Three decades ago when he was president, Gerald Ford spoke about the importance of communication skills. If he had a second chance at college, he said, he’d concentrate on learning to write and learning to speak. Today, communication is even more important and more challenging than in President Ford’s time. We live in an information age that revolves around communication.

Developing excellent communication skills is extremely important to your future career. Surveys of employers often show that communication skills are critical to effective job placement, performance, career advancement, and organizational success.1 In making hiring decisions, employers often rank communication skills among the most requested competencies. Many job advertisements specifically 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 in applicants.2 Another survey of managers and executives ranked the skills most lacking in job candidates, and writing skills topped that list.3

Gerald R. Ford, 38th President of the United States
Writing Skills and Professionalism Lead to Success

Writing skills are particularly important today because technological advances enable us to transmit messages more rapidly, more often, and to greater numbers of people than ever before. Writing skills, which were always a career advantage, are now a necessity. They can be your ticket to work—or your ticket out the door, according to a business executive responding to a recent survey. This survey of 120 American corporations, by the National Commission on Writing, a panel established by the College Board, found that two thirds of salaried employees have some writing responsibility. Yet, about one third of them do not meet the writing requirements for their positions.

"Businesses are crying out—they need to have people who write better," said Gaston Caperton, executive and College Board president. 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 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 salaried positions. But writing skills are also important for nonsalaried workers such as electricians, engineers, technicians, and supervisors, who must create reports for government agencies and regulatory bodies. Even hourly workers must be able to communicate to exchange messages.

Lamenting the sorry state of business writing skills, a front-page article in The New York Times announced, "What Corporate America Can't Build: A Sentence." Quoted in the article, Susan Trainman, a director of the Business Roundtable, an association of leading chief executives, said, "It's not that companies want to hire Tolstoy." They aren't seeking spellbinding authors; they just want people who can write clearly and concisely. Because so many lack these skills, businesses are spending as much as $3.1 billion annually on remedial training.

In addition to expecting employees to write clearly, businesses expect employees to act in a businesslike and professional manner on the job. Some new-hires
have no idea that excessive absenteeism or tardiness are grounds for termination. Others are surprised to learn that they are expected to devote their full attention to their duties when on the job. One young man wanted to read Harry Potter novels when things got slow. Even more employees don’t realize that they are sabotaging their careers when they sprinkle their conversation with *like*, *you know*, and uptalk (making declarative statements sound like questions). Companies are reluctant to promote people into management who do not look or sound credible. Figure 1.1 reviews six areas you will want to check to be sure you are not sending the wrong message with unwitting or unprofessional behavior.

**FIGURE 1.1**

- **Projecting Professionalism When You Communicate**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech habits</th>
<th>Unprofessional</th>
<th>Professional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaking in <em>uptalk</em>, a singsong speech pattern that has a rising inflection making sentences sound like questions. Using <em>like</em> to fill in mindless chatter, substituting <em>go for said</em>, relying on slang, or letting profanity slip into your conversation.</td>
<td>Recognizing that your credibility can be seriously damaged by sounding uneducated, crude, or like a teenager.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>Writing messages with incomplete sentences, misspelled words, exclamation points, IM slang, and mindless 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.</td>
<td>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-mail messages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>Using an e-mail address such as <a href="mailto:hotbabe@hotmail.com">hotbabe@hotmail.com</a>, <a href="mailto:supasnugglykitty@yahoo.com">supasnugglykitty@yahoo.com</a>, or <a href="mailto:buffedguy@aol.com">buffedguy@aol.com</a>.</td>
<td>An e-mail address that is your name or a relevant, positive, businesslike expression. It should not sound cute or like a chat room nickname.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answering machine/voice mail</td>
<td>An outgoing message with strident background music, weird sounds, or a joke message.</td>
<td>An outgoing message that states your name or phone number and provides instructions for leaving a message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>Soap operas, thunderous music, or a TV football game playing noisily in the background when you answer the phone.</td>
<td>A quiet background when you answer the telephone, especially if you are expecting a prospective employer’s call.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell phone</td>
<td>Taking or placing cell phone calls during business meetings or during conversations with fellow employees. Raising your voice (cell yell) or engaging in cell calls when others must reluctantly overhear.</td>
<td>Never letting a cell phone interrupt business meetings. Using your cell only when conversations can be private.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using This Book to Build Career Communication Skills

This book focuses on developing basic writing skills. You will, however, also learn to improve your listening, nonverbal, and speaking skills. The abilities to read, listen, speak, and write effectively, of course, are not inborn. When it comes to communication, it’s more nurture than nature. Good communicators are not born; they are made. Thriving in the dynamic and demanding new world of work will depend on many factors, some of which you cannot control. One factor that you do control, however, is how well you communicate.

