Communicating *for* Results

Fourth Edition

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From the Publisher

In today's fast-paced, globally connected world, effective communication is vital to individual as well as organizational success. With the on-going transition from a network economy to the cloud-based economy, employers are—now more than ever—increasingly interested in hiring individuals who can communicate clearly and effectively. Globalization has disrupted traditional models of communication, and spatial and time-related barriers have virtually ceased to exist. New technologies that provide solutions to such challenges have emerged, and these tools need to be understood and their uses mastered.

In addition to comprehending the changing business environment, managers must possess strong language skills, and more specifically, English language skills, as it emerges as the lingua franca of the global business world. Managers must know not only what needs to be communicated but also how to do so. Effective writing and speaking styles begin with an appreciation of the basics: grammar, tone, word choice, conciseness, structure, register, and rhetorical techniques. Additionally, writers must also know how to develop robust composition strategies, practise persuasive document planning, and have a thorough understanding of their audience's needs.

A Thorough, Hands-On Approach

The fourth edition of *Communicating for Results* has been adapted to address the needs of today's students from the South Asian region by providing them with a thorough understanding of how to effectively communicate in local business environments. A thorough, hands-on approach engages students in the processes of critical thinking, stylistic development, and content evaluation. Comprehensive coverage of approaches, techniques, and strategies for the development of letters, memos, e-mails, reports, and presentations—as well as extensive exercises based on real-life situations—help to simplify the writing process, banish writer's block, and ease fears about public speaking. In addition, two appendices provide indispensable guidance on usage, style, mechanics, grammar, and punctuation in business writing.

Throughout, this highly effective approach emphasizes practical knowledge that will give students a head start in the business world. They will develop confidence in their skills and will ultimately have everything they need to become competent and successful communicators who get their message across, get noticed, and get results.

All efforts have been made to trace the copyright holders of the assets used in the book. Any omissions, purely unintentional, will be taken care of in future editions.

List of Reviewers

The publisher and the authors would like to thank the following reviewers for their valuable feedback:

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- Yachna Malhotra (ITS - The Education Group, Ghaziabad)

Praise for the Book

- The chapters provide an appropriate blend of theory and practice. The presentation of the chapters is good. The material is up-to-date and technically correct. Examples given in the book are well suited for the Indian students. The greatest strength of the book is its simple language and vocabulary.

  Archana Parashar, IIM Raipur

- The text is perfectly to the point and provide an acute insight into the basic perception related to human communication both in personal and professional terms. The procedural design with which communication advances is clearly expressed.

  Hemant Raj Konwar, NERIM, Guwahati

- The material is up-to-date, authoritative, and technically correct. It reflects good, in-depth presentation.

  Itishri Sarangi, KIIT School of Humanities, Bhubaneswar

- The content is rich. It is very comprehensive and there is a need in the market for such content.

  Monali Chatterjee, Nirma University, Ahmedabad

- As recency and adequacy of examples are two key concerns for business communication teaching, this textbook would be useful for B-school students enrolled for the MBA programme over the next two–three years.

  Mukesh Kumar, IIM Amritsar

- The balance between theory and practice is satisfactory. Adequate number of examples and cases have been provided.

  Saikumari V., SRM Easwari Engineering College, Chennai

- The tonality and vocabulary are simple yet adequate. Jargons are avoided, which is a good sign. The material is also well developed.

  Soumyajyoti Banerjee, IIM Bodh Gaya

- The material is good and well researched and can compete very well in the contemporary context.

  Vidhu Gaur, MDI Gurgaon

- The book is a good read on communication in contemporary workplaces.

  Niva Bhandari, MDI Gurgaon

Highlights from the Fourth Edition

13 Digital and Social Media Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify key digital and social tools, including blogs, micro-blogs, podcasts, social and business networks, and video- and photo-sharing sites, and understand how to use them effectively.
2. Identify the benefits, risks, and challenges associated with digital media use in business environments.
3. Identify elements of digital media plans and campaigns and ways to build engagement and user-generated content.
4. Become aware of ways to measure effectiveness of digital and social media messaging.
5. Understand best practices for creating digital messages and optimizing content for mobile devices.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

This chapter explores the tools, strategies, and resources for successful business communication through digital, social, and new media channels. Following a brief history of the web and social networking, you'll be introduced to the issues and opportunities presented by digital and social media channels and subsequently learn about strategies for effective blogging, micro-blogging, and social and business networking. You will also be introduced to techniques for effectively creating and communicating digital messages in a variety of forms.

▲ Photo: © Rawpixel / Shutterstock

An updated and expanded chapter on digital and social media communications examines how individuals and organizations might connect, engage, and interact with their stakeholder communities more effectively using digital and social media. The chapter also examines how mobile communications technologies and channels are changing business interactions and how tech savvy managers can help their companies make the most of the digital media landscape.

Increased coverage of social media and digital communications technologies throughout— as well as added explorations of such essential and evolving topics as maintaining professionalism in the workplace, developing effective interpersonal communication skills, adapting to changing work environments, and working productively in teams— ensures that learners have a practical, up-to-date understanding of the realities of today's business environments.

The Digital Revolution and the New Media Landscape

The term "Digital Revolution" refers to the evolution and disruptive adoption of solid-state electronic technology coupled with widespread use of computers, the Internet, networking technology, mobile cellular phones, data storage and software that began with the invention of the transistor in 1948. The Digital Revolution marked the beginning of what has come to be known as the Information Age, on similar lines to what are historically referred to as the Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions. The move to digital computing and data made replication and manipulation of digital data and signals robust and reliable. Of equal significance is the capability to store, access, and transmit digital data remotely over data networks using universally accepted standard formats and protocols.

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the proliferation of digital hardware and software in developed nations in the form of personal computers, ATMs, industrial robots, computer-generated imagery, video gaming, electronic music, bulletin board systems, to name a few. In 1989, Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web. The World Wide Web became publicly accessible in 1991 and soon after followed by the launch of the Mosaic web browser and later Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer.

Cell phones became as commonplace as computers by the early 2000s, and progressively became more and more "smart". The use of text messaging, which was possible in the 1990s, became a craze by the mid-2000s. The digital revolution became a global phenomenon in this period. At the end of 2005, the population of the Internet reached 1 billion, and 3 billion people worldwide used cell phones. HDTV had become the standard television broadcasting format in many countries by the end of the decade.[17]

Early versions of social media pre-date the creation of well-known social networking sites such as MySpace (in 2003) and Facebook (in 2004). In fact, the roots of social media go back as far as 1979, when Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis from Duke University created the worldwide discussion system Usenet.[18]

Far from putting an end to web technologies, the dotcom* collapse in 2001 ushered in the Web 2.0 era, a second generation of Internet technology. From this point, the web grew to be more than just a platform where content and applications could be published by individuals, as it had been with Web 1.0. It became a platform for two-way communication, where content could be modified continuously by all users in collaboration.[19] Unlike Web 1.0—with its static websites—Web 2.0—with its blogs, wikis, and collaborative projects—is about connection, engagement, and participation. Table 13.1 summarizes the evolution of web technologies.

TABLE 13.1 Overview of Web 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 Technologies

WEB 1.0	WEB 2.0	WEB 3.0
• The "read-only" era	• The "read–write" web	• The "semantic" web
• No flow of communication from consumer to producer	• Users publish their own content	• Information interpreted by machines (AI)
• No posting of comments	• Wikis, blogs, widgets	• Users find, share, and combine information more easily
• Static websites	• Video streaming	• Natural language searches
• Bookmarking	• Easy exchange of audio and video clips	• Micro formats
• Hyperlinking		• Mobile devices
		• Cloud and grid computing
		• Personalized and contextual search

*Read more about the dot-com bubble here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dot-com_bubble

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"References." Because a combination résumé is less traditional, it is a more risky choice for anyone applying for jobs in traditional profession-oriented fields such as accounting, law, or banking. The formatting should be strategic and methodical so that the combination of styles is not confusing to readers.

Figures 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3 are samples of chronological, functional, and combination résumés.

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OBJECTIVE	To enable the delivery of superior in-store customer service and merchandise management in a fashion retail chain as an entry-level manager
EDUCATION	**Southern Business School**, Mysore
	Diploma in Retail Management
	June 2017 – May 2019
	First Class with Honors (76%)
	Major courses: • Managerial Accounting
	• Advanced Retail Management
	• Organizational Behaviour
	College of South India, Mysore
	Diploma in Fashion Merchandising
	July 2013 – April 2016
	First Class (67%)
	Major courses: • Fashion Retail Entrepreneurship
	• Retail Organizational Management
	• Retail Human Resources Management
EXPERIENCE	**Assistant Manager, Skylark Fashions, Kolkata**
	May 2016 - May 2017
	• Responsible for directing, training, and motivating store sales team of eight in order to provide a high level of customer service. Increased revenues by 15 per cent
	• Improved inventory-control procedures to reduce stock surpluses by 20 per cent
	Fashion Intern, Taba Shoes Limited, Kolkata
	January 2014 - March 2014
	• Assisted district manager in coordinating in-store displays
SKILLS	• Proficient in AutoFad3D Design and Print application
	• Superior communication and inter-personal skills
ACHIVEMENTS	Named Skylark Employee of the Month July to October 2016
PERSONAL	Gender: Male
	Date of Birth: January 14, 1999
	Nationality: Indian
REFERENCES	Available on request

Margin notes:
- Emphasizes professional goal in relation to the advertisement for the position being sought
- Places education first for emphasis, as degrees and diplomas of this young candidate relate directly to position being sought. Include schooling information also
- Describes work experience, quantifies specific achievements, and uses action verbs
- Mentions some skills commonly sought by employers
- Other expected inform... provid...

Figure 9.1
Chronological Résumé

Detailed writing samples respond to real-life situations and show students the level of excellence they should strive to achieve in their own writing. Comments and tips in the margins draw students' attention to important features of the samples, and "ineffective" samples show students what to avoid in their own writing.

