Business Communication Polishing Your Professional Presence (Canadian) 1st edition Shwom Solutions Manual

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Chapter 2: Managing the Communication Process

Analyzing, Composing, Evaluating

LECTURE OUTLINE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3.1 What should you spend time **analyzing**?
3.2 What is involved in **composing**?
3.3 How does evaluating improve **communication**?

INTRODUCTION

ACE is a flexible communication process that can be applied to any message – from a simple email to a complex report. ACE applies to both written and oral communication contexts.

Analyzing helps you make good decisions about what and how to communicate:

- Analyzing the **purpose** focuses the message
- Analyzing the **audience** helps you meet their needs
- Analyzing the **content** ensures a complete message
- Analyzing the **medium** helps you choose the best delivery option

Composing involves more than putting words on the page or speaking them aloud; you need to:

- Decide where and when to compose
- Organize the message
- Draft the content
- Design a professional format and delivery

Evaluating requires checking your message on multiple levels:

- Revising the content improves effectiveness
- Editing style and tone helps you project a professional image
- Proofreading increases your credibility
- Reviewing feedback helps you improve your communication strategy

Your evaluation may lead you back to the first step of the process – Analysis – to reconsider your decisions. This circular approach will ensure your communication success.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2.1
Why should you spend time analyzing?

TEACHING TIP: *ACE is a circular process, which implies that the communication process doesn't end. Ask students to explain why the process always returns to analyzing. What are the potential consequences of believing the communication process is over once the message is delivered?*

Analyzing the purpose focuses the message (see Exercise 1)

- What is my purpose?
  - To inform, persuade, report?
  - All messages should maintain **goodwill** – a positive relationship with the audience
- What outcome do you want to achieve?
  - **Outcome** – what you want your audience to know or do
  - See **FIGURE 2.2** for examples of purpose and outcome statements
  - See **FIGURE 2.3** for a draft and revised message that achieves a desired outcome
- Will the outcome require persuasion?
  - **Persuasion** – your ability to influence an audience to agree with your point of view, accept your recommendation, or grant your request
  - Informational messages usually require no persuasion (e.g., minutes, instructions, reports)
  - Messages that request change or suggest ideas often require persuasion
  - See **FIGURE 2.5** for sample purpose and outcome statements for a persuasive message (implementing a summer-hours work schedule)

Discussion Starter: *What is the difference between the purpose and outcome of a message? Provide an example of each within a specific business communication scenario.*

Analyzing the audience helps you meet their needs (see Exercise 1)

- **Primary Audience** – the direct recipient of your message
- **Secondary Audience** – anyone else who may receive a copy of (or hears about) your message
- See **FIGURE 2.7** for answers to the following questions to consider when analyzing the audience (based on the summer-hours work schedule):
  1. What does the primary and secondary audience already know?
  2. What information does the audience need to now – and why?
  3. When does the audience need this information?
  4. How will the audience react to this information?

  If the purpose is persuasive, also consider…
  5. What questions or objectives will the audience have?
  6. How will the audience benefit from the idea or proposal?
- **Audience Benefits** – what the recipient gains from agree with or acting on your message
  - See **FIGURE 2.7 ,** Item 6 for examples

Analyzing content ensures a complete message (see Exercise 2)

- FIGURE 2.6 – Primary and Secondary Audiences
- Do you know enough about the topic or situation to compose your message?
- Do you have enough data to support your main idea?
- If not, where can you find additional research?
  - **Primary Research** – collecting your own data (e.g., phone calls, surveys, etc.)

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- **Secondary Research** – using info other people have collected (e.g., books, articles, etc.)

Discussion Starter: *Describe an example of a time when you sent a message that failed or was ineffective. What could you have done to make the communication experience more successful?*

Analyzing the medium helps you choose the best delivery option (see Exercise 3)

- Choose a medium based on the needs of the audience, not what is most convenient for you
- See **FIGURE 2.8** for a list of medium advantages and disadvantages

Discussion Starter: *What are possible negative outcomes if you do not consider the audience when deciding which medium to use to convey your message?*

ETHICS: Ethics in Communication: Using O-A-R

(See Critical Thinking #6)

- When analyzing content, include information that both supports and contradicts your message
- Failing to address relevant information is an ethical error of omission
- Analyze contradictory information:
  - Is it weak enough that you can argue against it?
  - Does it bring up a problem that you can solve?
- Report the information, cite the source, then provide a solution
- Address negative information to demonstrate integrity, critical thinking, and problem solving

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LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2.3
What is involved in composing?

Teaching Tip: *Ask students to describe how they compose. What parts of the composing process in this section do they already use? Which are new to them? Demonstrate that composing involves more than putting words on the page by sharing examples of your own composing experiences – both good and bad.*

- **Composing** involves:
  - Deciding where and when to compose
  - Organizing the message
  - Drafting the content
  - Designing a professional format and delivery
- Even simple message benefits from at least two drafts:
  - First draft – used to get thoughts on paper
  - Second draft – used to refine your thoughts and evaluate language and grammar
- More complex messages require multiple drafts

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Practising strategic time management (see Exercise 4)

- TECHNOLOGY box – Boost your Brainpower: Become a Single Tasker
- **FIGURE 2.9** – Managing time (Analyzing, Composing, Evaluating)
- Do you prefer a quiet location, or do you need background noise?
- If your work environment is not conducive, how will you compensate?
- Plan how you will handle interruptions and distractions
- Estimate how much time you will need and plan your composing time

Discussion Starter: *Describe the environment in which you prefer to write. Will you be able to use that same kind of environment in the workplace? If not, what can you do to ensure effective writing at work?*

Organizing the message (see Exercise 5)

- How will you organize the content of the message?
  - Outline the content to break the information into major ideas and supporting details
  - See **FIGURE 2.10** for a traditional outline format
  - See **FIGURE 2.11A** for an outline to support a short informative email message
  - See **FIGURE 2.11B** for an outline to support a meeting discussion
  - See **FIGURE 2.12** for an example of a tree chart outline
- Where will you state your main point: At the beginning or the end?
  - **Direct Organizational Plan**
    1. Present the main idea in the first paragraph
    2. Provide supporting information in the middle paragraph
    3. Conclude the message with a call to action, deadlines, and contact info
  - **Indirect Organizational Plan**
    1. Open with a general statement about the topic
    2. Provide supporting information and related details in the middle
    3. Present the main idea after the supporting details
    4. Conclude with a call to action, applicable deadlines, and contact info
  - See **FIGURE 2.13, 2.14** for a comparison of the direct and indirect approaches
    1. **Subject line** tells what the message is about and influences the reader to continue or not

Drafting the content (see Exercise 6)

- **Drafting** is the creative process of getting information on the page
- Avoid the perfectionist syndrome by focusing on getting words on the page without evaluating them
- **Revising** is the logical process of evaluating the effectiveness of the message
  - Does the message support the purpose of the communication?
  - Will the audience understand the message?
  - Are changes in content, organization, or wording necessary?
- **Writer's block** – staring at a blank page without a clue of how to begin
  - Often due to procrastination, impatience with the writing process, or lack of information
  - Can be avoided with several techniques:
    - Use free writing to record all your thoughts regardless of their meaningfulness (see **FIGURE 2.15** for an example)
    - Similarly, think aloud to hear all your thoughts (e.g., get them out in the air)
    - Use an outline
    - Write the easiest parts first to get words on the page to work with

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Designing a Professional Format and Delivery)

- A document's format is similar to professional attire; how your message looks will communicate image
- Use consistent design principles:
  - Start with a purpose-driven introduction
  - Break the message into short chunks (paragraphs)
  - Begin each paragraph with a strong **topic sentence** (identify the main point)
  - Signal shifts by using headings or transition words, like "first" and "second"
  - Use parallel bullet lists for easy skimming
  - End with specific conclusion or recommendation

- **Email Messages** (see **FIGURE 2.16** for an example)
  - Use a short but meaningful subject line
  - Include a salutation to address the message to a specific person or group (audience)
  - Use paragraphs to separate the content
  - Conclude with a complimentary closing
  - Include a signature block with your contact information

  In addition, for longer messages (see **FIGURE 2.17** for an example)…
  - Begin with a focused first paragraph that identifies the purpose and previews the content
  - Use **topic-specific headings** – section or paragraph titles identifying a key idea (e.g., "Benefits of a Flexible Summer Schedule" rather than just "Benefits")
  - Format important lists as **bullet point lists** with parallel wording

- **Letters**
  - Sent to **external audiences** – people with whom you communicate outside your organization
  - However, they can be used internally for formal messages (e.g., promotions, etc.)
  - Letters are typically more formal medium options than emails or memos
  - See Appendix C for letter elements: letterhead, format, date line, inside address, salutation, paragraph organization, complimentary closing, and enclosure notation

- **Voice mail messages** (see **FIGURE 2.18** for examples of formal and informal messages)
  - Take time to design oral messages to ensure complete information:
    - Greet the recipient by name
    - Identify yourself and callback number
    - State your purpose and main point
    - Follow up with details
    - Identify actions
    - Repeat contact information
    - Say goodbye

- **Emerging media: Social, mobile,and instant messages** (see **FIGURES 2.19, 2.20**)
  - See Chapter 5 ("What are the Tools? What are the Rules? Communication Technologies in the workplace)
  - Design messages with appropriate length and purpose
  - Use interactive dynamic formats to engage the audience appropriately
  - **FIGURE 2.19** – Composing for Microblogs
  - **FIGURE 2.20** -- Composing for Networking Sites
  - **FIGURE 2.21** — Composing for Blogs
  - **FIGURE 2.22** – Composing Text Messages
  - **FIGURE 2.23** – Composing Instant Messages
  - Asynchronous – communication takes place with a time gap between sending and receiving

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- Synchronous – communication takes place in 'real time'

Discussion Starter: *How can you use the ACE process to effectively analyze, compose, and evaluate real-time communication using instant messaging? Tweeting? Blogging?*

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2.3
How does evaluating improve your communication?

Teaching Tip: *Students often struggle with evaluating because they either try to combine the composing and evaluating steps, or they try to check for all errors with one quick scan of their work. Help students understand that composing is a creative (right-brain) process, whereas evaluating is a logical (left-brain) process. To create effective communication, they should spend more time evaluating their work than they spent writing it, and they should evaluate each aspect (completeness, clarity, conciseness, style, tone, grammar, etc.) separately.*

- *Written communication* allows you to evaluate before delivering your message
- *Oral communication* requires you to evaluate while you are delivering your message

Revise content: Improve effectiveness (see Exercise 7 and 8))

- Completeness
  - Is your main point clear?
  - Have you provided all the information you need to support your purpose?
  - Are the benefits to the audience clear?
  - Is the information well organized?
- **Clarity** (see Exercise 7)
  - Refers to using clear wording that an audience can easily understand
  - See **FIGURE 2.24** for examples of how to revise to use clear wording
  - Avoid **abstract wording** – broad concepts that an audience can interpret in multiple ways
  - Use **concrete wording** – specific methods, topics, or instances
  - For example, "ASAP" is abstract; "by 5PM today" is concrete
- **Conciseness** (also see Exercise 7)
  - Refers to communication that is short and to the point; expressed in the fewest words possible
  - See **FIGURE 2.25** for examples of how to revise to use concise wording
  - See **FIGURE 2.26** for examples of eliminating unnecessary wording (see Exercise 8)
  - **Redundancies** – unnecessary repetition of an idea (e.g., refer back, new progress, etc.)
  - See **FIGURE 2.27** for examples of avoiding redundancies (also see Exercise 8)

Edit for style and tone: Project a professional image (see Exercise 9, 10, 11, 12)

- **Style** – how you express yourself rather than what you say (e.g., word and sentence length)
- **Tone** – the image your language projects about you (e.g., formal or casual) (see Exercise 12)
- Positive wording creates an optimistic and encouraging message
  - See **FIGURE 2.28** for examples of editing for positive wording (see Exercise 9)
- Conversational style means using short sentences and familiar words
  - See **FIGURE 2.29** for examples of editing for conversational style
  - Voice refers to the relationship between the subject and verb (see Exercise 10
  - **Active voice** means the subject performs the action of the verb
  - **Passive voice** means the subject does not perform the action of the verb

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    - See FIGURE 2.30 for examples of when to use active or passive voice
- Strong wording – eliminating slang and clichés (see Exercise 11)
    - **Slang** is nonstandard, informal language that is specific to countries, culture, or social groups
    - **Clichés** are also specific words or phrases, but are commonly overused phrases that have lost their meaning

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CULTURE: Considering Culture in Business Communications

(see Critical Thinking Question 7 and Exercise 16)

- Use ACE to consider cultural differences:
    - How familiar is the audience with American English?
    - Does the audience's culture value directness or indirectness?
    - Do they value "getting down to business" or taking time to establish a personal relationship
    - See the INEFFECTIVE and EFFECTIVE message examples

Discussion Starter: How are tone and style related to maintaining goodwill?