The goal of this book is to teach you basic business communication skills. These 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’ll 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’ve designed this book, its supplements, and two Web sites (http://guffeyextra.swlearning.com and http://guffey.swlearning.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 huge sums to communication coaches and trainers to teach employees the very skills that you are learning in this course. Your coach is your instructor. So, get your money’s worth! Pick your instructor’s brains.

With this book as your guide and your instructor as your coach, you may find this course to be the most important in your entire college curriculum. To get started, this first chapter presents an overview. You’ll take a quick look at the changing workplace, the communication process, listening, nonverbal communication, culture and communication, and workplace diversity. The remainder of the book is devoted to developing specific writing and speaking skills.

Succeeding in the Changing World of Work

The world of work is changing dramatically. The kind of work you’ll do, the tools you’ll use, the form of management you’ll work under, the environment in which you’ll work, the people with whom you’ll interact—all are undergoing a pronounced transformation. Many of the changes in this dynamic workplace revolve around processing and communicating information. As a result, the most successful players in this new world of work will be those with highly developed communication skills. The following business trends illustrate the importance of excellent communication skills.

- **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.

- **More participatory management.** Gone are the days of command-and-control management. Now, even new employees like you will be expected to understand and contribute to the big picture. Improving productivity and profitability will be everyone’s job, not just management’s.

- **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.
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 efficient and productive in or away from the office. We’re seeing a gradual progression from basic capabilities, such as e-mail and calendaring, to deeper functionality, such as remote database access and worldwide videoconferencing. Becoming familiar with modern workplace and collaboration technologies can help you be successful in today’s digital workplace.

**IP Telephony: VoIP**

Savvy businesses are switching from traditional phone service to Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This technology allows callers to make telephone calls using a broadband Internet connection, thus eliminating long-distance and local telephone charges.

**Wireless Networks and Wi-Fi**

No longer are computers and workers chained to their desks. Wireless networks use radio waves to send signals and connect to the Internet. Combined with high-speed broadband connections, these networks have fueled the increasing use of laptop computers and portable devices. Public Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity) “hot spots” provide free connections that further expand the range of laptops, PDAs (personal digital assistants), and handheld devices such as the BlackBerry and the Treo. Wireless networks enable business communicators to work anywhere, anytime, and still remain connected to office e-mail, company files, and programs such as Word and Excel.

**Company Intranets**

To share insider information, many companies provide their own protected Web site called an intranet. It 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.

**Electronic Presentations**

Business presenters load a slide presentation onto a laptop PC or PDA for handy electronic presentations in rooms equipped with projectors. Sophisticated presentations may include animations, sound effects, digital photos, video clips, or even hyperlinks to Internet sites.

**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.
Global competition, expanding markets, and the ever-increasing pace of business accelerate the development of exciting collaboration tools. Employees working together may be down the hall, across the country, or around the world. With today's tools, workers 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.

**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 an enhanced speakerphone to talk and be heard simultaneously.

**Web Conferencing**

With services such as WebEx and Live Meeting, all you need are a PC and an Internet connection to hold a meeting. Although the functions of Web conferencing (also called desktop or media conferencing) are constantly evolving, it currently incorporates screen sharing, voice communication, slide presentations, text messaging, and application sharing (e.g., participants can work on a spreadsheet together).

**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 worlds 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.

**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, you can videoconference without a computer or a television screen.

**One-Number Dialing**

Smart phones switch seamlessly between cellular networks and corporate Wi-Fi connections allowing employees to take their phones around corporate campuses, into their homes, or on the road. One-number dialing reduces frustration and wasted time.

**Presence Technology**

Responding to the demand for immediate communication, “presence awareness” builds on instant messaging. In a presence-enabled workplace, you would know whether to contact someone via voice, e-mail, or instant messaging. This awareness avoids time wasted in voice mailboxes and waiting for e-mail responses. A light on your telephone might indicate when key people on your team are present on your internal phone network. Still being developed, presence technology is built on Session Initiation Protocol (SIP).
• **Heightened global competition.** Because American companies are moving beyond local markets, you may be interacting with people from many different cultures. As a successful business communicator, you will want to learn about other cultures. You'll also need to develop multicultural skills including sensitivity, flexibility, patience, and tolerance.

• **Innovative communication technologies.** E-mail, fax, instant messaging, text messaging, the Web, mobile technologies, audio- and videoconferencing, company intranets, and voice recognition—all these innovative technologies are reshaping the way we communicate at work, as summarized in Figure 1.2. You can expect to be communicating more often and more rapidly than ever before. Your writing and speaking skills will be showcased as never before.

• **New work environments.** Mobile technologies and the desire for a better balance between work and family have resulted in flexible working arrangements. You may become part of an increasing number of workers who are telecommuters or virtual team members. Working as a telecommuter or virtual team member requires even more communication, because staying connected with the office or with one another means exchanging many messages. Another work environment trend is the movement toward open offices divided into small work cubicles. Working in a cubicle requires new rules of office etiquette and civility.