Extensive end-of-chapter resources and exercises including individual and group activities, writing improvement exercises, case study exercises, and online activities based on locally relevant realistic business situations that encourage students to develop their critical-thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills.

Exercises, Workshops, and Discussion Forums

1. **Brainstorming Elements of Effective Communication.** As a class or in small groups, discuss the skills and characteristics essential to effective business communication and, from your discussion, devise a list of words that accurately describe it. Rate each skill on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most important, and provide examples to support each characteristic.

2. **Taking a Professional "Selfie."** Using a smartphone, take a "selfie" that could be used for professional purposes and posted on a social media site such as LinkedIn. As you take the photo, consider the qualities of professional identity you would like to project. How is this professional "selfie" different from the photos you may post to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and other social media sites? What qualities and values do you hope viewers will associate with this image? How could you make this photo look even more professional?

3. **Exploring Professional Codes of Conduct.** For almost any profession or industry, there is at least one professional association that provides its members with guidelines for conduct and practice as well as networking and professional-growth opportunities. For this activity, conduct a brief online search to find at least one Indian professional association connected to your area of study or planned career path. Locate the association's professional code of practice.* Identify three core values and responsibilities, and for each list a behaviour or action that could demonstrate it or put it into practice. Share your findings in a small group and discuss the values and prescribed behaviours the codes have in common.

4. **Assessing the Impact of Online Disinhibition.** Professionals who use social media may sometimes face boundary issues when they choose a photo to post online. These professional lapses happen as a result of online disinhibition, or the tendency to behave differently online than in face-to-face interactions. In a small group, view the photo below and imagine you have come across it through social media. What is your impression of the man in the photo? Now imagine that this man is your doctor. Discuss your changing reaction to your viewing of this photo.

5. **Establishing Boundaries for Self-disclosure.** Begin on your own by circling the most appropriate recipient(s) for the following self-disclosures.
   a) Your deepest fear: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.
   b) Your most embarrassing professional experience: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook

* There are a number of India-specific sites to support this exercise: www.aima.in, www.ipra.org, http://www.barcouncilofindia.org/about/professional-standards/rules-on-professional-standards/, http://idaindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IDA-Code-of-Ethics-July-21-2017.pdf and suchlike.

COMMUNICATION INSIGHT

Air Asia India Flies on a Comma

However much people in business believe in the ascendancy of the spoken word, the need to write well is not getting any less important. Companies, governments, regulators, and the judiciary continue to recognize the written word as more acceptable, credible, and legally binding than the spoken. Written business communication is thus a crucial skill in organization life, and the ability to write well is a key competence that recruiters look for in prospective employees. The quality of writing has a direct impact on the image and performance of a company, and, in some cases, its financial well-being.

The wording of a contract in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is a classic example. While Shylock, the money-lender, on default of a loan extended by him, was eligible for "a pound of flesh" as compensation, but not to a single drop of blood (as this was not worded into the contract). Thus he was unable to enforce his agreement with Antonio the Merchant, thanks to some poor drafting and astute interpretation by the merchant's lawyer, Portia.[1]

In 2013, Air Asia India, a newly-formed joint venture alliance between Tata Sons, Air Asia Berhad, the Malaysia-based and Asia's largest low-cost airline, and Telstra Tradeplace was accorded permission by the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), a wing of the Government of India, to invest in a new company and commence operations after applying for and receiving licences from the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

This decision by the FIPB was made in spite of objections raised by officials of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, who stated that the proposal was not consistent with the foreign direct investment policy, which only permitted investment in existing airlines and not in new, greenfield ventures, such as was planned by its promoters.

The Finance Ministry and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) however, argued that the wording of the September 20, 2012 Press Note released by them announcing the new policy allowed for the setting up of greenfield airlines. The wording of note is reproduced below :

"The Government of India has reviewed the position in this regard and decided to permit foreign airlines also to invest, in the capital of Indian companies, operating scheduled and non-scheduled air transport services, up to the limit of 49% of their paid-up capital."[2]

The placement of a comma, after the word "invest", played a crucial role in their opinion; if it were not there, the meaning and interpretation of the policy would have restricted foreign airlines to investing only in existing airlines.

Thanks to a comma, Air Asia India, which commenced operations in June 2014, became the first subsidiary of a foreign airline to enter the Indian aviation sector. It also marked a comeback by the Tata Group to the aviation sector, after the nationalization of Air India (originally Tata Airlines when founded in 1932) in 1953.[3]

This and numerous other similar cases of poorly written proposals, letter, agreements, appointment letters, contracts and even laws indicate that written messages have significant impact on business outcomes. Business writing is evolving rapidly to simpler, plainer, less formal styles that are easily understood by everyone; however, the need to write well is as important as ever.

Exercise: Study this passage carefully to identify other unnecessary Commas in it. Also, check out the meaning of the term "Oxford Comma" and find an example of this in the case write-up.

● **Complex documents such as user agreements, instruction manuals, and mortgage applications can benefit from a plain language approach. With its emphasis on simplicity, directness, and clarity, plain language allows businesses to make complicated information accessible to all stakeholders in an organisation.**

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Localized and relevant Communication Insight caselets at the beginning of every chapter engage and motivate the learner by providing relevant, real-life organizational examples of communication situations and strategy.

9   Communicating for Employment

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Prepare for employment by assessing your career objectives, interests, and professional strengths.
2. Use resources to network and find out about jobs and employers.
3. Use social media tools to search for and apply for a job and to establish a profile.
4. Compose chronological, functional (skills-based), and combination résumés that provide overviews of your professional background and capabilities.
5. Create online and scannable résumés.
6. Write solicited and unsolicited job application letters that strategically target and sell your skills to prospective employers.
7. Prepare for and follow up on job interviews and group discussions.
8. Write a range of messages related to job-seeking, including thank-you letters, job-acceptance letters, and requests for recommendation.

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CHAPTER PREVIEW

Communicating for employment involves a targeted application of the persuasive skills explored in the previous chapter. Behind it is the aim of showcasing your qualifications and accomplishments according to how they meet the needs of a prospective employer. This chapter offers a roadmap to the job application process, beginning with the identification of career objectives and competencies through self-analysis. You'll discover traditional and social media resources for networking, carrying out a job search, and applying for positions, even when positions aren't advertised. You'll be introduced to a variety of options for designing a résumé and making tactical keyword selection to ensure your résumé gets past screeners and leads to an interview. You'll also encounter effective approaches to writing an application (or cover) letter. Finally, you'll learn how to prepare for a job interview and what types of questions to expect.

Practical knowledge and techniques that the learner can use to improve his or her individual skill sets and career prospects illustrate each chapter's main themes with real-life examples.

Checklists and review boxes summarize key points for easy reference.

CHECKLIST   **Intercultural Communication and Workplace Diversity**

- ❑ **Ask questions.** Foster openness in your communications and encourage feedback and constructive dialogue. Exercise sensitivity in the ways you ask others about themselves. When communicating globally, consult with someone from your intended audience's culture to determine acceptable usage and style elements.
- ❑ **Prepare to be flexible.** Adjust your tone, volume, rate of speaking, and use of pauses and silences in verbal exchanges and alter your non-verbal behaviours and facial expressions to suit the needs of the situation when communicating face-to-face. Make allowances for simpler, idiom-free vocabulary choices and shorter sentences when the interaction requires it.
- ❑ **Seek common ground.** Where there is potential for cultural conflict, look to what you share by emphasizing compromise and solutions. Being adept at cultural understanding does not mean that you have to adopt the entire cultural style of others but that you are open to meeting others halfway and making some necessary adjustments.
- ❑ **Tolerate ambiguity and uncertainty.** Communicating with someone from another culture can create uncertainty and sometimes make you uncomfortable. Accept that you may face difficulties in communicating and overcome uncertainty by facing it rather than avoiding it.
- ❑ **Listen to others, not to the voice of your ethnocentrism.** Pay attention to the cross-cultural situation and rely on feedback from multiple cues to monitor the level of an individual's understanding.
- ❑ **Bridge cultural gaps.** Demonstrate your culture's positive characteristics and speak positively for the strengths of other cultures. Rather than simply memorizing facts about other cultures, live the values of greatest importance to you and those you share with others through consideration and sensitivity. Think of your communication as a dialogue between equals.
- ❑ **Encourage your employer to commit to a harassment- and discrimination-free workplace.** If such a commitment has not been made, a human-rights policy and set of procedures can be instituted to resolve problems related to diversity issues quickly and fairly.

CHECKLIST   **Chapter Review**

- ❑ What is communication? What is communication theory?
- ❑ What are the areas of communication study and research?
- ❑ What are the primary elements of the transactional communication model? How does the communication process work?
- ❑ What types of barriers can occur in the communication process? How can those barriers be overcome?
- ❑ Name the five communication contexts. How do they differ and what specific skills are required for each?
- ❑ What is interpersonal communication? What are its core competencies? How can it be improved?
- ❑ What is non-verbal communication? What are the three domains of skills and abilities that le non-verbal competence?
- ❑ What are the five roles of non-verbal communication cues?
- ❑ What are the four components of non-verbal communication?
- ❑ How are the terms *internal communication* and *external communication* defined? Give examp each type.
- ❑ Which skills are most essential for effective workplace communication?
- ❑ What are the ways in which information can flow in organizations? What impact can the kind o have on organizational culture?
- ❑ What are culture, cultural intelligence, cross-cultural competence, and ethnocentrism?

CHECKLIST   **Chapter Review**

- ❑ What is intercultural communication?
- ❑ What are the dimensions of cultural difference?
- ❑ What are the best practices for speaking, listening, and writing interculturally?
- ❑ What are the characteristics of high- and low-context cultures?

