions that if they make people at work uncomfortable, such decorations are detrimental. She has the following advice for job seekers: “People have adjusted their thinking in what is acceptable, but it still comes down to the impression you want to make on the people you’re dealing with in your business.” Many workplaces today have policies covering body adornment, some requiring employees with customer contact to conceal such decorations.

Your Task. In teams or in class, discuss tattoos as a form of self-expression in the workplace. Gauge the attitudes toward tattoos and piercings in your class. Consider the limits to self-expression on the job. Think about casual clothing or blogging and tweeting about your employer. What is different? What are some of the similarities between these various forms of self-expression? What types of nonverbal cues do body adornments send? Summarize your discussion orally or in an e-mail to your instructor. Alternatively, your instructor may ask you to post your responses to a Blackboard discussion board or some other forum that allows individual postings.

T TEAM

1.11 Workplace Writing: Separating Myths From Facts

Today's knowledge workers are doing more writing on the job than ever before. Flattened management hierarchies, heightened global competition, expanded team-based management, and heavy reliance on e-mail have all contributed to more written messages.

Your Task. In teams or in class, discuss the following statements. Are they myths or facts?

- Because I'm in a technical field, I will work with numbers, not words.
- Secretaries will clean up my writing problems.
- Technical writers do most of the real writing on the job.
- Computers can fix any of my writing mistakes.
- I can use form letters for most messages.

1.12 Translating Idioms

Many languages have idiomatic expressions that do not always make sense to outsiders.

Your Task. Explain in simple English what the following idiomatic expressions mean. Assume that you are explaining them to nonnative speakers of English.

- have an axe to grind
- class act
- ballpark figure
- cold shoulder
- loose cannon
- get your act together
- go overboard
- keep on trucking
- the bottom of the barrel

E E-MAIL

1.13 Analyzing Diversity at Pharma Giant Pfizer

Recently, pharmaceutical powerhouse Pfizer stepped up its diversity program. Its chief diversity officer, Karen Boykin-Towns, explained: "We asked ourselves, is it really all that it could be and are we capitalizing on diversity? We said, 'We can do more.'"

The company has created 53 Colleague Resource Groups (CRGs), whose focus is to foster an inclusive culture and contribute value to the business. These groups are open to everyone and are supported by senior executives who act as sponsors, including those who are ethnically or racially different from the groups they counsel. Some CRGs act as focus panels for corporate advertisements. Others serve on the Business Maximization Subcommittee, providing input on business issues that might affect diverse customers.

Moreover, Pfizer conducts an annual pay-equity analysis to ensure that women and people of color are not discriminated against in compensation—which is often a thorny issue in the battle for true inclusion. Recently, Pfizer India conducted focus groups of leading women in sales and high-profile female physicians to discuss career goals, challenges, and opportunities.⁴⁸

Your Task. In what ways might Pfizer benefit by diversifying its staff? What competitive advantages might it gain? Outline your reasoning in an e-mail to your instructor. Alternatively, your instructor may want you to post your responses to a Blackboard discussion board or some other forum that allows individual postings by your class.

1.14 Capitalizing on Diversity: What to Do With Difference in Job Interviews?

Today's workforce benefits from diversity, and most businesses have embraced explicit nondiscrimination policies. The federal government and many state governments have passed legislation that makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, disability, sex, age, and other factors such as sexual orientation and gender identity. Some public institutions have the most far-reaching nondiscrimination policies on their books—for example, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT): "The Institute does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin."⁴⁹

Your Task: Consider how such differences could affect the communication, for instance, between an interviewer and a job candidate. If negatively, how could the differences and barriers be overcome? Role-play or discuss a potential job interview conversation between the following individuals. After a while summarize your findings, either orally or in writing:

- A female top executive is interviewing a prospective future assistant, who is male.
- A candidate with a strong but not disruptive foreign accent is being interviewed by a native-born human resources manager.
- A manager dressed in a conventional business suit is interviewing a person wearing a turban.
- A person over fifty is being interviewed by a hiring manager in his early thirties.
- A recruiter who can walk is interviewing a job seeker using a wheelchair.

Video Resources

Two video libraries accompany Guffey's *Essentials of Business Communication*, 9e. These videos take you beyond the classroom to build the communication skills you will need to succeed in today's rapidly changing workplace.

Video Library 1, *Building Workplace Skills*, includes seven videos that introduce and reinforce concepts in selected chapters. These excellent tools ease the learning load by demonstrating chapter-specific material to strengthen your comprehension and retention of key ideas.

Video Library 2, *Bridging the Gap*, presents six videos transporting you inside high-profile companies such as Cold Stone Creamery, The Little Guys, and Hard Rock Cafe. You will be able to apply your new skills in structured applications aimed at bridging the gap between the classroom and the real world of work.

We recommend three videos for this chapter:

Video Library 1: *Career Success Starts With Communication Foundations*. Made especially for Guffey books, this film illustrates the changing business world, flattened management hierarchies, the communication process, communication flow, ethics,

listening, nonverbal communication, and other topics to prepare you for today's workplace. The film is unique in that many concepts are demonstrated through role-playing. Be prepared to discuss critical-thinking questions at the film's conclusion.

Video Library 1: *Intercultural Communication at Work*. This film illustrates intercultural misunderstandings when a Japanese businessman visits an American advertising agency that seeks his business. The agency owners, Rob and Ella, as well as the receptionist, Stephanie, make numerous cultural blunders because they are unaware of the differences between high- and low-context cultures. At the film's conclusion, you will have an opportunity to make suggestions for improving Rob and Ella's cultural competence.

Video Library 2: *Understanding Teamwork: Cold Stone Creamery*. This video highlights teamwork at Cold Stone Creamery, a fast-growing ice cream specialty chain. It shows team members behind the counter but also provides the inside scoop through the insights of Kevin Myers, vice president, marketing. You will see how teamwork permeates every facet of Cold Stone's corporate culture. Look for a definition of *team*, as well as six kinds of teams and the characteristics of successful teams.

Grammar/Mechanics Checkup

These checkups are designed to improve your control of grammar and mechanics, which includes punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and number use. The checkups systematically review all sections of the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook. Answers are provided near the end of the book. You will find a set of alternate Bonus Grammar/Mechanics Checkups with immediate feedback at your premium Web site, www.cengagebrain.com. These bonus checkups use different exercises but parallel the items that appear in the textbook. Use the bonus checkups to reinforce your learning.

Nouns

Review Sections 1.02–1.06 in the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook. Then study each of the following statements. Underscore any inappropriate form, and write a correction in the space provided. Also record the appropriate G/M section and letter to illustrate the principle involved. If a sentence is correct, write C. When you finish, compare your responses with those provided at the end of the book. If your answers differ, study carefully the principles shown in parentheses.

_____ journeys (1.05d)

Example Although one exciting trip ended, several new journeys awaited the travelers.

1. Setting healthy workplace boundaries is an important task for new supervisors.
2. Be sure to read the FAQs before using that Web site.
3. Because world markets are expanding, many companys are going global.
4. Surprisingly, business is better on Sunday's than on weekdays.
5. She said that attornies are the primary benefactors of class action suits.
6. Only the Welches and the Sanchez's brought their entire families.
7. During the late 2000's, home values dropped precipitously.
8. Both editor in chiefs followed strict copyediting policies.
9. That financial organization employs two secretaries for four CPA's.
10. Voters in three countys refused to approve any new taxes.
11. Prizes were awarded to both runner ups in the essay contest.
12. Both cities are located in valleys that lie between mountains.
13. Our accountants insist that we list all income, expenses, and liability's.
14. Some typeface fonts make it difficult to distinguish between t's and /'s.
15. Both of the homes of her brother-in-laws had many chimneys.

Editing Challenge — 1

As the employee with the best communication skills, you are frequently asked to edit messages. The following memo has faults in proofreading, grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word use, and number form. You may (a) use standard proofreading marks (see Appendix B) to correct the errors here or (b) download the document from www.cengagebrain.com and revise at your computer.

Your instructor may ask you to use the **Track Changes** feature in Microsoft Word to show your editing comments. In Word 2010, turn on **Track Changes** on the **Review** tab. Click **Show Markup**. Place your cursor at an error, click **New Comment**, and key your correction in the bubble box provided. **Hint:** In this memo you will have about 40 edits that you might combine in 30 **Track Changes** comments. Study the guidelines in the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook as well as the lists of Confusing Words and Frequently Misspelled Words at the end of the book to sharpen your skills.

MEMORANDUM

To: Jessica Wu-Santana
From: Martin Fitzgerald, Manager
Date: November 4, 201x
Subject: Suggestion for Telecommuting Successfully

To help you become an effective telecommuter Jessica, we have a few suggestion to share with you. I understand you will be working at home for the next nine months. The following guidelines should help you stay in touch with us and complete your work satisfactory.

- Be sure to check your message bored daily, and respond immediate to those who are trying to reach you.
- Check your e-mail at least 3 times a day, answer all messages promptly. Make sure that you sent copys of relevant messages to the appropriate office staff.
- Transmit all spread sheet work to Scott Florio in our computer services department. He will analyze each week's activitsy, and update all inventorys.
- Provide me with end of week reports' indicating the major accounts you serviced.

In preparing your work area you should make sure you have adequate space for your computer printer fax and storage. For security reasons you're working area should be off limits to your family and friends.

We will continue to hold once a week staff meetings on Friday's at 10 a.m. in the morning. Do you think it would be possible for you to attend 1 or 2 of these meeting. The next one is Friday November 17th.

I know you will enjoy working at home Jesica. Following these basic guidelines should help you accomplish your work, and provide the office with adequate contact with you.

Communication Workshop

Using Job Boards to Learn About Employment Possibilities in Your Field

Nearly everyone looking for a job today starts with the Web. This communication workshop will help you use the Web to study job openings in your field. Looking for jobs or internships on the Web has distinct advantages. For a few job seekers, the Web leads to bigger salaries, wider opportunities, and faster hiring. The Web, however, can devour huge chunks of time and produce slim results.

In terms of actually finding a job, the Web does not always result in success. Web searching seems to work best for professionals looking for similar work in their current fields and for those who are totally flexible about location. However, the Web is an excellent place for any job seeker to learn what is available, what qualifications are necessary, and what salaries are being offered. Thousands of job boards with many job listings from employers across the United States and abroad are available on the Web.

Career Application. Assume that you are about to finish your degree or certification program and you are now looking for a job. At the direction of your instructor, conduct a survey of electronic job advertisements in your field. What's available? How much is the salary? What are the requirements?

Your Task

- **Visit Monster.com** (<http://www.monster.com>), one of the most popular job boards.
- **Study the opening page.** Ignore the clutter and banner ads or pop-ups. Close any pop-up boxes.
- **Select keyword, category, city, and state.** Decide whether you want to search by a job title (such as *nurse, accountant, project manager*) or a category (such as *Accounting/Finance, Administrative/Clerical, Advertising/Marketing*). Enter your keyword job title or select a category—or do both. Enter a city, state, or region. Click **Search**.
- **Study the job listings.** Click **Expand** to read more about a job opening. Click **More** to see a full description of the job.
- **Read job-search tips.** For many helpful hints on precise searching, click **Job search tips**. Browsing this information may take a few minutes, but it is well worth the effort to learn how to refine your search. Close the box by clicking the **X** in the upper right corner.
- **Select best ads.** In your career and geographical area, select the three best ads and print them. If you cannot print, make notes on what you find.
- **Visit another site.** Try <http://www.collegerecruiter.com>, which claims to be the highest-traffic entry-level job site for students and graduates, or <http://www.careerbuilder.com>, which says it is the nation's largest employment network. Become familiar with the site's searching tools, and look for jobs in your field. Select and print three ads.
- **Analyze the skills required.** How often do the ads you printed mention communication, teamwork, computer skills, or professionalism? What tasks do the ads mention? What is the salary range identified in these ads for the positions they feature? Your instructor may ask you to submit your findings and/or report to the class.



Communication Workshops (such as the one on this page) provide insight into special business communication topics and skills not discussed in the chapters. Topics include ethics, technology, career skills, and collaboration. Each workshop includes a career application to extend your learning and help you develop skills relevant to the workshop topic.

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OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you should be able to

- Prepare for a successful job search by identifying your interests, evaluating your assets, recognizing employment trends, and choosing a career path.
- Apply both electronic and traditional job-search techniques.
- Appreciate the need to customize your résumé, and know whether to choose a chronological or a functional résumé format.
- Organize your qualifications and information into effective résumé categories.
- Describe techniques that optimize a résumé for today's technologies, including preparing a scannable résumé and an e-portfolio.
- Write a customized cover letter to accompany your résumé.

Preparing for a Successful Job Search

Today's graduates face a tough job market and a recessionary economy. Competition for employment is keener than ever in recent history. In addition, the Web has changed the way we look for jobs. Workplace experts point out that the Web has made job searching easier but also more challenging.¹ Because hundreds and perhaps thousands of candidates may be applying for an advertised position, you must work hard to be noticed and to outshine the competition. You must also look beyond the Web.

The better prepared you are, the more confident you will feel during your search. This chapter provides expert current advice in preparing for a job search, scouring the job market, writing a customized résumé, and developing a persuasive cover letter. What you learn here can lead to a successful job search and maybe even your dream job.

You may think that the first step in finding a job is writing a résumé. Wrong! The job-search process actually begins long before you are ready to prepare your résumé. Regardless of the kind of employment you seek, you must invest time and effort getting ready. You can't hope to find the position of your dreams without (a) knowing yourself, (b) knowing the job market, and (c) knowing the employment process.

Finding a satisfying career requires learning about yourself, the job market, and the employment process.