• **Focus on information and knowledge as corporate assets.** Corporate America is increasingly aware that information is the key to better products and increased profitability. You will be expected to gather, sort, store, and disseminate data in a timely and accurate fashion. This is the new way of business life.

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### EXAMINING THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

As you can see, you can expect to be communicating more rapidly, more often, and with greater numbers of people than ever before. The most successful players in this new world of work will be those with highly developed communication skills. 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 1.3.

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, spoken word, fax, or other channel. Because both verbal and nonverbal messages are carried, 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 a telephone conversation to spelling errors in an e-mail message. Such errors damage the credibility of the sender.

4. **Receiver decodes 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 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 . . .*

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**DEVELOPING BETTER 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’re 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 percent efficiency. Such poor listening habits are costly in business. Letters 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.

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's 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’s also difficult to listen if you’re ill, tired, uncomfortable, or worried.

  - **Psychological barriers.** Everyone brings to the communication process a different 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 hear.

  - **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 abortion or overdose 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, 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 more than three times faster than speakers can say them, we can become bored and allow our minds to wander.

Observers have suggested that the best communication tools are ears.

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

The better a businessperson listens to a customer, the better she or he will be at fulfilling expectations, resolving disputes, reducing uncertainty, and projecting goodwill. Any employee listening to a customer should learn to defer judgment, pay attention to content rather than surface issues, focus on main ideas, and avoid replying to sidetracking issues.
• **Faking attention.** Most of us have learned to look as if we are listening even when we're 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 practice faked 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're just waiting politely for the next pause so that we can have our turn to speak.

### Tips for Becoming an Active Listener

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 techniques 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, unplug your iPod, and move away from loud people, noisy appliances, or engines. Choose a quiet time and place for listening.

- **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’s hard work but good exercise to stretch and expand the limits of your mind.

- **Keep an open mind.** We all sift and filter information through 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’s 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 as well as 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.
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 expression, 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? Do crossed arms mean defensiveness? Withdrawal? Or do crossed arms just mean that a person is shivering?

Messages are even harder to decipher when the verbal codes and nonverbal cues do not agree. What will you think if Scott says he’s 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.

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

Successful communicators recognize the power of nonverbal messages. Although it’s unwise to attach specific meanings to gestures or actions, some cues broadcast by body language are helpful in understanding the feelings and attitudes of senders.

**How the Eyes, Face, and Body Send Silent Messages**

Words seldom tell the whole story. Indeed, some messages are sent with no words at all. 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.

**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. 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 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’s OK. But in Germany and 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 videotape yourself making a presentation. Then study your performance. This way you can make sure your nonverbal cues send the same message as your words.

How 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 personality and attitudes. For example, when Donald Trump, multimillionaire real estate developer, 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. The way office furniture is arranged sends cues on how communication is to take place. Former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover used to make his visitors sit at a small table below his large, elevated desk. Clearly, he did not want office visitors to feel equal to him.

TERRITORY
Each of us has a certain area that we feel is our own territory, whether it’s 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 his or her 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 1.4 illustrates the four zones of social interaction among Americans, as formulated by anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Notice that Americans are a bit standoffish; only intimate friends and family may stand closer than about 1½ feet. If someone violates that territory, Americans feel uncomfortable and defensive and may step back to reestablish their space.

How Appearance Sends Silent Messages

The physical appearance of a business document, as well as the personal appearance of an individual, transmits immediate and important nonverbal messages.
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.

FIGURE 1.4

- Four Space Zones for Social Interaction

| Intimate Zone (1 to 1½ feet) | Personal Zone (1½ to 4 feet) | Social Zone (4 to 12 feet) | Public Zone (12 or more feet) |

APPEARANCE OF BUSINESS DOCUMENTS

The way a letter, memo, or report looks can have either a positive or a negative effect on the receiver. Sloppy e-mail messages send a nonverbal message that says you are in a terrific hurry or that the receiver is not important enough for you to care. 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’ll learn how to create 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 T-shirt, I don’t stand a chance.” As a businessperson, you’ll 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’ll learn more about professional attire and behavior in later chapters.

Tips for Improving Your 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 communication 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 videotape.** Ensure that your verbal and nonverbal messages are in sync by taping and evaluating yourself making a presentation.

• **Enlist friends and family.** Ask them to monitor your conscious and unconscious body movements and gestures to help you become a more effective communicator.

### UNDERSTANDING HOW CULTURE AFFECTS COMMUNICATION

Comprehending the verbal and nonverbal meanings of a message is difficult even when communicators are from the same culture. But when they are 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. Yet, cultural differences can still cause significant misunderstandings.

Comparing traditional North American values with those in other cultures will broaden your worldview. This comparison should also help you recognize some of the values that influence your actions and affect your opinions of others.