KEYWORDS

active listening Listening that demands close attention to a message's literal and emotional meaning and a level of responsiveness that shows the speaker the message was both heard and understood.

body language (kinesics) Non-verbal communication conveyed by gestures, posture, eye contact, and facial expressions.

bypassing Misunderstanding that results from the receiver inferring a different meaning from a message based on the different meanings of the words that are used.

channel barriers Inappropriate choices of channel that impede communication.

channel overload The inability of a channel to carry all transmitted messages.

channel A communication pathway or medium over which a message travels.

chronemics The study of the use and interpretation of time in non-verbal communication.

communication barriers Problems that can affect the communication transaction, leading to confusion or misunderstanding.

culture The shared values, customs, and patterns of behaviour of a particular group or society, including its rules, beliefs, language, and structures.

decoding The act of extracting meaning from spoken, written, and non-verbal communication.

downward communication flow The movement of information from superiors to subordinates.

dyadic The form of communication that involves a group of two.

emotional intelligence The ability to be in touch with one's own emotions, manage one's emotional displays, and understand and respond to the emotions of others to foster strong interpersonal relationships.

emotional interference A psychological factor that creates problems with the communication transaction.

encoding The act of converting ideas into code in order to convey a written, an oral, or a non-verbal message.

environmental interference Interference that results from preconceptions and differing frames of reference.

ethnocentrism The tendency to make false assumptions, based on limited experience, that one's own cultural or ethnic group is superior to others.

external communication Communication with audiences who are part of an external environment.

feedback The receiver's response to a message that confirms if the original message was received and understood.

formal communication channels Official internal communication pathways that facilitate the flow of information through an organization's hierarchy.

formal communications network A system of communication sanctioned by organizational management.

high-context cultures Cultures in which communication depends not only on the explicit wording of a message but also on the message's surrounding context.

horizontal communication flow The movement of information that enables individuals at the same organizational level to share ideas and exchange information.

informal oral network Unofficial internal communication pathways, also known as grapevines, that carry gossip and rumours—sometimes accurate, sometimes not.

information overload A condition whereby a receiver cannot process all messages because of their vast number.

internal communication Communication that takes place within an organization.

low-context cultures Cultures that favour direct communication and depend on explicit verbal and written messages exclusive of context.

message Any type of oral, written, multimedia, or non-verbal communication that is transmitted by a sender to an audience.

mixed messages Conflicting perceptions of a signal or message that may result in miscommunication.

A glossary at the end of each chapter defines key terms and concepts.

Supplements

Communicating for Results, fourth edition, is supported by an outstanding array of ancillary materials for both instructor and student, all available on the companion website: **https://india.oup.com/orcs/ 9780199496570/.**

For the Instructor

- An **instructor's manual** includes chapter overviews, learning objectives, key concepts, suggestions for discussion topics, recommended resources, sample syllabi, and additional homework assignments with detailed answer guidelines.
- An **answer key** provides solutions to the in-text exercises and the online case study workbook.
- **PowerPoint slides** summarize key points from each chapter and incorporate figures from the textbook.
- A **test generator**, with both multiple-choice and short-answer questions, creates both chapter-specific and multiple-chapter tests.

For the Student

- A **study guide** presents chapter overviews, learning objectives, key concepts, checklists, and review questions.
- A **case study workbook**—containing case studies and discussion questions—provides real-life examples taken from both general and discipline-specific situations.
- Interactive **self-grading practice quizzes** for each chapter, along with a practice mid-term and a practice final exam, allow students to test their level of comprehension.
- Annotated **web links** and an **online directory of business resources** provide a starting point for Internet research.

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To my mother, Margaret
—and in memory of my father, George Homer

Carolyn Meyer

To my students, for their work and desire to be better communicators
To my fellow teachers for their support and encouragement
To Pratima, a truly dedicated teacher, and my inspiration

N. Bringi Dev

1 Issues and Trends in Professional Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify the link between effective business communication and personal career success.
2. Understand professionalism and professional boundaries.
3. Recognize key changes and trends in the workplace, especially those influenced by technology.
4. Identify the goals of ethical business communication and apply standards to avoid ethical lapses.
5. Identify workplace privacy issues and apply strategies to safeguard personal information.

CHAPTER PREVIEW

This chapter introduces you to the contemporary workplace and what it takes to be a professional, both as an individual and as part of a team. You'll see why it's important to be honest and principled and to keep private information private.

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COMMUNICATION INSIGHT

Competitive Advantage in a Flat World

Professor James Hoadley of the Georgia Institute of Technology[1] remarked that in the 21st century, everyone in the world would be able to compete on an equal footing with everyone else. As a result, he predicted that the difference between success and failure would be the ability to communicate and to understand.

The veracity of this prediction is easily established; differentiation amongst products and services is decreasing, information and time asymmetry are reducing, globalization and the Internet have "flattened" markets, companies, processes, language, and even the workforce. The term "flat world" was coined by journalist Thomas Friedman based on a remark by Nandan Nilekani, then CEO of Infosys and currently its non-executive chairman that "the playing field is being levelled". Nilekani was referring to India's

● Today's businesses must understand the importance of communication, in the form of advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and other co-operative communication channels, for achieving competitive advantage.

capability to deliver intellectual property and capital from anywhere in the world.[2] Today, this capability encompasses not just software and BPO but also products and services in the engineering, design, health care, entertainment, and education domains, to cite just a few areas.

Management guru Michael Porter, in his eponymous book published in 1998, pointed out that differentiation is a source of **Competitive Advantage**. At that time, Porter referred to differentiation of features, quality, service, and similar attributes of products and services. In today's flat world, communication has emerged as arguably the most important source of competitive advantage. Successful companies rely and depend on advertising, public relations, digital marketing, and co-operative communication channels to launch new products and sustain their portfolios. Internal communication is a focus area for companies seeking to attract, retain, and grow their workforces. Customers and clients evaluate an organization's ability to deliver based on the quality of the company's communication as well as that of its employees, partners, channels, and service providers.

Consider the example of the Indian film industry; the success or failure of a movie is determined by how well it is marketed and how uniquely it positions itself from releases occurring around the same time. A 2017 survey[3] by a unit of WPP GroupM, a global media investment company, revealed that Indian film marketing budgets have grown in recent times from around 5–6% of the overall production budget to 10–15%. The survey also revealed that traditional film studios and production houses now increasingly rely on advertising and digital media interaction, coupled with research, data analytics, and innovation to market movies.

Jack Welch, former Chairman and CEO of General Electric Corporation is supposed to have said that if one does not have a competitive advantage, one should not compete.[4] Without the leverage that communication provides, organizations would be well advised to heed this statement.

Communicating for Change in the New Economy

Good communication matters—now more than ever in business. In today's diverse, wired, global business environments, everyone communicates for a living. It is impossible to work in an office setting without having to write a report, dash off an e-mail message, compose a formal letter, participate in a meeting, carry on a telephone conversation, network and collaborate with colleagues and associates, make a presentation, or use WhatsApp or Skype to carry out some of these functions. Spoken and written communication that is focused, reliable, and disciplined has the power to influence opinion and shape perceptions on which an organization's competitiveness, productivity, and success depend. Good communication plays a crucial role in building credibility and upholding standards of accountability in a global business environment, where relationships thrive on trust. How you write, speak, and listen on the job reflects who you are professionally, how you treat others, and how you do business.

Done well, your communication can empower you and be the means to promotion and success. Language is, after all, a powerful tool worth the effort of learning to use well. Effective communication can cut through the complexities of business, clarifying fuzzy concepts and making masses of data both meaningful and manageable for those who must use it and make decisions based on it.

Successful communication on the job doesn't happen merely by chance. It is the result of learning how to structure your information strategically—of using text, design, and technologies to achieve an intended purpose for a clearly defined audience. Delivering information effectively can depend on a fine balance between you and your audience, between a commitment to your business goals and an awareness of your audience's needs. Delivering information at Internet speed, as so many jobs now require, demands more than simply familiarizing yourself with the basic rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. It also requires keeping up with changes and developing an accessible, functional style that is flexible enough to be applied to the many forms of communication in your workplace.

Good communication makes good business sense. Even though the ability to communicate effectively is thought of as a "**soft skill**"—one of the social and self-management behaviours that help people take action and get results—as opposed to a "**hard skill**"—the know-how, tools, and techniques that equip people to work in a professional capacity—research has shown that communication is important for success at work. The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) Corporate Recruiters Survey Report 2017 reveals that employers consider communication to be the most important skill they look for when hiring management graduates.[5] Communication capabilities are not just a pathway to career advancement but also a route to a healthy bottom line. Terry Matthews, founder and chairman of Wesley Clover, a private equity and investment management firm, sees new graduates with specific skill sets as part of the formula for corporate success in the future economy: "It's not always the ones with the highest marks. Rather, it's the people with the hard work ethic, creativity and good communication skills."[6]

Communicating in Today's Workplace

As previously indicated, profound changes are occurring in the global workplace—and beyond—with implications for learning, job requirements, sought-after business talent, hiring, and the quality of work life. This transformation is caused by several factors:

- A changeover to a knowledge-based Internet
- The adoption of revolutionary information and communication technologies (**ICTs**)
- New team-based work environments with flattened hierarchies and a more diverse employee base
- Expectations for sustainability, ethical practice, employee engagement, and corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Highly competitive global markets

Communication is the cornerstone in the new and rapidly evolving workplace, bringing together core functions.

The knowledge economy Whereas the world economy used to be based on the products people made from raw materials through manual labour, the information age has made it knowledge-based. The knowledge worker makes and sells some kind of idea-based product: for example, software, consulting and financial services, music, design, or pharmaceuticals. The advantage that knowledge products have over products produced through manual labour is that their value can dramatically increase as the global market expands; the challenges in a knowledge economy are to ensure continued funding for research and development (R&D), to continue to draw on an educated workforce trained in critical thinking, and to fight the problem of "brain drain," the loss of experts to other countries.