The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need, by business book guru Daniel H. Pink and illustrator Rob Ten Pas/Newscom

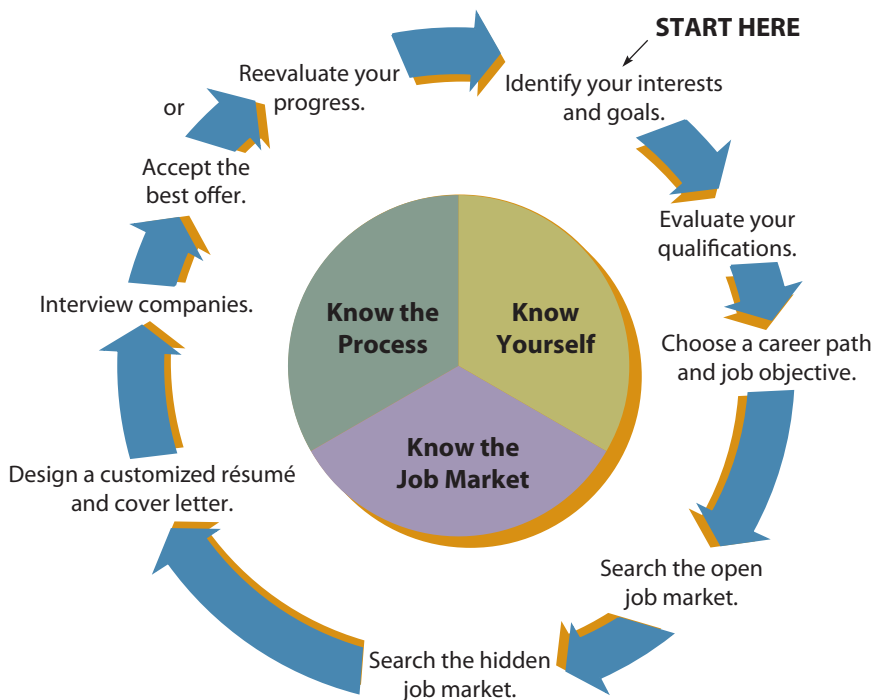


WORKPLACE IN FOCUS

Given the box-office success of comic book heroes such as Batman and Spider Man, it is not surprising that the hottest career hero of the new generation is also a fictional character—Johnny Bunko. In the Japanese magna book *The Adventures of Johnny Bunko: The Last Career Guide You'll Ever Need*, anime character Johnny Bunko is a disillusioned office worker who longs to escape his dead-end job and find true occupational happiness. Aided by the spellbinding avatar Diana and a pair of magic chopsticks, Bunko embarks on an action-packed career journey that gives readers valuable insights into their own career paths. *Why should job seekers consult career guides when preparing for employment?*

Begin the job-search process by identifying your interests and goals and evaluating your qualifications. This self-evaluation will help you choose a suitable career path and job objective. At the same time, you should be studying the job market and becoming aware of substantial changes in the workplace and hiring techniques. You will want to understand how to use the latest Web tools along with traditional resources in your job search. Both the Web and traditional approaches are necessary to help you effectively search the open and hidden job markets. Once you know what jobs are available in your field, you will need to design a résumé and cover letter that you can customize for small businesses as well as for larger organizations. Following these steps, summarized in Figure 13.1 and described in this chapter, gives you a master plan for securing a job you really want.

FIGURE 13.1 The Employment Search



Analyzing your likes and dislikes helps you make wise employment decisions.

Answering specific questions can help you choose a career.

Decide what qualifications you possess and how you can prove them.

People feel less job security after downsizing, outsourcing, and offshoring of jobs.

Identifying Your Interests and Goals

Buddha is believed to have said, “Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it.” Following this ancient wisdom, you should begin the employment process with introspection. This means looking inside yourself to analyze what you like and dislike so that you can make good employment choices. Career counselors charge large sums for helping individuals learn about themselves. You can do the same kind of self-examination—without spending a dime. For guidance in choosing a career that eventually proves to be satisfying, answer the following questions. If you have already chosen a career path, think carefully about how your answers relate to that choice.

- What are you passionate about? Can you turn this passion into a career?
- Do you enjoy working with people, data, or things?
- Would you like to work for someone else or be your own boss?
- How important are salary, benefits, technology support, and job stability?
- How important are working environment, colleagues, and job stimulation?
- Would you rather work for a large or small company?
- Must you work in a specific city, geographical area, or climate?
- Are you looking for security, travel opportunities, money, power, or prestige?
- How would you describe the perfect job, boss, and coworkers?

To aid you with appraising your abilities, many college career centers offer skills assessment and personality type testing. Be sure to explore resources available on campus, including one-on-one sessions with career counselors, job-search and etiquette workshops, local employer job postings, internships, and more.

Evaluating Your Qualifications

In addition to your interests, assess your qualifications. Employers today want to know what assets you have to offer them. Your responses to the following questions will target your thinking as well as prepare a foundation for your résumé. Remember, though, that employers seek more than empty assurances; they will want proof of your qualifications.

- *What technology skills can you offer?* Employers are often interested in specific computer software programs, Web experience, and social media skills.
- *What other skills have you acquired in school, on the job, or through activities?* How can you demonstrate these skills?
- *Do you work well with people? Do you enjoy teamwork?* What proof can you offer? Consider extracurricular activities, clubs, class projects, and jobs.
- *Are you a leader, self-starter, or manager?* What evidence can you offer? What leadership roles have you held?
- *Do you speak, write, or understand another language?* In today’s global economy, being able to communicate in more than one language is an asset.
- *Do you learn quickly? Are you creative?* How can you demonstrate these characteristics?
- *Do you communicate well in speech and in writing?* How can you verify these talents?
- *What are the unique qualifications you can offer that will make you stand out among other candidates?* Think about what you offer that will make you memorable during your job search.

Recognizing Employment Trends in Today’s Workplace

As you learned in Chapter 1, the workplace is changing. One of the most significant changes involves the concept of the job. Following the downsizing of corporations and the outsourcing and offshoring of jobs in recent years, companies are employing fewer people in permanent positions.

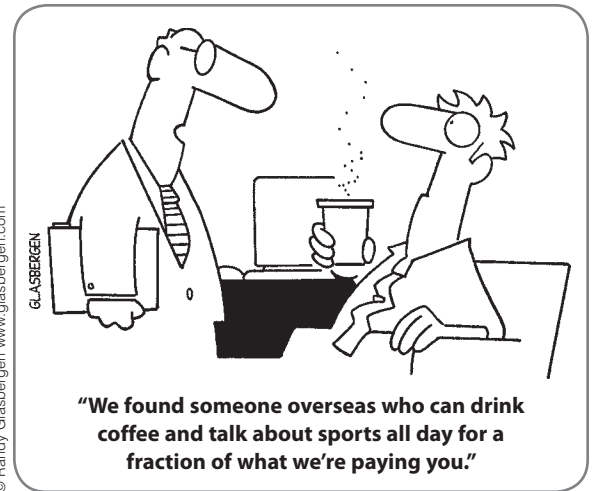
Other forms of employment are replacing traditional jobs. In many companies teams complete special projects and then disband. Work may also be outsourced to a group that is not even part of the organization. Because new technologies can spring up overnight making today's skills obsolete, employers are less willing to hire people into jobs with narrow descriptions. Instead, they are hiring contingency employees who work temporarily and then leave. What's more, big companies are no longer the main employers. People work for smaller companies, or they are starting their own businesses. According to the Small Business Administration, small companies employ over half of all private sector employees, and that number is expected to grow over the next decade.²

What do these changes mean for you? For one thing, you should probably forget about a lifelong career with a single company. Don't count on regular pay raises, promotions, and a comfortable retirement income. You should also become keenly aware that a career that relies on yesterday's skills is headed for trouble. You are going to need updated, marketable skills that serve you well as you move from job to job. Technology skills will become increasingly important over the next decade as more than 2 million jobs are expected to be created by 2018, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.³ This means that upgrading your skills and retraining yourself constantly are the best career strategies for the twenty-first century. People who learn quickly and adapt to change will always be in demand even in a climate of surging change.

Choosing a Career Path

The job picture in the United States is extraordinarily dynamic and flexible. On average, workers between ages eighteen and thirty-eight in the United States will have ten different employers; the median job tenure of wage earners and salaried workers with the current employer is 4.4 years.⁴ Although you may be frequently changing jobs in the future (especially before you reach forty), you still need to train for a specific career now. In choosing an area, you will make the best decisions when you can match your interests and qualifications with the requirements and rewards in specific careers. Where can you find the best career data? Here are some suggestions:

- **Visit your campus career center.** Most campus career centers have literature, inventories, career-related software programs, and employment or internship databases that allow you to explore such fields as accounting, finance, office technology, information systems, hotel management, and so forth. Some have well-trained job counselors who can tailor their resources to your needs. They may also offer career exploration workshops, job skills seminars, career days with visiting companies, assistance with résumé preparation, and mock interviews.
- **Search the Web.** Many job-search sites on the Web offer career-planning information and resources. You will learn about some of the best career sites in the next section.
- **Use your library.** Print and online resources in your library are especially helpful. Consult *O*NET Occupational Information Network*, *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, and *Jobs Rated Almanac* for information about job requirements, qualifications, salaries, and employment trends.
- **Take a summer job, internship, or part-time position in your field.** Nothing is better than trying out a career by actually working in it or in a related area. Many companies offer internships and temporary or part-time jobs to begin



Jobs are becoming more flexible and less permanent.

Career information can be obtained at campus career centers and libraries, from the Web, in classified ads, and from professional organizations.

Summer jobs, part-time employment, and internships are good opportunities to learn about various careers and to establish a professional network.

training college students and to develop relationships with them. Experts commonly believe that at least 60 percent of these relationships blossom into permanent positions. Recent polls suggest that as many as 90 percent of employers offer full-time job positions to their interns.⁵

- **Interview someone in your chosen field.** People are usually flattered when asked to describe their careers. Inquire about needed skills, required courses, financial and other rewards, benefits, working conditions, future trends, and entry requirements.
- **Volunteer with a nonprofit organization.** Many colleges and universities encourage service learning. In volunteering their services, students gain valuable experience, and nonprofits appreciate the expertise and fresh ideas that students bring.
- **Monitor the classified ads.** Early in your college career, begin monitoring want ads and Web sites of companies in your career area. Check job availability, qualifications sought, duties, and salary range. Don't wait until you are about to graduate to see how the job market looks.
- **Join professional organizations in your field.** Frequently, professional organizations offer student membership status and reduced rates. You will receive inside information on issues, career news, and possibly jobs. Student business clubs and organization such as Phi Beta Lambda can also provide leadership development trainings, career tips, and networking opportunities.

Conducting a Successful Job Search

Employment Web sites list many jobs, but finding a job electronically requires more work than simply clicking a mouse.

Searching for a job today is vastly different than it used to be as a result of the Web. Until fairly recently a job seeker browsed the local classified ads, found a likely-sounding job listing, prepared an elegant résumé on bond paper, and sent it out by U.S. mail. All that has changed because of the Web. The challenge today is knowing how to use the Web to your advantage, while realizing that traditional job-search techniques can still be effective. Like other smart job seekers, you can combine both online and traditional job-search tactics to land the job of your dreams.

Searching for a Job Online

Searching for a job electronically has become a common, but not always fruitful, approach. With all the publicity given to Web-based job boards and career sites, you might think that online job searching has totally replaced traditional methods. Not so! Although Web sites such as CareerBuilder.com and Monster.com list millions of jobs, actually landing a job is much harder than just clicking a mouse. In addition, these job boards now face competition from social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.⁶

Both recruiters and job seekers complain about online job boards. Corporate recruiters say that the big job boards bring a flood of candidates, many of whom are not suited for the listed jobs. Workplace experts estimate that the average Fortune 500 company is inundated with 2,000 résumés a day.⁷ Job candidates grumble that listings are frequently outdated and fail to produce leads. Some career advisors call these sites black holes,⁸ into which résumés vanish without a trace. Applicants worry about the privacy of information posted at big boards. Most important, a recent study has shown that the percentage of external hires resulting from job boards is astonishingly low—3.14 percent at Monster.com, 3.95 percent at CareerBuilder.com, and 1.35 percent at HotJobs.com, before Yahoo sold HotJobs to Monster.⁹ Workplace expert Liz Ryan advises job seekers not to count on finding a job by devoting all their energy to searching online job boards.¹⁰

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"The recruiting game has become an arms race of sorts. Recruiters, job boards, and Web sites like ResumeBomber.com have built technological systems to store and ship unprecedented numbers of [résumés]. . . . Companies have developed equally sophisticated programs to sort, select, and scrap all of those resumes."

—Kyle Stock,
business journalist,
The Wall Street Journal

FIGURE 13.2 Searching the Big Boards



Monster.com is one of several popular Web sites that allow you to search for jobs but also provides excellent tips for conducting job searches, writing résumés, organizing cover letters, preparing for job interviews, and planning careers.

Using the Big Job Boards. Despite these gloomy prospects, many job seekers use job boards to gather job-search information, such as résumé, interviewing, and salary tips. Job boards also serve as a jumping-off point in most searches. They can inform you about the kinds of jobs that are available and the skill sets required. With tens of thousands of job boards and employment Web sites deluging the Internet, it is hard to know where to start. We have listed a few of the best-known online job sites here:

- **CareerBuilder** claims to be the nation's largest employment network. Users can search for millions of jobs by job category, keywords, geographic location, industry, or type of job (full-time, part-time, internship, and so on).
- **Monster**, shown in Figure 12.3, offers access to information on millions of jobs worldwide. With the acquisition of Yahoo HotJobs, this volume will grow even larger. Monster.com uses a search technology called 6Sense to match applicants with the best job opportunities. Because of this cutting-edge search system, many consider Monster.com to be the Web's premier job site.
- **CollegeGrad** describes itself as the “number one entry-level job site” for students and graduates. In addition to searching for entry-level jobs, users can also search for undergraduate and graduate degree programs to help them become more marketable.
- **CareerJournal**, which is part of *The Wall Street Journal*, focuses on listing high-level executive and finance positions.

Forbes media reporter Elaine Wong sums up the relative strengths of LinkedIn and job boards as follows: “LinkedIn offers a targeted, easy to home in approach, but Monster and CareerBuilder still offer scale and reach.”¹¹

Beyond the Big Online Job Boards. Disillusioned job seekers may turn their backs on job boards but not on online job-searching tactics. Savvy candidates

Many job seekers start searching by visiting the big online job boards.

know how to use their computers to search for jobs at Web sites such as the following:

Job prospects may be more promising at the Web sites of corporations, professional organizations, employers' organizations, niche fields, and, most recently, professional networking sites.