Proofread to increase your credibility (see Exercise 12, 13)

- **Proofreading** is a systematic process of reviewing writing for errors
- Recognize the five most common errors
- FIGURE 2.32 – Identifying Five common Error Types
    - Content errors
    - Typographical errors
    - Grammatical errors
    - Format errors
- Checking systematically for errors (see Exercise 13)
    - See FIGURE 2.32 and FIGURE 2.33 for information about the most common errors
    - Read your work multiple times
    - Look for your own common errors
    - Read your work later
    - Read your draft aloud
    - Read from the bottom up
    - Change it up
- Swap with a colleague Taking advantage of technology tools (spelling, grammar, reading level, thesaurus, antonyms, etc.)
- See FIGURE 2.34 for examples of differences in reading levels (see Exercise 12)

Review feedback to improve your communication strategy

- Business communication is a two-way transaction
- Feedback comes in many forms (e.g., complaint, compliment, nonverbal reactions, etc.)
- Learn from feedback to continue to analyze and evaluate your messages

Discussion Starter: If you do not receive a response to a message, what techniques can you use to get feedback from your audience?

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IN SUMMARY,

- **FIGURE 2.35 – Request for Summer Hours: Using ACE**
- ACE will help you communicate more effectively
- ACE is applied to a range of messages through the rest of the book
- Each time you use ACE, you will become better equipped to analyze, compose, and evaluate

SUCCESSFUL COMMUNICATION @Work
Farzana Mawani, Manager and Communications Manager, Altima Healthcare Canada Inc.

Altima Healthcare Canada Inc. uses social media on a huge scale. The examples demonstrate how the company has turned their customers' proprietary feelings towards this Canadian company to their advantage, and used customer involvement to generate an enormous amount of social media traffic. Students are prompted to reflect on the effects of new media on established brands, and vice versa.

- **DISCUSSION QUESTION 1:** What is the significance of Farzana's comment that Altima Healthcare Canada Inc.'s messages must appeal to its audience? How do the needs of the audience influence her messages?

- **DISCUSSION QUESTION 2:** Which stage of the ACE process do you think is most crucial to Altima's successful management of its social media communication?

- **Supplementary Reflection Exercise**
  What aspects of Altima's communication strategy would work best for you? How does the audience influence Farzana's communication strategies?

CASE STUDY: Using ACE to Improve Communication Results

This case study includes three review questions. If evaluating for points, consider attributing points to each element of the answer (1 point each) as well as the students' writing style (1 point each) and grammar/mechanics (1 point each). Suggested points are provided at the end of each review question.

QUESTION 1: What other questions and objections can you anticipate? If you were going to revise the communication, which questions and objections would you want to answer directly? How?

NOTES: Encourage students to consider questions and objections from the audience's perspective. They should provide at least two questions and two objections. Then at least one question and one objection should be identified to answer directly. If they identify any they would not choose to address, they should include justification. (10 points)

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SAMPLE ANSWERS:

- Questions: How does this workshop relate to my specific job? What will the format be? Lecture? Hands-on? Group activities? Will my manager know if I don't attend?

- Objections: I'm already a good communicator. I'm probably a better communicator than the presenter. No one will miss me if I don't attend.

- The questions and objections that should be answered directly include whether it is required, the duration, the benefit, and the relevance. These answers will help motivate the audience to participate. The writer may not choose to directly address the questions about whether the manager will be upset if the audience does not attend, the assumption that the audience is not interested, the relationship to promotion, or whether the manager will know if someone is not in attendance. Direct answers to these questions and objections could be perceived as negative. For example, saying that "attendance is required and will be documented by sign-in sheets" could cast a negative light on the event, even for employees who were otherwise looking forward to the workshop.

QUESTION 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the following other options: sending an email with an attachment to each employee, making an announcement in a department meeting, sending a tweet to an employee list, calling each employee, posting a notice to the internal community Facebook page, sending an email with the information in the message rather than as an attachment. Would a combination of these options be optimal? If so, which combination?

NOTES: Students should provide at least one advantage and one disadvantage for 4 of these medium options: (1) sending an email with attachment to each employee (2) making an announcement in a department meeting (3) sending a tweet to an employee list, (4) calling each employee, (5) posting a notice on an internal community Facebook page, (6) sending an email with the information in the message rather than in the attachment (10 points)

SAMPLE ANSWERS:

- Sending an email with attachment to each employee. Advantages: Every employee receives the same information at the same time; information can be easily updated as needed; questions that arise can be answered quickly. Disadvantages: Some employees may dismiss the attachment thinking it does not apply to them; some will succumb to information overload if messages are sent to everyone, even those that are not affected by the information. This effect may cause these employees to ignore future messages that do apply to them. May be a disadvantage for those employees who are not regularly or frequently checking their email.

- Making an announcement in a department meeting. Advantages: everyone gets the information at the same time; instant feedback is available and encouraged. Disadvantages: all employees present may not need, want, or be affected by announcement; some may be surprised if there's been no lead up to the announcement.

- Sending a tweet to an employee list. Advantages: all employees are contacted at the same time; process is quick and easy. Disadvantages: not all employees may be on Twitter; news may come as a surprise or cause resentment.

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- Calling each employee. Advantages: personal contact with each person; employees may feel the message is important because of the personal contact; employees have difficulty saying no or disagreeing voice to voice. Disadvantages: message's importance may be overstated by a personal call; someone has to keep a record of all those who received the message and those who need to be called back.

- Posting a notice on Facebook. Advantages: FB is an accessible tool for employees; all those on FB will receive the information. Disadvantages: All employees may not receive the same information at the same time because some may not regularly check FB; if individual settings are not properly in place, information may be read by those who are not on the employee list.

- Sending information in the body of email rather than in attachment. Advantages: employees do not have to open anything; the information is all easily accessible. Disadvantages: requires a great deal of reading on the spot; this may take up company time that is needed elsewhere; harder to file the email than an attachment for future reference

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Question 3: Review how the ACE process led to this improved message by answering the following questions.

NOTES: To complete this review question, students will answer all 12 of the questions listed under each step of the ACE process (analyzing, composing, and evaluating). Some questions include two parts (e.g., either a second, related question or an explanation for their response); in these cases, identify points for each question part. (16 points)

SAMPLE ANSWERS:

Analyzing:

1. **What information in the revised version addresses the need for persuasion?**
   Persuasive content includes the (a) information about how engaging the presenter's previous workshop session was, (b) the strategies that the audience can immediately apply to their workplace communication, and (c) the statement that "communication is so important in our work every day…".
2. **How does the email message emphasize reader benefits?**
   Many of the reader benefits also contributed to persuasion: (a) the audience will enjoy the presenter's engaging workshop style, and (b) the audience will immediately benefit from the strategies addressed.
3. **What content appears in the email that was not included in the original flyer? Why is that content useful?**
   - The email includes the following new information: the duration, the addition of the word "Effective" in the title of the Communication Workshop, the name of the presenter and her company, the fact that the presenter has offered engaging workshops for the company before, a description of the kinds of strategies that will be addressed, management's expectation that all department employees will attend, the fact that employers from other departments are welcome, a date/time and method to respond, and contact information for the writer of the message.
   - All of this content is useful because it helps the audience understand the information. It includes clear and complete information in a concise format.

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Composing:

4. **Is the information in the email organized effectively? Explain.**
   Yes. The purpose of the message (to inform employees about the workshop) is clearly identified in the first paragraph (direct organizational plan). Additional information, including audience benefits, is outlined in the middle paragraph. And a forward-looking closing paragraph includes a day/time and method of responding.

5. **What determines which information goes in which paragraph?**
   The main idea should go first, followed by details, and concluding with contact information.

6. **How would you decide whether to organize the content directly or indirectly?**
   This message is effectively organized directly because the writer does not want the audience to search for the purpose of the message. If the writer thought the audience needed significant persuasion to participate, the indirect plan might be used to outline the benefits before mentioning the workshop.

Evaluating:

7. **In evaluating content, are there additional persuasive points you could add?**
   A specific strategy that will be presented at the workshop could be mentioned to pique the audience's interest, or an outline of the content (or a brochure/handout) could be included as an attachment to help sell the strengths of the presenter and/or the content of the presentation. Additionally, drawings for door prizes or refreshments could be included as incentives.

8. **Does this email message use clear and concise wording as well as professional tone and style?**
   Yes. The message uses plain English in short sentences and paragraphs. The tone is courteous (please), and the style is professional, both in its wording and format.

9. **Which elements promote a conversational style?**
   The use of personal pronouns makes the message conversational (e.g., mark your calendars, strategies that you can use, important in our work every day). The use of "please" and the sign-off of "Thanks" also promote goodwill.

10. **When proofing this email, which content elements would you proofread for accuracy?**
    The subject line should be proofread since most email applications do not spell check that content, the day, date, and time should be checked as well as the location. The correct spelling of the presenter's name and company (and previous workshop title) should be proofread as well as the location of the event. The time and day of the response request should be checked for accuracy.

11. **Is the message designed well? Explain.**
    Yes. The message is designed well because it follows the standard email formatting guidelines: effective subject line, appropriate salutation, well-balanced paragraphs with blank lines to separate them, a closing sign-off, and complete name and contact information in the signature block.

12. **Would you keep the current subject line or would you revise it? Explain.**
    The current subject line ("Communication Workshop – November 2") is okay. It's short and to the point. However, if the writer is concerned about motivating the audience to attend, it could be modified to include words like effective, engaging, strategies, important, etc. Additionally, the message could be marked as "high priority" to encourage the audience to read and respond.

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REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Why is analyzing your purpose important to composing an effective message?** Is the purpose always the same as the desired outcome? Possible answers include: to identify the purpose before beginning; to define the desired outcome; to keep the purpose and outcome clearly in mind while composing; do determine whether the purpose is to persuade or purely to inform.
2. **Explain the difference between the primary audience and the secondary audience, and provide an example of a message that would have audience benefits for both.** The primary audience consists of the message's direct recipients; the secondary audience includes anyone else who comes in contact with it, whether from the writer or from the primary audience. Examples could include secondary audiences in both categories, including recipients unintended by the original writer.
3. **What is the difference between primary research and secondary research? Describe a business communication situation in which you would want to research both sources of information to support your message.** Primary research involves collecting original data, while secondary research gathers data collected by others.
4. **Why is it important to consider your audience when analyzing your medium options?** Potential reasons include: some audiences react differently to different mediums; your previous experience or relationship with an audience makes some mediums more appropriate or natural than others; some mediums will elicit responses more quickly than others, if you need audience feedback quickly.
5. **What is the difference between direct and indirect message organization? When would you use each?** . Direct organization emphasizes the idea first and then gives details. Indirect organization gives the reasons first and then the main idea. Direct organization is used when the audience is receptive and positive toward the messagae; indirect organization is used when the audience may need persuading.
6. **Explain how reviewing feedback helps you improve your communication strategy.** Reasons to review feedback include: to evaluate the success of your strategy with a particular audience; to discover new content and ways to organize it; to interpret subtle or ambiguous responses (or silences).

CRITICAL THINKING

Each critical thinking question includes multiple questions or justification to support responses. The set of 10 questions could be assigned as a comprehensive assignment, or sets of questions could be identified to support specific aspects of students' learning.

1. **Think about the last written assignment you completed. What percentage of your overall time did you spend on each element of the ACE process (Analyzing, Composing, and Evaluating)? Will you change your approach in the future? Explain why or why not.**

   NOTES: Students' answers will vary based on their personal writing experiences. They should identify the percentage of time they *used* to spend on analyzing, composing, and evaluating their messages prior to reading this chapter, and then explain why they will (or won't) change their approach after better understanding the communication process.

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2. **Analyzing your audience helps you compose effective messages. However, sometimes you may need to communicate with people you do not know. How do you learn about and analyze an unfamiliar audience?**

   NOTES: At least two strategies for analyzing unfamiliar audiences should be identified.

