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# Chapter Guides

This section provides information about the chapters in the textbook and suggested solutions and answers for the activities. Each Chapter Guide includes the following items:

* Chapter outline
* Lecture notes, with the Learning Objective included for each major section in the chapter
* Answers to highlight box questions
* Answers to Test Your Knowledge questions
* Answers to Apply Your Knowledge questions
* Answers to Practice Your Skills activities

Example solutions to cases (complete example solutions for short-message cases; solution guidelines for long-message cases)

# Part 1: Understanding the Foundations of Business Communication

The first three chapters give students a general understanding of why good communication skills are important in business, how today’s communication is enhanced through technology (particularly the revolution in mobile communication), why effective interpersonal communication can be difficult, how communication is used in teams, and how it can overcome intercultural barriers. As you present this material, try to stimulate students to personalize basic concepts. Encourage them to think about their own careers and the communication skills they’ll need to be successful. Ask members of the class who have work experience to comment on the communication requirements and challenges they have encountered.

# Chapter 1: Professional Communication in a Digital, Social, Mobile World

Chapter 1 emphasizes the importance of effective communication, explains what it means to communicate in a professional context, describes the communication process model and the ways social media are changing the nature of business communication, outlines the effects of the mobile revolution, advises students on how to use communication technology effectively, and offers guidance for making ethical choices as a business communicator.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Understanding Why Communication Matters  
 Communication Is Important to Your Career  
 Communication Is Important to Your Company  
 What Makes Business Communication Effective?  
Communicating as a Professional  
 Understanding What Employers Expect from You  
 Communicating in an Organizational Context  
 Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach  
Exploring the Communication Process  
 The Basic Communication Model  
 Barriers in the Communication Environment  
 Inside the Mind of Your Audience  
 How Audiences Receive Messages  
 How Audiences Decode Messages  
 How Audiences Respond to Messages  
 The Social Communication Model  
The Mobile Revolution  
 The Rise of Mobile as a Communication Platform  
 How Mobile Technologies Are Changing Business Communication  
Using Technology to Improve Business Communication  
 Keeping Technology in Perspective  
 Guarding Against Information Overload   
 Using Technological Tools Productively  
 Reconnecting with People  
Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication  
 Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses  
 Ensuring Ethical Communication  
 Ensuring Legal Communication

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## LECTURE NOTES

**Section 1: Understanding Why Communication Matters**

*Learning Objective 1: Explain the importance of effective communication to your career and to the companies where you will work.*

Communication is the process of transferring information and meaning between *senders* and *receivers*, using some form of media transmitted through a communication channel.

The essence of communication is sharing—data, information, insights, and inspiration.

Communication Is Important to Your Career

Improving your communication skills may be the most important step you can take in your career.

Even great ideas won’t go anywhere without great communication.

As you take on leadership and management roles, communication becomes even more important.

The changing nature of employment is putting new pressure on communication skills, because you have to take responsibility for managing your own career.

If you learn to write well, speak well, listen well, and recognize the appropriate way to communicate in any situation, you’ll gain a major advantage that will serve you throughout your career.

Communication Is Important to Your Company

Effective communication helps businesses in numerous ways:

A stronger sense of trust between individuals and organizations

Closer ties with important communities in the marketplace

Opportunities to influence conversations, perceptions, and trends

Increased productivity and faster problem solving

Better financial results and higher return for investors

Earlier warning of potential problems

Stronger decision making

More persuasive marketing messages

Greater employee engagement

What Makes Business Communication Effective?

Stakeholders are groups affected in some way by the company’s actions: customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, neighbors, the community, the nation, and the world.

When communication breaks down, the results can range from time wasting to tragic.

To make your communication efforts as effective as possible, focus on making them practical, factual, concise, clear, and persuasive.

**Section 2: Communicating as a Professional**

*Learning Objective 2: Explain what it means to communicate as a professional in a business context.*

If you don’t have a lot of work experience yet, meeting the expectations of a professional environment might require some adjustment.

Professionalism is the quality of performing at a high level and conducting oneself with purpose and pride.

