Leadership Communication 4th Edition
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EXHIBIT 2.2
Key Questions in Developing a Communication Strategy

Component	Key Questions to Ask Yourself
Purpose	What is my objective or what do I want to accomplish? Do I have different but related purposes for different audiences? How does my purpose relate to and support the organization's strategy?
Message	What is my overall message? How do I formulate my message to make it acceptable to my audience(s)? What do I expect others to do because of my message? What are my supporting messages? Do they differ for each audience?
Medium/Forum	What is the most effective means or channel for reaching each audience (e-mail, blog, memo, letter, meeting, speech, podcast, etc.)? Do I need to consider costs, logistics, or other practical matters in selecting my communication medium or forum?
Audiences	Who are my primary audiences? Secondary? Accidental? What are their interests in this situation? What are their stakes in the outcomes? How will they be affected by my messages? How should I ask for feedback from this audience?
Communicator	Am I the best person to deliver the message? If not, who should deliver the message(s)? Who would be the most credible or otherwise effective communicator for different messages or audiences?
Timing	Does timing matter? If so, when should the message(s) be delivered and in what order?
Feedback	How will I determine if my audience is receiving my messages as I intend? How will I measure or assess the impact?

an excerpt from an actual strategy developed for a merger between two major high-profile companies. The complete communication strategy in this case consisted of several pages of an Excel spreadsheet containing over 25 different audiences and messages and with the timing broken down to minutes before and just after the merger announcement.

Analyzing Audiences

Analyzing an audience is fundamental to any communication strategy, since the characteristics of audiences will determine the approach and shape the targeted messages. As the communication strategy

EXHIBIT 2.3 Example of Communication Strategy Analysis for a Merger (portion only)

Target Audience	Medium	Purpose	Message	Communicator	Timing
Investment community	Meetings/ Internet	Inspire confidence in company's stability and value	A strategic move designed to make both companies stronger	CEO	Day of announcement
Local media	Press conference/ Blogs	Generate positive public opinion and allay any fears of changes in their services	Good for the local economy and the people of the community	CEOs of both companies	Day of announcement
National media	Press release/ calls/ Internet	Generate positive public opinion and reassure potential investors	Good move for the industry, sound financial move, etc.	Public affairs official	Day of announcement
Employees (acquirer)	E-mail/IM/ meetings	Keep good employees from leaving and reassure all that the company is stable	Good for all employees, creating stronger company, secure future for all	CEO, senior management team	Right after announcement
Employees (acquired)	E-mail/IM meetings	Keep good employees in place and make them as comfortable as possible	No layoffs, no major changes will occur (only if this is true)	CEO, senior management team	Right after announcement

framework illustrates, audience is the foundation on which all of the other components in the framework rest. A leader addresses many different audiences, making it difficult to generalize about what approach to use in all circumstances; therefore, we need to analyze our audience in each communication situation and should approach each audience as unique. At a minimum in most situations, we would want to answer the clarifying questions in Exhibit 2.4. Four additional approaches to analyzing our audiences, particularity if the communication is complex and going to a broader audience beyond our immediate group or peers are (1) by expertise, (2) by decision-making style, (3) by medium, and (4) by organizational context.

By Expertise or Community of Practice

Exhibit 2.5 demonstrates approaching audiences by analyzing their levels of expertise. The exhibit shows the different media, purposes, and approaches to use with the different levels of knowledge and experience of audiences to ensure that they are receptive to the messages.

EXHIBIT 2.4
Questions to Clarify Audience

1. Does the communication respond to a previous communication or particular request? If so, what? Where is this communication in the overall flow of communication?
2. Who are the primary audiences (the persons who will act) and who are the secondary audiences? Who might be an unintended or accidental audience?
3. If they are the decision makers, what motivates them and how do you best persuade them?
4. If they are not the decision makers, what is their relationship to the decision maker?
5. How much do they know about the subject? What do they need to know?
6. What do I expect them to do in response to this communication?
7. How do I expect them to feel?
8. What do they have to gain or lose by accepting my ideas/recommendations?
9. How will this communication affect the organization?
10. Overall, what do I expect to happen as a result of this communication?

Research on how organizations learn has found that companies consist of communities of practice.[5] Communities of practice are groups that have common interests or a common knowledge base and interact frequently. The group could be a work group, a team, a function, a department, or even a company.

Individuals within a community of practice have a common knowledge base and usually a similar level of expertise. For example, the industries in which an organization functions will share knowledge and expertise, although within each of the organizations, individuals will have different specific areas of focus and greater depth in one area. In the energy industry, the exploration geologists, the petroleum engineers, and the geophysicists within a company may differ in degrees and in fundamental understanding of the science within their industry, but they have a common vocabulary and some shared knowledge and can be communicated with effectively using similar language and media—that suggested in the "Expert" and "Technical" rows in Exhibit 2.5, for instance.

In a university setting, the departments represent communities of practice; however, the professors and students within the departments are not limited to the knowledge represented in one subject area, and an approach to communication to professors in engineering could safely be used with professors in biology, or the approach used with professors of history could resemble that used with professors of English. Again, most likely we would want to approach them as Exhibit 2.5 suggests we approach experts and technical people.