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SAMPLE ANSWER: When communicating with someone within your organization, ask colleagues for their perspectives of the person, keeping in mind that individual biases can affect people's opinions. Check files for previous communication that may document the audience's needs. Put yourself in the recipient's position; what do you think he/she needs to know?

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3. **Assume you work for a supervisor who generally prefers to receive email messages rather than have face-to-face meetings. Identify at least two circumstances in which you believe it would be better to request a meeting to discuss an issue rather than send an email. Explain your rationale. [Related to the Ethics feature]**

   NOTES: Students will provide two circumstances for communicating in person (rather than email) – and justify their reasoning – when communicating with a supervisor who prefers email over face-to-face meetings.

   SAMPLE ANSWER: First, any problematic situation that you do not wish to document, such as a potential problem with an employee, should be addressed by phone or in person so as not to create a document trail. Second, if you think your supervisor may react negatively to the information you need to share – even if documenting it is not a problem – a face-to-face meeting will allow you to temper the dialog based on his or her reaction.

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4. **Retrieve a recent email message that you wrote to someone other than your family and friends. Do you believe that the email portrays a professional image? If so, what elements of the email create that image? If not, what elements undermine that image?**

   NOTES: Students' answers will vary based on their email experiences. Answers require responses to three questions about an email message students wrote to someone other than family and friends.

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5. **Read three recent pieces of your writing (either emails or assignments). Begin to create your custom list of common errors. To help you develop your list, ask a friend to help you assess your messages, or seek assistance from your school's writing center. How can you ensure you do not continue to make these errors in the future?**

   NOTES: Answers will vary based on students' experiences. Students will evaluate either three email messages or class paper they recently wrote to create a list of common errors. Their response should also identify how they can ensure they won't continue to make these errors in the future based on the content outlined in the evaluation section of the chapter.

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6. **Work with a partner or in a small group. Take a look at the business scenarios given here. For each one:**
   a. Decide with your partner or group whether or not this situation is ethically challenging.
   b. If yes, see if your group can define, in writing, why or how the situation poses an ethical challenge.

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c. Finally, write down the most appropriate response or behaviour that you would recommend in the situation.
   i. I am considering giving a small gift to a potential client of our company.
   ii. When I called to ask for the manager or project lead, I asked if "he" was available.
   iii. Last night I showed the meeting agenda for today's strategy session to my friend who also works in this industry.
   iv. I was told I could pick anyone I wanted for this project, so I picked my favourite people.
   v. Our company created a service that can't be used by people with visual impairment.
   vi. Our new website launched last night in English only.

SAMPLE ANSWER: Students' responses will vary; most importantly, ensure they can rationalize each decision with sound examples.

---

7. **"Convince Me" tic-Tac-Toe! A game to play with a partner. On a blank piece of paper, create the following Tic-Tac-Toe grid:**

Greeting	Networking	Texting
Informal conversation	Colour choices	Emails
Use of words	Body language	Phone etiquette

a. One player chooses to be "X" and the other chooses "O."
b. Take turns with your partner.
c. You are allowed to place your mark over a square once you have convinced your opponent, *with an example,* that "culture" affects the concept in the box. For example, does culture have an impact on the colours people choose for designing documents or messages? Give an example.
d. The first person to get three Xs or Os in a row (horizontal, vertical, or diagonal) wins!

SAMPLE ANSWER: Students' responses will vary.

DEVELOPING YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

3.1 Why should you spend time analyzing?

EXERCISE 1 Improved Communication: Knowing the purpose and the audience

SAMPLE ANSWERS:

Students compile lists of questions about their audience (i.e., their team) to better understand why they are not attending these meetings. Questions will vary but need to address such things as the following:

- Employees' schedules
- Employees' role in the refund process
- Seniority (senior employees can role model attendance behaviours for younger or newer employees)
- Reasons for absence
- Preferred times for meetings
- Comfort of room – food/coffee/water might make the meeting more appealing

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EXERCISE 2 Do you have everything you need for a complete message?

NOTES: After analyzing the graph, students will identify questions and observations the audience may have based on the graph's content. They should also identify additional research they could conduct to answer those questions.

SAMPLE ANSWERS: The graph shows that except for a slight increase from 2008 to 2009 in South American, sales in North American and South American remained consistent over the four-year period. However, sales in the Europe region spiked from $30 million in 2009 to $90 million in 2010. Research is needed to determine why this spike occurred as well as why it fell to $20 million the following year (2011).

EXERCISE 3 Finding the most effective medium of delivery [related to Technology feature]

NOTES: For each of the five (a-e) scenarios provided, students will identify their best medium choice and explain their justification. Some scenarios include additional questions: scenario e requires a medium choice for initial communication in addition to a choice to maintain publicity throughout the year, and scenario e requires medium choices based on differing audience sizes (i.e., 50, 500, and 5,000). Students use Figure 2.8 for choices.

SAMPLE ANSWERS:

a. **Your employer leaves a message on your voice mail asking you to work overtime this weekend, but you plan to attend your cousin's out-of-town wedding. What medium would you use to explain why you can't work overtime?**
   You could reply using the same medium (phone/voice mail), but if possible, a face-to-face conversation would allow you to explain your personal commitment while emphasizing your professional commitment to the company. Additionally, the audience (employer) may find it difficult to refuse your reason in person. You can gauge his/her response to your reason while you're explaining it. If his/her initial reaction is negative (e.g., folded arms, deep sigh, rolled eyes), you could provide additional justification (e.g., close-knit family, important event, etc.). However, if your employer's reaction is more positive, you don't have to include the additional information. Your ability to perceive the need for this information would be difficult over the phone and impossible in a voice mail message.

b. **You are developing a new procedure manual for the sales associates in your department and need input on several issues from your department manager and training staff. What medium would you use to gather the input you need?**
   Depending on the size of the staff, you could schedule a meeting with the department manager and training staff to allow simultaneous input from several people who could comment on each other's suggestions. Having everyone together would elicit the needed input and encourage a discussion of the feedback. Some staff members may think of additional input based on others' responses that they would not have considered without the group discussion. You could follow up after the meeting with an email that summarizes the discussion (or provide minutes). However, if the logistics of meeting together are difficult (e.g., geography or timing), an email message to all staff encouraging them to reply to all could provide the same group dialog asynchronously. In this case, in would be important to

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include a timeline for the discussion and encourage input from everyone. Finally, if some of the staff members don't have access to email (or check it regularly), a quick survey could be distributed to gather individual feedback. This medium would elicit input from all staff members without the possibility of groupthink shadowing their responses.

c. **You ordered 14 boxes of 8 1/2" X 11" copy paper from a local office supply store, but you received 11 boxes of 8 1/2" X 14" legal paper. After you talk with Karamjeet, an associate manager of the store, he personally delivers the 14 boxes of standard copy paper to your office, carries the boxes into your supply room, and retrieves the boxes of legal paper—all within an hour of your initial contact. You are so impressed with Karamjeet's personal attention and quick service that you want to inform his supervisor. How do you contact Karamjeet's supervisor to recognize his efforts?** Write a letter to Paul's supervisor outlining his exceptional services. A letter serves as an official document that provides a permanent record; feedback is not required.

2.2 What is involved in composing?

EXERCISE 4 Using your time effectively

NOTES: Given a workplace research scenario, students will determine how much time they would need to compose and evaluate a report and how they would spread the work over the seven-day time period before the report is due.

SAMPLE ANSWER: The purpose is to provide information about the client's leading competition. To do this, you need to analyze your audience (your supervisor's project team), understand the information you've gathered (TV ads, websites, and print media sources) so you can organize the content, and draft the report (leaving room for revising, evaluating, formatting, and down time between editing to provide an objective perspective. The amount of time will vary, roughly several hours a day (with a day or two off). Here's a sample timeline:

- Day 1 – Thoroughly read/review the content and organize by topic; create an outline
- Day 2 – Fill in the outline with narrative supported by sources
- Day 3 – Continue to compose, seeking feedback from colleagues to ensure the organization is good
- Day 4 – Finalize the draft
- Day 5 – Break
- Day 6 – Revise, edit, proofread, seek additional feedback
- Day 7 – Print final copy and submit to supervisor

EXERCISE 5 Getting Organized!

NOTES: After analyzing two versions of the same email (direct and indirect), students will respond to four questions about (a) circumstances when the direct organizational plan would be better, (b) when the indirect plan would be better, (c) which plan they would choose, and (d) how they would revise the message to emphasize audience benefits. Items a, b, and c also require justification.

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a. **Under what circumstances would Nichole choose to write this message to Susan with the direct organizational plan? Explain at least two circumstances.**

Nichole would choose to use the direct organizational plan if she knew that (1) Susan preferred the direct organizational plan, or (2) Susan would agree with her recommendation of Adaptive Solutions' website.

b. **Under what circumstances would Nichole write this same message with the indirect organizational plan? Explain at least two circumstances.**

Nichole would choose to use the indirect organizational plan if she knew that (1) Susan preferred the indirect organizational plan, or (2) Susan preferred the Creative Communications website design and will be disappointed with her recommendation of Adaptive Solutions' website.

c. **How would you revise each message to emphasize audience benefits?**

The message could emphasize audience benefits for Susan by revising the justification (ease of use, comprehensive content, and general appearance) to identify specific benefits for the company. By addressing how these factors will create an effective web design for Susan's company, Nichole can more effectively persuade her audience to agree with her conclusion.

EXERCISE 6 Moving past the first draft

NOTES: Students' responses will vary based on their topic. Students will free write at least half a page (typed and single spaced) based on a topic they are researching for a class project (or a topic you assign). After reviewing the page, they will identify how they could use the free written material to support their project.

2.3 How does evaluating improve your communication?

EXERCISE 7 Sifting for meaning: Improving: Clarity and conciseness

NOTES: Students will edit ten sentences (a-j) to improve their clarity and conciseness.

a. **Computer technology and its associated software applications in conjunction with the widespread usage of the World Wide Web have had the most profound and visible effects of any invention in modern history.**

Computer technologies and the World Wide Web have proven to be the most significant inventions of modern history.

b. **Technologies have dramatically impacted and modified our complex communication systems, exchanges of information, and our commercial endeavors.**

Technology has changed the way we communicate, share information, and do business.

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c. **As technology permeates nearly every facet of business entities, the question is whether today's college students receive adequate information and assistance as they prepare for the high-tech world of business.**
Are today's college students technologically prepared to do well in business?

d. **A multitude of employers are now testing their prospective employees prior to employment to determine if their information technology knowledge and skill levels will meet or exceed their technology expectations in terms of meeting their workplace needs.**
Employers often evaluate potential employees' technology knowledge to ensure they have the skills needed to perform their jobs.

EXERCISE 8 Trimming the excess: Removing unnecessary wording and redundancies

NOTES: Students will edit ten sentences (a-j) to eliminate unnecessary wording and redundancies.

a. **You asked me to provide you with my recommendation for the new sales position, and I believe that Sarah Miller is the best candidate.**
I believe that Sarah Miller is the best candidate for the new sales position.

b. **We combined together the proposals, and after close scrutiny of the results have come to the consensus of opinion that this project will be our first priority.**
After reviewing the proposals, we have determined that this project will be our priority.

c. **Foreign imports are an essential necessity in our business.**
Imports are a necessity in our business.

d. **We respectfully and humbly extend our grateful thanks that your future plans have secured our company's good success.**
Thank you; your plans have secured our company's success.

EXERCISE 9 Project professionalism: Positive wording

NOTES: Students will edit ten sentences (a-j) to sound more positive.

a. **She will not do well on the employment exam if she does not review the company's procedures.**
She will do well on the employment exam if she reviews the company's procedures.

b. **The committee will not make their decision until next week.**
The committee will make their decision next week.

c. **The employees will receive no bonus if they do not submit their performance evaluations on time.**
The employees will receive a bonus if they submit their performance evaluations on time.

d. **I cannot attend the meeting if this report is not finished on time.**
I will attend the meeting if the report is finished on time.

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e. **Because the construction plans were not delivered, we could not determine a timeline for completion.**
When the construction plans are delivered, we will determine a timeline for completion.