- **Company Web sites.** Probably the best way to find a job online is at a company's own Web site. Many companies now post job openings only on their own Web sites to avoid being inundated by the volume of applicants that respond to postings on online job boards. Job seekers also find that they are more likely to obtain an interview if they post their résumés on company sites. In addition to finding a more direct route to decision makers, job hunters find that they can keep their job searches more private than at big board sites.
- **Professional organization Web sites.** Online job listings have proved to be the single-most popular feature of many professional organizations such as the International Association of Administrative Professionals, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the National Association of Sales Professionals, the National Association of Legal Assistants, and the Association of Information Technology Professionals. Although you pay a fee, the benefits of joining a professional association in your career field are enormous. Remember that it is never too early to start networking. If you join a professional organization while you are still in college, you will jump-start your professional connections.
- **JobCentral National Labor Exchange.** JobCentral is a public service Web site provided by the DirectEmployers Association, a nonprofit consortium of Fortune 500 and other leading U.S. corporations. Many companies now use JobCentral as a gateway to job listing at their own Web sites, advertising millions of jobs. Best of all, this service is free, bypassing the big commercial job boards. You can enter a job description or job title, and a list of openings pops up. When you click one, you are taken straight to the company's Web site, where you can apply.
- **Local employment Web sites.** Although many of the big job boards allow you to search for jobs geographically, frequently job seekers have more luck using local employment Web sites such as Craigslist, Cumulus Jobs, and JobStar.
- **Niche Web sites.** If you want a job in a specialized field, look for a niche Web site, such as Dice for technology jobs, Advance for Health Care Careers for medical occupations, and Accountemps for accounting positions. Niche Web sites also exist for job seekers with special backgrounds or needs, such as the disabled (GettingHired), and older workers (Workforce50). New Grad Life, an aggregate job-search site, offers free resources for recent college gradu-

ates such as a list of 100 top niche job sites. However, don't rely on any single search strategy. A recent poll suggests that less than 20 percent of job seekers find a position with the help of such specialized job market sites.¹² Your prospects are brighter with social media such as LinkedIn and Twitter.

- **Social media sites.** Perhaps you use Facebook or Google+ to communicate with friends and family. However, users are increasingly tapping into social media sites to prospect for jobs; and recruiters also use these sites to find potential employees. LinkedIn is currently the top site for job seekers, with over 42 million users, both job seekers and recruiters. Other popular sites include Facebook, Plaxo, TheLadders, BlueSteps, and Jobster.¹³ Twitter has created a job-search engine called TwitJobSearch, and many companies now post recruitment videos on YouTube. Smart job seekers use these tools to network and to search for available positions. Of course, the most successful job seekers understand that they must maintain a professional online appearance at all times.



Safe Online Job Hunting. You need to be aware of the dangers associated with using online job boards and other employment sites. Your current boss might see your résumé posted online, or a fraudster could use the information in your résumé to steal your identity. The following tips can help you conduct a safe, effective Web job search:

- **Use reputable sites.** Stick to the well-known, reputable job boards. Never use a site that makes you pay to post your résumé.
- **Be selective.** Limit the number of sites on which you post your résumé. Employers dislike “résumé spammers.”
- **Use a dedicated e-mail address.** Set up a separate e-mail account with a professional-sounding e-mail address for your job search.
- **Limit personal information.** Never include your social security or other identification numbers on your résumé. Consider omitting your home address and home phone number to protect your privacy.
- **Post privately.** If given an option, choose to post your résumé privately. Doing so means that you can control who has access to your e-mail address and other contact information.
- **Count the days.** Renew your résumé posting every 14 days. If you keep it up longer, it will look as if employers have no interest in you. If you haven’t received a response in 45 days, pull your résumé from the site and post it somewhere else.
- **Keep careful records.** Keep a record of every site on which you post your résumé. At the end of your job search, remove all posted résumés.
- **Protect your references.** If you post your résumé online, don’t include your references. It is unethical for job seekers to post their references’ personal contact information online without their knowledge.
- **Don’t respond to a “blind” job posting.** Respond only to job postings that include a company name and contact information. It is unfortunate that many scammers use online job boards to post fake job ads as a way to gather your personal information.

Despite these dangers, job seekers use online sites to search millions of openings. The harsh reality, however, is that landing a job still depends largely on personal contacts. One employment expert believes that overreliance on technology may have made job seekers lazy: “At the end of the day, the job hunt is largely about people and it is about networking—looking at who you know and where they work.”¹⁴ Job-search consultant Debra Feldman concurs: “More important than what you know is who knows what you know. Make sure you are on the radar of people who have access to the kind of job leads you want.”¹⁵

Searching for a Job Using Traditional Techniques

Finding the perfect job requires an early start and a determined effort. A research study of college graduates revealed that those with proactive personalities were the most successful in securing interviews and jobs. Katharine Brooks, career services director in Austin, Texas, recommends: “Look for opportunities to learn, take a risk, try things out, see what you like, and always be open to the next opportunity.”¹⁶

Whether you use traditional or online job-search techniques, you should be prepared to launch an aggressive campaign—and you can’t start too early. Some universities now require first- and second-year students to take an employment seminar called Reality 101. Students learn early on that a college degree alone does not guarantee a job. They are cautioned that grade point averages make a difference to employers.¹⁷ They are also advised of the importance of experience, such as internships. Traditional job-search techniques, such as those described here, continue to be critical in landing jobs.

You can ensure a safe online search by choosing reputable sites, protecting your personal information and that of your references, keeping careful records, and renewing your posts regularly.

Many jobs are listed on the Web, but most hiring is still done through personal contact.

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“You can’t hide in your room and wait to be discovered. Your brilliance will mean little if no one outside your immediate circle knows about it. You have to make yourself discoverable.”

—Michael Wade,
management
consultant
and blogger at
Execupundit.com

The most successful job seekers are those who launch aggressive campaigns employing a wide array of techniques such as these.

- **Check classified ads in local and national newspapers.** You can find classified job ads in print or online versions of newspapers. Be aware, though, that classified ads are only one small source of jobs.
- **Check announcements in publications of professional organizations.** If you don't have a student membership, ask your instructors to share current copies of professional journals, newsletters, and so on. Your college library is another good source.
- **Contact companies in which you are interested, even if you know of no current opening.** Write an unsolicited letter and include your résumé. Follow up with a telephone call. Check the company's Web site for employment opportunities and procedures. To learn immediately of job openings, use Twitter to follow companies where you would like to work.
- **Sign up for campus interviews with visiting company representatives.** Campus recruiters may open your eyes to exciting jobs and locations. They may also help you prepare by offering mock interviews.
- **Attend career fairs.** Job fairs are invaluable in your quest to learn about specific companies and your future career options. Recruiters say that the more you know about the company and its representatives, the more comfortable you will be in an interview.¹⁸
- **Ask for advice from your instructors.** Your teachers often have contacts and ideas for conducting and expanding your job search.
- **Develop your own network of contacts.** Networking still accounts for most of the jobs found by candidates. Therefore, plan to spend a considerable portion of your job-search time developing a personal network. The Communication Workshop at the end of this chapter gives you step-by-step instructions for traditional networking as well as some ideas for online networking.

Creating a Customized Résumé

A customized résumé means that you will prepare a special résumé for each position you want.

After using both traditional and online resources to learn about the employment market and to develop job leads, you will focus on writing a customized résumé. This means you will prepare a special résumé for every position you want. The competition is so stiff today that you cannot get by with a generic, all-purpose résumé. Although you can start with a basic résumé, you should customize it to fit each company and position if you want your résumé to stand out from the crowd. Include many keywords that describe the skills, traits, tasks, and job titles associated with your targeted job. You will learn more about keywords shortly.

The Internet has made it so easy to apply that recruiters are swamped with applications. As a job seeker, you have about five seconds to catch the recruiter's eye—if your résumé is even read by a person. Many companies use computer scanning technologies to weed out unqualified candidates. Your goal is to make your résumé fit the targeted position and be noticed. Such a résumé does more than merely list your qualifications. It packages your assets into a convincing advertisement that sells you for a specific job.

In the scramble to get noticed, some job seekers—particularly in creative professions—occasionally resort to unusual job-hunting tactics, for example, sending a recruiter a shoe “to get a foot in the door” or a bowling pin to suggest “I'll bowl you over.”¹⁹ The survey of hiring managers revealed that more than half of marketing and a quarter of advertising executives view such unconventional approaches as unprofessional. Whereas in advertising gimmicky applications may be acceptable to almost half of the executives polled, in most business disciplines they would be a huge gamble. Perhaps you should think twice before drawing attention to yourself the way one applicant did by putting up posters of himself in the garage where the executives parked.

The goal of a résumé is winning an interview. Even if you are not in the job market at this moment, preparing a résumé now has advantages. Having a current résumé makes you look well organized and professional should an unexpected employment opportunity arise. Moreover, preparing a résumé early can help you recognize weak areas and give you time to bolster them. Even after you have accepted a position, it is a good idea to keep your résumé up-to-date. You never know when an opportunity might come along!

Choosing a Résumé Style

Résumés usually fall into two categories: chronological and functional. In this section we present basic information as well as insider tips on how to choose an appropriate résumé style, how to determine its length, and how to arrange its parts. You will also learn about adding a summary of qualifications, which busy recruiters increasingly want to see. Models of the résumés in the following discussion are shown in our comprehensive Résumé Gallery beginning on page 421.

Chronological. The most popular résumé format is the chronological résumé, shown in Figures 13.6 through 13.9 in our Résumé Gallery. It lists work history job by job, starting with the most recent position. Recruiters favor the chronological format because it quickly reveals a candidate's education and experience. Recruiters are familiar with the chronological résumé, and one research study showed that 75 percent of employers prefer to see a candidate's résumé in this format.²⁰ The chronological style works well for candidates who have experience in their field of employment and for those who show steady career growth, but it is less appropriate for people who have changed jobs frequently or who have gaps in their employment records. For college students and others who lack extensive experience, the functional résumé format may be preferable.

Functional. The functional résumé, shown in Figure 13.10 on page 425, focuses on a candidate's skills rather than on past employment. Like a chronological résumé, the functional résumé begins with the candidate's name, contact information, job objective, and education. Instead of listing jobs, though, the functional résumé groups skills and accomplishments in special categories, such as *Supervisory and Management Skills* or *Retailing and Marketing Experience*. This résumé style highlights accomplishments and can de-emphasize a negative employment history. People who have changed jobs frequently, who have gaps in their employment records, or who are entering an entirely different field may prefer the functional résumé. Recent graduates with little or no related employment experience often find the functional résumé useful. Older job seekers who want to downplay a long job history and job hunters who are afraid of appearing overqualified may also prefer the functional format. Be aware, though, that online job boards may insist on chronological format. In addition, some recruiters are suspicious of functional résumés, thinking the candidate is hiding something.

Deciding on Length

Experts simply do not agree on how long a résumé should be. Conventional wisdom has always held that recruiters prefer one-page résumés. A survey of 150 senior executives, however, revealed that 52 percent of executives polled believe a single page is the ideal length for a staff-level résumé, but 44 percent said they prefer two pages. Nearly one third of those surveyed (31 percent) also said that three pages is ideal for executive positions.²¹ Recruiters who are serious about candidates often prefer the kind of details that a two-page résumé can provide. On the other hand, many recruiters are said to be extremely busy and prefer concise résumés.

Perhaps the best advice is to make your résumé as long as needed to sell your skills to recruiters and hiring managers. Individuals with more experience will

Winning an interview is the goal of a customized résumé.

See our comprehensive Résumé Gallery beginning on page 421.

Chronological résumés focus on job history with the most recent positions listed first.

Because functional résumés focus on skills, they may be more advisable for graduates with little experience.

Recruiters may say they prefer one-page résumés, but many choose to interview those with longer résumés.

naturally have longer résumés. Those with fewer than ten years of experience, those making a major career change, and those who have had only one or two employers will likely have one-page résumés. Those with ten years or more of related experience may have two-page résumés. Finally, some senior-level managers and executives with lengthy histories of major accomplishments might have résumés that are three pages or longer.²²

Organizing Your Information Into Effective Résumé Categories

The parts of résumés should be arranged with the most important qualifications first.

Although résumés have standard parts, their arrangement and content should be strategically planned. A customized résumé emphasizes skills and achievements aimed at a particular job or company. It shows a candidate's most important qualifications first, and it de-emphasizes any weaknesses. In arranging your information and qualifications, try to create as few headings as possible; more than six generally makes the résumé look cluttered. No two résumés are ever exactly alike, but most writers consider including all or some of these categories: main heading, career objective, summary of qualifications, education, experience, capabilities and skills, awards and activities, personal information, and references.

Main Heading

Your résumé, whether it is chronological or functional, should start with a main heading that is as uncluttered and simple as possible. The first line of the main heading should always be your name; add your middle initial for an even more professional look. Format your name so that it stands out on the page. Below your name, list your contact information, including your complete address, area code and phone number, and e-mail address. Be sure to include a telephone number

where you can receive messages. The outgoing message at this number should be in your voice, it should mention your full name, and it should be concise and professional. If you include your cell phone number and are expecting an important call from a recruiter, pick up only when you are in a quiet environment and can concentrate.

For your e-mail address, be sure it sounds professional instead of something like *toosexy4you@hotmail.com* or *six-packguy@yahoo.com*. Also be sure that you are using a personal e-mail address. Putting your work e-mail address on your résumé announces to prospective employers that you are using your current employer's resources to look for another job. If you have a Web site where an e-portfolio or samples of your work can be viewed, include the address in the main heading.



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Career objectives are most appropriate for specific, targeted positions, but they may limit a broader job search.

Career Objective

Opinion is divided about the effect of including a career objective on a résumé. Recruiters think such statements indicate that a candidate has made a commitment to a career and is sure about what he or she wants to do. Career objectives, of course, make the recruiter's life easier by quickly classifying the résumé. Such declarations, however, can also disqualify a candidate if the stated objective does not match a company's job description.²³ A well-written objective—customized for the job opening—can add value to either a chronological or a functional résumé.

A person applying for an auditor position might include the following objective: *Seeking an auditor position in an internal corporate accounting department where my accounting skills, computer experience, knowledge of GAAP, and attention*

to detail will help the company run efficiently and ensure that its records are kept accurately.

Your objective should also focus on the employer's needs. Therefore, it should be written from the employer's perspective, not your own. Focus on how you can contribute to the organization, not on what the organization can do for you. A typical self-serving objective is *To obtain a meaningful and rewarding position that enables me to learn more about the graphic design field and allows for advancement.* Instead, show how you will add value to the organization with an objective such as *Position with advertising firm designing Web sites, publications, logos, and promotional displays for clients, where creativity, software knowledge, and proven communication skills can be used to build client base and expand operations.* As Rick Saia, a certified professional résumé writer, advises, these days, “the company is really not as interested in what they can do for you as in what you can do for them.”²⁴

Also be careful that your career objective does not downplay your talents. For example, some consultants warn against using the words *entry-level* in your objective, as these words emphasize lack of experience or show poor self-confidence. Finally, your objective should be concise. Try to limit your objective to no more than three lines. Avoid using complete sentences and the pronoun *I*.

If you choose to omit the career objective, be sure to discuss your objectives and goals in your cover letter. Savvy job seekers are also incorporating their objectives into a summary of qualifications, which is discussed next.

