

Chapter 1
ACHIEVING SUCCESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION

Multiple Choice

1. Communication is the process of
 - a. transferring knowledge.
 - b. listening actively.
 - c. sending and receiving messages.
 - d. writing effective messages.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 4; TYPE: concept

2. Which of the following would *not* be considered a stakeholder when it comes to your business communications?
 - a. Co-workers
 - b. Customers
 - c. Friends
 - d. Investors

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 4; TYPE: application

3. An example of internal communication would be
 - a. an e-mail message from a manager to a supplier requesting updated prices on parts.
 - b. an e-mail message from a sales manager to a salesperson asking for a report on travel expenses for a trade show.
 - c. a phone call from a manager to a computer repair firm checking on the status of a printer being repaired.
 - d. a fax from a magazine to an advertiser quoting new ad rates.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 4; TYPE: application

4. An example of informal external communication would be
 - a. on the golf course, a restaurant owner listens to a friend describe the poor service she recently received while dining at the restaurant.
 - b. a group of friends discuss a product they have all recently purchased.
 - c. two department managers from the same company talk business while eating lunch.
 - d. all of the above.

ANSWER: a; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 4; TYPE: application

5. An example of external communication would be
- a. talking on a cell phone to a colleague.
 - b. an e-mail from a salesperson to a customer.
 - c. a memo from a manager at headquarters to a manager at a store in another state.
 - d. a teleconference among company sales representatives in several locations.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 4; TYPE: application

6. An example of downward communication flow is
- a. a junior staff person giving information to a staff supervisor.
 - b. a sales manager giving instructions to a salesperson.
 - c. an e-mail message about sick leave from one staff secretary to another.
 - d. a company briefing held on the organization's top floor.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 5; TYPE: application

7. An example of horizontal communication would be
- a. a junior staff person giving information to a staff supervisor.
 - b. a company briefing held on the organization's ground floor.
 - c. an e-mail message about sick leave sent from one department secretary to a secretary in a different department.
 - d. all of the above.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: application

8. Every organization has
- a. an intranet.
 - b. an extranet.
 - c. an informal communication network.
 - d. a tall communication structure.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

9. In most organizations, the grapevine tends to be particularly active when
- a. employees are satisfied with their jobs.
 - b. formal communication channels are working efficiently.
 - c. employees are wasting company time.
 - d. the formal communication network is not providing the information employees believe they need.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

10. A casual conversation between co-workers is an example of
- a. upward communication flow.
 - b. downward communication flow.
 - c. interdepartmental communication.
 - d. informal communication.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 5; TYPE: application

11. When it comes to the informal communication network, savvy managers
- a. work hard to shut it down.
 - b. tap into it to spread and receive informal messages.
 - c. ignore most of the information it contains.
 - d. none of the above

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

12. Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of effective business messages?
- a. They provide practical information.
 - b. They present the writer's opinions as facts.
 - c. They state precise audience responsibilities.
 - d. They clarify and condense information.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

13. Social networking technologies are designed to
- a. discourage employees from socializing at work.
 - b. help dissatisfied employees find better jobs.
 - c. help companies take advantage of all the contacts their employees have.
 - d. do none of the above.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

14. A flatter organizational structure
- a. decreases the chance of misunderstandings occurring.
 - b. helps make communication more efficient.
 - c. can block effective communication by overburdening key individuals.
 - d. does all of the above.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

15. If a company's formal communication network contains many levels of hierarchy
- a. communication tends to be more effective.
 - b. downward communication tends to be more effective, but upward does not.
 - c. upward communication tends to be more effective, but downward does not.
 - d. upward and downward communication tend to be less effective.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

16. Which of the following is *not* one of the four main ways to improve business communication?
- a. Acknowledge the importance of the situation.
 - b. Minimize distractions.
 - c. Adopt an audience-centered approach.
 - d. Provide constructive feedback.

ANSWER: a; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

17. The term *corporate culture* refers to
- a. the number of organizational levels within a corporation.
 - b. the extent to which corporations dominate a particular culture.
 - c. the mixture of values, traditions, and habits that give a company its atmosphere and personality.
 - d. a company's sponsorship of events such as concerts and plays.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

18. In the first step of the communication process, the sender
- a. decides what to say.
 - b. chooses a communication channel.
 - c. has an idea.
 - d. chooses a communication medium.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

19. A communication channel is
- a. chosen based partly on the formality of your message.
 - b. the specific method chosen for sending a message, such as e-mail, a memo, or a phone call.
 - c. a means for transmitting your message.
 - d. all of the above.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