EXERCISE 10 Project professionalism: Active voice

NOTES: Students will edit ten sentences (a-j) to change from passive to active voice.

a. **The proposal was written by the marketing team based on in-depth research.**
The marketing team wrote the proposal based on in-depth research.

b. **The decision was made to extend overtime allowances by 10 percent.**
The manager decided to extend overtime allowances by 10 percent.

c. **Because two proposals were submitted, a meeting was scheduled to discuss the differences.**
Because they submitted two proposals, we scheduled a meeting to discuss the differences.

d. **Positive feedback about the presentation was received from the clients.**
He received positive feedback from the clients on his presentation.
OR: The clients provided positive feedback on the presentation.

e. **The salary increase will be seen in your next paycheque.**
They will initiate the salary increase in your next paycheque.

EXERCISE 11 Project Professionalism: Eliminating slang and clichés

NOTES: Students will edit ten sentences (a-h) to clarify the actual meaning.

a. **Everyone in the department knows that the *buck stops here*.**
Everyone in the department knows we are ultimately responsible for what happens.

b. **She needs to *dangle some carrots* in front of her team to get anything done.**
She needs to entice her team with an incentive to get anything done.

c. **She has really been a *good soldier* about the change in leadership.**
She has not caused any trouble about the change in leadership.

d. **The union representative said we need to *sweeten the pot* if we want to end the labour strike.**
The union representative said we need to add more compensation if we want to end the labour strike.

e. **He will be *swimming with the sharks* if he tries to present that proposal to the management team.**
He will be competing at a high level where the consequences are costly if he tries to present that proposal to the management team.

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EXERCISE 12 Project professionalism: Improving reading level

NOTES: Answers will vary. Students will rewrite a paragraph they found. They will revise the original using simple words and short sentences. They also determine the new version's grade level and explain which version is most effective.

EXERCISE 13 Project professionalism: Proofread for error reduction (related to the Technology feature)

NOTES: Students will type the paragraph and use their word processor's spelling and grammar tools to create a list of spelling errors the program did not find as well as suggested changes that would introduce an error. Responses should also include students' perceptions of whether their findings will change how they proofread in the future. This information should be summarized in an email or memo to the instructor.

SAMPLE ANSWER: ***Due*** *to recent security events,* ***our*** *technology upgrades* ***are*** *scheduled to be implemented at the beginning of next* ***month****. This change requires you to ask yourself what applications you* ***currently*** *use and* ***predict*** *those you may* ***need*** *during the next fiscal year. How will you* ***know*** *what you might need in the future****?*** *That is a difficult question to* ***answer****. However,* ***your input*** *is necessary to* ***ensure*** *that* ***our*** *resources* ***are*** *used* ***correctly****.* ***Thanks*** *in advance for* ***your*** *effort* ***to*** *improve this process.*

My spelling/grammar checker identified only four of these errors: Do/Due, hour/our, you're/your, and too/to. My grammar checker did not introduce any changes that would introduce an error, but these results convince me that I cannot depend on the automated spelling and grammar tools to evaluate my writing. I need to systematically look for errors to ensure I communicate effectively and professionally.

Best regards,
[Students' Name]

EXERCISE 14 Revising and designing an email message

SAMPLE ANSWER:

Subject: Flight from St. Hubert to Edmonton

Darryl:

No seats are available on the flight we wanted. What do you think about flying out of Saint-Hubert tomorrow at 5 p.m. with an arrival in Edmonton at 11 p.m.? We will have a 1.5 h. layover in Winnipeg but will arrive on time to meet with our team at 9 a.m. the following morning.

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We can leave from work immediately following my meeting from 3-4 p.m. tomorrow. Let me know if you`d like me to pick you up from work or from your house.

Regards,
Francois

EXERCISE 15 Revising and designing a voicemail message

NOTES: Students will revise the voice message to use a more concise style.

SAMPLE ANSWER:

Marika, this is Alex. I'm okay, but was just in a car accident and won't be able to attend our 8 AM meeting. I'm sorry, but you'll have to present our report on your own. The photocopies are on Lucy's desk. Please call me when you get this message to confirm. I'll be in as soon as I can.

EXERCISE 16 Exploring cultural communication [related to the Culture feature]

NOTES: Students draft and compose an outline, first individually and then collaboratively. Both the individual and combined outlines are handed in. The assignment requires students to consider how collaboration affects both content and organization of a message.

EXERCISE 17 Impromptu presentations

NOTES: Assign students to make informal (one- to two-minute) presentations on one of the topics listed using the direct organizational plan. Give them a minute to organize their thoughts, but encourage them to speak without notes. Encourage the class to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of the presentations in a supportive manner that supports improved speaking skills.

SUPPLEMENTAL HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Study Question 3.1 – What should I spend time analyzing?

I Have a Great Idea!

You have a great idea for your workplace (think of something that applies to your workplace or some organization to which you belong). For example, you may want to have someone come in and do a workshop on becoming a more effective speaker or may want to have someone come in and do a workshop on office ergonomics training (you may use one of these or come up with one on your own). In a discussion board posting, give your analysis of the four important elements (purpose, audience, content requirements, and medium) to analyze before composing. You will only be analyzing and then posting your analysis; there will be

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no end product. Post your analysis to the Discussion Board on the class website. Be sure to give an appropriate subject. Other students will be able to read your posting, so be sure to proofread carefully before you submit your posting to the Discussion Board.

Deliverable: One discussion board posting on the class website Discussion Board.

Study Question 3.2 – What is involved in composing?

Two-Faced Description

Using the concepts you have learned in Chapter 3, write a brief paragraph (100-150 words) to a friend describing your first month of school this semester and save it as a Word file. Next, compile an email to your instructor where you write a brief paragraph (100-150 words) describing your first month of school this semester. In the same email, write an additional paragraph (there is no limit for word count) to your instructor about the similarities and differences between the two paragraphs that you noticed and what you think are the reasons for the differences. Attach the Word file of the paragraph to your friend to the email and do not forget to proofread your email carefully before clicking on "Send."

Deliverable: An email to instructor with an attached Word file.

Study Question 3.3 – How does evaluating improve communication?

Evaluating a Past Message

Pick a message you wrote (incident report, letter, proposal, resume, newsletter, etc., from the workplace, school, or personal life) and apply the four ways Chapter 3 gives to evaluate your communication: revising the content, editing the tone and style, proofreading for errors, and using feedback to improve. Compile an email to your instructor where you write a brief paragraph (100-150 words) explaining the revisions you would make if you still could. Provide enough detail about the original message, so the revisions you explain make sense. Do not forget to proofread your email carefully before clicking on "Send."

Deliverable: An email to instructor.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTION

The ACE process is equally important to social media strategies as any other form of communication. In a 2009 interview discussing Kraft Foods Australia/New Zealand's approach to social media Simon Talbot, Corporate Affairs Manager, said "We focused our first two years of social media on simply listening and asking questions". This listening process helped Kraft understand their customers (audience) in relation to its products and helped them devise a strategy to use social media effectively by understanding customer's perspectives and how they use products.

During the 2008 elections, President Obama was well known for his campaign's use of social media to connect to and communicate with voters. Governments at all levels are using social media to engage citizens and voters. The Collaboration Project, sponsored by the National Academy of Public Administration, describes case

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studies of innovative uses of collaborative technology in government to promote community participation. Cases are listed by approach, including social networking and social voting, and by level of government. One example is DipNote, the U.S. State Department's blog which allows the public to discuss foreign policy.

ENHANCING THE ONLINE COURSE

- Have each student find a corporate blog and present on the discussion board an analysis in which they discuss the audience for it and its purpose. Have students review each other's presentation and engage in a discussion about the effectiveness of blogs as a corporate communication medium based on audience and purpose and using each other's blog examples as evidence to support their claim. (If the class is large, divide students into groups and have each group work collaboratively to locate and analyze a blog together. For the discussion, have groups comment on the work of one or two other groups.)

- Have each student find a corporate tweet and post an analysis on the discussion board using the categories (evaluating content, style and tone, proofreading for errors). Have students engage in a discussion about the credibility of Twitter as a corporate communication tool based on each other's analyses.

- Ask students (individually or in groups depending on class size) to choose one of the case studies from NAPA's collaboration project mentioned in Social Media in Action. Students should review the case and do additional research online to find out more. Ask students to summarize the case in a discussion board post along with an analysis of

- Case study: For the case study scenario, assume that your employer is a global company. Employees required to attend the workshop are located in Switzerland, India, Japan, and the United States. Ask students to analyze the audience with an emphasis on how to compose the message to show cultural understanding. Are there additional or different questions and objections you would need to answer directly? Are there others you would not want to address? Why/why not?
  Ask each student to compose the message for the case study using the revised scenario of a global audience. Pair students. Students should exchange their compositions and use Word track changes and commenting tools to review their work.

- Students should "role play" as a new employee of a company for a product or service with which they are familiar (or ask students to locate the manual for the product if they need additional information). Ask them to write a message promoting the product or service to potential customers using the following media:

  - An email message
  - A text message
  - A Facebook post
  - A twitter tweet
  - A flyer

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Students should then compare and discuss the choices they made when composing each message. Ask students to post their messages and vote to determine the most effective. Follow up with a discussion about why it is effective.

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2 Managing the Communication Process: Analyzing, Composing, Evaluating

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Introduction

The ACE Communication Process

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A **systematic** process that helps you make good communication decisions.

A **flexible** process: that can be applied to any situation, simple or complex, and any message, written or oral.

An **iterative** process: **evaluation** may lead back to the **analysis** to reconsider decisions.

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Learning Objectives

2.1 Why should you spend time **analyzing**?

2.2 What is involved in **composing**?

2.3 How does **evaluating** improve your communication?

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2.1 Why should you spend time analyzing?

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ACE Part 1: Analyzing

Four key elements…

1. Purpose
2. Audience
3. Content
4. Medium

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Analyzing the purpose focuses the message

Think about *why* you are communicating from two points of view.

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- What is your **purpose** for communicating?
- What **outcome** do you want to achieve? What you want your audience to know or do as a result of the communication?

Analyzing the purpose focuses the message

PURPOSE	DESIRED OUTCOME
• To inform my client that I cannot take on a new project right now.	• My client will postpone the project rather than hire someone else to do it.
• To persuade my supervisor to approve a summer-hours work schedule.	• My supervisor will present the plan to upper management.
• To ask my supervisor for an extension on a project deadline.	• My supervisor will let me submit the project next Friday so I can finish it during the week.

FIGURE 2.2 Examples of Purpose and Outcome Statements

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Analyzing the purpose focuses the message

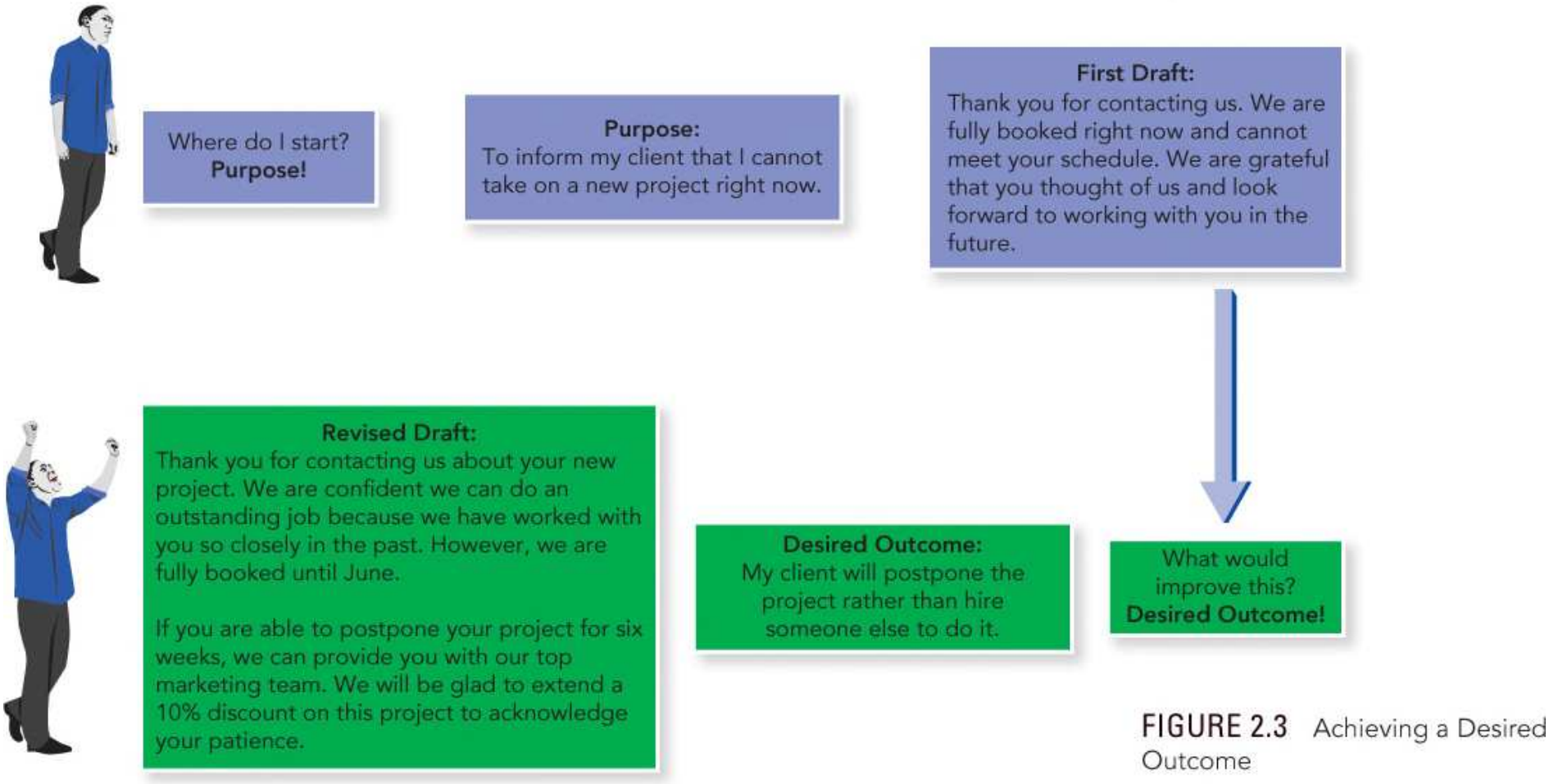

FIGURE 2.3 Achieving a Desired Outcome

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Analyzing the purpose focuses the message