Summary of Qualifications

“The biggest change in résumés over the last decade has been a switch from an objective to a summary at the top,” says career expert Wendy Enelow.²⁵ Recruiters are busy, and smart job seekers add a summary of qualifications to their résumés to save the time of recruiters and hiring managers. Once a job is advertised, a hiring manager may get hundreds or even thousands of résumés in response. A summary at the top of your résumé makes it easier to read and ensures that your most impressive qualifications are not overlooked by a recruiter, who skims résumés quickly. Job applicants must often capture a recruiter's attention in less than ten seconds.²⁶ A well-written summary, therefore, motivates the recruiter to read further.

A summary of qualifications (also called *career profile*, *job summary*, or *professional highlights*) should include three to eight bulleted statements that prove you are the ideal candidate for the position. When formulating these statements, consider your experience in the field, your education, your unique skills, awards you have won, certifications, and any other accomplishments that you want to highlight. Include numbers wherever possible. Target the most important qualifications an employer will be looking for in the person hired for this position. Examples of summaries of qualifications appear in Figures 13.6, 13.7, 13.9, and 13.11 in the résumé models found in our Résumé Gallery.

Education

The next component in a chronological résumé is your education—if it is more noteworthy than your work experience. In this section you should include the name and location of schools, dates of attendance, major fields of study, and degrees received. By the way, once you have attended college, you should not list high school information on your résumé.

Your grade point average and/or class ranking may be important to prospective employers. The National Association of Colleges and Employers found that 66 percent of employers screen candidates by GPA, and 58 percent of those surveyed said they would be much less likely to hire applicants with college GPAs of less than 3.0.²⁷ One way to enhance your GPA is to calculate it in your major courses only (for example, *3.6/4.0 in major*). It is not unethical to showcase your GPA in your major—as long as you clearly indicate what you are doing. Although

A summary of qualifications section lists your most impressive accomplishments and qualifications in one concise bulleted list.

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“I know many days I have reviewed hundreds of resumes and most in less than 20 seconds. . . . [T]he average is probably around 5 to 7 seconds. So for the record when you hear or read about, ‘reading a resume in 20 seconds,’ that isn’t completely true. It is more than likely, ‘reviewed the resume in 20 seconds.’”

—Brad Remillard,
executive recruiter
and hiring expert

The education section shows degrees and GPA but does not list all courses a job applicant has taken.

some hiring managers may think that applicants are hiding something if they omit a poor record of grades, consultant Terese Corey Blanck suggests leaving out a poor GPA. Instead, she advises that students try to excel in internships, show extracurricular leadership, and target smaller, lesser-known companies to offset low grades.²⁸ Remember, however, that many employers will assume your GPA is lower than 3.0 if you omit it.²⁹

Under *Education* you might be tempted to list all the courses you took, but such a list makes for very dull reading and uses valuable space. Refer to courses only if you can relate them to the position sought. When relevant, include certificates earned, seminars attended, workshops completed, scholarships awarded, and honors earned. If your education is incomplete, include such statements as *BS degree expected 6/14* or *80 units completed in 120-unit program*. Title this section *Education*, *Academic Preparation*, or *Professional Training*. If you are preparing a functional résumé, you will probably put the education section below your skills summaries, as Kevin Touhy has done in Figure 13.10.

Work Experience or Employment History

If your work experience is significant and relevant to the position sought, this information should appear before your education section. List your most recent employment first and work backward, including only those jobs that you think will help you win the targeted position. A job application form may demand a full employment history, but your résumé may be selective. Be aware, though, that time gaps in your employment history will probably be questioned in the interview. For each position show the following:

- Employer's name, city, and state
- Dates of employment (month and year)
- Most important job title
- Significant duties, activities, accomplishments, and promotions

Describe your employment achievements concisely but concretely to make what résumé consultants call “a strong value proposition.”³⁰ Avoid generalities such as *Worked with customers*. Be more specific, with statements such as *Served 40 or more retail customers a day*; *Successfully resolved problems about custom stationery orders*; or *Acted as intermediary among customers, printers, and suppliers*. If possible, quantify your accomplishments, such as *Conducted study of equipment needs of 100 small businesses in Houston*; *Personally generated orders for sales of \$90,000 annually*; or *Keyed all the production models for a 250-page employee procedures manual*. One professional recruiter said, “I spend a half hour every day screening 50 résumés or more, and if I don't spot some [quantifiable] results in the first 10 seconds, the résumé is history.”³¹

Your employment achievements and job duties will be easier to read if you place them in a bulleted list. When writing these bullet points, don't try to list every single thing you have done on the job; instead, customize your information so that it relates to the target job. Make sure your list of job duties shows what you have to contribute and how you are qualified for the position you are applying for. Do not make your bullet points complete sentences, and avoid using personal pronouns (*I, me, my*). If you have performed a lot of the same duties for multiple employers, you don't have to repeat them.

In addition to technical skills, employers seek individuals with communication, management, and interpersonal capabilities. This means you will want to select work experiences and achievements that illustrate your initiative, dependability, responsibility, resourcefulness, flexibility, and leadership. Employers also want people who can work together in teams. Therefore, include statements such as *Collaborated with interdepartmental task force in developing ten-page handbook for temporary workers* and *Headed student government team that conducted most successful voter registration in campus history*.

The work experience section of a résumé should list specifics and quantify achievements.

Statements describing your work experience can be made forceful and persuasive if you use action verbs, such as those listed in Figure 13.3 and illustrated in Figure 13.4. Starting each of your bullet points with an action verb will help ensure that your bulleted lists are parallel.

FIGURE 13.3 Action Verbs for Powerful Résumés

The underlined words are especially good for pointing out accomplishments.

Communication Skills	assessed	evaluated	investigated	streamlined	operated
arbitrated	assisted	executed	located	systematized	<u>overhauled</u>
arranged	clarified	handled	measured	tabulated	performed
authored	coached	headed	observed	updated	troubleshooting
<u>clarified</u>	<u>collaborated</u> (with)	implemented	organized	validated	programmed
collaborated	communicated	<u>improved</u>	researched		remodeled
<u>convinced</u>	coordinated	<u>increased</u>	reviewed	Creative Skills	repaired
corresponded	counseled	led	searched	acted	retrieved
defined	demonstrated	modeled	solved	conceptualized	solved
developed	demystified	<u>organized</u>	studied	created	<u>upgraded</u>
directed	developed	oversaw	summarized	customized	Financial Skills
drafted	enabled	planned	surveyed	designed	administered
edited	encouraged	prioritized	systematized	developed	allocated
enlisted	evaluated	produced		directed	analyzed
explained	<u>expedited</u>	recommended	Clerical, Detail Skills	established	appraised
formulated	explained	<u>reorganized</u>	activated	fashioned	audited
influenced	facilitated	reviewed	approved	<u>founded</u>	balanced
integrated	guided	scheduled	arranged	illustrated	budgeted
interpreted	informed	<u>strengthened</u>	catalogued	<u>initiated</u>	calculated
mediated	instructed	supervised	classified	instituted	computed
moderated	motivated	<u>trained</u>	collected	integrated	developed
negotiated	persuaded		compiled	<u>introduced</u>	forecast
participated	set goals	Research Skills	executed	<u>invented</u>	managed
persuaded	stimulated	analyzed	generated	<u>originated</u>	marketed
promoted	<u>teamed</u> (with)	clarified	implemented	performed	planned
publicized	trained	collected	inspected	planned	projected
reconciled	Management, Leadership Skills	critiqued	logged	<u>revitalized</u>	researched
recruited	administered	diagnosed		shaped	
resolved	analyzed	evaluated	Technical Skills		More Accomplishment Verbs
spoke	assigned	examined	assembled	built	<u>achieved</u>
specified	assigned	experimented	built	calculated	<u>expanded</u>
suggested	<u>attained</u>	extracted	calculated	computed	<u>improved</u>
summarized	authorized	formulated	configured	designed	<u>pioneered</u>
translated	chaired	gathered	designed	devised	<u>reduced</u> (losses)
wrote	consolidated	identified	designed	engineered	<u>resolved</u> (problems)
	contracted	informed	devised	fabricated	<u>restored</u>
Teamwork, Supervision Skills	coordinated	inspected	engineered	installed	<u>revamped</u>
adapted	delegated	interpreted	fabricated	maintained	<u>spearheaded</u>
advised	developed	interviewed	installed		
	directed	invented	maintained		

FIGURE 13.4 Use Action Verbs in Statements That Quantify Achievements

Identified weaknesses in internships and researched five alternate programs
Reduced delivery delays by an average of three days per order
Streamlined filing system, thus reducing 400-item backlog to zero
Organized holiday awards program for 1,200 attendees and 140 workers
Designed three pages in HTML for company Web site
Represented 2,500 students on committee involving university policies and procedures
Calculated shipping charges for overseas deliveries and recommended most economical rates
Managed 24-station computer network linking data in three departments
Distributed and explained voter registration forms to over 500 prospective voters
Praised by top management for enthusiastic teamwork and achievement
Secured national recognition from National Arbor Foundation for tree project

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Emphasize the skills and aptitudes that prove you are qualified for a specific position.

Capabilities and Skills

Recruiters want to know specifically what you can do for their companies. Therefore, list your special skills, such as *Proficient in preparing federal, state, and local payroll tax returns as well as franchise and personal property tax returns*. Include your ability to use the Internet, social media, software programs, office equipment, and communication technology tools. If you speak a foreign language or use sign language, include it on your résumé. Describe proficiencies you have acquired through training and experience, such as *Certified in computer graphics and Web design through an intensive 350-hour classroom program*. Use expressions such as *competent in, skilled in, proficient with, experienced in, and ability to*; for example, *Competent in writing, editing, and proofreading reports, tables, letters, memos, manuscripts, and business forms*.

You will also want to highlight exceptional aptitudes, such as working well under stress, learning computer programs quickly, and interacting with customers. If possible, provide details and evidence that back up your assertions; for example, *Mastered PhotoShop in 25 hours with little instruction*. Include examples of your writing, speaking, management, organizational, and interpersonal skills—particularly those talents that are relevant to your targeted job. For recent graduates, this section can be used to give recruiters evidence of your potential. Instead of *Capabilities*, the section might be called *Skills and Abilities*.

Those job hunters preparing a functional résumé will place more focus on skills than on any other section. A well-written functional résumé groups skills into categories such as *Accounting/Finance Skills, Management/Leadership Skills, Communication/Teamwork Skills, and Computer/Technology Skills*. Each skills category includes a bulleted list of achievements and experience that demonstrate the skill, including specific numbers whenever possible. These skills categories should be placed in the beginning of the résumé, where they will be highlighted, followed by education and work experience. The action verbs shown in Figures 13.3 and 13.4 can also be used when constructing a functional résumé.

Awards, Honors, and Activities

If you have three or more awards or honors, highlight them by listing them under a separate heading. If not, put them in the education or work experience section, whichever is appropriate. Include awards, scholarships (financial and other), fellowships, dean's list, honors, recognitions, commendations, and certificates. Be sure to identify items clearly. Your reader may be unfamiliar, for example, with

Awards, honors, and activities are appropriate for the résumé.

Greek organizations, honors, and awards; tell what they mean. Instead of saying *Recipient of Star Award*, give more details: *Recipient of Star Award given by Pepperdine University to outstanding graduates who combine academic excellence and extracurricular activities.*

It is also appropriate to include school, community, volunteer, and professional activities. Employers are interested in evidence that you are a well-rounded person. This section provides an opportunity to demonstrate leadership and interpersonal skills. Strive to use action statements. For example, instead of saying *Treasurer of business club*, explain more fully: *Collected dues, kept financial records, and paid bills while serving as treasurer of 35-member business management club.*

Personal Data

Today's résumés omit personal data, such as birth date, marital status, height, weight, national origin, health, disabilities, and religious affiliation. Such information does not relate to genuine occupational qualifications, and recruiters are legally barred from asking for such information. Some job seekers do, however, include hobbies or interests (such as skiing or photography) that might grab the recruiter's attention or serve as conversation starters. For example, let's say you learn that your hiring manager enjoys distance running. If you have run a marathon, you may want to mention it. Many executives practice tennis or golf, two sports highly suitable for networking. You could also indicate your willingness to travel or to relocate since many companies will be interested.

Omit personal data not related to job qualifications.

References

Listing references directly on a résumé takes up valuable space. Moreover, references are not normally instrumental in securing an interview—few companies check them before the interview. Instead, recruiters prefer that you bring to the interview a list of individuals willing to discuss your qualifications. Therefore, you should prepare a separate list, such as that in Figure 13.5, when you begin your job search. Ask three to five individuals—instructors, your current employer or previous employers, colleagues or subordinates, and other professional

References are unnecessary for the résumé, but they should be available for the interview.

FIGURE 13.5 Sample Reference List

References
Bryanna A. Engstrom
 1103 Wood Road
 Boscobel, WI 53805
 Home: (608) 375-1926 Cell: (608) 778-5195 E-mail: bengstrom@tds.net

Mr. Jeff Schmitz
 Loan Supervisor
 Community First Bank
 925 Wisconsin Avenue
 Boscobel, WI 53805
 (608) 375-4116
 jschmitz@commfirstbank.com

Ms. Sue Winder
 Work Study Supervisor
 Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
 1800 Bronson Boulevard
 Fennimore, WI 53809
 (608) 822-3611, Ext. 1200
 swinder@swtc.edu

Ms. Sondra Ostheimer
 Business/Communication Instructor
 Southwest Wisconsin Technical College
 1800 Bronson Boulevard
 Fennimore, WI 53809
 (608) 822-3622, Ext. 1266
 sostheimer@swtc.edu

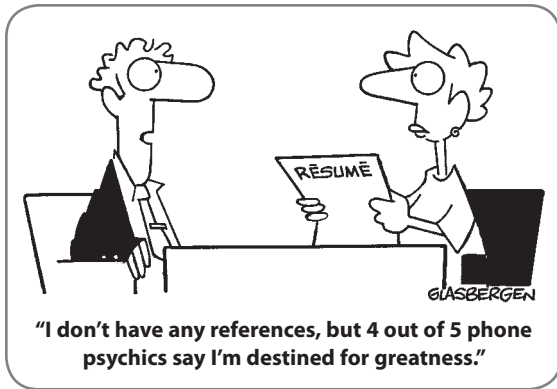
Provides reference list to be left at interview

Lists professional, not personal, references

Uses parallel form for all entries

Prints reference list with heading that matches heading on résumé

Lists only people who have given permission



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contacts—whether they would be willing to answer inquiries regarding your qualifications for employment. Be sure, however, to provide them with an opportunity to refuse. No reference is better than a negative one. Better yet, to avoid rejection and embarrassment, ask only those people who will give you a glowing endorsement.

Do not include personal or character references, such as friends, family, or neighbors, because recruiters rarely consult them. Companies are more interested in the opinions of objective individuals who know how you perform professionally and academically. One final note: most recruiters see little reason for including the statement *References furnished upon request*. It is unnecessary and takes up precious space.