Spurring the spread of information, publicly accessible search engines such as Google and open-access business engines and databases have become equalizers, helping to make the acquisition of knowledge more democratic so that everyone can, potentially, know almost anything at any given time. It is understood that workers should have both the skills to utilize such resources to find and evaluate information and the know-how to process and communicate that information effectively. The information age makes researchers of us all, no matter what our occupation or job profile. Shared workspaces, company intranets, telecommuting, and co-working are prime examples of how the business milieu is being radically reshaped.

The risk society The forces of modernization have brought not only unprecedented progress but also unprecedented risk. Recognizing this situation, sociologists Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck have called our modern society a "risk society."[7] Risk is the potential for loss. When we act to gain something, we must often assume a certain level of risk. Today's businesses carry out extensive assessments to identify potential risks and avoid risk-related losses. Dangers include not only environmental risks, such as natural disasters, but also manufactured risks that are complex, have the potential to be catastrophic, and can affect many people. Examples of manufactured risks in ICTs include **piracy**, **cyberwarfare, phishing,** and **identity theft**. Security breaches result in lost or compromised data, as well as a loss of trust; they can harm commerce and a company's credibility, reputation, and bottom line. Institutions such as governments and businesses attempt to control such risks by building trust, establishing cross-border co-operation, and forging networks.

Managing risk is essential for the active risk-taking that allows a dynamic economy to continue. Preventive measures and regulation are part of this effort, as are the specialized protocols of crisis and **risk communication**. Data security, cybersecurity, and defence against a spectrum of threats to communication from computer viruses, hacking, and other forms of cyberattack continue to be top concerns for organizations.

Flatter organizations Organizations are by tradition layered and hierarchical. Managers from the top down at many levels are entrusted with making important decisions and setting the strategies for action to be carried out by front-line employees with whom they may or may not be in direct contact. As organizations strive for greater cost savings, efficiency, competitiveness, and sustainability, management hierarchies may be flattened, with fewer layers and divisions. This decentralization and democratization of the workplace, with fewer middle managers to pass along and interpret directions, makes for shorter communication chains; therefore, every individual must be a skilled communicator if company products and services are going to make it into the market.

Sustainability and corporate social responsibility Corporations hold significant power and influence in the world. In fact, 69 of the 100 largest economies in the world are companies.[8] According to Kristen Coco, strategic communications consultant at the UN Global Compact (UNGC), the **corporate social responsibility** movement was born in the 1990s amid growing stakeholder concerns over environmental catastrophes (such as the sinking of the *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker), the first sustainability reports from forward-looking companies such as Ben & Jerry's, and the emergence of the antiglobalization movement.[9]

Today, important initiatives such as the UNGC drive transparency on how corporations earn their money, treat their employees, and protect the planet's finite resources.

Communicating these values to stakeholders has become more important as interest in **sustainable development** and related concepts of CSR, corporate ethics, citizenship and accountability, and the triple bottom line of environment, economy, and society grows.[10] Reporting sustainable development is more than a PR exercise. Through a combination of voluntary and mandatory disclosures, sustainability reporting can accomplish many objectives:

- Strengthen the link between a company and its stakeholders and increase stakeholder value
- Boost financial performance
- Showcase efficiency in production and lead to better use of company assets and innovative technology
- Increase the company's appeal to socially responsible investors
- Build industry credibility, set an example, and enhance company reputation

Business on a global scale The world's economy is becoming increasingly global—to the point where, since 2000, the world seems to have shrunk. This is due, in large part, to several key factors:

- There has been an increased access to and usage of the Internet. The number of users in India is expected to double to 59 per cent of the population, up from 26 per cent in 2016.
- Cloud computing and the use of mobile and cloud-based apps (applications) have made Ola, Facebook, and LinkedIn household names.
- Network major Cisco predicts that by 2022 there will be 982 million smartphone users in India, up from about 500 million in 2017.[11]
- Networking products and services such as Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and 5G mobile data services are becoming more widespread and cheaper to acquire and use.
- Data analytics, AI, and the Internet of Things (IoT) have moved beyond the buzzword stage and are being actively used for commercial purposes.

The globalized business structure provides new opportunities as well as challenges for employees and their organizations. The need to explore new and emerging markets, negotiate, buy and sell overseas, market products, and enter into joint ventures is anchored in effective communication with people from around the world; without this communication, none of these functions could be accomplished. The ability to communicate across cultural barriers, time zones, and language divides—and to exercise intercultural sensitivity by respecting differences in customs, lifestyles, religions, and business etiquette—is crucial to the success of operations in this new global economy.

More diverse employee base Apart from the fact that India is intrinsically a multicultural country, in recent times we have seen growth in the number of expatriates living and working in Indian companies. For example, Infosys Limited states on its website that it has people from all walks of life—of different interests, genders, and orientations from over a 100 nationalities, operating out of 45 countries.[12]

Because of the demographic makeup of most workplaces and the interactions brought about by a worldwide economy, managing and promoting **diversity** is an important component of management. Organizational policies and practices will continue to be vital in sustaining an equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment in which all individuals are valued, respected, and treated with dignity.

Growing millennial workforce The term *millennials (also known as Generation Y or Gen Y)* generally refers to individuals born between 1982 and 2004[13]. Millennials today constitute roughly 47 per cent of the working age population in India, have increased levels of disposable income, are consumption-oriented, and are very digitally savvy and active. Millennials bring unique talents and competencies to the workforce, but their numbers alone make for a competitive labour market. Their work styles and preferences show desire for

- flexible hours
- work–life balance
- ongoing learning, coaching, and real-time feedback
- fulfillment—work that is authentic and allows them to be themselves and develop their strengths
- being kept in the loop—having access to all workplace information that they perceive to be relevant to them and to their jobs[14]

Worldwide, stereotypes about millennials abound. The popular press and others have labelled them the "Look at Me" generation,[15] suggesting that they are attention-seeking.

However, millennials are also known for their willingness to work in teams, communicate openly with managers, embrace new communication technologies, and change jobs frequently, in fact twice as often as previous generations, in order to achieve career goals.[16] More and more millennials seek to work from home, making telecommuting, mobile offices, online collaboration tools, and cloud software more than just passing trends. If the millennial generation has a personality, it could be summed up as the Pew Research Center has described it: confident, connected, and open to change.[17]

Team work environments In the twenty-first century, business is conducted by teams. According to former IBM strategist Joel Cawley, "We are not just communicating more than ever before, we are now able to collaborate—to build coalitions, projects, and products together—more than ever before."[18] Collaboration in the broadest sense is at work in "open data" and crowdsourcing initiatives, such as apps that allow users to report and share information about heavy traffic or road closures.

Collaboration through cross-functional teams, in which individuals with different areas of expertise come together to share information for a common goal, makes the most of a workforce's creative potential by increasing individual involvement in decision-making and project development. Innovations in information technology and mobile communications have made it possible for employees to be part of virtual project teams, which can eliminate time and space barriers—by allowing team members to contribute outside of traditional work hours and from various locations—and still provide quality, low-cost solutions to organizational problems. Working in teams, however, depends on good communication and the interpersonal skills to overcome conflicts that arise when people with differing viewpoints must make joint decisions. Special training is often required to help teams boost performance by managing conflict and practising open communication.

● **Millennial workers tend to be comfortable working in teams, communicating openly, and embracing new technologies.**

Disruptive and innovative communication technologies Technology and language use shaped by technology now filter our perspective of the world. Our communications are mediated through many different technologies and electronic forums, most of which did not exist 30 years ago. Many of these are what Harvard professor of business administration Clayton Christensen calls **disruptive technologies**—affordable, accessible products and services that take root at the bottom of the market then move up to displace established competitors and make some existing products and services obsolete.[19] Many technologies that are now essential communication tools are disruptive technologies: laptops; e-mail and e-mail innovations such as IMAP accounts and auto

responders; tablet computers; smartphones and other hand-held wireless devices; Bluetooth technology; instant messaging (IM); text messaging; voicemail; proprietary Voice over Internet Protocol services (VoIP) such as Skype; podcasts; mobile apps such as Basecamp and WebEx; space-defying video conferencing and web conferencing; presentation software such as PowerPoint, Prezi, and Keynote; interactive software that can change the sequence of information; weblogs; wikis; virtual worlds; cloud computing; and wearable computer components. Not only do these technologies allow us to communicate farther and faster, but they also enable us to communicate around the clock—to the point where we are always using one technology or another.[20]

Connectivity through the World Wide Web Web 2.0 (read–write) applications such as blogs, wikis, peer-to-peer file sharing, social networking platforms, and virtual worlds allow users to communicate, collaborate, and socialize, as well as to create, distribute, and share content. Web formats such as really simple syndication (RSS) feeds allow frequently updated works to be published and new content to be syndicated automatically.

- **Social networking sites: Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit, and Twitter.** Facebook began as a tool—or what the site calls "a social utility"—to "give people the power to share and make the world more open and connected . . . to stay connected with friends and family, to discover what's going on in the world, and to share and express what matters to them."[21] This networking platform lets users control the information they share with others, and this tool for self-presentation has been quickly embraced by marketing-savvy corporations. Twitter is a popular microblogging tool that allows users to send and read "tweets" of up to 280 characters. Twitter also offers corporate representatives the chance to build trust and promote corporate values such as transparency.