### Comparing Key Cultural Values

Until relatively recently, typical North Americans shared the same broad cultural values. Some experts identified them as “Anglo” or “mainstream” values. These values largely represented white, male, Northern European views. Women and many minorities now entering the workforce may eventually modify these values. However, a majority of North Americans are still governed by these mainstream values.

Although North American culture is complex, we’ll focus on four dimensions to help you better understand some of the values that shape your actions and judgments of others. These four dimensions are individualism, formality, communication style, and time orientation.

### INDIVIDUALISM

One of the most identifiable characteristics of North Americans is their *individualism*. This is an attitude of independence and freedom from control. They think that initiative and self-assertion result in personal achievement. They believe in individual action, self-reliance, and personal responsibility; and they desire a large degree of freedom in their personal lives. Other cultures emphasize membership in organizations, groups, and teams; they encourage acceptance of group values, duties, and decisions. Members of these cultures typically resist independence because it fosters competition and confrontation instead of consensus.
FORMALITY

A second significant dimension of North American culture is our attitude toward formality. Americans place less emphasis on tradition, ceremony, and social rules than do people in some other cultures. They dress casually and are soon on a first-name basis with others. Their lack of formality is often characterized by directness. In business dealings North Americans tend to come to the point immediately; indirectness, they feel, wastes time, a valuable commodity.

COMMUNICATION STYLE

A third important dimension of our culture relates to 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.” North Americans also tend to be uncomfortable with silence and impatient with delays. What’s more, they tend to use and understand words literally. Latinos, on the other hand, enjoy plays on words; Arabs and South Americans sometimes speak with extravagant or poetic figures of speech (such as “the Mother of all battles”).

TIME ORIENTATION

A fourth dimension of our culture relates to time orientation. North Americans consider time a precious commodity to be conserved. 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. Being late for an appointment is not a grievous sin.

Figure 1.5 compares a number of cultural values for U.S. Americans, Japanese, and Arabs. Notice that belonging, group harmony, and collectiveness are very important to Japanese people, while family matters rank highest with Arabs. As we become aware of the vast differences in cultural values illustrated in Figure 1.5, we can better understand why communication barriers develop and how misunderstandings occur in cross-cultural interactions.

Controlling Ethnocentrism and Stereotyping

The process of understanding and accepting 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 just described 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. 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 among people from other cultures demands tolerance and flexible attitudes. As global markets expand and as our society becomes increasingly multietnic, 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 having sympathy for and appreciating beliefs and practices different from our own.

One of the best ways to develop tolerance is by practicing *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.” It includes the ability to accept others’ contributions in solving problems in a culturally appropriate manner. When Kal Kan Foods began courting the pet owners of Japan, for example, an Asian advisor suggested that the meat chunks in its Pedigree dog food be cut into perfect little squares. Why? Japanese pet owners feed their dogs piece by piece with chopsticks. Instead of insisting on what “should be” (feeding dogs chunky meat morsels), Kal Kan solved the problem by looking at it from another cultural point of view (providing neat small squares).15

The following tips provide specific suggestions for preventing miscommunication in oral and written transactions across cultures.

**Tips for Minimizing Oral Miscommunication Among Cross-Cultural Audiences**

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

- **Use simple English.** Speak in short sentences (under 20 words) with familiar, short words. Eliminate puns, sports 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 blame 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.

• Remember to smile! Roger Axtell, international behavior expert, calls the smile the single most understood and most useful form of communication in either personal or business transactions.

• Follow up in writing. After conversations or oral negotiations, confirm the results and agreements with follow-up letters. For proposals and contracts, engage a translator to prepare copies in the local language.

Tips for Minimizing Written Miscommunication Among Cross-Cultural 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 translator if (1) your document is important, (2) your document will be distributed to many readers, or (3) 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 like 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).

• Cite numbers carefully. For international trade it’s 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, 2006, might be written as 3/5/06, while in Europe the same date might appear as 5.3.06. For clarity, always spell out the month.

CAPITALIZING ON WORKFORCE 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. Nearly 85 percent of the new entrants to the workforce will be women, minorities, and immigrants, according to estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. By 2012 groups now considered minorities (African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and others) will make up 34 percent of the workforce. Nearly half (48 percent) of all workers will be women, and more than 19 percent will be fifty-five years or older.¹⁶

While the workforce is becoming more diverse, the structure of many businesses in North America is also changing. As you learned earlier, many workers are now organized by teams. Organizations are flatter, and rank-and-file workers are increasingly making decisions among themselves. What does all this 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.