In Figures 13.6 through 13.10 beginning on page 421, you will find our *Résumé Gallery*, which contains models of chronological and functional *résumés*. Use these models to help you organize the content and format of your own persuasive *résumé*.

Optimizing Your *Résumé* for Today's Technologies

Because *résumés* are increasingly becoming part of searchable databases, you may need three versions.

Thus far we have aimed our *résumé* advice at human readers. However, the first reader of your *résumé* may well be a computer. Hiring organizations today use a variety of methods to process incoming *résumés*. Some organizations still welcome traditional print-based *résumés* that may include attractive formatting. Larger organizations, however, must deal with thousands of incoming *résumés*. Increasingly, they are placing those *résumés* directly into searchable databases.

To improve your chances, you will need various versions of your *résumé*. For starters, we recommend that you create a traditional print-based *résumé* in Microsoft Word. To preserve your formatting, you may opt to convert this Word document to a PDF file. Then, when pursuing a job with a large, popular company, be sure to make your *résumé* scannable so that a computer can read it. Finally, some job hunters prepare a plain-text version with minimal formatting for cutting and pasting into company application forms online. If you are very creative, you may even craft an e-portfolio or a video *résumé* to showcase your qualifications. Most job applicants, however, will focus on a print-based *résumé* first.

Designing a Print-Based *Résumé*

Print-based *résumés* (also called *presentation résumés*) are attractively formatted to maximize readability. You can create a professional-looking *résumé* by using your word processing program to highlight your qualifications. The *Résumé Gallery* in this chapter provides ideas for simple layouts that are easily duplicated. You can also examine *résumé* templates for design and format ideas. Their inflexibility, however, may lead to frustration as you try to force your skills and experience into a predetermined template sequence. What's more, recruiters who read hundreds of *résumés* can usually spot a template-based *résumé*. Instead, create your own original *résumé* that fits your unique qualifications.

Your print-based *résumé* should be in an outline format with headings and bullet points to present information in an orderly, uncluttered, easy-to-read format. An attractive print-based *résumé* is necessary (a) when you are competing for a job that does not require electronic submission, (b) to present in addition to an electronic submission, and (c) to bring with you to job interviews. Even if a *résumé* is submitted electronically, nearly every job candidate will want to have an attractive traditional *résumé* handy for human readers.

Résumé Gallery

FIGURE 13.6 Chronological Résumé: Current College Student With Limited Experience

To highlight her skills and capabilities, Bryanna Engstrom placed them in the summary of qualifications at the top of her résumé. She used the tables feature of her word processing program to create neat, invisible columns and to fit more information on one page, the length favored by most recruiters.

Bryanna A. Engstrom
1103 Wood Road
Boscobel, WI 53805

Home: (608) 375-1926 Cell: (608) 778-5195 E-mail: bengstrom@tds.net

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over three years' experience in administrative positions, working with business documents and interacting with customers
- Ability to keyboard (65 wpm) and use ten-key calculator (150 kpm)
- Proficient with Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, SharePoint, and Publisher (passed MOS certification exam)
- Competent in Web research, written and oral communication, records management, desktop publishing, computer software troubleshooting, and proofreading and editing business documents
- Trained in QuickBooks, Flash, Photoshop, Dreamweaver

EXPERIENCE

Administrative Assistant, Work Study
Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fennimore, Wisconsin, August 2011–present

- Create letters, memos, reports, and forms in Microsoft Word
- Develop customized reports and labels using Microsoft Access
- Maintain departmental Microsoft Excel budget

Loan Support Specialist
Community First Bank, Boscobel, Wisconsin, May 2010–September 2011

- Prepared loan documents for consumer, residential, mortgage, agricultural, and commercial loans
- Ensured compliance with federal, state, and bank regulations
- Originated correspondence (oral and written) with customers and insurance agencies
- Ordered and interpreted appraisals, titles, and credit reports
- Created and maintained paper and electronic files for customers

Customer Sales Representative
Lands' End, Dodgeville, Wisconsin, Winter seasons 2010–2011

- Answered phones and assisted customers with orders
- Resolved customers' merchandise questions and problems
- Entered catalog orders into computer system

EDUCATION

Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, Fennimore, Wisconsin
Major: Administrative Assistant with Help Desk certificate
AA degree expected May 2013. GPA in major: 3.8 (4.0 = A)

ACTIVITIES AND AWARDS

- Placed first in state BPA Administrative Assistant competition
- Served as SWTC Student Senate Representative for Administrative Assistant program
- Nominated for SWTC Ambassador Award (recognizes outstanding students for excellence in and out of classroom)

Omits objective to keep all options open

Focuses on skills and aptitudes that employers seek

Uses present-tense verbs for current job

Arranges employment by job title for easy recognition

Combines activities and awards to show extracurricular involvement

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Preparing a Scannable Résumé

A scannable résumé is one that is printed on plain white paper and read by a computer. According to Pat Kendall, former president of the National Resume Writers' Association, more than 80 percent of résumés are scanned by companies using automated applicant-tracking software.³² These systems scan an incoming résumé with optical character recognition (OCR) looking for keywords or keyword phrases. The most sophisticated programs enable recruiters and hiring managers to rank résumés based on the number of “hits” and generate reports. Information from your résumé is stored, usually for from six months to a year.

Applicant-tracking software scans incoming résumés searching for keywords.

FIGURE 13.7 Chronological Résumé: Recent College Graduate With Related Experience

Jessica Fuentes used a chronological résumé to highlight her work experience, most of which was related directly to the position she seeks. Although she is a recent graduate, she has accumulated experience in two part-time jobs and one full-time job. She included a summary of qualifications to highlight her skills, experience, and interpersonal traits aimed at a specific position. Notice that Jessica designed her résumé in two columns with five major categories listed in the left column. In the right column she included bulleted items for each of the five categories. Conciseness and parallelism are important in writing an effective résumé. In the *Experience* category, she started each item with an active verb, which improved readability and parallel form.

Jessica A. Fuentes
2403 Mira Loma Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 90415 (714) 455-9231
jfuentes@aol.com

OBJECTIVE
Position with financial services organization installing accounting software and providing user support, where computer experience and proven communication and interpersonal skills can be used to improve operations.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over five years' experience in the accounting field
- Experienced in designing, installing, and providing technical support for accounting software, including SAP Great Plains, Peachtree, and Oracle
- Proficient in Word, Access, PowerPoint, Excel, and QuickBooks
- Skilled in technical writing, including proposals, user manuals, and documentation
- Commended for tactful and professional communication skills
- Fluent in speaking and writing Spanish

EXPERIENCE

Accounting software consultant. South Coast Software, Huntington Beach, CA
June 2011 to present

- Design and install accounting systems for businesses such as Century 21 Butler Realty, Capital Financial Services, Pacific Lumber, and others
- Provide ongoing technical support and consultation for clients
- Help write proposals such as successful \$400,000 government contract

Office manager (part-time). Coastal Productions, Fountain Valley, CA
June 2010 to May 2011

- Conceived and implemented improved order processing and filing system
- Designed and integrated module code pieces to export and convert data from an inhouse SQL database to QuickBooks format for automated check printing and invoice billing
- Trained three employees to operate QuickBooks software

Bookkeeper (part-time). Home Roofing, Santa Ana, CA
August 2006 to May 2010

- Kept books for roofing company with \$240,000 gross income
- Performed all bookkeeping tasks including quarterly internal audit and payroll

EDUCATION

Orange Coast College, Costa Mesa, CA
Associate of Arts degree in business administration, June 2010
GPA in major 3.6 (4.0 = A)

Oracle University—currently enrolled in database training seminars leading to Oracle certification

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

- Dean's list, three semesters
- Elected to Alpha Beta Sigma business student honorary

Annotations:

- Lists most impressive qualifications** (points to Summary of Qualifications)
- Arranges jobs in reverse chronological order** (points to Experience section)
- Uses bulleted lists to make résumé easier to read** (points to bulleted lists in Experience)
- Shows job titles in bold for readability** (points to bolded job titles in Experience)
- Includes detailed objective in response to advertisement** (points to Objective)
- Uses present-tense verbs for current job and past-tense verbs for previous jobs** (points to Experience)
- Specifies relevant activities for targeted position** (points to bulleted lists in Experience)
- Provides white space around headings to create open look** (points to section headings)

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Before sending your résumé, find out whether the recipient uses scanning software. If you can't tell from the job announcement, call the company to ask whether it scans résumés electronically. If you have even the slightest suspicion that your résumé might be read electronically, you will be smart to prepare a plain, scannable version as shown in Figure 13.11. Although current scanning software can read a résumé in any format, many companies still use older versions that have difficulty with complex fonts and formatting. Therefore, it pays to follow these tips for maximizing scannability and "hits."

FIGURE 13.8 Chronological Résumé: Current University Student With Limited Relevant Experience

Hung-Wei Chun used MS Word to design a traditional chronological print-based résumé that he plans to give to recruiters at the campus job fair or during an interview. Although Hung-Wei has work experience not related to his future employment, his résumé looks impressive because he has transferable skills. His internship is related to his future career, and his language skills and study abroad experience will help him score points in competition with applicants. Hung-Wei's volunteer experience is also attractive because it shows him as a well-rounded, compassionate individual. Because his experience in his future field is limited, he omitted a summary of qualifications.

Hung-Wei Chun
 2153 E. Wilshire Ave., Apt. B, Fullerton, CA 92931
 714.872.3229
 chunhw@gmail.com

OBJECTIVE Seeking a position in marketing where my communication and language skills can help an organization promote and position its products to its target market

EDUCATION California State University, Fullerton
Bachelor of Arts–Business Administration, May 2013
 Major: Marketing and Public Relations
 Major GPA 3.4 Overall GPA 3.25
 Study Abroad: Paris, France Fall 2010

RELATED COURSE WORK Principles of Marketing Introduction to Macroeconomics
 Business Communication Spanish Conversation
 Introduction to Public Relations Organizational Behavior
 Social Relations in the Workplace

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE Islands Restaurant, Brea, CA April 2010–present
Head Food Server (nights and weekends)
 • Deliver friendly and professional customer service
 • Train and supervise other food servers
 • Handle large amounts of cash and perform accounting duties at the end of the shift

Don Conkey & Partner, CPAs, Newport Beach, CA Fall 2009
General Office Assistant (part time)
 • Expedited mail and answered phones
 • Filed documents and entered data into computer
 • Provided secretarial support

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE Beverly Hilton Hotel, Beverly Hills, CA Spring 2010
Intern
 • Conducted research for potential campaigns
 • Interacted with guests and business partners
 • Wrote restaurant reviews and other press kit items
 • Performed general office duties

HONORS AND AWARDS Susan G. Komen, Newport Beach, CA October 2009–present
 • Raise funds
 • Organize local 5K Race for the Cure
 • Was named “Volunteer of the Month” in Spring 2010

LANGUAGES Spanish (understand and read)
 French (near-native fluency)

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS American Marketing Association (Member)
 Public Relations Association of America (Treasurer)

ACTIVITIES Enjoy watching films, reading, running, and travel

Callouts:
 - **Uses larger type and bold underline to enhance appearance:** Points to the name and contact information.
 - **Uses professional-sounding address:** Points to the address line.
 - **Responds to specific job advertisement:** Points to the objective statement.
 - **Highlights skills named in advertisement:** Points to the related course work section.
 - **Uses bulleted lists to make résumé easier to read:** Points to the bulleted lists in the professional and internship experience sections.
 - **Quantifies descriptions of experience:** Points to the specific duties and achievements listed in the experience sections.

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Tips for Maximizing Scannability. A scannable résumé must sacrifice many of the graphic enhancements you might have used to make your traditional print résumé attractive. To maximize scannability, follow these steps:

Scannable résumés use plain formatting, large fonts, quality printing, and white space.

- **Use 10- to 14-point type.** Use a well-known font such as Times New Roman or Arial. The font size in the body of your résumé should be 10-, 11-, or 12-point, and headings should be no larger than 14-point.
- **Avoid fancy formatting.** Do not use underlining, italics, borders, shading, or other graphics to highlight text. These features don't scan well. Most

FIGURE 13.9**Chronological Résumé: University Graduate With Substantial Experience**

Because Rachel Chowdhry has many years of experience and seeks executive-level employment, she highlighted her experience by placing it before her education. Her summary of qualifications highlighted her most impressive experience and skills. This chronological two-page résumé shows the steady progression of her career to executive positions, a movement that impresses and reassures recruiters.

RACHEL M. CHOWDHRY
374 Cabot Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91359
E-Mail: rchowdhry@west.net
(805) 490-3310

OBJECTIVE Senior Financial Management Position

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Over 12 years' comprehensive experience in the accounting industry, including over 8 years as a controller
- Certified Public Accountant (CPA)
- Demonstrated ability to handle all accounting functions for large, midsized, and small firms
- Ability to isolate problems, reduce expenses, and improve the bottom line, resulting in substantial cost savings
- Proven talent for interacting professionally with individuals at all levels, as demonstrated by performance review comments
- Experienced in P&L, audits, taxation, internal control, inventory management, A/P, A/R, and cash management

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

11/10 to present CONTROLLER
United Plastics, Inc., Newbury Park, California (extruder of polyethylene film for plastic aprons and gloves)

- Direct all facets of accounting and cash management for 160-employee, \$3 billion business
- Supervise inventory and production operations for tax compliance
- Talked owner into reducing sales prices, resulting in doubling first quarter 2012 sales
- Created cost accounting by product and pricing based on gross margin
- Increased line of credit with 12 major suppliers

1/08 to 10/10 CONTROLLER
Burgess Inc., Freeport, Illinois (major manufacturer of flashlight and lantern batteries)

- Managed all accounting, cash, payroll, credit, and collection operations for 175-employee business
- Implemented a new system for cost accounting, inventory control, and accounts payable, resulting in a \$100,000 annual savings
- Reduced staff from 11 persons to 5 with no loss in productivity
- Successfully reduced inventory levels from \$1.1 million to \$600,000

8/06 to 11/07 TREASURER/CONTROLLER
The Builders of Winter, Winter, Wisconsin (manufacturer of modular housing)

- Supervised accounts receivable/payable, cash management, payroll, insurance
- Directed monthly and year-end closings, banking relations, and product costing
- Refinanced company with long-term loan, ensuring stability

Rachel M. Chowdhry **Page 2**

4/02 to 6/06 SUPERVISOR OF GENERAL ACCOUNTING
Levin National Batteries, St. Paul, Minnesota (local manufacturer of flashlight batteries)

- Completed monthly and year-end closing of ledgers for \$2 million business
- Audited freight bills, acted as interdepartmental liaison, prepared financial reports

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Education: BBA degree, University of Minnesota, major: Accounting, 2001
Certification: Certified Public Accountant (CPA), 2003
Personal: Will travel and/or relocate

Annotations:

- Lists most impressive credentials** (points to Summary of Qualifications)
- Explains nature of employer's business because it is not immediately recognizable** (points to United Plastics, Inc.)
- Uses action verbs but includes many good nouns for possible computer scanning** (points to job descriptions)
- Emphasizes steady employment history by listing dates FIRST** (points to dates in job titles)
- Describes and quantifies specific achievements** (points to bullet points in job descriptions)
- De-emphasizes education because work history is more important for mature candidates** (points to Additional Information)

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applicant-tracking programs, however, can accurately read bold print, solid bullets, and asterisks.