- **Web 3.0 (the transcendent web).** Businesses are beginning to plan for the next generation of web technology—and for the privacy concerns it brings. Web 3.0 encompasses artificial intelligence (AI) technology, social media, the semantic web (which allows for more sophisticated and personalized searching), and the Internet of Things (dubbed IoT, a network of web-enabled objects and devices).[22] Many business leaders believe that Web 3.0 will transform business, especially the online media and retail industries, over the coming years. Web 3.0 promises the unprecedented ability to not only connect and communicate with customers but also, through real-time analytics, capture data about their online activities that can then be used for sales and marketing as well as product development. A wide variety of "things"—from cars to health-monitoring devices to personal fitness trackers—are already equipped to automatically collect and exchange data over the Internet. Moreover, technology research group Machina Research predicts that the number of such devices will grow to 27 billion by 2025, and that these devices will generate several trillion dollars in revenue by that time.[23] Companies that have embraced Web 3.0 include Dell, which has created a community of one million online users to test products and provide feedback on design, and Amazon, which uses AI to provide customer recommendations based on individual browsing histories.[24]

- **Mobile apps for business.** Smartphones, tablets, and other devices with mobile Internet capabilities are gaining popularity in India and across the globe. Thus, it should not be surprising that many businesses, and even the government, have taken advantage of mobile apps. Business-to-business (B2B) apps are used to support an organization's internal business processes such as customer-relationship management, warehouse management, and sales-force automation. Business-to-consumer (B2C) apps fulfill different needs:
  - Content-oriented apps, such as Twitter and IM+, answer the need for information, communication, entertainment, and socialization.
  - Marketing-oriented apps promote brands and excel in targeting them to a younger, digitally native demographic. Companies frequently use mobile apps as mainstays of their communications planning, often using them to build brand awareness.

- **Mobile apps for business provide an array of features that can help organizations organize data, boost productivity, and meet their customers' needs**.

- Service-oriented apps allow users to perform tasks such as online banking, shopping, or consulting schedules.

Various apps also benefit businesses by boosting productivity. Examples include note-taking apps such as Evernote, business-planning apps such as StratPad, file-syncing apps such as Dropbox Business, scheduling apps such as Google Calendar, and virtual personal-assistant apps such as Alexa and Google Assistant.

New economies: Attention/distraction and share The rise of the Internet and social media has made information gluts and overload a central fact of daily experience. Surging volumes of content bring with them endless choices about what to view, read, listen to, and know. Though capital, labour, information, and knowledge are plentiful, attention is scarce, and businesses must compete and manage information strategically to attract it. A state of what tech writer Linda Stone calls "continuous partial attention" is the new reality,[25] especially for knowledge workers whose reliance on digital technologies can result in constant distractions on the job. Attention has become the new currency because it is always at a premium.[26] The term **attention economy** thus refers to a system centered on seeking and receiving attention from other human beings. Having the greatest number of views, tags, followers, or likes is a badge of success, and quantifying and measuring this attention is a big part of what businesses now do.[27] The aim of attracting or interrupting consumers' concentration, which is the idea behind the **distraction economy**, has implications for how we present ourselves on online platforms, how businesses market their brands and manage their online images and interactions, and even how we manage our lives. The distraction economy has also brought the need for **mindfulness**, or the ability to "manage [a] wandering mind and external distractions."[28] For businesses and their stakeholders, getting attention quickly and memorably and forging connections and affinities online matters more now than it has ever before.

Social media, along with mobile communications, play an equally important role in the **share** (or **peer**) **economy**. The share economy is based on the idea of collaborative consumption, or sharing as reinvented through network technologies, with a "shift in consumer values from ownership to access."[29] This new, peer-to-peer economic model is based on some old and familiar concepts:

- Sharing
- Renting
- Swapping
- Gifting
- Lending
- Bartering[30]

App-based services such as Airbnb (accommodation), Swiggy (food delivery), Byju's (learning), and Ola (taxi) have disrupted previously regulated businesses in the taxi, learning, food and grocery delivery, and hotel industries. Because share economies place a monetary value on access to assets, they enable people who control that access to become part-time entrepreneurs.[31]

Professionalism and Employee Engagement
Why Professionalism Is Important

A professional is a worker or a practitioner (e.g., a doctor, a lawyer, an engineer, an accountant, a performing artist, or an investment advisor) in whom others put their trust. **Professionalism**, or the act of being professional, requires a worker to be worthy of that trust, as demonstrated through their attitudes and actions. Workers can show professionalism through actions such as the following:

- Putting clients first
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Using their knowledge for honest, legal, and ethical purposes[32]

At its most basic, professionalism involves aspiring and committing to appropriate work identities, conduct, and practices.[33] A starting point for many new workers is getting to know and understand their shared work identity. This identity links them to others who do the same work and reinforces a sense of belonging based on what they have in common, including their

- educational background
- professional training
- experiences and expertise
- membership in professional associations
- shared work cultures
- shared ways of solving problems and helping clients and customers deal with uncertainty and risk[34]

Becoming professionalized, or achieving status as a professional, isn't a matter of wearing the right suit just to fit in and look the part. It's a matter of standing out as someone who can act decisively and knowledgeably, adapt to new situations, and add value to the performance of an organization based on his or her high-quality work standards.[35] As an employee, professionalism is an ongoing process of social learning that involves thinking about and carrying out your duties according to a set of shared values, objectives, norms, and expectations important to you, your organization, and its stakeholders.

The link between organizations and professionalism is strong. In fact, professionalism is embedded in every aspect of the workplace, including its

- systems
- structures
- rules
- processes[36]

An organization's policies, mission statement, codes of conduct, training manuals, and standards for communication make professionalization of its workforce a priority, in part because professionalism is viewed as desirable, appealing, and rewarding.

A commitment to professionalism increases the chance that your behaviour, interactions, communications, and achievements will be viewed positively. For individuals, these outcomes can lead to higher status and authority.[37] For organizations, professionalism, by reducing risk of conflict and error, can improve workflow, the quality and conditions of work life, and the customer-client experience. Ultimately, professionalism is good for business because it enhances a company's efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and reputation.

Qualities, Characteristics, and Expectations

No matter what your profession or occupation is, being professional depends on your capacity to act and interact in the best interests of customers and colleagues, never purely out of self-interest.[38] Being professional requires you to display professional attitudes and to conduct yourself professionally, especially when you are at work in the service of others. It involves not just a single skill or capacity but a whole range of integrated qualities (highlighted in Figure 1.1).
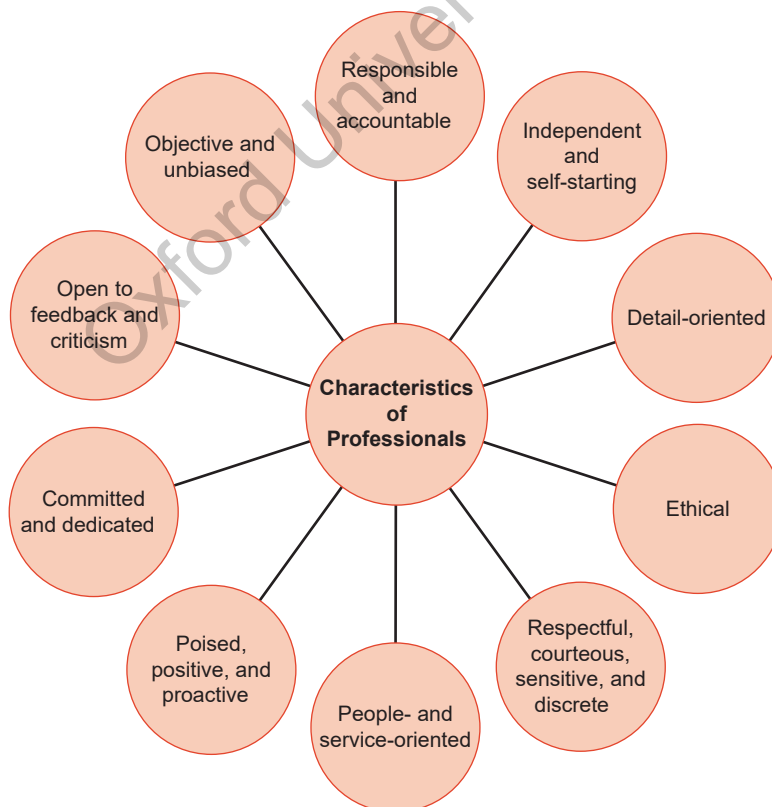
Figure 1.1
Characteristics of a Professional

A true professional strives to be

1. responsible and accountable
2. independent and self-starting
3. a stickler for detail and high standards
4. ethical and demonstrates fairness and integrity
5. respectful, courteous, sensitive, and discrete
6. people- and service-oriented
7. poised, positive, and proactive
8. committed as well as dedicated
9. objective and unbiased
10. open to feedback and criticism

The set of characteristics an organization values is as unique as the organization itself. Demonstrating these characteristics and being a good "corporate citizen" are what most organizations expect of their employees. Such characteristics, in combination, also define organizational culture. However, some people interpret an organization's insistence that its employees live up to certain corporate expectations in their daily conduct as a way for the organization to exercise domination and control over its members.

This more negative interpretation of organizational expectations explains why businesses of the future may opt to become "**authentic organizations**."[39] Authentic organizations aim to succeed by fostering environments of creativity and innovation that will attract top talent and thereby bring meaning and engagement back to the workplace. **Employee engagement** has to do with harnessing an employee's "self" to her or his work role in a way that makes the employee not just attentive to that role but fully immersed in it.[40] Engaged employees boost organizational performance and increase revenues,[41] making engagement a top priority for managers. Many companies in India now survey employee engagement and satisfaction frequently and have introduced measures to increase it.[42] Surveys by Human Resource consulting companies reveal that the engagement levels of employees in Indian companies is of the increasing order of 75 to 80 per cent.[43]

Professional Boundaries and Behaviours

Relationships are defined by the boundaries we set to map out what is considered acceptable behaviour and what is off-limits in particular contexts. Boundaries create transparency and help build strong, respectful relationships. **Personal boundaries** are the limits (emotional, physical, and mental) we establish to protect ourselves and set our own thoughts and feelings apart from those of other people. **Professional boundaries**, on the other hand, define the roles and responsibilities of employees in the workplace. Professional boundaries help employees work safely, comfortably, and productively. They help each member of an organization know where they stand, what is expected of them, and what they can rightfully say "yes" and "no" to. Recognizing and respecting boundaries helps all concerned work together more effectively, and it helps to build an environment of transparency in which there is less chance of stress, blame, or bullying.