A diverse work environment, however, has many benefits. Consumers want to deal with companies that respect their values and create products and services tailored to their needs. Organizations that hire employees with different experiences and backgrounds are better able to create the different products that these consumers desire. In addition, businesses with diverse workforces suffer fewer discrimination lawsuits, fewer union clashes, and less government regulatory action. That’s why a growing number of companies view today’s diversity movement as a critical bottom-line business strategy. Organizations such as PepsiCo, UPS, Nike, Reebok, and Enterprise Rent-a-Car want employees who speak the same language, literally and figuratively, as their customers.¹⁷ These organizations are convinced that it improves employee relationships and increases business.

**Tips for Effective Communication With Diverse Workplace Audiences**

Capitalizing on workplace diversity is an enormous challenge for most organizations and individuals. Harmony and acceptance do not follow automatically when people who are dissimilar work together. The following suggestions can help you become a more effective communicator as you enter a rapidly evolving workplace with ethnically diverse colleagues and clients.

- **Understand the value of differences.** Diversity makes an organization innovative and creative. Sameness fosters groupthink, an absence of critical thinking sometimes found in homogeneous groups. Case studies, for example, of the Kennedy administration’s decision to invade Cuba and of the Challenger
missile disaster suggest that groupthink prevented alternatives from being considered. Diversity in problem-solving groups encourages independent and creative thinking.

- **Don’t expect conformity.** Gone are the days when businesses could say, “This is our culture. Conform or leave.” The CEO of athletic shoemaker Reebok stressed seeking people who have new and different stories to tell. “It accomplishes next to nothing to employ those who are different from us if the condition of their employment is that they become the same as us. For it is their differences that enrich us, expand us, provide us the competitive edge.”

- **Create zero tolerance for bias and stereotypes.** Cultural patterns exist in every identity group, but applying these patterns to individuals results in stereotyping. Assuming that African Americans are good athletes, that women are poor at math, that French Canadians excel at hockey, or that European American men are insensitive fails to admit the immense differences in people in each group. Check your own use of stereotypes and labels. Don’t tell sexist or ethnic jokes at meetings. Avoid slang, abbreviations, and jargon that imply stereotypes. Challenge others’ stereotypes politely but firmly.

- **Practice focused, thoughtful, and open-minded listening.** Much misunderstanding can be avoided by attentive listening. Listen for main points; take notes if necessary to remember important details. The most important part of listening, especially among diverse communicators, is judging ideas, not appearances or accents.

- **Invite, use, and give feedback.** As you learned earlier, a critical element in successful communication is feedback. You can encourage it by asking questions such as *Is there anything you don’t understand?* When a listener or receiver responds, use that feedback to adjust your delivery of information. Does the receiver need more details? A different example? Slower delivery? As a good listener, you should also be prepared to give feedback. For example, summarize your understanding of what was said or agreed on.

- **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 Chinese 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.

- **Learn about your cultural self.** Knowing your own cultural biases helps you become more objective and adaptable. Begin to recognize the stock reactions and thought patterns that are automatic to you as a result of your upbringing. Become more aware of your own values and beliefs so that you will recognize them when you are confronted by differing values.

- **Learn about other cultures and identity groups.** People are naturally threatened by the unknown. Consider the following proverb: “I saw in the distance what I took to be a beast, but when I came close, I saw it was my brother and my sister.” The same error occurs in communities and work groups. From a distance an unknown person may appear to be threatening. But when the person is recognized or better known, our reactions change. Learning more about diverse groups and individuals helps you reduce the threat of the unknown.

- **Seek common ground.** Look for areas where you and others not like you can agree or share opinions. Be prepared to consider issues from many perspectives, all of which may be valid. Accept that there is room for different points of view to coexist peacefully. Although you can always find differences, it’s 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.
Chapter 1 Building Your Career Success With Communication Skills

SUMMING UP AND LOOKING FORWARD

This chapter described the importance of becoming an effective business communicator in this information economy. Many of the changes in today’s dynamic workplace revolve around processing and communicating information. Flattened management hierarchies, participatory management, increased emphasis on work teams, heightened global competition, and innovative communication technologies 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 the powerful effect that culture has on communication, and you became more aware of key cultural values for North Americans. Finally, the chapter discussed ways that businesses and individuals can capitalize on 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. John Bryan, the highly respected former CEO of Sara Lee, recognized this when he said that communication skills are “about 99 percent developed.” Bryan contended that “the ability to construct a succinct memo, one that concentrates on the right issues, and the ability to make a presentation to an audience—these are skills that can be taught to almost anyone.”

Remember that writing skills 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.

CRITICAL THINKING

1. Why is it important for business and professional students to develop good communication skills, and why is it difficult or impossible to do without help?
2. Recall a time when you experienced a problem as a result of poor communication. What were the causes of and possible remedies for the problem?
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. Because English is becoming the world’s language and because the United States is a dominant military and trading force, why should Americans bother to learn about other cultures?