20. In the communication process all of the following occur *except*
- a. the receiver decodes the message.
 - b. the sender transmits the message.
 - c. the receiver has an idea.
 - d. the receiver gets the message.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

21. The final link in the communication chain is
- a. receiving the message.
 - b. sending the message.
 - c. giving feedback to the sender.
 - d. interpreting the message.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

22. Business communication is often more demanding than social communication because communication on the job is affected by
- a. advances in technology.
 - b. the growing reliance on teamwork in business.
 - c. the globalization of business.
 - d. all of the above

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

23. Bad connections, poor acoustics, and illegible text are all examples of
- a. problems with feedback.
 - b. distractions.
 - c. problems with background differences.
 - d. overload problems.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: application

24. Distorting the parts of a received message that do not fit your preconceptions is called
- a. discrimination.
 - b. misreading.
 - c. selective perception.
 - d. stereotyping.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 14; TYPE: concept

25. In order for the audience to respond positively to a business message, they must

- a. remember it.
- b. be able to respond to it.
- c. be motivated to respond to it.
- d. do all of the above.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 14-15; TYPE: concept

26. To make your communication more effective,

- a. don't send unnecessary messages.
- b. include as much information as possible, even if you're not sure it's necessary.
- c. send the same messages by multiple channels.
- d. do all of the above.

ANSWER: a; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

27. Which of the following contributes to overcoming emotional distractions in business communication?

- a. A top-down management style
- b. Unspoken limits on the kinds of information that can be transmitted
- c. Recognizing your feelings and anticipating others' reactions
- d. High salaries and great benefits

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

28. Writing and speaking from your audience's point of view makes it more likely that

- a. you will lose prestige in the eyes of your audience.
- b. there will be confusion about the meaning of your messages.
- c. receivers will understand your message and respond positively.
- d. your message will be ineffective.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

29. The primary difference between constructive feedback and destructive feedback is that constructive feedback

- a. avoids all negative information.
- b. focuses on the people involved in the situation.
- c. is designed to stimulate improvement.
- d. none of the above.

ANSWER: c; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 17; TYPE: concept

30. Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of ethical communication?
- a. It includes all relevant information.
 - b. It is designed to hide some negative information.
 - c. It is true in every sense.
 - d. It is not deceptive in any way.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 24; TYPE: concept

31. Like e-mail, instant messages
- a. are not considered legal documents.
 - b. can be used as evidence in lawsuits or criminal trials.
 - c. are the employee's private property, and cannot be monitored.
 - d. are none of the above.

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 24; TYPE: concept

32. All of the following are examples of unethical communication *except*
- a. using jargon.
 - b. misquoting.
 - c. distorting visuals.
 - d. plagiarism.

ANSWER: a; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: application

33. Which of the following is an example of an ethical dilemma?
- a. Deciding whether or not to inform employees that layoffs are coming as they work on finishing a big project
 - b. Deciding whether or not to sell company stock when you've received inside information on a coming downturn
 - c. Deciding whether or not to use the copy machine for personal papers
 - d. Deciding whether or not to declare the costs of your vacation travel as a deductible business expense

ANSWER: a; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: application

34. Which of the following is an example of an ethical lapse?
- a. Putting unsigned suggestions in the company suggestion box
 - b. Informing a new employer about your previous (competing) employer's major clients
 - c. Telling your supervisor that another employee is stealing office supplies
 - d. Providing incorrect data in a report, even though you did not know it was incorrect at the time

ANSWER: b; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 25; TYPE: application

35. To help establish clear guidelines for ethical behavior, many companies provide employees a written
- a. ethical audit.
 - b. ethical dilemma.
 - c. ethical lapse.
 - d. code of ethics.

ANSWER: d; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 26; TYPE: concept

True or False

36. Downward communication flows from employees to executives, providing accurate, timely reports on problems, trends, opportunities, grievances, and performance.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

37. Most of the information that flows downward in an organization is geared toward helping employees do their jobs.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

38. Upward communication generally helps executives solve problems and make intelligent decisions.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

39. Within organizations, formal communication is upward and downward, while informal communication is always horizontal.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

40. Effective managers avoid the grapevine and communicate with employees through formal channels only.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

41. The grapevine tends to be most active when employees receive too much information about their company.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

42. Because external communication is carefully orchestrated, almost none of it occurs informally.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

43. Informal external communication is generally less important than formal communication.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

44. Social networking technologies help companies capitalize on all the connections their employees may have.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

45. Social networking software helps companies prevent employees from sending personal e-mail messages from their offices.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

46. Effective communication eliminates the need for feedback from the audience.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