Will the outcome require persuasion?

No, if your communication is purely informative

Yes, if you need to influence a recipient to agree with an idea or take an action

PURPOSE	DESIRED OUTCOME
To persuade my supervisor to approve a summer-hours work schedule.	My supervisor will support the proposal and believe it is in the best interests of the department to adopt the plan. She will forward the proposal to upper management and request a meeting to discuss it, with the goal of having the proposal accepted in time to implement it for June 1.

FIGURE 2.5 Sample Purpose and Outcome Statements

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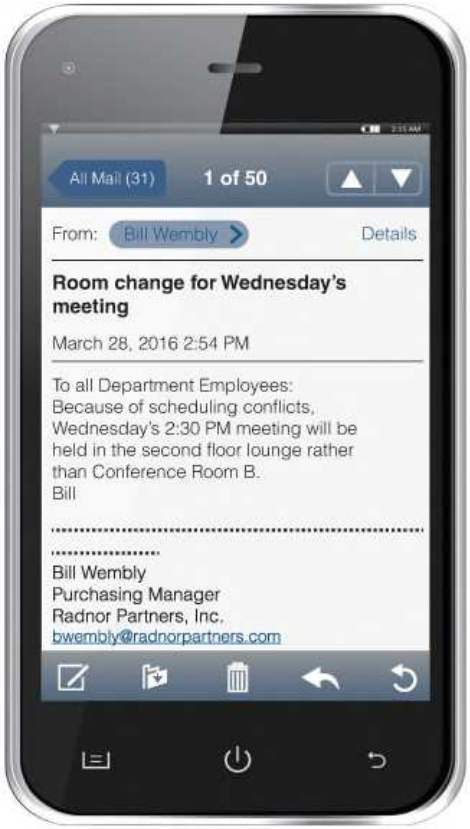

FIGURE 2.4 Informational Message: No Persuasion Needed

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Analyzing the audience helps you meet their needs

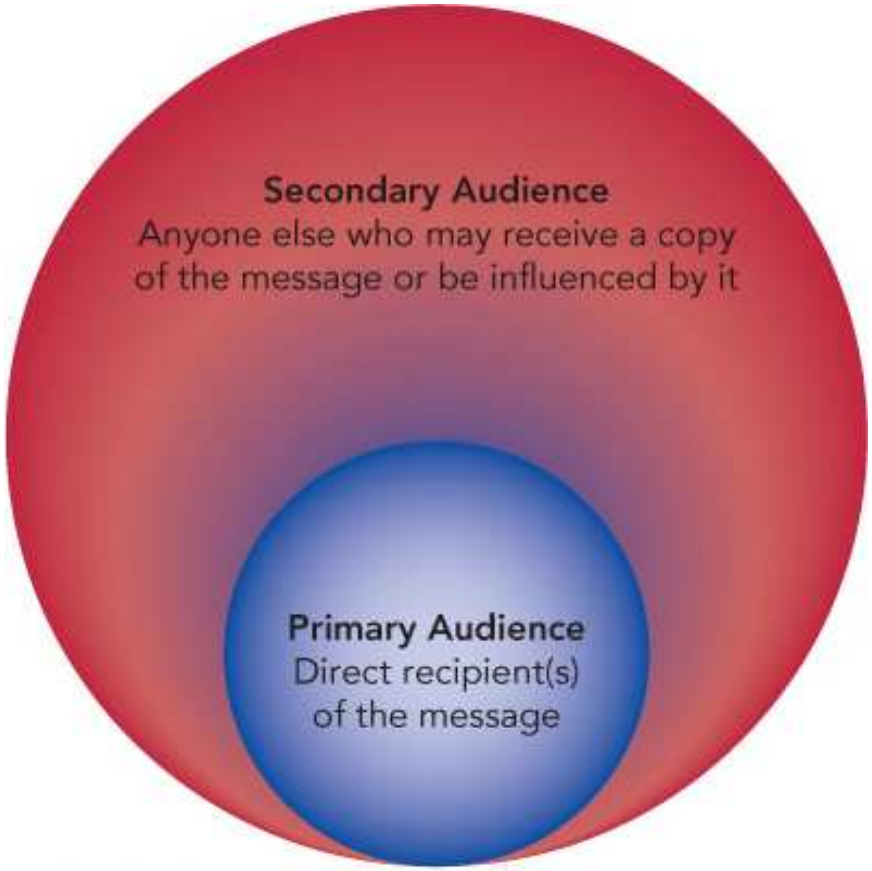

FIGURE 2.6 Primary and Secondary Audiences

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Analyzing the audience helps you meet their needs

1. **What does the primary and secondary audience already know?**

   My supervisor and upper management already know about the structure of our current workday, so I do not need to explain that.

2. **What information does the audience need to know—and why?**

   Both audiences need to know what I mean by "summer hours," how summer hours will work in our department, and how the change will affect the productivity of the department during the summer months.

3. **When does the audience need this information?**

   My supervisor needs the information soon so we can gain support from upper management in time to implement the change for June 1.

4. **How will the audience react to this information?**

   I don't know how my supervisor or upper management will react, so I will try to anticipate potential problems and provide solutions.

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Analyzing the audience helps you persuade

If the purpose is primarily persuasive, also consider these questions:

5. What questions or objections will my audience have?

My audience may ask these questions:

- How will we ensure that someone is available to answer phone calls after 4 p.m. if all employees ask to start and end their day earlier?
- When workdays begin and end earlier, will we have to rearrange lunch hours and breaks? How will we handle that?
- Will there be additional costs?
- Has this plan worked well in other departments or companies?
- Will anyone think this schedule is unfair?
- Is there any evidence to support the benefits?

6. How will my audience benefit from my idea or proposal?

- Providing flexible summer hours may improve employee morale, which may lead to the following additional benefits:
  - **a.** reduced employee turnover rates
  - **b.** increased employee productivity
  - **c.** increased quarterly sales figures
- Providing flexible summer hours may improve employees' perceptions of my supervisor.

FIGURE 2.7 Audience Analysis Questions

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Analyzing the content ensures a complete message

- Do you know enough about the topic or situation?
- Do you have enough data to support your main idea?
- If not, where can you find additional information?

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Analyzing the content ensures a complete message

Primary research—collecting your own data

Secondary research—using information other people have collected

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Analyzing the medium helps you choose the best delivery option

Choose a medium or channel based on the needs of the audience.

Do not choose based on what is most convenient for you.

Examine range of options in Figure 2.8, page 33.

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ETHICS in Communication

Sample decisions made daily in the workplace:

- Could an email potentially cause harm to a group, community, or individual?
- Could a private meeting create uncertainty regarding influence, morality, or respect?
- Is this communication that I am preparing based on beliefs or on facts?
- Have I included everything that the audience needs? Is this message complete?
- If I hit “send” on this email, will my employer face potential legal considerations, such as an action under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, provincial human rights legislation, or the Criminal Code?
- Am I using any information in this report that violates another person’s privacy, uses their intellectual property, or violates a signed competition clause?

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ETHICS: Using O-A-R

Observe: "Look to Learn"; what is "done" and what is "not done"?

Ask: What are the ethical standards and practices in your workplace?

Research: What do trusted sources say?

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2.2 What is involved in composing?

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ACE Part 2: Composing

Four key elements…

1. Practicing strategic time management
2. Organizing the content
3. Drafting the content
4. Designing the message

Involves…

- organizing the content so that it is understandable from the audience's perspective
- putting that content into coherent sentences and logical paragraphs
- selecting a medium that is professional
- designing a format that makes the communication easy to follow

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Managing Your Time

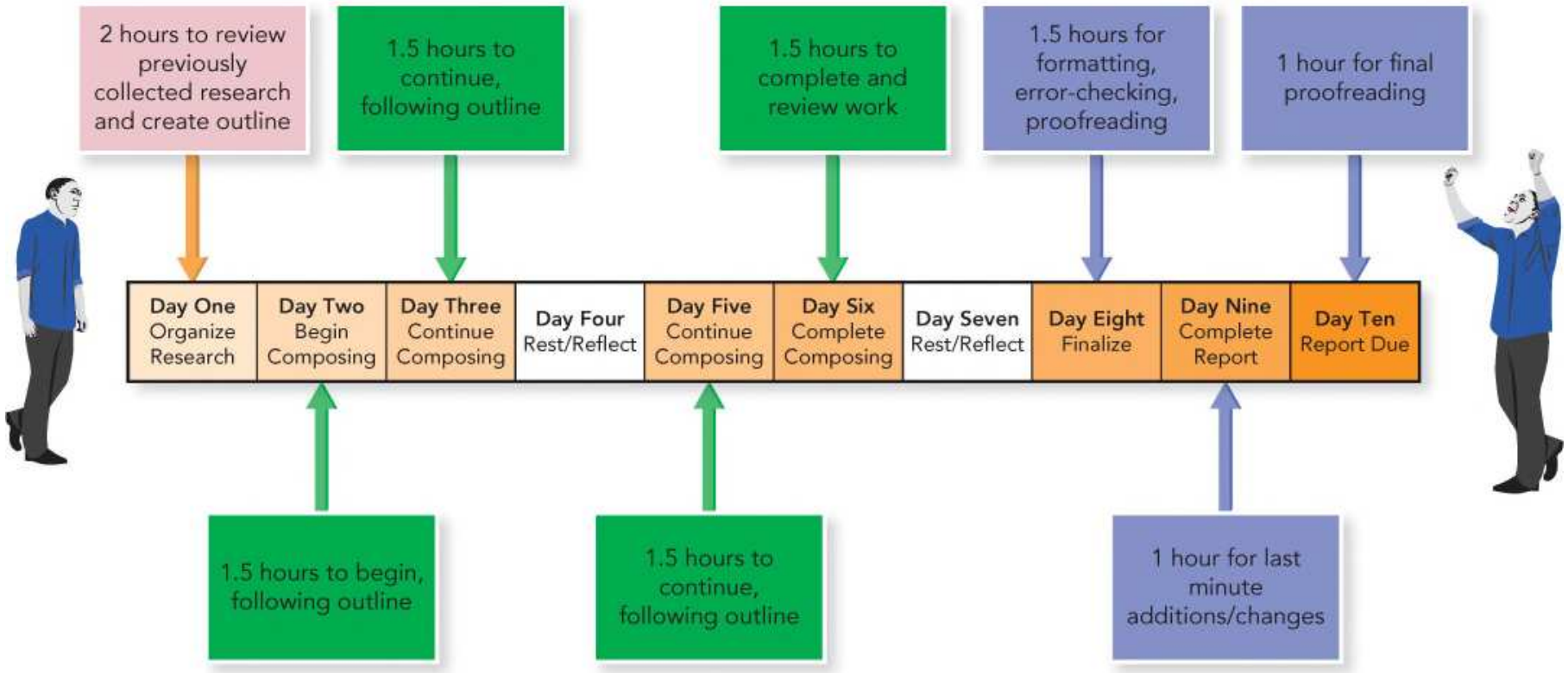

FIGURE 2.9 Managing Time (Analyzing – Composing – Evaluating)

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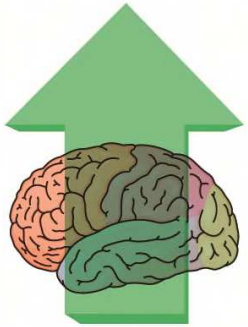
TECHNOLOGY:
Avoid Multitasking!