CHAPTER REVIEW

6. Are communication skills acquired by nature or by nurture? Explain.

7. List seven trends in the workplace that affect business communicators. Be prepared to discuss how they might affect you in your future career.
8. Give a brief definition of the following words:
   a. Encode
   b. Channel
   c. Decode

9. List 11 techniques for improving your listening skills. Be prepared to discuss each.

10. What is nonverbal communication? Give several examples.

11. Name five unprofessional communication techniques that can sabotage a career.

12. Describe the concept of North American individualism. How does this concept set North Americans apart from people in some other cultures?

13. What is ethnocentrism, and how can it be reduced?

14. List seven suggestions for enhancing comprehension when you are talking with people for whom English is a second language. Be prepared to discuss each.

15. List at least eight suggestions for becoming a more effective communicator in a diverse workplace. Be prepared to discuss each.
EXPAND YOUR LEARNING WITH THESE BONUS RESOURCES!

Guffey Companion Web Site
http://guffey.swlearning.com
Your companion Web site offers review quizzes, a glossary of key terms, and flash cards to build your knowledge of chapter concepts. Additional career tools include Dr. Guffey’s Guide to Business Etiquette and Workplace Manners, Listening Quiz, and electronic citation formats (MLA and APA) for business writers. You’ll also find updated links to all chapter URLs.

Guffey Xtra!
http://guffeyxtra.swlearning.com
This online study assistant illustrates chapter concepts in PowerPoint. It strengthens your language skills with Your Personal Language Trainer (a grammar/mechanics review), Speak Right!, Spell Right!, and Sentence Competency Exercises. In addition, Guffey Xtra! brings you bonus online chapters: Employment and Other Interviewing and How to Write Instructions. You’ll also find the Grammar/Mechanics Challenge exercises so that you can revise without rekeying.

INFOTRAC COLLEGE EDITION

Building Knowledge and Research Skills
To excel as a knowledge worker in today’s digital workplace, you must know how to find and evaluate information on the Internet. As a student purchasing a new copy of Guffey’s Essentials of Business Communication, 7e, you have an extraordinary opportunity to develop these research skills. For four months you have special access to InfoTrac College Edition, a comprehensive Web-based collection of millions of journal, magazine, encyclopedia, and newspaper articles. You’ll find many activities and study questions in this text that help you build knowledge and develop research skills using InfoTrac. Watch for the InfoTrac icons. InfoTrac is available only with NEW copies of your textbook.

How to Use InfoTrac
With your Web browser on your computer screen, key the following URL: www.infotrac-college.com. Click Register New Account. Establish your logon name and password. (You may wish to read Thomson’s Privacy Policy). When you feel confident, go to the Keyword Search page and enter your search term. If you need a little help, click InfoTrac Demo.

ACTIVITIES AND CASES

1.1 Pumping Up Your Basic Language Muscles With Xtra!
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-teaching, which means you can review at your own pace and repeat as often as you need. Your Personal Language Trainer is available to you at http://guffeyxtra.swlearning.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 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.
1.2 Getting To Know You
Because today’s work and class environments often involve cooperating in teams or small groups, getting to know your fellow classmates is important. To learn something about the people in this class and to give you practice in developing your communication skills, your instructor may choose one of the following activities:

Your Task

a. For larger classes, divide into groups of four or five. Take one minute to introduce yourself briefly (name, major interest, hobbies, goals) within your group. Spend five minutes in the first group session. Record the first name of each individual you meet. Then informally regroup. In new groups again spend five minutes on introductions. After three or four sessions, study your name list. How many names can you associate with faces?

b. For smaller classes, introduce yourself in a two-minute oral presentation while standing before the class at the rostrum. Where are you from? What are your educational goals? What are your interests? What do you expect from this class? This informal presentation may serve as the first of two or three oral presentations correlated with Chapter 12.

c. For online classes, write a letter of introduction about yourself answering the questions in (b). 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.

1.3 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 message to your instructor briefly describing your observations. (See Chapter 5 to learn more about memos.)

1.4 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 http://guffey.swlearning.com. What two listening behaviors do you think you need to work on the most?

1.5 Finding Relevant Listening Advice
Your manager, Rasheed Love, has been asked to be part of a panel discussion at a management conference. The topic is “Workplace Communication Challenges,” and his area of expertise is listening. He asks you to help him prepare for the discussion by doing some research.

Your Task. Using an InfoTrac subject search, locate at least three articles with suggestions for improving workplace listening skills. Use full-text articles, not abstracts. In a memo to Rasheed Love, present a two- to three-sentence summary explaining why each article is helpful. Include the author’s name, publication, date of publication, and page number. Then list at least ten listening suggestions. See Chapter 5 for memo format. Begin your memo with a sentence such as, “As you requested, I found three articles on listening techniques. After discussing the articles, I will present a list with the most helpful suggestions.”