47. Despite increased market globalization, the nature of business communication has not changed very much in recent years.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 7-8; TYPE: application

48. Among other factors, the globalization of business has decreased the demand for skilled communicators.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 7-8; TYPE: concept

49. Knowledge workers specialize in acquiring, processing, and communicating information.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 8; TYPE: concept

50. Flatter organizational structures generally create less distortion when it comes to internal communication.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

51. The more links in the formal communication chain, the greater the opportunity for distortion of messages.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

52. Workforce diversity includes differences in race, but also in gender and education.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

53. Employees should avoid strong negative feedback at all costs.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

54. The goal of an open communication climate is to eliminate the need for any feedback.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

55. The communication process is a simple one consisting of two phases: the sender transmits the message and the receiver gets the message.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

56. “Noise” refers to any interference that prevents the audience from receiving your message.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

57. Successful organizations usually avoid the need for feedback.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

58. Multitasking generally enhances the quality of employees’ communication.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

59. Factors such as poor acoustics and uncomfortable meeting rooms can be annoying but are not really that important when it comes to communication.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: application

60. In business, you can usually count on having your audience’s full attention for important messages.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

61. Too much information is always better than not enough.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

62. In today's business environment, clients and co-workers expect you to answer your cell phone while meeting with them.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

63. If a long report requires no action from recipients, it's best to withhold that information to ensure that they read the report.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

64. Effective communicators tag all e-mail messages as "urgent" to make sure the audience responds.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

65. As long as employees get the job done, most companies are not concerned with employees' meeting expectations of business etiquette.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 18; TYPE: concept

66. E-mail and instant messages are legal documents and can be used as evidence in lawsuits or criminal trials.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 24; TYPE: concept

67. Ethics can be defined as not doing anything illegal.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 24; TYPE: concept

68. Plagiarism is only a problem in the classroom. In the business environment, it's just another term for information sharing.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

69. A message that is intended to mislead or manipulate the audience is unethical, even if its content is true.

ANSWER: T; DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

70. When people must choose between conflicting loyalties and weigh difficult trade-offs, they are facing an ethical lapse.

ANSWER: F; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

Fill-in-the-Blank

71. Communication is the process of _____ and _____ messages.

ANSWER: sending, receiving; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 4; TYPE: concept

72. Groups affected in some way by a company's actions are referred to as _____.

ANSWER: stakeholders; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 4; TYPE: concept

73. When, within a single company, the sales manager calls the production manager to discuss a delay, the message is traveling in the _____ communication network.

ANSWER: internal OR formal; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 5; TYPE: application

74. The informal communication network within an organization is also called the _____.

ANSWER: grapevine; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

75. Social _____ technologies help companies take advantage of all the connections their employees may have.

ANSWER: networking; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

76. Workforce _____ refers to all the differences among the people you come into contact with on the job, including age, gender, sexual orientation, education, and so forth.

ANSWER: diversity; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 9; TYPE: concept

77. A _____ is the mixture of values, traditions, and habits that give a company its atmosphere or personality.

ANSWER: corporate culture; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

78. When a sender puts an idea into a message the reader will understand, the sender is _____ the message.

ANSWER: encoding; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

79. For a message to be successfully received, the receiver must _____ the message—extract your idea from it.

ANSWER: decode; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

80. Selective _____ is the process of distorting or ignoring information that does not fit one's view of reality.

ANSWER: perception; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 14; TYPE: concept

81. Focusing on and caring about the receivers of your messages and making every effort to get your message across in a meaningful way is necessary to adopt an _____ - _____ approach.

ANSWER: audience-centered; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

82. _____ are the accepted principles of conduct that govern behavior within a society.

ANSWER: Ethics; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 24; TYPE: concept

83. Deliberately misleading an audience by omitting disappointing profit figures from a presentation is an example of _____ communication.

ANSWER: unethical; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: application

84. An ethical _____ involves choosing between conflicting alternatives that are not clear-cut.

ANSWER: dilemma; DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

85. An ethical _____ involves making a clearly unethical or illegal choice.

ANSWER: lapse; DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

Short Answer

86. How does the primary function of upward-flowing communication differ from that of downward-flowing communication?

ANSWER: Communication that flows upward mainly helps executives solve problems and make intelligent decisions. On the other hand, communication that flows downward is geared primarily toward helping employees do their jobs.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

87. When is the grapevine most active within an organization?

ANSWER: Grapevines tend to be most active when employees believe the formal network is not providing the information they want or need.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: concept

88. List at least three examples of formal external communication.

ANSWER: Any formal communication with outsiders (announcements, letters, e-mail messages, meetings, etc.) constitutes formal external communication.