- **Place your name on the first line.** Reports generated by applicant-tracking software usually assume that the first line of a résumé contains the applicant's name.

FIGURE 13.10 Functional Résumé: Recent College Graduate With Unrelated Part-Time Experience

Recent graduate Kevin Touhy chose this functional format to de-emphasize his meager work experience and emphasize his potential in sales and marketing. This version of his résumé is more generic than one targeted for a specific position. Nevertheless, it emphasizes his strong points with specific achievements and includes an employment section to satisfy recruiters. The functional format presents ability-focused topics. It illustrates what the job seeker can do for the employer instead of narrating a history of previous jobs. Although recruiters prefer chronological résumés, the functional format is a good choice for new graduates, career changers, and those with employment gaps.

KEVIN M. TOUHY
 Phone: (412) 359-2493
 Cell: (412) 555-3201
 E-mail: ktouhy@aol.com

P. O. Box 341
 Monroeville, PA 15146

OBJECTIVE Position in sales, marketing, or e-marketing in which my marketing, communication, and technology skills can help an organization achieve its goals.

SALES AND MARKETING SKILLS

- Developed people and sales skills by demonstrating lawn-care equipment in central and western Pennsylvania
- Achieved sales amounting to 120 percent of forecast in competitive field
- Personally generated over \$30,000 in telephone subscriptions as part of the President's Task Force for the Northeastern University Foundation
- Conducted telephone survey of selected businesses in two counties to discover potential users of farm equipment and to promote company services
- Successfully served 40 or more retail customers daily as clerk in electrical appliance department of national home hardware store

COMMUNICATION AND COMPUTER SKILLS

- Conducted research, analyzed findings, drew conclusions, and helped write 20-page report contending that responsible e-marketing is not spam
- Learned teamwork skills such as cooperation and compromise in team projects
- Delivered PowerPoint talks before selected campus classes and organizations encouraging students to participate in campus voter registration drive
- Earned A's in Interpersonal Communication and Business Communication
- Developed Word, Outlook, Excel, PowerPoint, and Internet Explorer skills
- Commended for ability to learn computer programs quickly

ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Helped conceptualize, organize, and conduct highly effective campus campaign to register student voters
- Scheduled events and arranged weekend student retreat for Marketing Club
- Trained and supervised two counter employees at Pizza Planet
- Organized courses, extracurricular activities, and part-time employment to graduate in seven semesters

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration, Northeastern University, June 2011
Major: Business Administration with e-marketing emphasis
GPA: Major, 3.7; overall 3.3 (A=4.0)
Related Courses: Marketing Research; Internet Advertising, Sales, and Promotion; and Competitive Strategies for the Information Age

Associate of Arts, Community College of Allegheny County, 2010
Major: Business Administration with marketing emphasis
GPA: 3.7

EMPLOYMENT

Sept. 2009–May 2011, Pizza Planet, Pittsburgh
 Summer 2009, Bellefonte Manufacturers Representatives, Pittsburgh
 Summers 2006–2009, Home Depot, Inc., Pittsburgh

Annotations:

- Includes objective that focuses on employer's needs** (points to Objective)
- Quantifies achievements with specifics instead of generalities** (points to Sales and Marketing Skills)
- Calls attention to computer skills** (points to Communication and Computer Skills)
- Avoids dense look and improves readability by "chunking" information** (points to Education)
- Uses functional headings that emphasize necessary skills for sales and e-marketing position** (points to Sales and Marketing Skills)
- Employs action verbs and bullet points to describe skills** (points to Communication and Computer Skills)
- Highlights recent education and contemporary training while de-emphasizing employment** (points to Education)

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- **List each phone number on its own line.** Your landline and cell phone numbers should appear on separate lines to improve recognition.
- **Avoid double columns.** When listing job duties, skills, computer programs, and so forth, don't tabulate items into two- or three-column lists. Scanners read across and may convert tables into nonsensical output.
- **Take care when printing and mailing.** When printing your scannable résumé for mailing, use smooth white paper and black ink and print it on a quality printer. Mail your résumé in a large envelope to avoid folding it. If your résumé is longer than one page, don't staple it.

FIGURE 13.11 Scannable Résumé

Letitia P. Lopez prepared this “plain Jane” résumé free of graphics and fancy formatting so that it would scan well if read by a computer. With the résumé, she included many job titles, skills, traits, and other descriptive keywords that scanners are programmed to recognize. To improve accurate scanning, she avoided bullets, italics, underlining, and columns. If she had more information to include, she could have gone to a second page because a résumé to be scanned need not be restricted to one page.

Uses asterisks to list most impressive qualifications; includes many keywords for target position

Prevents inaccurate scanning by using Arial type font in which letters do not touch

LETICIA P. LOPEZ
2967 Ocean Breeze Drive
Clearwater, FL 33704
813 742-5839
LLopez@scoast.net

OBJECTIVE
Customer-oriented, fast-learning, detail-oriented individual seeks teller position with financial institution.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- * Over three years' experience as a bank teller
- * Proven ability to interact professionally, efficiently, and pleasantly with customers
- * Reputation for accuracy and ability to work well under pressure
- * Speak Spanish fluently
- * Experience using Excel, Word, PowerPoint, accounting software, banking CRT, and the Internet
- * Member of First Federal Bank's Diversity Committee
- * Received First Federal Bank Certificate of Merit as an outstanding new employee

EXPERIENCE

First Federal Bank, Pinellas Park, Florida
July 2010 to present
Teller

Cheerfully greet customers, make deposits and withdrawals, accurately enter on computer. Balance up to \$10,000 in cash with computer journal tape daily within 15-minute time period. Solve customer problems and answer questions patiently. Issue cashier's checks, savings bonds, and traveler's checks. Complete tasks under pressure with speed, accuracy, and special attention to positive customer service. Communicate well with customers who speak English or Spanish.

Bay Aviation Maintenance Company, St. Petersburg, Florida
June 2008 to June 2010
Bookkeeper

Managed all bookkeeping functions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, and tax reports for a small business. Demonstrated ability to work independently, took responsibility for establishing and meeting deadlines, and learned new computer programs without instruction. Commended for honesty as well as for being a self-starter who could handle multiple priorities and deadlines.

EDUCATION

University of South Florida, Tampa, FL
Bachelor of Science in Business Management expected in 2013

Hillsborough Community College, Tampa, FL
Associate of Arts Degree, 2010
Majors: Business Administration and Accounting

Places name alone at top of résumé where scanner expects to find it

Uses typical headings for easy recognition

Provides ample white space for accurate scanning

Scanners produce “hits” when they recognize targeted keywords such as nouns describing skills, traits, tasks, and job titles.

Tips for Maximizing “Hits.” In addition to paying attention to the physical appearance of your résumé, you must also be concerned with keywords or keyword phrases that produce “hits,” or recognition by the scanner. The following tips will help you to maximize hits:

- **Focus on specific keywords or keyword phrases.** Study carefully any advertisements and job descriptions for the position you want. Describe your experience, education, and qualifications in terms associated with the job advertisement or job description for this position. Select keywords or phrases that describe specific skills, traits, expertise, tasks, and job titles.

- **Use accurate names.** Spell out complete names of schools, degrees, and dates. Include specific names of companies, products, and services, as appropriate.
- **Be careful of abbreviations and acronyms.** Spell out unfamiliar abbreviations and acronyms, but maximize easily recognized abbreviations and acronyms—especially those within your field, such as CAD, JPG, or JIT.
- **Describe interpersonal traits and attitudes.** Hiring managers look for keywords and phrases that describe interpersonal traits and attitudes that are related to the specific position; for example, *time management skills*, *dependability*, *high energy*, *leadership*, *sense of responsibility*, and *team player*.

Showcasing Your Qualifications in an E-Portfolio or a Video Résumé

As the workplace becomes increasingly digital, you have new ways to display your qualifications to prospective employers—in digitized e-portfolios and video résumés. Resourceful job candidates in certain fields—writers, models, artists, and graphic artists—have been creating print portfolios to illustrate their qualifications and achievements for some time. Now business and professional job candidates are using electronic portfolios to show off their talents.

Understanding the E-Portfolio. An e-portfolio is a collection of digital files that can be navigated with the help of menus and hyperlinks much like a personal Web site. An e-portfolio provides viewers with a snapshot of a candidate's performance, talents, and accomplishments. A digital portfolio may include a copy of your résumé, reference letters, commendations for special achievements, awards, certificates, work samples, a complete list of your courses, thank-you letters, and anything else that touts your accomplishments. An e-portfolio might include links to electronic copies of your artwork, film projects, videos, blueprints, documents, photographs, multimedia files, and blog entries that might otherwise be difficult to share with potential employers.

E-portfolios are generally accessed at Web sites, where they are available around-the-clock to employers. Some colleges and universities not only make Web site space available for student e-portfolios, but also provide instruction and resources for scanning photos, digitizing images, and preparing graphics. E-portfolios may also be burned onto CDs and DVDs to be mailed to prospective employers. Whichever medium you choose, respect the intellectual property of your employers before sharing professional work samples online. Don't post them without permission.³³

E-portfolios have many advantages. On Web sites they can be viewed at employers' convenience. Let's say you are talking on the phone with an employer in another city who wants to see a copy of your résumé. You can simply refer the employer to the Web address where your résumé resides. E-portfolios can also be seen by many individuals in an organization without circulating a paper copy. But the real reason for preparing an e-portfolio is that it shows off your talents and qualifications more thoroughly than a print résumé does.

Understanding the Video Résumé. Tech-savvy applicants even use videos to profile their skills. A professional-grade video résumé may open doors and secure an interview when other techniques have failed.³⁴ However, some recruiters are skeptical about digital or video portfolios because they fear that such applications take more time to view than paper-based résumés do. One time-strapped recruiter clearly favors traditional applications: "If I have a stack of resumes and a good highlighter, I can do that much faster."³⁵ Nontraditional applications may end up at the bottom of the pile or be ignored.

An e-portfolio offers links to examples of a job candidate's performance, talents, and accomplishments in digital form.



Job candidates generally offer e-portfolios at Web sites, but they may also burn them onto CDs or DVDs.

OFFICE INSIDER

"I think the video résumé debate is going to be hot for the next few years. Typically, they are frowned upon because of [Equal Employment Opportunity Commission] regulation. Companies are scared to death of getting sued."

—Joel Cheesman,
blogger and expert on
online recruiting

Moreover, humiliation looms if the applicant produces an amateurish result with low-quality video, poor sound, and inappropriate lighting. Finally, video résumés are most appropriate for positions requiring creativity, salesmanship, and presentation skills in the visual and performing arts, advertising, and public relations fields. Video résumés are much less suitable for more traditional positions—for example, in banking or accounting.³⁶

A truly weighty reason to exercise caution when creating and sharing video résumés is the risk of discrimination lawsuits. Employment decisions must be based on objective criteria related to the position, not on subjective factors such as appearance. Corporate lawyers advise their clients to refuse to view online video résumés or traditional résumés with pictures. New Jersey attorney Steven Harz warns: "Video resumes lend themselves to making decisions based on race, gender, national origin and other protected classifications plus other subjective issues. Subjective decisions are difficult to defend in court."³⁷

Not long ago, fewer than a quarter of senior executives in the United States accepted video résumés, but multimedia resources are growing. Within a few years, video résumé sites, such as BriteTab.com, OptimalResume.com, InterviewStudio.com, and Resumebook.tv, were launched.³⁸ They propose to make creating e-video résumés an easy task with customizable templates. Experts agree that the new medium will need to mature before smart use guidelines can emerge. You can learn more about video résumés by searching the Web.

Ensuring Integrity and Polishing Your Résumé

Because your résumé is probably the most important message you will ever write, you will revise it many times. With so much information in concentrated form and with so much riding on its outcome, your résumé demands careful polishing, proofreading, and critiquing.

As you revise, be certain to verify all the facts, particularly those involving your previous employment and education. Don't be caught in a mistake, or worse, a distortion of previous jobs and dates of employment. These items likely will be checked, and the consequences of puffing up a résumé with deception or flat-out lies are simply not worth the risk.

Being Honest and Ethical

A résumé is expected to showcase a candidate's strengths and minimize weaknesses. For this reason, recruiters expect a certain degree of self-promotion. Some résumé writers, however, step over the line that separates honest self-marketing from deceptive half-truths and flat-out lies. Distorting facts on a résumé is unethical; lying is illegal. Most important, either practice can destroy a career.

Given the competitive job market, it might be tempting to puff up your résumé. What's more, you would not be alone in telling fibs or outright whoppers. A survey of 8,700 workers found that only 8 percent admitted to lying on their résumés; however, the same study found that of the 3,100 hiring managers surveyed, 49 percent caught a job applicant lying on some part of his or her résumé. And 57 percent of employers will automatically dismiss applicants who lie on any part of their résumés. According to Rosemary Haefner, vice president of Human Resources for CareerBuilder.com, "Even the slightest embellishment can come back to haunt you and ruin your credibility. If you're concerned about gaps in employment, your academic background or skill sets, invention is not the answer."³⁹ Although recruiters can't check all information, most will verify previous employment and education before hiring candidates. Over half will require official transcripts.

After hiring, the checking process may continue. If hiring officials find a discrepancy in GPA or prior experience and the error is an honest mistake, they meet with the new-hire to hear an explanation. If the discrepancy wasn't a mistake,

Lying on a résumé is illegal and fudging the facts is unethical. Either can destroy a career.