Professionalism can be broken down into six distinct traits:

* Striving to excel
* Being dependable and accountable
* Being a team player
* Demonstrating a sense of etiquette
* Making ethical decisions
* Maintaining a positive outlook

Understanding What Employers Expect from You

Today’s employers expect you to be competent at a wide range of communication tasks:

Digital information fluency—recognizing information needs, using efficient search techniques to locate reliable sources of information, and using gathered information ethically

Organizing ideas and information logically and completely

Expressing ideas and information coherently and persuasively

Actively listening to others

Communicating effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and experiences

Using communication technologies effectively and efficiently

Following accepted standards of grammar, spelling, and usage

Communicating in a civilized manner

Communicating ethically, even when choices aren’t crystal clear

Managing your time wisely and using resources efficiently

Using critical thinking, evaluating evidence completely and objectively in order to form logical conclusions and make sound recommendations

Communicating in an Organizational Context

In the formal communication network, ideas and information flow along the lines of command in three directions: downward, upward, and horizontally.

In the informal communication network, often referred to as the grapevine or the rumor mill, communication occurs outside the formal network; social media now play a huge role.

Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach

An audience-centered approach involves understanding and respecting the members of your audience and making every effort to get your message across in a way that is meaningful to them.

It is also known as adopting the “you” attitude, in contrast to messages that are about “me.”

Etiquette encompasses the expected norms of behavior in any particular situation.

**Section 3: Exploring the Communication Process**

*Learning Objective 3: Describe the communication process model and the ways social media are changing the nature of business communication.*

Even well intentioned communication efforts can fail.

By understanding communication as a process with distinct steps, you can improve the odds that your messages will reach their intended audiences and produce their intended effects.

The Basic Communication Model

By viewing communication as a process, you can identify and improve the skills you need to be more successful:

The sender has an idea.

The sender encodes the idea as a message.

The sender produces the message in a medium.

The sender transmits the message through a channel.

The audience receives the message.

The audience decodes the message.

The audience responds to the message.

The audience provides feedback.

Considering the complexity of this process, it should come as no surprise that communication efforts often fail to achieve the sender’s objective.

*Note: This model, based on Claude Shannon’s classic information theory model of communication, isn’t necessarily a completely accurate or robust representation of how human communication works, but it is valuable as a starting point to get students thinking about message encoding, transmission, decoding, and feedback.*

Barriers in the Communication Environment

Messages can be disrupted by a variety of communication barriers:

Noise and distractions, including multitasking

Competing messages

Filters, both human and technological

Channel breakdowns

Everyone in an organization can help minimize barriers and distractions.

Take steps to insulate yourself from distractions, including disconnecting from constant message feeds and updates.

Inside the Mind of Your Audience

For an audience member to receive a message, the receiver has to:

*Sense* the presence of a message

*Select* it from all the other messages clamoring for attention

*Perceive* it as an actual message

Five habits will increase the chances that your messages will be sensed, selected, and perceived:

Consider audience expectations.

Ensure ease of use.

Emphasize familiarity.

Practice empathy.

Design for compatibility.

A received message doesn’t mean anything until the recipient decodes it and assigns meaning to it.

There is no guarantee that the receiver will assign the same meaning that the sender intended.

Audiences tend to extract the meaning they expect to get from a message.

Culture plays a huge role in how messages are decoded.

Individual beliefs and biases influence the meaning that audiences extract from messages.

Selective perception occurs when people distort threatening or confusing information to make it fit their perceptions of reality.

Differences in language and usage influence received meaning.

Individual thinking styles affect message decoding.

Audience members will respond in the way you’d like them to if they:

*Remember* the message long enough to act on it

Are *able* to respond as you wish

Are *motivated* to respond

The Social Communication Model

The basic communication model shows how a single idea moves from one sender to one receiver.

In a larger sense, it also helps represent the traditional nature of much business communication, which was primarily defined by a *publishing* or *broadcasting* mindset.

In contrast to the publishing mindset, this new social communication model is *interactive* and *conversational*.

Customers and other groups are now empowered through social media, which transform passive audiences into active participants in the communication process by allowing them to share content, revise content, and respond to content, or contribute new content.

The social communication model changes business communication in profound ways:

Customers and other stakeholders participate in, influence, and often take control of conversations in the marketplace.

They rely on each other for information about products, offer technical support, and even participate in group buying using social tools.

Social media tools can increase the speed of communication, lower communication costs, improve access to pockets of expertise, and boost employee satisfaction.

A hybrid approach is emerging in which some communications follow the traditional approach and others follow the social approach.