DIFFICULTY: easy; PAGE: 6; TYPE: application

89. Briefly define “knowledge workers.”

ANSWER: Knowledge workers are employees who specialize in acquiring, processing, and communicating information.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 8; TYPE: concept

90. What characterizes an “open communication climate”?

ANSWER: In an open communication climate, communication flows freely down, up, and across the organization chart. Open climates encourage employees to communicate with candor and honesty, even when delivering negative information.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 10; TYPE: concept

91. What does it mean for an audience to “decode” a message?

ANSWER: The audience decodes your message by extracting your ideas from it. Decoding is the sixth step in the communication process.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11; TYPE: concept

92. Briefly explain the nature and importance of the final phase in the communication process.

ANSWER: The final phase in the communication process occurs when the receiver provides feedback for the sender. Feedback enables the sender to evaluate the effectiveness of the message.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

93. How can the exchange of numerous messages become a barrier to effective communication?

ANSWER: The sheer number of messages that people receive on the job can be distracting. Too many messages can result in information overload, which not only makes it difficult to discriminate between useful and useless information but also amplifies workplace stress.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

94. To adopt an audience-centered approach to communication, what do you need to learn about your audience? List at least three specific examples.

ANSWER: An audience-centered approach requires learning as much as possible about the receiver's biases, education, age, social status, style, and point of view.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15; TYPE: concept

95. Briefly explain the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse.

ANSWER: You face an ethical dilemma when you must choose between two or more conflicting alternatives that both seem valid and ethical. An ethical lapse, on the other hand, occurs when you make a choice that is clearly unethical and or illegal. An ethical dilemma can lead to an ethical lapse but doesn't necessarily do so.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 25; TYPE: concept

Essay

96. Describe the various directions communication flows through an organization's formal network, and give an example of each one.

ANSWER: Communication travels upward, downward, and horizontally through an organization's formal hierarchy. An example of upward flowing communication would be an employee sending an e-mail to his or her supervisor requesting clarification of a new company policy. The manager's response would flow downward. Horizontal communication would include a memo from the production manager to the shipping manager warning of an impending delay.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 5; TYPE: application

97. Describe at least five common characteristics of effective business messages.

Effective business messages provide practical information that immediately helps receivers in concrete ways. They also give facts rather than impressions, focusing on what is rather than on what could, should, or might be. They present information in a concise, efficient manner. Finally, effective business messages state precise responsibilities, persuade others, and offer recommendations rather than simply pointing out problems.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 6; TYPE: concept

98. Briefly describe the eight steps of the communication process.

ANSWER: The first step in the communication process occurs when the sender has an idea and decides to share it. Second, the sender encodes the idea as a message that the receiver will understand. Third, the sender produces the message in a transmittable medium. Fourth, the sender transmits the message through a channel (such as a face-to-face conversation or an e-mail). Fifth, the audience receives the message. Sixth, the audience decodes the message by extracting your idea from it. Seventh, the audience responds to the message. Eighth, the audience sends feedback that helps the sender evaluate the effectiveness of the communication effort.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 11-12; TYPE: concept

99. Describe four common types of communication barriers.

ANSWER: Four common types of communication barriers are noise and distractions, competing messages, filters, and channel breakdowns. Noise and distractions can be both physical and emotional and are especially common due to the widespread habit of multitasking. Competing messages make it difficult to gain and keep your audience's attention and can result in information overload, which makes it difficult to distinguish between useful and useless information, and increases workplace stress. Messages can be blocked or distorted by filters, which are any human or technology intervention between the sender and the receiver. Filtering can be intentional or unintentional. Finally, channel breakdowns occur when the channel you select fails to deliver your message at all.

DIFFICULTY: difficult; PAGE: 12; TYPE: concept

100. Describe five strategies for overcoming communication barriers and briefly explain what each one of these strategies requires.

ANSWER: The first strategy for overcoming common communication barriers is to minimize distractions by reducing noise and interruptions and sending fewer messages. Second, adopt an audience-centered approach. Doing so requires learning as much as possible about your audience and tailoring your message to suit the receiver's needs and point of view. Third, effective communication requires fine-tuning your business communication skills. Fourth, provide and respond to constructive feedback. This involves focusing on the process and outcomes of communication (not the faults or failures of the people involved) and learning to view your work as something you can improve. Finally, be sensitive to business etiquette, since the way you conduct yourself can have a profound impact on your company's success and reputation.

DIFFICULTY: moderate; PAGE: 15-18; TYPE: concept