In business, boundary-setting is a question of defining where you end and other people begin. Defining and establishing professional boundaries begins with you recognizing the limits of your personal boundaries. It also requires you to understand the guidelines your organization has set to regulate how you will behave toward others and how others will behave toward you. As a starting point, you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What is your role?
- What is your job description?
- What are your duties and responsibilities?
- Who do you support and report to?

- Who assigns your work and sets your priorities?
- Who evaluates your work and provides feedback?

You should also be aware of boundaries set by

- organizational rules and regulations (positive/negative sanctions)
- norms (obligations that must be met)
- cognition (ways of thinking)
- individualized self-regulation (self-control and personal commitments, such as pride in perform-ance, that guide you where organizational regulations leave off)

Reading your job description, perusing your employment manual, reflecting on your personal values, and having appropriate conversations with superiors or supervisors are all good ways to gain the insight and information you need to set professional boundaries. Observing workplace culture and paying attention to how others interact can also yield valuable information. For example, you may learn that being truly helpful to a colleague or a customer involves maintaining a proper social distance and striking a balance between being under-involved and being over-involved. Learning about organizational culture and being able to stay within professional boundaries are both essential to maintaining professionalism.

Unprofessional behaviour is often the result of loose boundaries or a lack of respect for established boundaries. Crossing these limits, for example, by intruding on someone else's space or sharing too much personal information, can cause confusion, conflict, embarrassment, and loss of respect and reputation. Such behaviour can shift attention off-task and away from a customer's needs, or violate a colleague's need for space and disrupt co-worker relationships. It can also cause irreparable damage to an individual's reputation. Unprofessional behaviour takes many forms, including the following:

- Gossiping about colleagues
- Bullying and intimidating colleagues
- Using cliques to ostracize certain colleagues
- Using profane language
- Displaying gender, racial, or personal bias
- Ignoring messages or responding to them in an inappropriate way
- Sabotaging a colleague's efforts
- Blaming a colleague unfairly for your mistake
- Not acknowledging a colleague's presence or contribution

Professional lapses draw criticism, especially when they happen repeatedly. As a result, they can have costly consequences, lowering morale and hurting employee retention, and may cost you your job or even your career.

How can you tell if you are being professional? Professionalism is subject to self-judgement and the judgement of others.[44] Periodic performance reviews may flag boundary issues. Even before that stage is reached, informal feedback and reactions from colleagues may help you understand how you are measuring up as a professional. This measuring of professionals in fact takes place on several levels:

- Self-reflection and self-regulation (measuring yourself based on adherence to your internal standards and those of the organization)
- Evaluations, reactions, and feedback from colleagues, managers, and other stakeholders
- Awards, merits, and citations
- Acceptance into professional associations and accrediting bodies

Although there is no secret formula for professionalism, there are some general rules of thumb: check your emotional baggage at the door; stay principled, committed, and respectful; and be the best employee you can be.

CHECKLIST Professionalism

- ❑   What is professionalism?
- ❑   What are some factors that help to foster a sense of belonging among professionals?
- ❑   What aspects of the workplace is professionalism embedded in?
- ❑   How do workplaces communicate professional standards to their employees?
- ❑   What are the benefits of being professional?
- ❑   What skills (attitudes, beliefs, behaviours) are associated with professionalism?
- ❑   What is employee engagement?
- ❑   How do companies measure employee engagement?
- ❑   What are professional boundaries and why are they important?
- ❑   What constitutes unprofessional behaviour?
- ❑   How can professionalism be measured?

Ethical Communication
Ethics and Legal Responsibilities of Business Communication

When you communicate on the job, not only do you represent your organization, but you also assume responsibility for its actions. Every document (letter, e-mail, or report) you write is in reality a legal contract admissible as evidence in a court of law. Signing a letter means you agree to its content. It makes your promises and agreements legally binding and makes retractions next to impossible to carry out without proof of altered circumstances. For the good of your company, its image, and its bottom line, communicating legally and ethically is of the highest importance.

Business ethics stipulate that senior executives as well as employees at every organizational level "do the right thing" in regard to both relationships with stakeholders (employees, customers, investors, and the public) and administration of products and services. Behaving ethically in business settings involves an awareness of how the choices you make affect and influence others, for better or for worse. Corporate codes of ethics—upholding equal commitment to values such as honesty, integrity, fairness, social responsibility, and respect—sensitize managers and staff alike to how they should behave. The growing emphasis on business ethics is more than just a trend or bandwagon effect. Most Indian organizations, be they governmental, non-governmental, public, or private sector, have instituted one or more codes or have framed policies to deal with matters such as conflict of interest, external and customer relations, the handling of company assets, relationships with competitors, and employee workplace issues.

Having moral and interpersonal ground rules in place in the form of policies, training programmes, and other initiatives helps companies weather crises and controversies by allowing them to distinguish right from wrong in times of fundamental change. A company's ethical practices speak to its social responsibility and integrity—an invaluable asset that makes perfect sense in an age weary of corporate corruption. Ethical business conduct and communication create a marketplace advantage, enhance employee performance, promote a strong public image, prevent legal challenges, save huge sums in legal fees, and provide incentive for leniency in legal proceedings.

Tips on Ethical Communication

Responsible and accountable workplace communication, especially written communication, plays a big part in ethical business conduct. Here are some tips for becoming a good and ethical corporate citizen:

- **Tell the truth.** Avoid deceptive language, words with double meanings, and extremes of over-statement and understatement. Misrepresentation, especially when it is in the form of false advertising, is punishable by law. Make sure that your motives are clear, with no indications of a hidden agenda, and that others will perceive them as such.
- **Avoid language that attempts to evade responsibility.** The passive voice, when misapplied, can mislead readers through its failure to assign responsibility for certain actions.
- **Don't suppress or de-emphasize important information, including information that the public rightfully deserves to know or that people need to do their jobs.** Present facts accurately while ensuring that they are relevant and used in a reasonable way in reaching conclusions and making recommendations. Include any information the reader would want to have and will need to understand your recommendations (as long as the information is within your authority to disclose). Don't hide facts or conflicts of interest or emphasize or de-emphasize certain facts to give readers a false impression; avoid half-truths and exaggerations. Give clear warnings of risks and dangers when issuing safety information—someone's life may hang in the balance, and the liability of your company could depend on it.
- **Offer good value for money.** Back up any claims you make about the value of a service or per-formance of a product, including claims made through visual images. There are stiff penalties for falsifying sales, marketing, and investment information and for making any claim about product pricing, performance, or quality that can't be verified.
- **Be timely in your communication.** Avoid unjustified delays in replying or processing informa-tion and be sure to direct your message to the right person.
- **Consider your obligations.** Keep in mind to whom you are responsible when you carry out com-munications on the job—your managers, co-workers, suppliers, customers and clients, the com-pany, regulators, shareholders, other stakeholders, the public and community, and society at large.
- **Show respect and consider ideals and impacts.** Speak, write, and act with the inherent dignity of others in mind. Consider whether those with whom you are communicating and outside observers would consider your communications respectful. Give thought to how your communi-cation impacts and helps stakeholders and how it reflects the positive values to which you aspire. Provide the opportunity for stakeholders to give input into decision-making.
- **Avoid libel.** Libel is printed and recorded defamation and is characterized by false, malicious, or derogatory remarks—remarks that arouse hatred, contempt, or ridicule toward the individ-uals to whom they are applied. Common law protects every person against this kind of character assassination.
- **Distinguish between fact and opinion.** Let readers know the difference between conjecture and a verifiable fact. Passing off an opinion as a fact is misleading and unethical.
- **Use a layout that doesn't hide information.** Style elements such as lists, bullets, and spacing should be used to spotlight important information, not hide it.
- **Know what you can and cannot disclose to certain parties according to corporate disclosure practices, privacy law, and confidentiality agreements.** Careless publication or misuse of your company's intellectual property and confidential information, even in the form of an offhand remark, can be detrimental to your organization and might result in charges of wrongdoing. Not advising investors of major corporate events that affect such things as share prices can, on the other hand, expose companies to lawsuits under legislation.
- **Be especially careful communicating in cyberspace.** Cyberspace is an ethical minefield. Remember that e-mail and text messages are easily forwarded. Once they are sent, you have vir-tually no control over where they end up. Many companies now have regulations in place regard-ing the type of information their employees can transmit via e-mail. Others insist on archiving e-mail messages for up to two years. A general rule is to not transmit by electronic means any-thing you would not want your employer, colleagues, or friends to see or to find in the newspaper.

- **Don't claim authorship of content you have not written.** Disclose how you obtained your information and how you used it in making your arguments. The consequences of plagiarism—not giving due credit for borrowed words or ideas—are serious. Always acknowledge your sources by using quotation marks, notes, or citations.

CHECKLIST   Ethical Writing

- ❑   Is the document truthful?
- ❑   Is the action the document endorses legal?
- ❑   In writing the document, do you treat others in a way you would like to be treated, with respect and concern for their inherent dignity? Have you avoided violating anyone's rights?
- ❑   Are you willing to take responsibility for what the document says?
- ❑   Would your perspective on an issue still seem fair if you were viewing it from the opposite side?
- ❑   Is the information in the document based on thorough research from recent, reliable, and unbiased sources?
- ❑   Do you use sound and logical reasoning and avoid exaggeration?
- ❑   Would it be acceptable if everyone communicated in the same way you have?
- ❑   As you accomplish your purpose, are you also acting in the best interest of your employer and your client?
- ❑   Are ethical standards applied consistently to your writing?
- ❑   Does your communication comply with the policies and codes of conduct specified by your company or generally acceptable norms in the industry?