How to Gain Time and Optimize Your IQ!		
Focus on one thing at a time and gain up to a 40% increase in productivity		
Optimize your IQ Studies show that "single tasking" can allow you to make optimal use of your IQ. Multitasking can lower your IQ by as much as 10 points.		Multitasking can cause a drop in cognitive function, similar to the effects of missing a night's sleep.
Gain time While your co-workers will lose as much as 2.1 hours per day by multitasking (the equivalent of 546 working hours annually), single tasking can give you an employment edge: more time!		Effective analyzing, composing, and evaluating takes time, patience, and focus. Give yourself this extra time by single tasking your way through your work day.

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"Singletasking"
is the opposite of multitasking.

Focusing on a single task actually saves time and improves quality.

How?

1. Prioritize tasks – limit daily goals
2. Use the timer on your phone
3. Turn notifications off

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Organizing the Message: Use an Outline

FIGURE 2.10 Traditional Outline

OUTLINE

Proposal for Summer-Hours Work Schedule

PURPOSE: To propose that ABC Communication's Sales Department adopt a summer-hours work schedule between June 1 and August 31.

Introduction
- Statement of problem
- Proposed solution

Detailed Description of Proposed Summer-Hours Work Schedule
- Flextime options emphasizing core workday hours
- Suggested policies to ensure balanced staffing

Benefits (documented by primary and secondary research)
- Increased employee morale
- Reduced employee turnover rates
- Increased employee productivity

Implementation Plan
- Survey employees to assess flextime preferences
- Develop policies and procedures
- Create an assessment plan

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Organizing the Message: Simple Outline

(A) NOTES FOR PLANNING AN EMAIL	(B) OUTLINE FOR DISCUSSION AT A MEETING
Notes for Email to Cherilyn SUBJECT: Update on Summer-Hours Schedule Proposal • Ask for feedback on attached rough draft • Briefly explain research gathered to date • Outline information to be included • Thank her for taking time to provide input	**Overview of Summer-Hours Schedule Proposal** 1. What is a flexible summer-hours schedule? 2. How will the company benefit from the schedule? 3. How will we avoid/overcome potential problems? 4. When/how will we implement the schedule? 5. How will we assess the schedule's effectiveness?

FIGURE 2.11 Short Outlines

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Use a bulleted list of notes or make a list of questions to answer.

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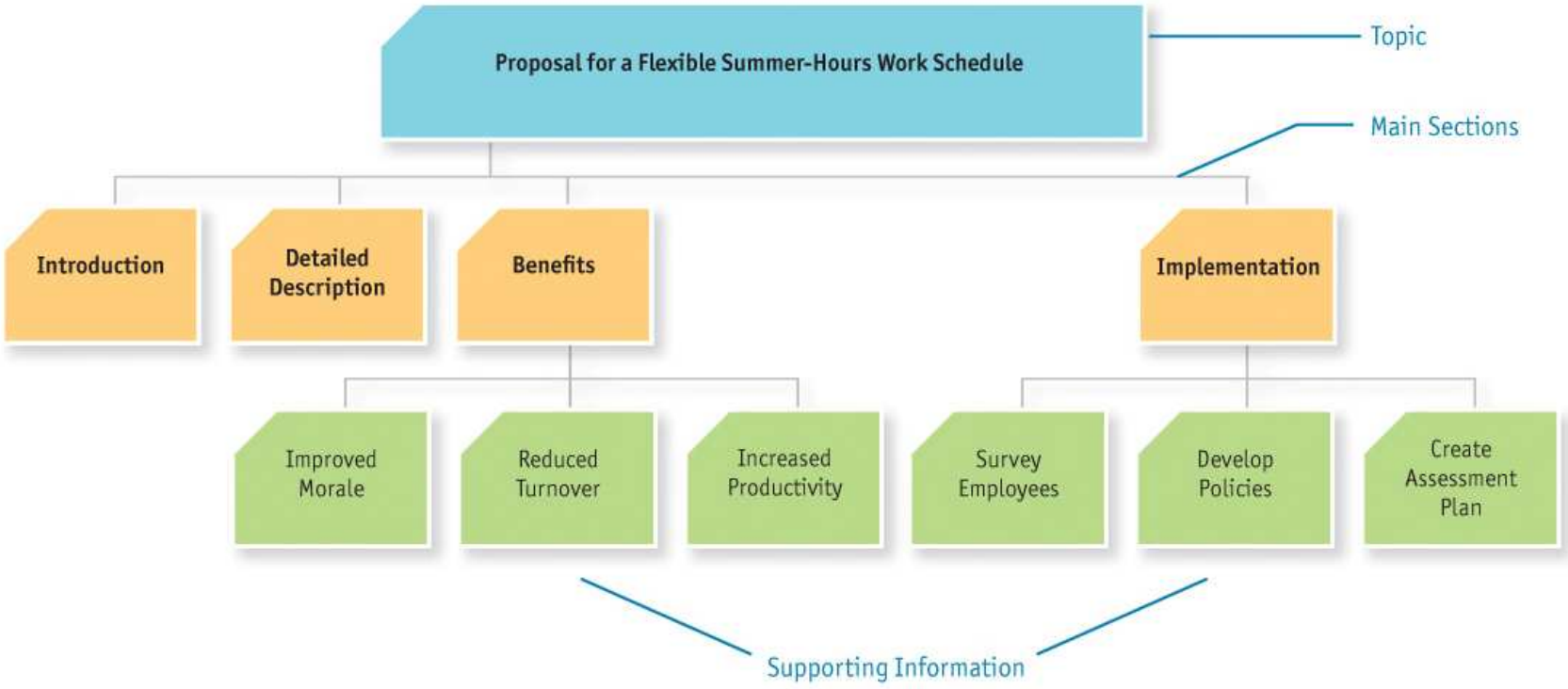
Organizing the Message: Org Chart Style

FIGURE 2.12 Tree Chart Outline



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Use a tree chart outline to see hierarchical structure and connections between ideas.

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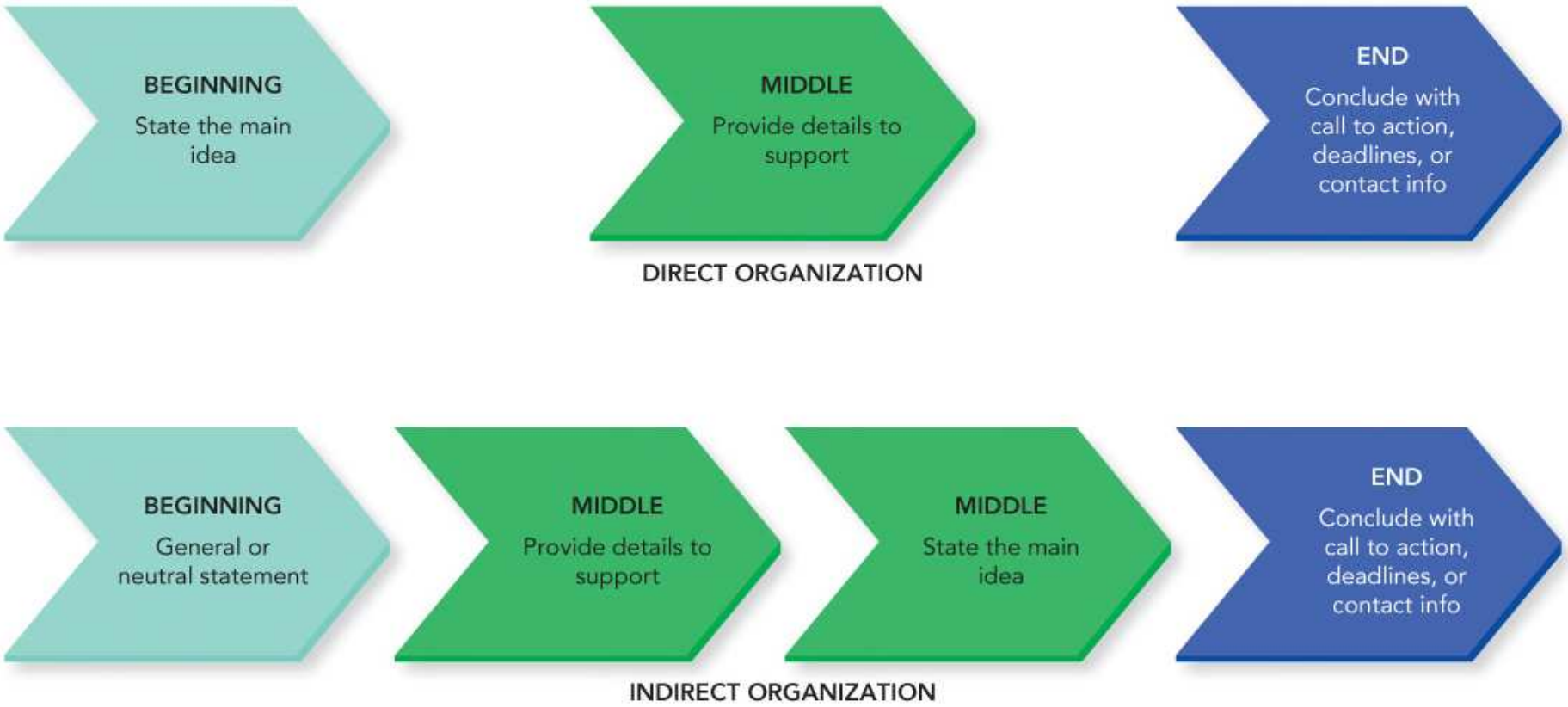
Organizing the Message: Direct or Indirect?

Where will you state the main point – at the beginning or later?

FIGURE 2.13 Direct and Indirect Organization



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Drafting the content

Drafting—the creative process of getting information on the page

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Potential barriers

- Perfectionist syndrome
- Writer's block

Potential solutions

- Free writing
- Thinking aloud
- Point form first
- Use an outline

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Drafting the content

Example of free writing

Okay . . . It is really hard to start writing this report as I can't think of how to start. I know I need to start the introduction of this report with a statement of the problem and the purpose of the report. There really wasn't a serious problem, but the summer-hours plan sounded like a good idea to me. A friend told me about it at his company, I mentioned it to some colleagues here, and they thought I should recommend it. So what's the problem? How do I describe it? I don't know. Maybe I should get some coffee. Oh well, low morale could be contributing to our typical third-quarter sales slump. The summer numbers are always the lowest each year. I can document this with the data I collected from the last 10 years. But since I found that data after I started the research, it shouldn't really be the problem we're trying to solve, just a possible benefit of the schedule. So the summer flex hours could be a solution that boosts morale and productivity, thereby potentially increasing third-quarter sales. If I start with that in the introduction and then support the idea with findings from sources in the middle, I could close with a recommendation to try summer hours and assess its effect on both morale and sales. I should get more coffee.

FIGURE 2.15 Example of Free Writing

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Designing a professional format and delivery

Design techniques for good business communicators:

- Start with a purpose-driven introduction.
- Break your message into short paragraphs.
- Begin each paragraph with a strong **topic sentence**—identify the main point or idea of the paragraph.
- Use parallel bullet lists for easy comprehension and skimming.
- End with a specific conclusion, recommendation, or action item.