1.6 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 a memo to your instructor.
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?

a. Whistling, wringing hands
b. Bowed posture, twiddling thumbs
c. Steepled hands, sprawling sitting position
d. Rubbing hand through hair
e. Open hands, unbuttoned coat
f. Wringing hands, tugging ears

1.8 Universal Sign For “I Goofed”
In an effort to promote peace and tranquillity on the highways, motorists submitted the following suggestions to a newspaper columnist.22

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

a. 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.”
b. Make a temple with your hands, as if you were praying.
c. Move the index finger of your right hand back and forth across your neck—as if you were cutting your throat.
d. Flash the well-known peace sign. Hold up the index and middle fingers of one hand, making a V, as in Victory.
e. Place the flat of your hands against your cheeks, as children do when they’ve made a mistake.
f. Clasp your hand over your mouth, raise your brows, and shrug your shoulders.
g. Use your knuckles to knock on the side of your head. Translation: “Oops! Engage brain.”
h. Place your right hand high on your chest and pat a few times, like a basketball player who drops a pass or a football player who makes a bad throw. This says, “I’ll take the blame.”
i. 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.”
j. Open your window and tap the top of your car roof with your hand.
k. Smile and raise both arms, palms outward, which is a universal gesture for surrender or forgiveness.
l. Use the military salute, which is simple and shows respect.
m. 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.”

1.9 Alice In Wonderland Travels to Tokyo
Jeff Davis is the leader of a creative team representing a large American theme park company. The owners of a Japanese park rely on the American company to develop new attractions for their Tokyo park. But the Japanese own their park and must approve any new addition. Jeff and his team recently traveled to Japan to make an important presentation to the owners. His team had worked for the past year developing the concept of an outdoor garden maze with a network of hedge passageways for children to wander through. The concept was based on Alice in Wonderland.

The jobs of Jeff’s entire team depended on selling the idea of this new attraction (including restaurants and gift shops) to the owners of the Tokyo park. Because the Japanese smiled and nodded throughout the presentation, Jeff assumed they liked the idea. When he pushed for final approval, the Japanese smiled and said that an outdoor garden attraction might be difficult in their climate. Jeff explained away that argument. Then, he asked for a straightforward yes or no, but the Japanese answered, “We will have to study it very carefully.” Thinking he had not made himself clear, Jeff began to review the strong points of the presentation.
Your Task. Analyze the preceding cross-cultural incident. What cultural elements may be interfering with communication in this exchange?

1.10 Cross-Cultural Gap At Resort Hotel In Thailand

The Laguna Beach Resort Hotel in Phuket, Thailand, nestled between a tropical lagoon and the sparkling Andaman Sea, is one of the most beautiful resorts in the world. Fortunately, it was spared serious damage from the region’s tidal waves. (You can take a virtual tour by using Google and searching for “Laguna Beach Resort Phuket.”) When Brett Peel arrived as the director of the hotel’s kitchen, he thought he had landed in paradise. Only on the job six weeks, he began wondering why his Thai staff would answer yes even when they didn’t understand what he had said. Other foreign managers discovered that junior staff managers rarely spoke up and never expressed an opinion contrary to those of senior executives. What’s more, guests with a complaint thought that Thai employees were not taking them seriously because the Thais smiled at even the worst complaints. Thais also did not seem to understand deadlines or urgent requests.

Your Task. In teams decide how you would respond to the following. If you were the director of this hotel, would you implement a training program for employees? If so, would you train only foreign managers, or would you include local Thai employees as well? What topics should a training program include? Would your goal be to introduce Western ways to the Thais? At least 90 percent of the hotel guests are non-Thai.

1.11 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 people for whom English is a second language.

a. class act
b. grey area
c. cold shoulder
d. eager beaver
e. early bird
f. get your act together
g. go ape
h. go behind someone’s back
i. the bottom of the barrel

1.12 Analyzing Diversity At Reebok

Reebok grew from a $12 million a year sport shoe company into a $3 billion footwear and apparel powerhouse without giving much thought to the hiring of employees. “When we were growing very, very fast, all we did was bring another friend into work the next day,” recalled Sharon Cohen, Reebok vice president. “Everybody hired nine of their friends. Well, it happened that nine white people hired nine of their friends, so guess what? They were white, all about the same age. And then we looked up and said, ‘Wait a minute. We don’t like the way it looks here.’ That’s the kind of thing that can happen when you are growing very fast and thoughtlessly.

Your Task. In what ways would Reebok benefit by diversifying its staff? What competitive advantages might it gain? Outline your reasoning in an e-mail message to your instructor.

VIDEO RESOURCES

Two special sets of videos accompany Guffey’s Essentials of Business Communication, 7e. 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 Communication Skills, presents five 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 Yahoo, Ben & Jerry’s, and Zubi Advertising. You’ll 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 two videos for this chapter:**

*Career Success Starts With Communication Foundations.* This film, made especially for Guffey books, 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.