Privacy in the Workplace

Privacy, according to legal scholar Alan Westin, is "the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others."[45] Doing business, in fact any commercial activity, involves the collection and retention of the personal information of customers, clients, patients, and employees. While the collection of personal information by either governments or other organizations is one matter, the issue of privacy arises when personal information is disclosed, shared, sold, stolen or in any way commercially or socially used, distributed or exploited in any way without the express consent of the individuals whose data is being shared. The sharing of data is almost always enabled via one form of communication or the other, such as orally or in printed or digital form, and transmitted by phone, fax, social media, cloud, file transfer, or suchlike.

With technology now affecting almost all aspects of business activity and posing unwarranted intrusions and techno-threats, concerns about privacy—and the best way to protect personal or privileged information—have never been greater. Despite the best efforts of most companies to safeguard the personal information of customers and employees, privacy breaches are becoming more common.

An example of such a breach of privacy is the Facebook-Cambridge Analytica case, a major US scandal reported in early 2018 when it was revealed that Cambridge Analytica had harvested the personal data of millions of Facebook profiles of US voters without their consent and used it for creating political campaigns.[46] It has been described as a watershed moment in the public understanding of personal data and precipitated a massive fall in Facebook's stock price and calls for tighter regulation of tech companies' use of data.

In India, there has been much debate as well as legal activity relating to the Aadhaar, which is a unique identity number based on the biometric and demographic data available to people resident in India. The Aadhaar scheme is administered by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), a statutory

authority established under the provisions of what is commonly referred to as the Aadhaar Act. Used to provide proof of identity and residence, it was originally required to obtain subsidies and access to government services. Over time, the use of Aadhaar has been extended to a variety of identification situations, such as income tax, finance, banking and so on. In February 2018, the government stated that 1.17 billion Aadhaar IDs had been assigned, translating to coverage of 89.2 per cent of the population.[47] Since its inception, there have been serious concerns expressed of every facet of the Aadhaar scheme, including the use, storage, and sharing of data, as also the security issues relating to theft and loss of information of almost every citizen of India.

Policy and legislation in the areas of data protection and privacy have been evolving since the beginning of the millennium with the introduction of the Information Technology Act, 2000. This legislation addresses matters relating to the penalties and processes, including compensation and punishment, for the wrongful disclosure, misuse, and violation of contractual terms relating to personal data. The Government of India has defined the practices and procedures relating to the protection of "sensitive" personal data, such as passwords, financial, medical and health-related data, biometrics, and sexual orientation. Known as the Information Technology (Reasonable security practices and procedures and sensitive personal data or information) Rules, 2011, these rules apply to companies, organizations, individuals, or their agents that "collect, receive, possess, store, deals or handle personal information",[48] and any breach of these rules will make them liable to pay damages to the parties affected by such misuse. The process of introduction and passing of a codified law dealing with data protection is currently in the Indian Parliament.*

Another instance of the issue of privacy, with specific reference to communication relates to Instagram. In late 2012, the popular photo-sharing website Instagram was forced to rescind controversial changes in its original terms of use after thousands of users, including *National Geographic*, protested the site's apparent right to sell photos and threatened to stop using the service. Instagram had faced controversy before over settings governing user privacy, but this time the policy's wording would have allowed advertisers to show user photos without compensation. CEO Kevin Systrom issued this apology: "It became clear that we failed to fulfill what I consider one of our most important responsibilities—to communicate our intentions clearly. I am sorry for that, and I am focused on making it right."[49]

There are also several steps you can follow, as an employee, to help ensure your organization meets privacy standards:

- Learn about the local privacy laws and privacy legislation that apply to you and your organization.
- Identify what constitutes "personal information" in your workplace—what can be legitimately collected, used, and disclosed by fair and lawful means. Many organizations, such as Tata Steel Limited, have their own privacy policies (see https://www.tatasteel.com/media/6872/tsl_data-privacy-policy.pdf).
- Obtain written, verbal, electronic, or (in some circumstances) implied consent from customers for the collection, use, and disclosure of any of their personal information.
- Be accountable for the personal information you collect, use, and disclose and be proactive in protecting it with security safeguards to prevent unwarranted intrusion, release, or misuse.

Giving up some privacy is something you can expect on the job because the premises and equipment you use belong to your employer, the company's human resources department needs your personal information to manage your pay and benefits, and your employer needs to ensure that work is being done properly. Infringements on employee privacy, however, are becoming much more common. Video surveillance, on-the-job drug testing, web-browsing records, and keystroke monitoring are part of an employer's need to know, but this need must be balanced with respect for employees' rights to privacy.[50] Fair employers have clear policies in place that tell their employees exactly what personal information can be collected and how it will be used. Employees should be well advised of web, e-mail, and social media policies, random surveillance, and any monitoring of their Internet use.

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*At the time of publication of this edition of the book, The Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019 (Bill No. 373 of 2019), which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 11, 2019, is under process.

CHECKLIST   Chapter Review

- ❑ What role does communication play in today's business environments?
- ❑ What trends and issues define communication and doing business in the contemporary workplace?
- ❑ What are the differences between soft skills and hard skills?
- ❑ What is professionalism? What are the characteristics and boundaries of workplace professionalism?
- ❑ What does the term *business ethics* refer to?
- ❑ What strategies and practices can you employ to be an ethical communicator?
- ❑ What is privacy? What laws govern privacy protection and regulation in India?
- ❑ What steps can you follow to help ensure your organization meets privacy standards?

🔑 KEYWORDS

attention economy An economic system centred on seeking and receiving attention from other people (particularly consumers).

authentic organizations Organizations that encourage employees to be their best selves by valuing and nurturing employees' unique perspectives and differences in attitude.

business ethics The socially accepted moral principles and rules of business conduct.

communication A transactional and relational process involving the meaningful exchange of information.

corporate social responsibility (CSR) A company's voluntary contributions to sustainable development through the support of non-profit organizations and/or the creation of socially conscious corporate policies.

cyberwarfare A form of information warfare, usually the conducting of politically motivated sabotage through hacking.

disruptive technologies Innovative, transformative products and services that create new opportunities and move up the market to replace established competitors.

distraction economy An economic system centred on drawing people's (particularly consumers') attention away from one source and to another source.

diversity Differences among people with respect to gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, religious belief, and physical ability, which are to be acknowledged, valued, and celebrated in today's workplaces.

employee engagement Employees' genuine enthusiasm for and commitment to their work and their organization.

hard skill A technical skill (know-how and abilities) that a person requires for a specific job.

ICTs Technologies, such as mobile phone systems and the Internet, used for transmitting, manipulating, and storing data by electronic means.

identity theft The act of acquiring and collecting an individual's personal information for criminal purposes.

libel A false published statement that is damaging to a person's reputation.

mindfulness The ability to focus one's thoughts by tuning out external distractions.

personal boundaries The emotional, physical, and mental limits individuals establish to protect themselves from harm and to set their thoughts and feelings apart from those of other people.

piracy The unauthorized reproduction and distribution of copyrighted material, including video games, software, music, and films.

professional boundaries The emotional, physical, and mental limits that define what employees should and should not do, as well as what can and cannot be done to them, in the workplace.

professionalism The act of being professional, which requires demonstration of the level of competence or skill expected from a professional.

risk communication An interactive exchange of information and ideas on risk among risk assessors, risk managers, and other interested parties.[51]

share (or peer) economy An economic system centred on access to rather than ownership of resources.

soft skill A social, interpersonal, self-management, or language skill that complements a person's technical skills.

sustainable development Economic development that maintains natural resources for future generations and recognizes the relationship between economic, social, and environmental issues.

team A group whose members have complementary skills and work for a common mission or goal.

Exercises, Workshops, and Discussion Forums

1. **Brainstorming Elements of Effective Communication.** As a class or in small groups, discuss the skills and characteristics essential to effective business communication and, from your discussion, devise a list of words that accurately describe it. Rate each skill on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being most important, and provide examples to support each characteristic.

2. **Taking a Professional "Selfie."** Using a smartphone, take a "selfie" that could be used for professional purposes and posted on a social media site such as LinkedIn. As you take the photo, consider the qualities of professional identity you would like to project. How is this professional "selfie" different from the photos you may post to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and other social media sites? What qualities and values do you hope viewers will associate with this image? How could you make this photo look even more professional?

3. **Exploring Professional Codes of Conduct.** For almost any profession or industry, there is at least one professional association that provides its members with guidelines for conduct and practice as well as networking and professional-growth opportunities. For this activity, conduct a brief online search to find at least one Indian professional association connected to your area of study or planned career path. Locate the association's professional code of practice.* Identify three core values and responsibilities, and for each list a behaviour or action that could demonstrate it or put it into practice. Share your findings in a small group and discuss the values and prescribed behaviours the codes have in common.

4. **Assessing the Impact of Online Disinhibition.** Professionals who use social media may sometimes face boundary issues when they choose a photo to post online. These professional lapses happen as a result of online disinhibition, or the tendency to behave differently online than in face-to-face interactions. In a small group, view the photo below and imagine you have come across it through social media. What is your impression of the man in the photo? Now imagine that this man is your doctor. Discuss your changing reaction to your viewing of this photo.