**Section 4: The Mobile Revolution**

*Learning Objective 4: Outline the challenges and opportunities of mobile communication in business.*

Some experts predict that mobile communication will change the nature of business and business communication even more than social media have.

Firms on the leading edge of the mobile revolution are working to integrate mobile technology throughout their organizations.

The Rise of Mobile as a Communication Platform

Mobile is now the primary Internet-access technology for millions of people.

Mobile has become the primary communication tool for many business professionals, including a majority of executives under age 40.

Continuous, intimate mobile connectivity can start to resemble a continuous stream of conversations that never quite end, which influences the way businesses need to interact with their stakeholders.

Companies that work to understand and embrace mobile, both internally and externally, stand the best chance of capitalizing on this monumental shift in the way people communicate.

How Mobile Technologies Are Changing Business Communication

Mobile necessitates some obvious changes in communication practices, such as the need to deal with smaller screens and different input methods.

Many users expect websites to be mobile friendly, so many companies are adopting a *mobile-first* approach in which they design to fit the needs of mobile users. This typically involves simplifying screen designs and changing navigation controls to accommodate touch-based swiping maneuvers.

Other changes brought about by mobile are often deeper and sometimes more subtle:

* Mobile users expect to have immediate access to information and the ability to stay connected to their various social and business networks.
* Constant or *radical* connectivity is a mixed blessing, as it can prevent people from healthy disengagement from work.
* Mobile users are often multitasking, which means they are distracted, and therefore getting through to them is more challenging.
* Mobile communication has put pressure on traditional standards of grammar, punctuation, and writing in general.
* Mobile devices can serve as sensory and cognitive extensions.
* Mobile devices create a host of security and privacy concerns (e.g., employees who want to use their personal devices for business-network access).
* Mobile tools can enhance productivity and collaboration.
* Mobile apps can assist in a wide variety of business tasks.
* Mobile connectivity can accelerate decision making and problem solving.
* With mobile capabilities such as cameras, accelerometers, and GPS, the communication experience can be made more engaging.

**Section 5: Using Technology to Improve Business Communication**

*Learning Objective 5: List four general guidelines for using communication technology effectively.*

Today’s businesses rely heavily on technology to facilitate the communication process.

To use communication technology effectively, you need to:

* Keep technology in perspective.
* Guard against information overload and information addiction.
* Use technological tools productively.

Disengage from the computer frequently to communicate in person.

Keeping Technology in Perspective

Remember that technology is simply a tool—a means by which you can accomplish certain tasks.

Technology is an aid to interpersonal communication, not a replacement for it.

Technology has business value only if it helps deliver the right information to the right people at the right time.

Guarding Against Information Overload

The overuse or misuse of communication technology can lead to information overload, in which people receive more information than they can effectively process.

Information overload makes it difficult to discriminate between useful and useless information, lowers productivity, and amplifies employee stress both on the job and at home.

As a recipient, use the filtering features of your communication systems to isolate high-priority messages that deserve your attention; be wary of subscribing to too many feeds; focus on the information you truly need to do your job.

As a sender, reduce information overload by making sure you don’t send unnecessary messages; indicate the priority of messages to help receivers know how to react to them.

Using Technological Tools Productively

In the “information technology paradox,” information tools can waste as much time as they save.

Inappropriate web use not only distracts employees from work responsibilities, but can also leave employers open to lawsuits.

Social media can expose confidential information or damage a firm’s reputation in the marketplace.

Employers need clear policies that are enforced evenly for all employees.

Knowing how to use tools efficiently can make a big difference in your productivity.

Managers need to guide and train their employees in productive use of information tools.

Reconnecting with People

Even the best technologies cannot truly match the rich experience of person-to-person contact.

Reconnect in person, or at least over the phone, from time to time in order to maintain positive working relationships.

**Section 6: Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication**

*Learning Objective 6: Define* ethics*, explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse, and list six guidelines for making ethical communication choices.*

Ethics are the principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society.

Ethical communication:

Includes all relevant information

Is true in every sense

Is not deceptive in any way

Examples of unethical communication include:

Plagiarism

Omitting essential information

Selective misquoting

Misrepresenting numbers

Distorting visuals

Failing to respect privacy or information security needs

The widespread adoption of social media has increased the attention given to the issue of transparency.

**Class discussion question:** Have you ever contributed to “social media outrage” (using your social media accounts to boost the anger about a contemporary issue by forwarding it, liking it, etc.) without stopping to think who might’ve originated the message or what the originator’s motives might’ve been?