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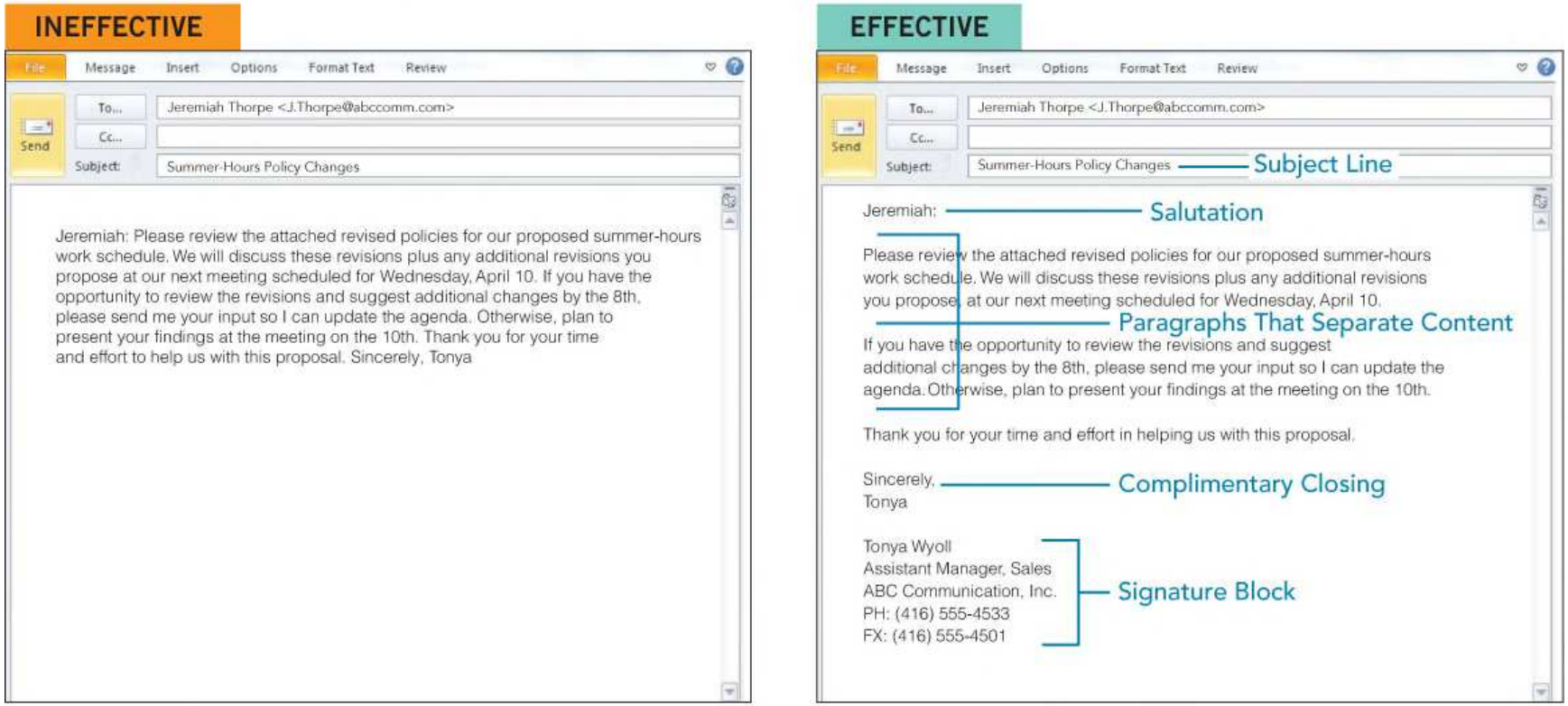
Designing a professional format and delivery:
Email messages

FIGURE 2.16 Poorly Designed versus Professionally Designed Email Messages



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Use a salutation, paragraphs to separate content, a complimentary closing, and a signature block.

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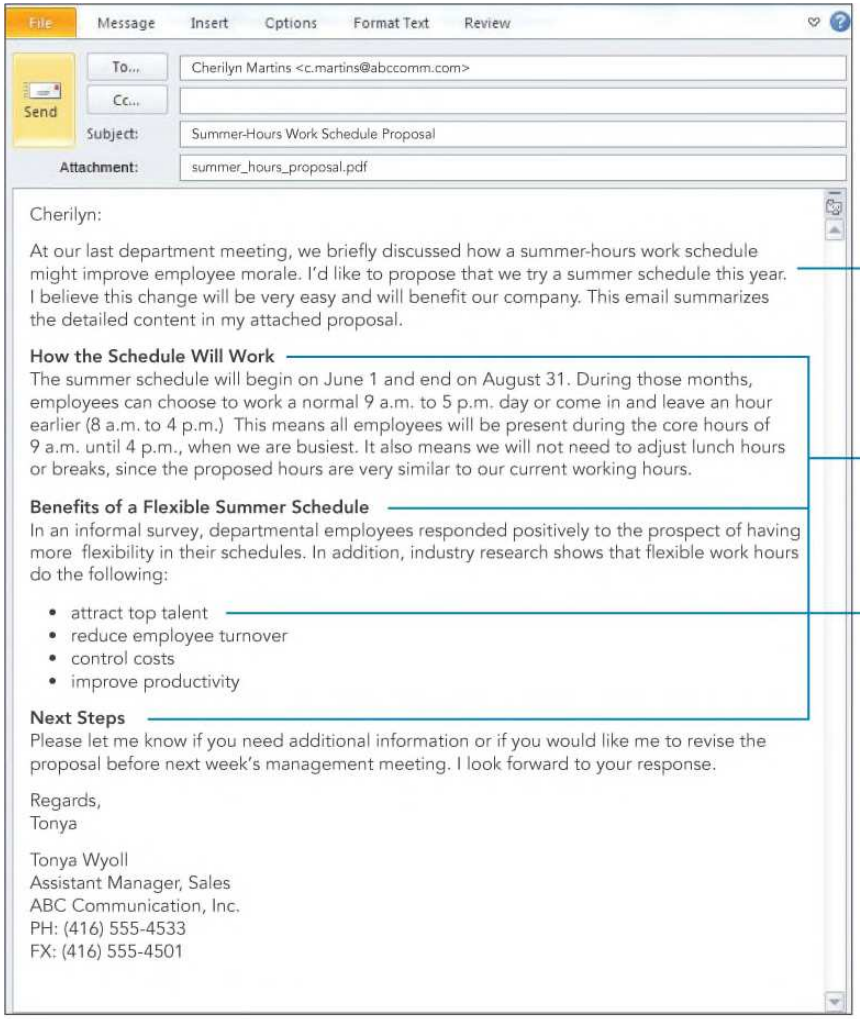
For longer email messages

Use these additional techniques:

- Begin with a focused first paragraph.
- Use topic-specific headings.
- Format list using bullet points.



File | Message | Insert | Options | Format Text | Review

Send

To... Cherilyn Martins <c.martins@abccomm.com>

Cc...

Subject: Summer-Hours Work Schedule Proposal

Attachment: summer_hours_proposal.pdf

Cherilyn:

At our last department meeting, we briefly discussed how a summer-hours work schedule might improve employee morale. I'd like to propose that we try a summer schedule this year. I believe this change will be very easy and will benefit our company. This email summarizes the detailed content in my attached proposal.

How the Schedule Will Work

The summer schedule will begin on June 1 and end on August 31. During those months, employees can choose to work a normal 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. day or come in and leave an hour earlier (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) This means all employees will be present during the core hours of 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., when we are busiest. It also means we will not need to adjust lunch hours or breaks, since the proposed hours are very similar to our current working hours.

Benefits of a Flexible Summer Schedule

In an informal survey, departmental employees responded positively to the prospect of having more flexibility in their schedules. In addition, industry research shows that flexible work hours do the following:

- attract top talent
- reduce employee turnover
- control costs
- improve productivity

Next Steps

Please let me know if you need additional information or if you would like me to revise the proposal before next week's management meeting. I look forward to your response.

Regards,
Tonya

Tonya Wyoll
Assistant Manager, Sales
ABC Communication, Inc.
PH: (416) 555-4533
FX: (416) 555-4501

FIGURE 2.17 Email with Focused Opening, Topic-Specific Headings, and Bullet Points

The first paragraph of this long email contains the purpose of the message, the main point, and a preview of the content.

Notice how the three topic-specific headings help the audience grasp the organization and meaning of the document at a glance.

Bullet points make important lists easy to skim.

If the audience needs to refer to the document again, they will know exactly where to find the information they need.

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Designing a professional format and delivery: *Letters*

letter

CP CONSULTING PROFESSIONALS — Letterhead

2403 Rock Haven Boulevard Suite 22 • Newberry OH • 43431

O: (419) 555-5563
F: (419) 555-5564

queries@consultpro.com
www.consultpro.com

March 21, 20XX — Date line is followed by three blank lines.

Content is centered vertically between the letterhead and bottom of page.

Ms. Tonya Wyoll
Assistant Manager, Sales
ABC Communication, Inc.
114 Main Street West
Newberry, OH 43431

Inside address is followed by two blank lines.

Dear Ms. Wyoll: — Salutations in a business letter traditionally begin with the word "Dear." However, some contemporary writers omit "Dear." The salutation ends with a colon and is followed by two blank lines.

Thank you for your interest in our consulting services. I enjoyed our telephone conversation yesterday and am enclosing our proposal for the professional development workshop "Engaging Customers with Social Media."

The goal of this workshop is to help sales professionals harness the power of social media to increase sales. Participants in this workshop will learn to use social networks to find sales prospects, get past electronic gate keepers, create a customer community, and drive customers to your website. Our clients report that the techniques they learn in the workshop are both easy to implement and effective.

Please contact me at r.nelson@consultpro.com or 555-5563 at your convenience to discuss the workshop in more detail or to schedule a session. I look forward to hearing from you.

Paragraphs all begin at the left margin with no indentation.

Sincerely,

Regina Nelson

Regina Nelson
Training Director

Complimentary closing is followed by three blank lines to make room for the signature before the typed name and title.

Enclosure — "Enclosure" indicates that another document is enclosed in the same envelope.

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Use for more formal communication and intended for **external audiences**—people outside your organization

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Voice mail messages

Design voice mail messages with the same principles used to design emails.

- Greet recipient
- Identify yourself
- State your purpose and main point
- Follow up with details
- Identify actions
- Provide contact information
- Sign off

FIGURE 2.18 Sample Voice Mail Message

SAMPLE VOICE MAIL

Hello, Ms. Nelson. This is Tonya Wyoll from ABC Communication. My number is (416) 555-4533. — Greeting and identification

I am calling in response to the proposal for professional development that you sent recently. I have discussed this with my supervisor and would like to arrange a date for the workshop. — Purpose and main point

Please call me at (416) 555-4533. I look forward to talking with you soon. Goodbye. — Action, contact information, and sign-off

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Two Key Questions to Consider

Is this message for a business purpose?

Audience expectations are high for business messages. Even very short business messages require planning and formatting.

Who is your audience?

Social media messages are very easily forwarded. (Think of the term “viral.”) Therefore, awareness of your secondary audience is as important as knowledge of your primary audience.

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Different forms of social media require different formatting approaches.

FIGURE 2.19 Composing for Microblogs

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- Use 120 characters or less to allow others to modify when resending
- Keep links/URLs short

Engage the audience using interactive dynamic formats: links, videos, photos.

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Different forms of social media require different formatting approaches.

- Keep posts shorter than 250 characters; these receive more shares, comments, and "likes"
- Use photos and links to videos to enhance interest
- Keep posts on topic (i.e., industry or skill related)

FIGURE 2.20 Composing for Networking Sites

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- Keep posts shorter than 250 characters; these receive more shares, comments, and "likes"
- Use photos and links to videos to enhance interest
- Keep posts on topic (e.g., industry or skill related)

Engage the audience using interactive dynamic formats: links, videos, photos.

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Different forms of social media require different formatting approaches.

- Use blogs to present detailed and organized ideas
- Create opportunities for discussion and feedback from your audience
- Design using standard elements for business writing: headings, subheadings, bullet points, short paragraphs, white space

FIGURE 2.21 Composing for Blogs

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- Use blogs to present detailed and organized ideas
- Create opportunities for discussion and feedback from your audience
- Design using standard elements for business writing: headings, subheadings, bullet points, short paragraphs, white space

Engage the audience using interactive dynamic formats: links, videos, photos.

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Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Different forms of social media require different formatting approaches.

- Keep messages short, clear, and to the point
- Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
- Limit the use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
- Get permission from business contacts before texting them

FIGURE 2.22 Composing Text Messages

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- Keep messages short, clear, and to the point
- Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
- Limit the use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
- Get permission from business contacts before texting them

Designing a professional format and delivery:
Social media messages

Different forms of social media require different formatting approaches.