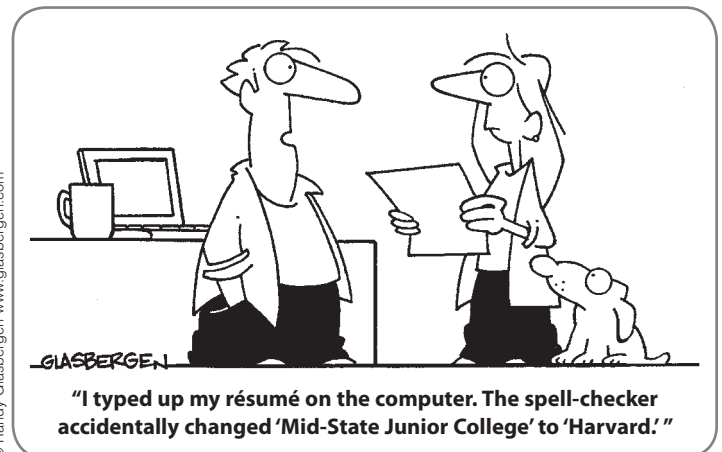
© Steven Hirsch/Splash News/News.com

WORKPLACE IN FOCUS

Whether legally risky or merely unprofessional, sending personal photos to recruiters is a mistake, employment experts say. Hiring based on looks has triggered discrimination lawsuits for Southwest Airlines and Hooters Restaurants, and fashion brand American Apparel is under fire for requiring full-body photos for all job applicants. In one high-profile case about looks and professionalism, Citibank fired an employee for accentuating sex appeal at work. *Is it possible to keep appearance out of the employment process in the age of Facebook?*

they will likely fire the person immediately. No job seeker wants to be in the unhappy position of explaining résumé errors or defending misrepresentation. Avoiding the following common problems can keep you off the hot seat:

- **Inflated education, grades, or honors.** Some job candidates claim degrees from colleges or universities when in fact they merely attended classes. Others increase their grade point averages or claim fictitious honors. Any such dishonest reporting is grounds for dismissal when discovered.
- **Enhanced job titles.** Wishing to elevate their status, some applicants misrepresent their titles. For example, one technician called himself a programmer when he had actually programmed only one project for his boss. A mail clerk who assumed added responsibilities conferred upon herself the title of supervisor. Even when the description seems accurate, it is unethical to list any title not officially granted.
- **Puffed-up accomplishments.** Some job seekers inflate their employment experience or achievements. One clerk, eager to make her photocopying duties sound more important, said that she assisted the *vice president in communicating and distributing employee directives*. An Ivy League graduate who spent the better part of six months watching rented movies on his DVD player described the activity as *Independent Film Study*. The latter statement may have helped win an interview, but it lost him the job. In addition to avoiding puffery, guard against taking sole credit for achievements that required many people. When recruiters suspect dubious claims on résumés, they nail applicants with specific—and often embarrassing—questions during their interviews.
- **Altered employment dates.** Some candidates extend the dates of employment to hide unimpressive jobs or to cover up periods of unemployment and illness. Let's say that several years ago Cindy was unemployed for 14 months between working for Company A and being hired by Company B. To make her employment history look better, she adds seven months to her tenure with Company A and seven months to Company B. Now her



employment history has no gaps, but her résumé is dishonest and represents a potential booby trap for her.

- **Hidden keywords.** One of the latest sneaky tricks involves inserting invisible keywords in electronic résumés. To fool scanning programs into ranking their résumés higher, some job hunters use white type on a white background or they use Web coding to pack their résumés with target keywords. However, newer recruiter search tools detect such mischief, and those résumés are tossed.⁴⁰

If your honest qualifications aren't good enough to get you the job you want, start working now to improve them. No job seeker should want to be hired based on lies.

Polishing Your Résumé

While you continue revising, look for other ways to improve your résumé. For example, consider consolidating headings. By condensing your information into as few headings as possible, you will produce a clean, professional-looking document. Study other résumés for valuable formatting ideas. Ask yourself what graphic highlighting techniques you can use to improve readability: capitalization, underlining, indenting, and bulleting. Experiment with headings and styles to achieve a pleasing, easy-to-read message. Moreover, look for ways to eliminate wordiness. For example, instead of *Supervised two employees who worked at the counter*, try *Supervised two counter employees*. Review Chapter 4 for more tips on writing concisely.

In addition to making your résumé concise, make sure that you haven't included any of the following information, which does not belong on a résumé:

- Any basis for discrimination (age, marital status, gender, national origin, religion, race, number of children, disability)
- A photograph
- Reasons for leaving previous jobs
- The word *résumé*
- Social security number
- Salary history or requirements
- High school information
- References
- Full addresses of schools or employers (include city and state only)

Above all, make sure your print-based résumé look professional. Avoid anything humorous or "cute," such as a help-wanted poster with your name or picture inside. Eliminate the personal pronoun *I* to ensure an objective style. Use high-quality paper in a professional color, such as white, off-white, or light gray. Print your résumé using a first-rate printer. Be prepared with a résumé for people to read as well as versions for computer scanning, sending by e-mail, and posting to Web sites.

Proofreading Your Résumé

After revising, you must proofread, proofread, and proofread again for spelling, grammar, mechanics, content, and format. Then have a knowledgeable friend or relative proofread it yet again. This is one document that must be perfect. Because the job market is so competitive, one typo, misspelled word, or grammatical error could eliminate you from consideration.

By now you may be thinking that you'd like to hire someone to write your résumé. Don't! First, you know yourself better than anyone else could know you. Second, you will end up with a generic or a one-time résumé. A generic résumé in today's tight job market will lose out to a customized résumé nine times out of ten. Equally useless is a one-time résumé aimed at a single job. What if you don't get that job? Because you will need to revise your résumé many times as you seek a variety of jobs, be prepared to write (and rewrite) it yourself.

Studying models for ideas can help you improve your résumé format.

OFFICE INSIDER

"It sounds basic, but make sure that your résumé is free of typos and other errors. When applying by e-mail, there is more of a tendency to rush and make careless mistakes. For many employers, this shows a lack of attention to detail and is an easy way to eliminate someone from consideration."

—Wendy S. Enelow,
executive director of
Career Masters Institute

In addition to being well written, a résumé must be carefully formatted and meticulously proofread.

Submitting Your Résumé

If you are responding to a job advertisement, be sure to read the job listing carefully to make sure you know how the employer wants you to submit your résumé. Not following the prospective employer's instructions can eliminate you from consideration before your résumé is even reviewed. Employers will probably ask you to submit your résumé as a Word, plain-text, or PDF document. You may also be asked to submit it in the company database or by fax.

Send your résumé in the format the employer requests.

- **Word document.** Recruiters may still ask candidates to send their résumés and cover letters by postal mail. They may also allow applicants to attach their résumés as Microsoft Word documents to e-mails, despite the fear of viruses.
- **Plain-text document.** Some employers expect applicants to submit résumés and cover letters as plain-text documents. This format is widely used for posting to an online job board and sometimes for sending by e-mail. Plain-text résumés may be embedded within or attached to e-mails. Convert your files to plain text in Microsoft Word with the **Save As** option. Select *Plain Text* as the file type. Because you will lose nearly all formatting after converting your file to plain text, you will have to examine the resulting document carefully in your word processor and check it again once you paste the plain-text résumé into your e-mail.
- **PDF document.** For safety reasons, many hiring managers prefer PDF (portable document format) files. A PDF résumé will look exactly like the original and cannot be altered without Adobe Acrobat or other conversion software. Most computers have Adobe Acrobat Reader installed for easy reading of PDF files. Converting your Microsoft Word and other Office documents to a PDF file, however, requires an add-in for older word processing software or Adobe Acrobat. The 2010 Office versions allow you to select **Save as** and **Print** to a PDF.
- **Company database.** Some organizations prefer that you complete an online form with your résumé information. This enables them to plug your data into their formats for rapid searching. You might be able to cut and paste your information into the online form.
- **Fax.** Although still a popular way of sending résumés, faxing presents problems such as blurry text and lost information. If you must fax your résumé, use at least 12-point font to improve readability. Thinner fonts—such as Times New Roman, Palatino, New Century Schoolbook, Arial, and Bookman—are clearer than thicker ones. Avoid underlines, which may look broken or choppy when faxed. Follow up with your polished, printed résumé.

Whether you are mailing your résumé the traditional way, submitting it by e-mail, or transmitting it by fax, don't send it on its own. Regardless of the submission format, in most cases a résumé should be accompanied by a cover letter, which will be discussed next.

Creating a Customized, Persuasive Cover Letter

Job candidates often labor over their résumés but treat the cover letter as an afterthought. Some send out résumés without including a cover letter at all. These critical mistakes could destroy a job search. Even if an advertisement does not request one, be sure to distinguish your application with a persuasive cover letter (also called a *letter of application*). Some hiring managers won't even look at a résumé if it is not accompanied by a cover letter. A cover letter has three purposes: (a) introducing the résumé, (b) highlighting your strengths in terms of benefits to the reader, and (c) helping you gain an interview. In many ways your cover letter is a sales letter; it sells your talent and tries to beat the competition. It will, accordingly, include many of the techniques you learned for persuasive messages in Chapter 8, especially if your letter is unsolicited.

Cover letters introduce résumés, relate writer strengths to reader benefits, and seek an interview.

Recruiting professionals disagree about how long to make a cover letter. Many prefer short letters with no more than three paragraphs. Others desire longer letters that supply more information, thus giving them a better opportunity to evaluate a candidate's qualifications and writing ability. These recruiters argue that hiring and training new employees is expensive and time consuming; therefore, they welcome extra data to guide them in making the best choice the first time. Follow your judgment in writing a brief or a longer cover letter. If you think, for example, that you need space to explain in more detail what you can do for a prospective employer, do so.

Regardless of its length, a cover letter should have three primary parts: (a) an opening that captures attention, introduces the message, and identifies the position; (b) a body that sells the candidate and focuses on the employer's needs; and (c) a closing that requests an interview and motivates action. When putting your cover letter together, remember that the biggest mistake job seekers make when writing cover letters is making them sound too generic. You should, therefore, write a personalized, customized cover letter for every position you apply for.

Gaining Attention in the Opening

Your cover letter will be more appealing, and more likely to be read, if it begins by addressing the reader by name. Rather than sending your letter to the *Hiring Manager* or *Human Resources Department*, try to identify the name of the appropriate individual. Kelly Renz, vice president for a recruiting outsourcing firm, says that resourceful job seekers “take control of their application's destiny.” She suggests looking on the company's Web site, doing an Internet search for a name, or calling the human resources department and asking the receptionist the name of the person in charge of hiring.

In addition, Ms. Renz suggests using professional networking sites such as LinkedIn to find someone working in the same department as the posted job. This person may know the name of the hiring manager.⁴¹ If you still cannot find the name of any person to address, you might replace the salutation of your letter with a descriptive subject line such as *Application for Marketing Specialist Position*.

How you open your cover letter depends largely on whether the application is solicited or unsolicited. If an employment position has been announced and applicants are being solicited, you can use a direct approach. If you don't know whether a position is open and you are prospecting for a job, use an indirect approach. Whether direct or indirect, the opening should attract the attention of the reader. Strive for openings that are more imaginative than *Please consider this letter an application for the position of . . .* or *I would like to apply for . . .*

Openings for Solicited Jobs. When applying for a job that has been announced, consider some of the following techniques to open your cover letter:

- **Refer to the name of an employee in the company.** Remember that employers always hope to hire known quantities rather than complete strangers:

Mitchell Sims, a member of your Customer Service Department, told me that IntriPlex is seeking an experienced customer-service representative. The enclosed summary of my qualifications demonstrates my preparation for this position.

At the suggestion of Ms. Jennifer Larson of your Human Resources Department, I submit my qualifications for the position of staffing coordinator.

- **Refer to the source of your information precisely.** If you are answering an advertisement, include the exact position advertised and the name and date

The opening in a cover letter gains attention by addressing the receiver by name.

Openers for solicited jobs refer to the source of the information, the job title, and qualifications for the position.

of the publication. If you are responding to a position listed on an online job board, include the Web site name and the date the position was posted:

Your advertisement in Section C-3 of the June 1 Daily News for an accounting administrator greatly appeals to me. With my accounting training and computer experience, I am confident I could serve Quad Graphics well.

From your company's Web site, I learned about your need for a sales representative for the Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois regions. I am very interested in this position and am confident that my education and experience are appropriate for the opening.

Susan Butler, placement director at Sierra University, told me that Data-Tech has an opening for a technical writer with knowledge of Web design and graphics.

My talent for interacting with people, coupled with more than five years of customer-service experience, makes me an ideal candidate for the director of customer relations position you advertised on the CareerJournal.com Web site on August 3.

- **Refer to the job title and describe how your qualifications fit the requirements.** Hiring managers are looking for a match between an applicant's credentials and the job needs:

Will an honors graduate with a degree in recreation and two years of part-time experience organizing social activities for a convalescent hospital qualify for your position of activity director?

Because of my specialized training in finance and accounting at Boise State University, I am confident that I have the qualifications you described in your advertisement for a staff accountant trainee.

Openings for Unsolicited Jobs. If you are unsure whether a position actually exists, you might use a more persuasive opening. Because your goal is to convince this person to read on, try one of the following techniques:

- **Demonstrate interest in and knowledge of the reader's business.** Show the hiring officer that you have done your research and that this organization is more than a mere name to you:

Because Signa HealthNet, Inc., is organizing a new information management team for its recently established group insurance division, could you use the services of a well-trained information systems graduate who seeks to become a professional systems analyst?

- **Show how your special talents and background will benefit the company.** Human resource managers need to be convinced that you can do something for them:

Could your rapidly expanding publications division use the services of an editorial assistant who offers exceptional language skills, has an honors degree from the University of Maine, and has two years of experience producing a campus literary publication?

Do recruiters really read cover letters? Although some hiring managers ignore them, others read them carefully. Given the stiff competition for jobs today, making an effort to write a cover letter and to customize it for the position makes sense. Crafting a letter specifically for a job opening enables the job seeker to stand out from all those who skip this important step.

In applying for an advertised job, Tonya Powell wrote the solicited cover letter shown in Figure 13.12. Notice that her opening identifies the position advertised on the company's Web site, so that the reader knows exactly what advertisement

Openings for unsolicited jobs show an interest in and knowledge of the company, as well as spotlight reader benefits.

FIGURE 13.12 Solicited Cover Letter

Uses personally designed letterhead → **Tonya L. Powell**
1770 Hawthorne Place, Boulder CO 80304
(303) 492-1244, tpowell@yahoo.com

May 23, 2013

Addresses proper person by name and title → Ms. Courtney L. Donahue
Director, Human Resources
Del Rio Enterprises
4839 Mountain View Avenue
Denver, CO 82511

Identifies job and exact page where ad appeared → Dear Ms. Donahue:
Your advertisement for an assistant product manager, appearing May 22 in the employment section of your company Web site, immediately caught my attention because my education and training closely parallel your needs.