Distinguishing Ethical Dilemmas from Ethical Lapses

An ethical dilemma involves making a choice when the alternatives aren’t completely wrong or completely right:

Two conflicting alternatives that are both ethical and valid

Two alternatives that lie somewhere in the vast gray area between right and wrong

An ethical lapse is a clearly unethical choice.

Ensuring Ethical Communication

To ensure ethical communication, three elements need to be in place and to work in harmony:

Ethical individuals

Ethical company leadership

The appropriate policies and structures to support employees’ efforts to make ethical choices

A code of ethics is an explicit written policy of ethics guidelines that helps employees determine what is acceptable.

Ethics audits monitor ethical progress and point out any weaknesses that need to be addressed.

Every employee has the responsibility to communicate in an ethical manner.

In the absence of clear guidelines, ask yourself the following questions about your business communication efforts:

Have I defined the situation fairly and accurately?

What is my intention in communicating this message?

What impact will the message have on those who receive it or who might be affected by it?

Will the message achieve the greatest possible good while doing the least possible harm?

Will the assumptions I’ve made change over time? That is, will a decision that seems ethical now seem unethical in the future?

Am I comfortable with my decision? Would I be embarrassed if it were printed in tomorrow’s newspaper or spread across the Internet?

Ensuring Legal Communication

In addition to ethical guidelines, business communication is also bound by a wide variety of laws and regulations, including the following areas:

Promotional communication. Marketing specialists need to be aware of the many laws that govern truth and accuracy in advertising.

Contracts. A contract is a legally binding promise between two parties, in which one party makes a specified offer and the other party accepts.

Employment communication. A variety of local, state, and federal laws govern communication between employers and both potential and current employees.

Intellectual property. In an age when instant global connectivity makes it effortless to copy and retransmit electronic files, the protection of intellectual property (IP) has become a widespread concern.

Financial reporting. Finance and accounting professionals who work for publicly traded companies must adhere to stringent reporting laws.

Defamation. Negative comments about another party raise the possibility of defamation, the intentional communication of false statements that damage character or reputation. (Written defamation is called *libel*; spoken defamation is called *slander*.)

Transparency. To help audiences make informed decisions, various laws now require communicators to disclose financial relationships and other factors that could influence the presentation of their messages.

**Class discussion question:** Should companies be allowed to advertise to children who are too young to make fully-informed choices? If there should be a cutoff age, what should it be and how would it be enforced?

HIGHLIGHT BOX: THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION

The Internet of Things

Encourage students to view communication in its broadest sense. For example, digital devices and systems might carry on a “conversation” among themselves that previously would’ve taken place between two or more humans in some form. Rather than someone with a clipboard or digital scanner checking inventory in a warehouse or retail store and submitting some form of report for a supervisor to read, the products themselves may be able to communicate their status to an inventory-management system that automatically reorders stock as needed. This is still business communication in the sense that vital information and meaning is being shared across the organization, but there are no longer human beings involved and no writing or reading takes place.

HIGHLIGHT BOX: DIGITAL+SOCIAL+MOBILE: TODAY’S COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

It’s All Fun and Games—and Effective Business Communication

1. Refer students to the coverage of communication ethics in “Committing to Ethical and Legal Communication.” They should conclude that gamification is ethical if it doesn’t distort or hide information audiences need in order to make informed decisions. For example, if a personal finance game app offered by a bank or credit card company minimized the negative consequences of credit risk in such a way that it prompted consumers to make unwise decisions, this could be considered unethical. This question can also be a good entry point for a larger discussion about the ethics of persuasive communication.
2. Student answers will vary.

## COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT JETBLUE

### Individual Challenge

Students should frame their responses using the discussion of effective business communication in “What Makes Business Communication Effective?” and “Adopting an Audience-Centered Approach” from the chapter. They should be sure to evaluate the content and style of the Twitter exchange separately from the decisions or circumstances that prompted the exchange. For instance, if a traveler tweeted to complain about some aspect of company policy, students should evaluate the nature of the company’s response, not the policy itself.

### Team Challenge

Student answers will vary but they should take into consideration the standards of professional communication discussed in the chapter. Students with limited work experience may not yet appreciate the effect of communication that is too casual for a business context, but they can use the information in the chapter to get a sense of what appropriate business communication looks and sounds like. Their comparisons of the two companies’ communication efforts should be based on specific word, phrase, and punctuation choices, rather than vague observations.