FIGURE 2.23 Composing Instant Messages

- Keep conversations short, clear, and to the point
- Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
- Limit use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
- Respect the other person's time management; ask first if they have time at that moment; respect the answer; book a better time to correspond online

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- Keep conversations short, clear, and to the point
- Establish a professional tone by using "please," "thank you," and other courtesies
- Limit use of short forms and emojis; use full words for clarity
- Respect the other person's time management; ask first if they have time at that moment; respect the answer; book a better time to correspond online

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2.3 How does evaluating improve your communication?

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ACE Part 3: Evaluating

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Four key elements…

1. Revise content
2. Edit for style and tone
3. Proofread for errors
4. Review feedback

Revising the content improves effectiveness

Step 1: Check for completeness

- Is your main point clear?
- Have you provided all the info your audience needs?
- Are the benefits to the audience clear?
- Is the information well-organized?

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Step 2: Check for clarity

- Is it easy to understand?
- Does it avoid **abstract wording**—broad concepts that an audience can interpret in multiple ways?
- Does it use **concrete wording**—specific methods, topics, or instances?

POORLY WORDED	CLEARLY WORDED
• Please affix the appropriate amount of postage to the mailing package. • I sincerely appreciate your exertion on this critically important endeavour.	• Please put a stamp on the envelope. • Thank you for your work on this important project.

FIGURE 2.24 Using Clear Wording

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Step 3: Check for conciseness

FIGURE 2.25 Using Concise Wording

WORDY	CONCISE
• This email is in reference to our approval of your prior request.	• Your request has been approved.
• Attached herein are the agenda for this month's meeting, the minutes from last month's meeting, and the report we discussed last month and will review this month.	• Attached are the documents you will need for this month's meeting: • the agenda • the minutes from last month's meeting • the report we will discuss
• If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me.	• Please contact me if you have any questions.

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Is it short and to the point, using the fewest possible words?

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Step 3: Check for conciseness

WORDY	CONCISE
• As you know, we met yesterday to discuss next year's budget. Based on the auditor's review, we recommended the following actions.	• Based on the auditor's review of our budget, we recommended the following actions.
• As your assistant manager, I am suggesting that we review our departmental procedures.	• I suggest we review our departmental procedures.
• There are three people who will attend the meeting.	• Three people will attend the meeting.

FIGURE 2.26 Eliminating Unnecessary Words

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Does it avoid fillers and any information that is not helpful to achieve your purpose?

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Step 3: Check for conciseness

REDUNDANT	CONCISE
• Please refer back to the minutes from our last department meeting.	• Please refer to the minutes from our last department meeting.
• Advance planning on your project will allow our departments to combine together our resources and divide up the work to be done.	• Advanced project planning will allow our departments to combine resources and divide the work.
• The first issue we need to address is travel reimbursement. Travel reimbursement is an important issue to address because nearly 70% of our employees have expense accounts.	• First, we need to address travel reimbursement because nearly 70% of our employees have expense accounts.

FIGURE 2.27 Avoiding Redundancies

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Does it avoid **redundancies** — unnecessary repetition of an idea?

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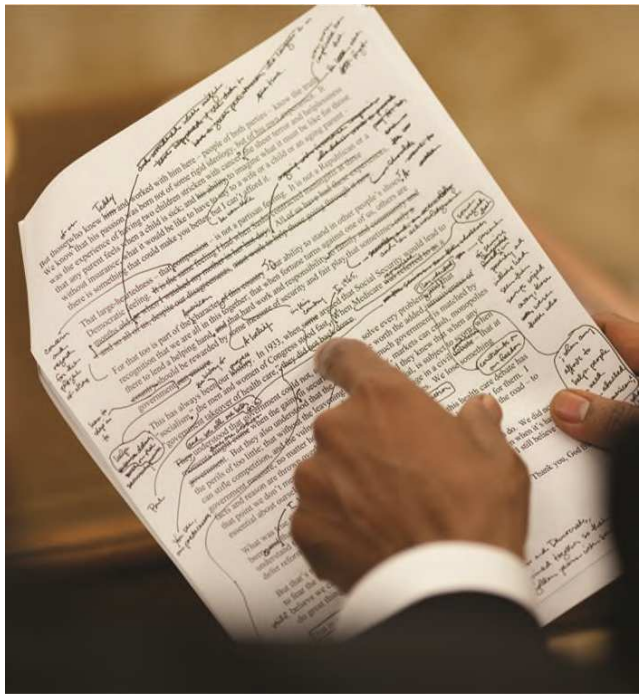
Editing style and tone helps you project a professional image

Style—how you express yourself (not what you say).

Tone—the image your language projects about you. Keep tone professional and courteous at all times.



Pete Souza/The White House/Getty Images

President Barack Obama editing a speech on health care

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Use positive wording

Create an optimistic, encouraging, and more informative message

NEGATIVE	POSITIVE
• We will not be able to approve a new budget until the analysis is complete. • The board has not yet voted on the salary increases. • If you do not sign the form before 5 p.m., we will not be able to fund your travel request.	• We will be able to approve a new budget when the analysis is complete. • The board will vote on the salary increases at the next meeting. • If you sign the form before 5 p.m., we will be able to fund your travel request.

FIGURE 2.28 Using Positive Wording

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Use a conversational style

- Academic writing often sounds too formal for everyday communication.
- A conversational style is especially important in social media.

FIGURE 2.29 Using Conversational Style

TOO FORMAL	CONVERSATIONAL
• Henceforth all documentation is to be completed within two business days.	• Please complete all forms within two business days.
• As per your instructions, I have initiated discussions with the previously identified employees.	• I opened discussions with the employees you mentioned last week.
• This new policy will facilitate the implementation of more beneficial scheduling decisions.	• This new policy will let us schedule shipments more efficiently.

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Use the appropriate voice

- In **active voice,** the subject performs the action of the verb.

ACTIVE VOICE: $\overbrace{\text{The employees}}^{\text{subject}}$ $\overbrace{\text{completed}}^{\text{verb}}$ the project early.

- In **passive voice,** the subject does not perform the action.

PASSIVE VOICE: $\overbrace{\text{The project}}^{\text{subject}}$ $\overbrace{\text{was completed}}^{\text{verb phrase}}$ early.

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Use the appropriate voice

FIRST DRAFT: ALL ACTIVE VOICE	SECOND DRAFT: REVISED (BLEND OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE)
I am writing to apologize for the delay in presenting our report. John couldn't get the printer to work and, when it did work, the printer did not render Kumar's charts properly. So, Mona had to redo all the charts so that you could understand the data. We want to ensure that you have the clearest possible understanding of our research.	Please accept the delay in presenting this report. Technical issues prevented our original report from rendering properly. We are confident that this version is the clearest possible expression of our research. Thank you for your patience.

FIGURE 2.30 Using Active and Passive Voice

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Eliminate slang and clichés

- **Slang** is nonstandard, informal language that is specific to countries, cultures, or social groups.

- **Clichés** are commonly overused phrases that have lost their force and meaning.

CLICHÉ	MEANING
Her proposal is all over the map.	Her proposal is disorganized.
The bottom fell out of that investment.	The investment lost money.
Hiring him was a bad call.	Hiring him was a bad decision.

FIGURE 2.31 Eliminating Clichés

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CULTURE:
Considering Culture in Business Communications

Culture is socially constructed.

It is a set of implicit and explicit social **expectations**, **values**, and **norms**, shared between members of the same group. The characteristics of a culture include, but are not limited to: **music, religion, traditions, etiquette, moral values, rules, gender roles, language, art,** and **history**. Although cultural expectations, values and norms remain clearly identifiable, they evolve to varying degrees over time. Culture often connects to a strong value system, and governs how people relate, trust and exchange ideas.

Therefore, because culture is a strong component of each individual's and group's identity, it is an extremely important consideration in business communications.

(Satov, 2013)

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Proofreading increases your credibility

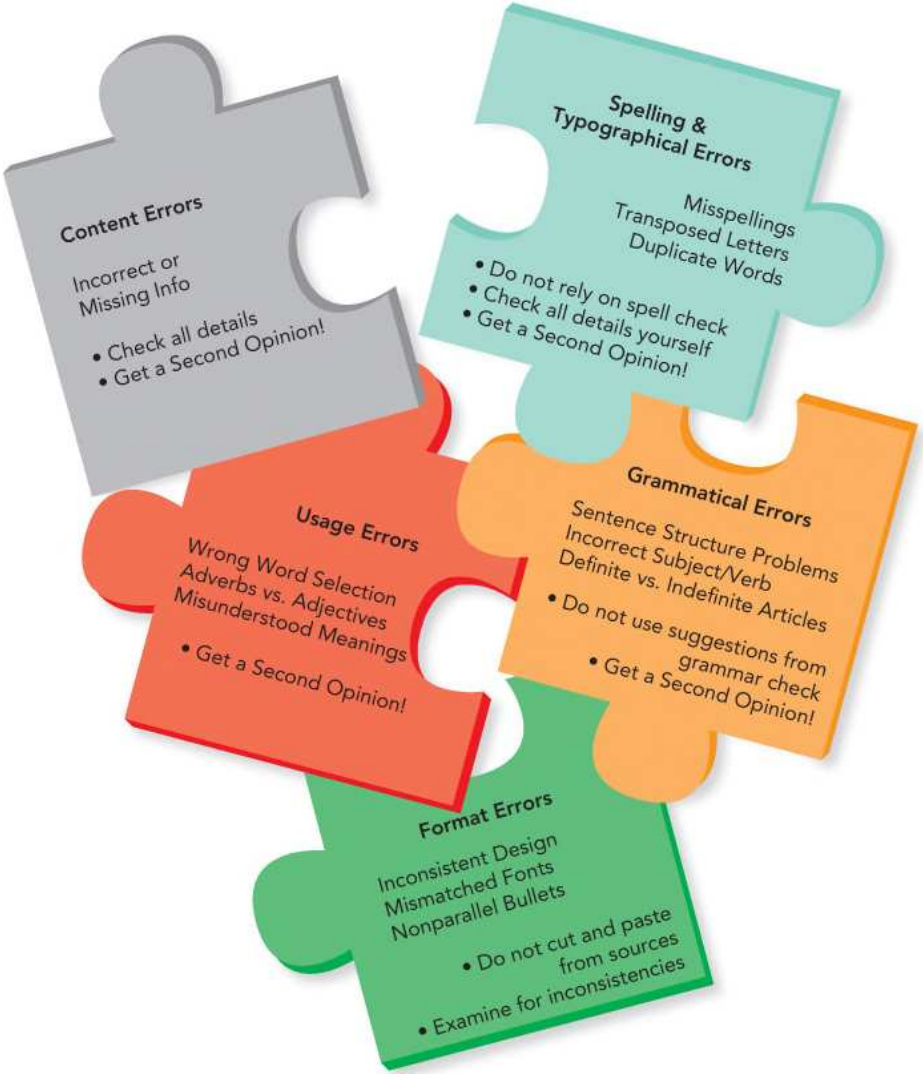

FIGURE 2.32 Identifying Five Common Error Types

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Check systematically for errors

- Read your work multiple times
- Look for your own common errors
- Read your work later
- Read your draft aloud
- Read from the bottom up
- “Change it up”: change appearance of text
- Swap with a colleague

FIGURE 2.33 What Are Your Most Common Errors?

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Take advantage of technology tools

- Spelling, grammar, reading level analysis, thesaurus, etc.
- Business writing should be short and simple – messages should be written at the eighth-grade level or less

FIGURE 2.34 Examples of Reading Levels

INAPPROPRIATE	APPROPRIATE
Grade Level 12.3: Henceforth, all documentation is to be completed within two business days.	Grade Level 5.2: Please complete all forms within two business days.
Grade Level 14.8: As per your instructions, I have initiated discussions with the previously identified employees.	Grade Level 6.0: I began talking with the employees you mentioned last week.
Grade Level 16.6: This new policy will facilitate the implementation of more beneficial scheduling decisions.	Grade Level 8.3: This new policy will let us schedule shipments more efficiently.

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Reviewing feedback helps you improve your communication strategy

- Ask for feedback early in communication process—may require you to spend more time **analyzing**, **composing**, and **evaluating**.
- Pay attention to subtle feedback you may receive without asking.

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In Summary:

ACE will help you communicate more effectively.

ACE can be applied to all communications.

Each time you use **ACE**, you will become better equipped to analyze, compose, and evaluate.

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