*Erasing Stereotypes: Zubi Advertising.* This film features a successful businessperson who used her knowledge of Hispanic culture to build an advertising company that creates ads appealing to the Hispanic American market. Despite the obstacles of being a female and a Cuban in Miami, Teresa Zubizarreta created a hugely successful advertising agency. With headquarters in Miami and satellite offices in Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Detroit, and New York, Teresa Zubizarreta and her 70-person team work to craft precise messages aimed at Hispanic audiences. Your instructor may ask you to watch for specific information as you view this film.

**Grammar/Mechanics Checkup—1**

These checkups are designed to improve your control of grammar and mechanics. They systematically review all sections of the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook. Answers are provided near the end of the book. You will find Advanced Grammar/Mechanics Checkups with immediate feedback at Guffey Xtra! (http://guffeyxtra.swlearning.com).

**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. If your answers differ, study carefully the principles shown in parentheses.

**Example**

Attorneys seem to be the only ones who benefit from class action suits.

1. Some companies are giving up land lines and using cell phones exclusively.
2. Business is better on Saturday’s than on Sundays.
3. Some of the cities in Craig’s report offer excellent opportunities.
4. Frozen chickens and turkeys are kept in the company’s lockers.
5. All secretaries were asked to check supplies and other inventorys.
6. Only the Bushs and the Sanchezes brought their entire families.
7. In the 1990s profits grew rapidly; in the late 2000’s investments soared.
8. Both editor in chiefs instituted strict proofreading policies.
9. Luxury residential complexes are part of the architect’s plan.
10. Voters in three countys are likely to approve new gas taxes.
11. The instructor was surprised to find two Cassidy’s in one class.
12. André sent digital photos of two valleys in France before we planned our trip.
13. Most companies have copies of statements showing their assets and liabilitys.
14. My flat-screen monitor makes it difficult to distinguish between o’s and a’s.
15. Both runner-ups complained about the winner’s behavior.
The following memo has many faults in grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, word use, and number form. Correct the errors with standard proofreading marks (see Appendix B) or revise the message online at Guffey Xtra! Study the guidelines in the Grammar/Mechanics Handbook to sharpen your skills. When you finish, your instructor can show you the revised version of this memo.

TO: Jocelyn Smith-Garcia  
FROM: Kevin West, Manager  
DATE: November 4, 200x  
SUBJECT: SUGGESTION FOR TELECOMMUTING SUCCESSFULLY

To help you become an effective telecommuter Jocelyn, we have a few suggestions to share with you. I understand you will be working at home for the next 9 months. The following guidelines should help you stay in touch with us, and complete your work satisfactory.

- Be sure to check your message board daily, and respond immediately 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 copies of relevant message’s to the appropriate officestaff.
- Transmit all spreadsheet work to Zachary Jackson in our computer services department, he will analyze each week’s activitys, and update all inventories.
- 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 your 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 Jocelyn. Following these basic guidelines should help you accomplish your work, and provide the office with adequate contact with you.

Communication Workshops (such as the one on the next page) provide insight into special business communication topics and skills not discussed in the chapters. These topics cover ethics, technology, career skills, and collaboration. Each workshop includes a career application with a case study or problem to help you develop skills relevant to the workshop topic.
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. Locating 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, using 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. Yet, the Web is an excellent place for any job seeker to learn what’s available, what qualifications are necessary, and what salaries are being offered. Thousands of job boards with many job listings for 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 <www.monster.com>, one of the most popular job boards.

• Study the opening page. Remember that most job boards are supported by advertisements. As a result, you might get a pop-up ad, which you should ignore. Close any pop-up boxes. From the opening page, click Find Jobs.

• Read More Search Tips. Before entering any keywords, it’s wise to spend a few moments learning how to search. Click More Search Tips for many helpful hints on precise searching. Browsing this information may take a few minutes, but it’s worth the effort. Scroll down to learn about safe job searching, keyword searching, location and company searching, and sorting and viewing your results. Close this box by clicking the X in the top right corner.

• Conduct a practice search. Back on the search page, enter a search term in the Enter Key Word(s) box. Skip the Enter Company Name box and then click a geographical area in the Select Location box. Just for fun, try “Honolulu, Hawaii.” In the Select Job Category box, select an appropriate term, such as Advertising or Accounting. Then press click Get Results. You should see many current job ads.

• Conduct a real search. Now conduct a job search in your career area and in geographical areas of your choice. Select three ads and print them. If you cannot print, make notes on what you find.

• Visit another site. Try www.CollegeRecruiter.com, which claims to be the highest-traffic entry-level job site for students and graduates, or 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. From the ads you printed, how often do they mention communication, teamwork, computer skills, or professionalism? What tasks do the ads mention? What is the salary range identified in these ads for this position? Your instructor may ask you to submit your findings and/or report to the class.