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Your communication skills will benefit you in the following ways:

* Promoting your ideas to colleagues, bosses, investors, and customers
* Succeeding in any career path, but particularly in communication-centric careers such as sales
* Enabling more effective leadership

Gaining a competitive advantage in the job market

And your communication skills will contribute to your company in the following ways:

* A stronger sense of trust between individuals and organizations
* Stronger decision making and faster problem solving
* Earlier warning of potential problems
* Increased productivity and steadier work flow
* Stronger business relationships
* Clearer and more persuasive marketing messages
* Enhanced professional images for both employers and companies
* Lower employee turnover and higher employee satisfaction

Better financial results and higher return for investors

**[LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication (See MyBCommLab for additional insights)**

1. The five attributes of effective business communication are:

* Providing practical information
* Giving facts rather than vague impressions
* Presenting information in a concise, efficient manner
* Clarifying expectations and responsibilities

Offering compelling, persuasive arguments and recommendations

**[LO-1]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication (See MyBCommLab for additional insights)**

1. Professionalism can be broken down into six distinct traits: striving to excel, being dependable and accountable, being a team player, demonstrating a sense of etiquette, making ethical decisions, and maintaining a positive outlook. **[LO-2]** **AACSB: Reflective thinking**
2. By taking an audience-centered approach to communication, a communicator can focus on the audience and its needs. With this approach, the communicator works hard to overcome any barriers and to get the message across in a way that is meaningful to the audience. **[LO-2]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
3. Before they can perceive an incoming message as an actual message, audience members need to sense the presence of the message and select it from all other messages and noises competing for their attention. **[LO-3]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
4. The most common barriers in any communication environment are noise and distractions, competing messages, filters, and channel breakdowns. **[LO-3]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
5. “BYOD” refers to the “bring your own device” trend, in which employees want to use their own digital devices to perform work functions and access company information networks (with or without management’s consent). BYOD can present serious security and privacy challenges for companies, because personal devices often lack the rigorous security controls of company-owned equipment, and employees don’t always use them in secure and responsible ways (such as accessing risky websites). **[LO-4]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
6. Information overload occurs when people receive more information than they can effectively process, which makes it difficult to discriminate between useful and useless information, lowers productivity, and amplifies employee stress both on the job and at home. **[LO-5]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
7. An ethical dilemma involves choosing among alternatives that aren’t clear-cut. Perhaps two conflicting alternatives are both ethical and valid, or perhaps the alternatives lie somewhere in the gray area between clearly right and clearly wrong. **[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**
8. An ethical lapse is a clearly unethical choice. **[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

## APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Business is largely a matter of relationships and transactions, both of which are critically dependent on communication. Effective communication fosters closer relationships, which are more productive, and more expedient transactions, which save time and money as well. **[LO-1] AACSB: Written and oral communication (See MyBCommLab for additional insights)**
2. The interactive nature of social media is an invitation for audiences to let their voices be heard in an ongoing conversation with a company, rather than being confined to passive listening-only roles. **[LO-2] AACSB: Written and oral communication (See MyBCommLab for additional insights)**
3. Overuse of social media on the job can affect an employee’s ability to receive truly important business messages because the volume of incoming messages can make it difficult to sense the presence of important incoming messages, select them from all the other messages coming in, and perceive them as messages that matter the most. **[LO-3]** **AACSB: Analytical thinking**   
   *Note: in early printings of the 14th edition, this question is missing the Learning Objective tag; it should be tagged as LO-3.*
4. Students will learn more about writing and formatting messages for mobile devices in subsequent chapters, but they can answer this question by using what they’ve learned in this chapter about effective communication and the basic communication process. Their answers should address the needs for concise messages and clear, simple designs that display well on small screens. **[LO-4]** **AACSB: Information technology**
5. This situation is an ethical dilemma because it does not present one alternative that is clearly right and one or more alternatives that are clearly wrong. Both options (informing employees now about the possibility of a layoff or waiting until you are sure) have positive and negative elements that can help or harm various stakeholders. For example, if you share the possibility of a layoff, some key employees could leave now, which could hurt the company’s prospects and even increase the need for a layoff, which would then harm even more employees. Conversely, if you don’t tell employees about the possibility of a layoff and it eventually comes to pass, you have deprived them of some of the time they could’ve been using to find new jobs, which will increase stress on them and their families and possibility harm them financially. **[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning** **(See MyBCommLab for additional insights)**

## PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

### Message for Analysis

Students will recognize this document as ineffective because it presents so many barriers to effective communication. The blog:

* Creates emotional barriers right from the first sentence (accusing employees of lying and cheating, later calling them names), preventing readers from perceiving the intended message
* Presents a restrictive and authoritarian attitude, reflecting an environment that discourages open communication and thus discourages employee candor
* Expresses bias or prejudice (in the slur against women employees)
* Reflects the author’s anger and defensiveness (“I simply have no choice”)
* Assumes bad intentions on the part of the employees, underlining the lack of audience-centered thinking
* Uses vague, confusing language (More than three times during what period? Will have to answer to the author for what specific penalties?)
* Polarizes workers by inciting conflict between “punctual” employees and others

To revise the message, students should start by deleting all the information that isn’t necessary so that the message can focus on the problem at hand and the potential consequences. To avoid starting with an accusation, the message could start by reminding employees that accurate time records are a matter of economic fairness to the company and to each other, then move on to the announcement of the new entrance technologies and policy. (Whether these moves are a wise decision by the company owner is a separate question, to be sure.) Note that for this and all others writing assignments found in the text, students should feel free to use their creativity to make up any details that can make a message more realistic. **[LO-1]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**

### Exercises

1. Look for information about students’ majors, hobbies, likes, dislikes, and career plans. The email messages, blog posts, or social networking updates will give you an idea of the level of your students’ writing, in addition to helping you learn more about your students. **[LO-1]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
2. This question provides a good opportunity to discuss the advantages and limitations of utilizing social media for business communication, specifically the length limitations imposed by a channel such as Twitter. Students should be encouraged to explain how the content of their messages reflects the demands of a social communication model and medium. **[LO-1]** **AACSB: Information technology**
3. This exercise reveals how well students translate the chapter material into a practical analysis of business communication—the first step to crafting more effective messages of their own. Look for descriptions of specific communication elements, such as solid logical argumentation, persuasive emotional appeals, successful integration of audio and video components, or an audience-centric message. **[LO-1]** **AACSB: Analytical thinking**
4. In completing this exercise, students should recognize the often-significant differences between how they prioritize their own personal and professional qualities and how a prospective employer might prioritize them. **[LO-2]** **AACSB: Reflective thinking**
5. This message needs to communicate the importance of the situation without preemptively offending anyone (since there have been no instances of etiquette mistakes and only a general concern about them). The first paragraph could provide the general manager with a brief overview of the situation, describing how customers come in contact with production personnel and explaining the potential damages to sales that could result from etiquette mistakes. The second paragraph could then follow with an explanation of how etiquette training would minimize the risk of lost sales. Depending on the circumstances and the writer's relationship with the recipient, the message might also propose a solution, such as adapting the sales department's etiquette training course for re-use in the production department. **[LO-2]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**
6. Before writing the report, the team will want to know:

a. The audience’s culture (so that cultural biases can be avoided)

b. The audience’s level of knowledge about the subject (so that the report’s style, content, organization, and tone will address that level)

c. The environment in which the report will be received (to compensate for any noise interference)

d. Whether the report will be read directly by the intended audience or will first pass through several layers of gatekeepers (so that anticipated distortions can be minimized before the report is read and summarized by gatekeepers)

e. The audience’s gender and family status (because child care may be viewed from a different perspective by men, women, parents, and nonparents)

**[LO-2]** **AACSB: Interpersonal relations and teamwork**

1. Regarding the issue of employee blogs and information that is critical of an employer, a much stronger case can be made for placing such restrictions than for not doing so. Publicly aired criticism of internal company matters is likely to cause harm to the company (by scaring away potential customers, employees, or investors, for instance) while probably doing little or nothing to resolve whatever situations a blogger might be upset about. In fact, an argument can be made that criticizing one’s own employer in public is unethical, since employees are paid to further the company’s interests, not their own. If they are unhappy in their jobs, they have a responsibility to either work to improve the situation through appropriate channels or to find other employment. **[LO-2]** **AACSB: Information technology**
2. This exercise challenges students to apply their understanding of the communication process. Ask them to be specific about how they encoded and transmitted the idea they wanted to share; also ask them to explain exactly how they knew whether the message had been accurately decoded.