Relates writer's experience to job requirements → According to your advertisement, the job includes "assisting in the coordination of a wide range of marketing programs as well as analyzing sales results and tracking marketing budgets." A recent internship at Ventana Corporation introduced me to similar tasks. Assisting the marketing manager enabled me to analyze the promotion, budget, and overall sales success of two products Ventana was evaluating. My ten-page report examined the nature of the current market, the products' life cycles, and their sales/profit return. In addition to this research, I helped formulate a product merchandising plan and answered consumers' questions at a local trade show.

Discusses schooling → Intensive course work in marketing and management, as well as proficiency in computer spreadsheets and databases, has given me the kind of marketing and computer training that Del Rio probably demands in a product manager. Moreover, my recent retail sales experience and participation in campus organizations have helped me develop the kind of customer service and interpersonal skills necessary for an effective product manager.

Discusses experience → After you have examined the enclosed résumé for details of my qualifications, I would be happy to answer questions. Please call me at (303) 492-1244 to arrange an interview at your convenience so that we may discuss how my marketing experience, computer training, and interpersonal skills could contribute to Del Rio Enterprises.

Asks for interview and repeats main qualifications → Sincerely,
Tonya L. Powell
Tonya L. Powell
Enclosure

Refers reader to résumé

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Tonya means. Using word processing, Tonya designed her own letterhead that uses her name and looks like professionally printed letterhead paper. Notice that Tonya chose a blue color accent for her letter. When used sparingly and strategically, color can help job hunters stand out. Personal branding expert William Arruda believes, "Color is a valuable tool in your personal branding toolbox that will help express your brand attributes and create emotional connections with hiring managers and recruiters." Arruda does not promote gaudy-looking application documents but suggests the consistent use of just one color—one that is best suited to reinforce an applicant's brand message.⁴²

More challenging are unsolicited cover letters, such as Donald Vinton's shown in Figure 13.13. Because he hopes to discover or create a job, his opening must grab the reader's attention immediately. To do that, he capitalizes on company information appearing in an online article. Donald purposely kept his cover letter short and to the point because he anticipated that a busy executive would be

FIGURE 13.13 Unsolicited Cover Letter

Uses personal business style with return address above date

2250 Turtle Creek Drive
Monroeville, PA 15146
May 29, 2013

Mr. Richard M. Jannis
Vice President, Operations
Sports World, Inc.
4907 Allegheny Boulevard
Pittsburgh, PA 16103

Dear Mr. Jannis:

Today's *Pittsburgh Examiner* online reports that your organization plans to expand its operations to include national distribution of sporting goods, and it occurs to me that you will be needing highly motivated, self-starting sales representatives and marketing managers. Here are three significant qualifications I have to offer:

- Four years of formal training in business administration, including specialized courses in sales management, retailing, marketing promotion, and consumer behavior
- Practical experience in demonstrating and selling consumer products, as well as successful experience in telemarketing
- Excellent communication skills and a strong interest in most areas of sports (which helped me become a sportscaster at Penn State radio station WGNF)

May we talk about how I can put these qualifications, and others summarized in the enclosed résumé, to work for Sports World as it develops its national sales force? I'll call during the week of June 5 to discuss your company's expansion plans and the opportunity for an interview.

Sincerely yours,
Donald W. Vinton
Donald W. Vinton

Enclosure

Shows resourcefulness and knowledge of company

Uses bulleted list to make letter easier to read

Refers to enclosed résumé

Keeps letter brief to retain reader's attention

Takes initiative for follow-up

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unwilling to read a long, detailed letter. Donald's unsolicited letter "prospects" for a job. Some job candidates believe that such letters may be even more productive than efforts to secure advertised jobs, since prospecting candidates face less competition and show initiative. Notice that Donald's letter uses a personal business letter format with his return address above the date.

Highlighting Your Strengths in the Body

Once you have captured the attention of the reader and identified your purpose in the letter opening, you should use the body of the letter to promote your qualifications for this position. If you are responding to an advertisement, you will want to explain how your preparation and experience fill the stated requirements. If you are prospecting for a job, you may not know the exact requirements. Your employment research and knowledge of your field, however, should give you a reasonably good idea of what is expected for this position.

The body of the cover letter promotes the candidate's qualifications for the targeted job.

It is also important to stress reader benefits. In other words, you should describe your strong points in relation to the needs of the employer. Hiring officers want you to tell them what you can do for their organizations. This is more important than telling what courses you took in college or what duties you performed in your previous jobs. Instead of *I have completed courses in business communication, report writing, and technical writing*, try this:

Courses in business communication, report writing, and technical writing have helped me develop the research and writing skills required of your technical writers.

Choose your strongest qualifications and show how they fit the targeted job. Remember that students with little experience are better off spotlighting their education and its practical applications, as these candidates did:

Because you seek an architect's apprentice with proven ability, I submit a drawing of mine that won second place in the Sinclair College drafting contest last year.

Composing e-mails, business letters, memos, and reports in my business communication and office technology courses helped me build the writing, language, proofreading, and computer skills mentioned in your ad for an administrative assistant.

In the body of your letter, you may choose to discuss relevant personal traits. Employers are looking for candidates who, among other things, are team players, take responsibility, show initiative, and learn easily. Do not just list several personal traits, though; instead, include documentation that proves you possess these traits. Notice how the following paragraph uses action verbs to paint a picture of a promising candidate:

In addition to honing technical and academic skills at Mid-State University, I have gained interpersonal, leadership, and organizational skills. As vice president of the business students' organization, Gamma Alpha, I helped organize and supervise two successful fund-raising events. These activities involved conceptualizing the tasks, motivating others to help, scheduling work sessions, and coordinating the efforts of 35 diverse students in reaching our goal. I enjoyed my success with these activities and look forward to applying such experience in your management trainee program.

Finally, in this section or the next, you should refer the reader to your résumé. Do so directly or as part of another statement, as shown here:

As you will notice from my enclosed résumé, I will graduate in June with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Please refer to the attached résumé for additional information regarding my education, experience, and references.

Motivating Action in the Closing

After presenting your case, you should conclude by asking confidently for an interview. Don't ask for the job. To do so would be presumptuous and naïve. In requesting an interview, you might suggest reader benefits or review your strongest points. Sound sincere and appreciative. Remember to make it easy for the reader to agree by supplying your telephone number and the best times to call you. In addition, keep in mind that some hiring officers prefer that you take the initiative to call them. Avoid expressions such as *I hope*, which will weaken your closing. Here are possible endings:

This brief description of my qualifications and the additional information on my résumé demonstrate my genuine desire to put my skills in accounting to work for McLellan and Associates. Please call me at (405) 488-2291 before 10 a.m. or after 3 p.m. to arrange an interview.

Employers seek employees who are team players, take responsibility, show initiative, and learn easily.

The closing of a cover letter confidently requests an interview and makes it easy to respond.

To add to your staff an industrious, well-trained administrative assistant with proven word processing and communication skills, call me at (350) 492-1433 to arrange an interview. I look forward to meeting with you to further discuss my qualifications.

Please allow me to discuss my qualifications for the financial analyst position more fully in an interview. You can reach me at (213) 458-4030. Next week, after you have examined the enclosed résumé, I will call you to discuss the possibility of arranging an interview.

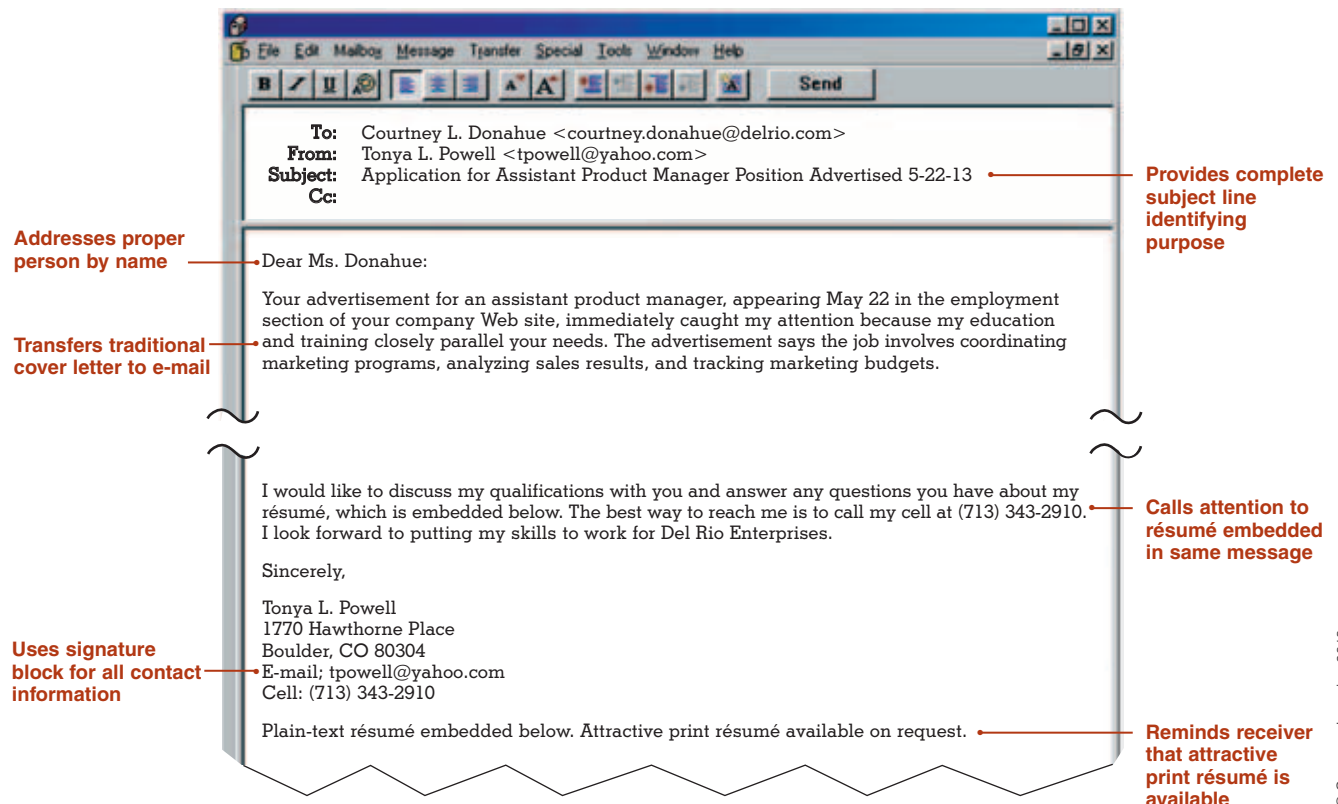
Sending Your Cover Letter

More than 90 percent of résumés at Fortune 500 companies arrive by e-mail or are submitted through the corporate Web site.⁴³ Many applicants using technology make the mistake of not including cover letters with their résumés submitted by e-mail or by fax. A résumé that arrives without a cover letter makes the receiver wonder what it is and why it was sent. Recruiters want you to introduce yourself, and they also are eager to see some evidence that you can write. Some candidates either skip the cover letter or think they can get by with one-line cover letters such as this: *Please see attached résumé, and thanks for your consideration.*

If you are serious about landing the job, take the time to prepare a professional cover letter. If you are sending your résumé by e-mail, you may use the same cover letter you would send by postal mail but shorten it a bit. As illustrated in Figure 13.14, an inside address is unnecessary for an e-mail recipient. Also, move your return address from the top of the letter to just below your name. Include your e-mail address and phone number. Remove tabs, bullets, underlining, and italics that might be problematic in e-mail messages. If you are submitting your résumé by fax, send the same cover letter you would send by postal mail. If you are submitting your résumé as a PDF file, do the same for your cover letter.

Serious job candidates send a professional cover letter even if the résumé is submitted online, by e-mail, or by fax.

FIGURE 13.14 E-Mail Cover Letter



Look for ways to reduce the overuse of *I*.

OFFICE INSIDER

"Unless you are applying for a position as a snake charmer, the following opening line from an actual cover letter will definitely nix your chances of winning an interview: 'I have seven years of expertise as an international press editor, proven journalism skills, and excellent writhing skills.'"

—Patrick Beausoleil,
Bouma Construction
Company

Final Tips for Successful Cover Letters

As you revise your cover letter, notice how many sentences begin with *I*. Although it is impossible to talk about yourself without using *I*, you can reduce “I” domination with this writing technique. Make activities and outcomes, and not yourself, the subjects of sentences. For example, rather than *I took classes in business communication and computer applications*, say *Classes in business communication and computer applications prepared me to . . .* Instead of *I enjoyed helping customers*, say *Helping customers was a real pleasure*.

Because the beginning of a sentence is a prominent position, avoid starting sentences with *I* whenever possible. Use the “you” view (*You are looking for a hardworking team player . . .*), or try opening with phrases that de-emphasize you, the writer—for example, *All through college, I worked full time at . . .* Above all, strive for a comfortable style. In your effort to avoid sounding self-centered, don’t write unnaturally.

Like the résumé, your cover letter must look professional and suggest quality. This means using a traditional letter style, such as block or modified block. Also, be sure to print it on the same quality paper as your résumé. As with your résumé, proofread it several times yourself; then have a friend read it for content and mechanics. Don’t rely on spell-check to find all the errors. Just like your résumé, your cover letter must be perfect.



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- Flash Cards

Summing Up and Looking Forward

In today’s competitive job market, an employment search begins with identifying your interests, evaluating your qualifications, and choosing a career path. Finding the perfect job will mean a concentrated effort devoted to searching online job listings, checking classified advertisements, and networking. In applying for jobs, you will want to submit a customized, persuasive résumé that advertises your skills and experience. Whether you choose a chronological or a functional résumé style, you should tailor your assets to fit the position sought. If you think your

résumé might be scanned, emphasize keywords and keep the format simple. A persuasive cover letter should introduce your résumé and describe how your skills and experiences match those required.

Now, if your résumé and cover letter have been successful, you will proceed to the employment interview, one of life’s most nerve-wracking experiences. The last chapter in this book provides helpful suggestions for successful interviewing and follow-up communication.

Critical Thinking

1. In regard to hiring, conventional wisdom holds that it’s all about whom you know. How can job candidates find an insider to refer them for a job opening?
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of using video résumés and other creative but unconventional job-application strategies.
3. Why is searching for a job both exhilarating and intimidating? How can you overcome feelings of intimidation?
4. Is it easier to search for a job by visiting online job boards or by networking? Which method do you think is more successful?
5. **Ethical Issue:** Job candidate Karen is an older job seeker who is worried that her age will hurt her during her job search. While preparing her résumé, she has decided to omit the year she graduated from college and to leave off several positions she held earlier in her career so that she will appear younger to recruiters. Is what she is doing unethical?