© Getty Images/iStockphoto

5. **Establishing Boundaries for Self-disclosure.** Begin on your own by circling the most appropriate recipient(s) for the following self-disclosures.
   a) Your deepest fear: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.
   b) Your most embarrassing professional experience: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook

* There are a number of India-specific sites to support this exercise: www.aima.in, www.ipra.org, http://www.barcouncilofindia. org/about/professional-standards/rules-on-professional-standards/,   http://idaindia.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/IDA-Code-of-Ethics-July-21-2017.pdf and suchlike.

friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

c) Your favourite YouTube celebrities: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

d) Your most inspiring mentor or role model: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

e) A conflict you had with your manager or teacher: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

f) Co-workers or classmates who annoy you: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

g) Your guiltiest pleasure in social media: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

h) Your proudest academic or work experience: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (iii) a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.

i) Your grade-point average: (i) a long-time personal friend or trusted family member; (ii) Facebook friends; (i)a co-worker or manager; (iv) almost anyone; (v) no one.
Go back over the list and draw X's through the least suitable recipients—individuals to whom you would never disclose such information. Form a small group to compare responses. After your discussion, did your thinking on self-disclosure change? Were exceptions ever possible?

6. Rotary International is a global organization whose mission is to provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through fellowships of business, professional, and community leaders. One of the guiding principles of Rotary is the Four-Way Test, an ethical guide that members are encouraged to use in their personal and professional relationships. The Four-Way Test asks members to benchmark their thoughts, words, and deeds against these four questions; (i) Is it the truth?, (ii) Is it fair to all concerned?, (iii) Will it build goodwill and better friendships?, and (iv) Will it be beneficial to all concerned?. Discuss the Four-Way Test in small groups to examine how these four measures of conduct might be deployed in an organizational setting.

7. **Facing Ethical Challenges.** In a group, discuss the following situations and decide whether they are permissible under any circumstances:
   a) Not informing consumers about weaknesses in the side-door impact panels of your company's best-selling SUV
   b) Exaggerating qualifications and experiences on résumés and in job interviews
   c) Leaking the results of a drug trial for an important new cancer medication developed by a major pharmaceutical company
   d) Revealing details of a patient's medical history to a prospective employer without the consent of the patient
   e) Falsifying one or two figures on an expense report
   f) Lying on a performance review to protect a colleague who is also a friend

8. **Discussing the Facebook Phenomenon.** In a small group, discuss your answers to the following questions:
   a) Why do you use Facebook?
   b) How long do you spend per day on the site while at work?
   c) What is in your profile?
   d) Who has access to your profile? Do your managers and co-workers have access to your Facebook page?
   e) What privacy settings do you use?
   f) What positive outcomes have resulted from your use of Facebook?
   g) What negative situations have you experienced?
Share your findings with your instructor and compare them with findings and viewpoints from the rest of the class. What conclusions can you draw about Facebook and social networking platforms in general?

9. **Considering Privacy.** In a small group, review each of the following scenarios and discuss whether you should provide or ask for such information and if you do, whether it would constitute a breach of privacy according to commonly accepted professional norms.

    a) While at work, you receive a phone call from Uma, who tells you that she is a friend of Ramesh, a colleague of yours. Uma states that she needs to be in touch with Ramesh urgently about a "personal matter" and asks for his mobile phone number.

    b) A member of the human resources team in your company stops at your workspace and asks for information about one of your co-workers relating to his attendance, work habits, and his relationships with other employees outside of office hours.

    c) You are attending an industry conference as part of a contingent deputed by your company. During the lunch break, you meet an employee of a rival company. You exchange visiting cards and talk about your respective roles and assignments. You find that you have much in common, including the products you deal with and their customers. During the course of the conversation, you ask her to send you brochures and technical information relating to her company's products. In return, you offer to do the same.

    d) While booking a flight ticket online, you find that you are unable to complete the transaction as the payment process does not function properly. You seek assistance and support by initiating a chat support session via the company's website. At the start of the session, you are asked to provide your name, e-mail address, and mobile phone number, without which the session does not go forward. Having reluctantly done so, you engage in conversation with the support agent, who asks for your credit card number, the name on your card, its expiry date, and card PIN to carry out the payment process on your behalf.

Writing Improvement Exercises

1. **Establishing Your Goals in Business Communication.** Write an introductory memo to your instructor in which you explain your reasons for taking the course, the outcomes you hope to achieve, your strengths and weaknesses as a writer, the role communication will play in your chosen profession, and the type of writing you currently do or expect to do on the job.

2. **Writing a Personal Statement.** A personal statement (sometimes referred to as a "career summary" or a "career objective") is a short summary or profile (100 words) that defines you and your mission as a professional. It identifies who you are (e.g., degrees/diplomas completed or in-progress, internships, industry experience, core skills), what you can bring to the job, and what your career objectives are. Imagine that you are applying for a job in your field or updating your LinkedIn account, and write a personal statement that describes you as a professional. Keep in mind both your objective as well as your audience's needs and interests, and try to include your most relevant qualities, skills, and experiences.

3. **Assessing Communication Needs for Employment.** Refer to the classified or careers section of any daily newspaper or to an employment website. Review several advertisements and note the communication skills that are required for each position. Write a memo or an e-mail to your instructor summarizing the skills employers want most. Variation: Create a word table (or matrix) in which you provide examples from your own work history and experience that correspond to the skills employers seek.

Case Study Exercises

Social Media and Your Career

Social media applications such as Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, and Instagram offer individuals almost unlimited scope for socializing as well as self-expression. Almost everyone today has a footprint on the Web, and uses it for keeping in touch and sharing information with people in their networks. Believing that the information, comments, pictures, and other content that they post is visible to only their "friends," they seldom think about the implications of what they post, or the impressions that others might take away about them. Especially so when it comes to their professional persona.

Surveys reveal that over 70 per cent of potential employers routinely carry out checks on applicants on the Web as part of their due diligence processes. While this might be to verify their identity or validate their credentials, these checks also look for negative aspects that would disqualify them. In some cases, hiring companies ask applicants to provide information on their social media pages, and even log in data for these pages, and refusal to do so may result in their not being considered. There are reports on the Web that state that applicants who were not on social media were not considered for employment.

Applications such as Glassdoor or Rate my Professors allow employees and students to comment on the company or college they are in, their managers, classmates, and colleagues, as also organizational policies and process. There have been cases of people being fired or sued for posting information that was considered incorrect, offensive, or illegal.

Many people have lost their jobs and jeopardized their careers for posting information relating to their work, employers, co-workers, or even customers.

By its very nature, the use of social media blurs the lines between what is personal and what is professional. Our ability to recognize disinhibition, to be aware that what we post online is either visible or can be tracked, and of course, to take steps to protect our privacy and post with caution could go a long way in keeping our work and social persona safely delineated.

a) What issues explored in the chapter does this case raise?

b) What conclusions did you reach in these situations?

c) Is it ever acceptable to discuss work experiences and colleagues via social media platforms? What are the limits to free speech when expressing personal opinions may damage professional relationships?

d) What could you as well as your employer do in terms of best practices, regulations, and policies to prevent similar occurrences? In terms of ethical practice in the workplace, what could be considered reasonable constraints and levels of ethical achievement?

e) What are the lessons to be learned from this case?

Online Activities

1. **Corporate Mission Statements.** Analyze the following corporate mission statements from prominent Indian companies. What values are most commonly represented? What does the organization in each case promise to do for stakeholders (customers, employees, owners, and society at large) in exchange for their loyalty and commitment?

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited

https://www.ongcindia.com/wps/wcm/connect/en/about-ongc/vision-and-mission/

Dabur India Limited

https://www.dabur.com/in/en-us/about/about-us/vision-mission

State Bank of India

https://www.sbi.co.in/portal/web/about-us/ mission-vision-values

Zomato

https://www.zomato.com/about

GlaxoSmithKline Pharma

https://india-pharma.gsk.com/en-in/about-us/ our-mission-and-strategy/

2. **Personal Mission Statements.** Read the instructions from "Creating Your Personal Mission Statement" and create a statement that reflects your values and goals.

www.uoguelph.ca/cera/PDFs/Creating%20 Personal%20Mission%20Statements.pdf

3. **Facebook as a Business Tool.** Find a company that has a Facebook profile. How does this company use the site to promote its products and services or to put forth its mission statement and increase its market share?

4. **Corporate Social Responsibility.** Watch these corporate CSR videos and make a list of the values each company associates with its practices and the initiatives that demonstrate them. How does each tell its CSR story?

Bombardier

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6n4Sq IMkePA

Tata Group

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CYvLyhl R6CY

Cisco

https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=CuQ7f-tPouc

5. **Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting.** Individually or in a small group, select three companies that have made it to the most recent list of India's Top 100 Employers. Visit each of these three companies' corporate websites and find information related to the company's sustainability or corporate social responsibility reporting. What measures and practices contribute to sustainable development in each case?

6. **How Millennial Are You?: A BrainFall Quiz.** Answer 11 multiple-choice questions about your attitudes and media use to determine your generational identity and affiliation.

https://brainfall.com/quizzes/how-millennial-are-you/

7. **Identifying Factors in Employee Engagement.** Working in a small group, visit the CNBC story titled *LinkedIn Top Companies 2018: Where India wants to work now*. Select two or three businesses and read three reviews of each. From among the pros and cons, what are the factors that most consistently contribute to employee engagement and job satisfaction?

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-top-companies-2018-where-india-wants-work-now-abhigyan-chand

8. **Company Ethics Codes.** Read the ethics codes for the following companies and look for similarities between them. Summarize your findings on the fundamental standards of most organizational ethics codes.

Merck & Co. Inc.

http://www.msd.com/pdfs/English_MSD_Code-of-Conduct.pdf

Infosys

https://www.infosys.com/investors/corporate-governance/Documents/CodeofConduct.pdf

9. **User Privacy on Social Networking Sites.** Many users rely on default settings when it comes to their social networking practices, and most do not pay close attention to terms of use agreements or privacy policies. How much privacy do these agreements, policies, and settings guarantee you? Review your privacy setting and any agreements you have accepted. Note your concerns. Do the privileges of using the site outweigh those concerns? What aspects of your privacy have you traded away in exchange for your right to social network?