Students might identify such barriers as a difference in perception due to differences in age, background, culture, or language; a lack of credibility, precision, congeniality, or control; a lack of information about the audience; a misunderstanding caused by unfocused, incoherent, or sloppy communication; a miscommunication resulting from one party being sidetracked or constantly bringing up unnecessary information; an inability to relate new information to existing ideas; or the noise from environmental distractions, from the emotional states of the people involved, or from a person’s poor listening ability. **[LO-3]** **AACSB: Written and oral communication**

1. Students should evaluate the websites using the criteria for effective business communication and the discussion of the audience-centered approach. For example, a website that isn’t mobile friendly (meaning the presentation isn’t simplified for smaller screens and touch/swipe controls) doesn’t do a good job of meeting the needs of mobile users. **[LO-4]** **AACSB: Information technology**
2. To improve the discussion that this exercise can generate, consider assigning different services to different students. The wide variety of services students will access can provide powerful evidence of how widespread the social communication model has become. **[LO-5]** **AACSB: Information technology**
3. Students should recognize that the boss’s request itself is potentially unethical, putting the employee in a situation of policing his or her colleagues—which will surely lead to circumstances in which the employee is forced to be disingenuous with colleagues (e.g., not saying anything to a colleague who steals office supplies but then reporting the behavior to the boss). The employee would want to consider the following in a discussion with the boss: the uncomfortable situation this request will create for the employee, the effect this informal assignment would have on workplace dynamics, the damage to the employee’s career prospects or ability to work with others if colleagues find about such reporting, and last but not least the fact that asking employees to spy on one another is a misguided way to solve a problem (e.g., ethics training and making employees aware of the costs of their decisions would be a much more enlightened approach). **[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**
4. Here is a brief ethical assessment of each situation:

a. Keeping quiet about the possible environmental hazard would be an ethical lapse that could possibly affect lives if not wildlife.

b. Stretching the truth, even “a bit,” is never ethical.

c. Helping a friend would be ethical, unless “privileged” information were being conveyed without permission.

d. Using allocated funding for bogus purchases is unethical. It would be better to justify the need for next year’s budget than to preserve it by cheating.

**[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

1. Students should be able to identify dozens of potential violations of Cisco’s *Code of Conduct*. Three examples include: entering into or sustaining a business relationship that creates a conflict of interest with an employee’s professional responsibilities at Cisco; providing financial information that is not accurate or not objective; and discussing confidential information with an outside party who is not bound by a nondisclosure agreement. Opportunities to report or discuss ethical concerns include contacting the company’s Ethics Program Office, the General Counsel, or the Audit Committee. **[LO-6]** **AACSB: Ethical understanding and reasoning**

## ASSISTED GRADING QUESTIONS (accessed on MyBCommLab)

1. Critical thinking is an essential aspect of business communication because it involves the ability to evaluate evidence completely and objectively in order to form logical conclusions and make sound recommendations. Business professionals frequently face the need to understand complex and unclear situations, identify underlying reasons and essential data points, then process that information and express it clearly and logically. **[LO-3] AACSB: Analytical thinking**
2. Mobile technology is changing business communication in multiple ways. Students’ answers should include key points from the chapter:

* Mobile necessitates some obvious changes in communication practices, such as the need to deal with smaller screens and different input methods.
* Many users expect websites to be mobile friendly, so many companies are adopting a mobile-first approach, in which they design to fit the needs of mobile users.
* Mobile users expect to have immediate access to information and the ability to stay connected to their various social and business networks.
* Constant or radical connectivity is a mixed blessing, as it can prevent people from healthy disengagement from work.
* Mobile users are often multitasking, which means they are distracted and therefore getting through to them is more challenging.
* Mobile communication has put pressure on traditional standards of grammar, punctuation, and writing in general.
* Mobile devices can serve as sensory and cognitive extensions.
* Mobile devices create a host of security and privacy concerns; e.g., employees who want to use their personal devices for business-network access.
* Mobile tools can enhance productivity and collaboration.
* Mobile apps can assist in a wide variety of business tasks.
* Mobile connectivity can accelerate decision making and problem solving.
* With mobile capabilities such as cameras, accelerometers, and GPS, the communication experience can be made more engaging.

**[LO-4]** **AACSB: Information technology**