EXHIBIT 2.5
Audience Expertise Table

Source: Table created based on information from Houp, K. W., Pearsall, T. E., & Tebeaux, E. (2000). *Reporting Technical Information*, 9th ed. New York: Oxford University Press. Used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

Audience	Medium	Purpose	Approach
Layperson/ nonexpert	Magazine article Newsletter Pamphlet Blog, Twitter	To entertain To inform To engage	Make interesting and practical Give background Define terms Use narratives and analogy
Executive	E-mail Memo Presentation Report	To inform To persuade	Focus on decision making Keep simple Be honest and direct Give conclusions and recommendations early
Expert	Journal article Report Professional network/blog White paper	To inform	State the how and why Present limited background information Use language of the discipline State inferences and conclusions Cite numerous references
Technical	Reports Procedure Professional/ network/blog White Paper	To inform To instruct To persuade	State the how and why Provide limited background information Keep practical/avoid theory
Combined (diverse)	E-mail Memo Report Blog Twitter	To inform To instruct To persuade	Avoid technical language and jargon Use sections, divisions, and headings Define terms/limit technical information to appendixes Keep prose clean, concise, and simple

When joining an organization early in our career, we usually join fellow experts, and we learn to communicate using the jargon of that discipline. As we move up in an organization, we begin to communicate more with individuals outside our area of expertise and our audiences become broader, more diverse, and less technical. The result is that we have to shift our approach to one we would use with a combined or nonexpert audience.

Leaders need to communicate to audiences with a range of expertise from the layperson, or nonexpert, to the technical or highly specialized individual. Taking time to think through these different levels of audience expertise and interests before or even as we develop our documents and presentations will help us ensure that our audiences understand and accept our messages.

By Decision-Making Style

When we seek a decision from our audience, we want to consider their decision-making style to ensure that we use a communication approach that is persuasive to them. In a *Harvard Business Review* article, Gary A. Williams and Robert B. Miller provide one useful approach to analyzing decision-making styles and argue that "persuasion works best when it's tailored to five distinct decision-making styles." Their research indicates that "more than half of all sales presentations are mismatched to the decision-maker's style."[6] Exhibit 2.6 explains the styles they identify.

In any situation, internal or external to an organization, knowing how the audience makes decisions will help us target our messages appropriately. We should try to anticipate our audience's response,

EXHIBIT 2.6 Decision-Making Styles

Style	Characteristics	Communication Approach
Charismatics	Talkative, captivating Easily intrigued by new ideas Make decisions based on information, not emotions	Begin with bottom line Focus on results Present straightforward arguments Use visual aids
Thinkers	Intelligent, logical, academic Impressed by arguments supported by data Tend to be risk averse Need time to come to their own conclusions	Openly communicate any concerns up front Have lots of data ready Provide all perspectives Be prepared to go through methods Be prepared for silence
Skeptics	Demanding, suspicious of every fact Aggressive, almost combative style Need to trust someone to believe their ideas Don't like being challenged or made to look uninformed in any way	Build credibility in yourself and your ideas by enlisting the help of someone they trust Emphasize the credibility of your sources Make arguments as concrete as possible, using specific examples
Followers	Cautious, responsible Risk averse Prefer innovative applications of proven solutions Make decisions based on track records, theirs or others'	Present proven methods, references, and testimonials Show how the idea is safe yet innovative Use case studies Present options Provide details
Controllers	Logical, unemotional, sensible, detail-oriented, analytical Abhor uncertainty and ambiguity Focus on the facts and analytics of an argument	Carefully structure your argument Provide details from experts Don't push too hard Provide the facts and leave them to decide

Source: Adapted and reprinted by permission of Harvard Business Review. From "Change the way you persuade," by G.A. Williams & R.B. Miller, 80 (5), pp. 65–74.

considering very carefully what they will do after reading what we have written or hearing what we have to say. We should try to adopt the audience's point of view, assume the "you attitude." What is it that they need to hear to agree with our message? What will appeal to them? What will help them make the decision we want them to make?

By Medium

It is important to consider an audience's expectations for communication based on the medium through which they receive that communication. For example, employees may not expect to respond directly to the CEO if she sends an e-mail through a distribution list but may feel very differently if the same CEO puts a post on her blog. Likewise, customers interacting with our organization's Twitter accounts expect to be able to carry on online conversations if they desire, so we should be prepared to answer any tweets we receive if we interact through that medium. Remember again that the medium and message are so intertwined that we need to consider both or put simply, the how along with the what.

By Organizational Context

When we communicate professionally, we are communicating within an organizational context. Whether the communication is simple or complex, we need to think carefully about organizational relationships and how they affect motivation. Many of the questions in Exhibit 2.4 will help in understanding better what motivates our audience in a particular organizational context.

While most often communication may be too rapid to allow us to break out our audiences as the various approaches above suggest every time we send a message and in many cases our familiarity with the audience will minimize the need for in depth analysis, with any important correspondence or report we should at least be able to articulate very clearly our purpose in writing to a particular audience and our expectations of the audience as a result of this communication. This clarity of purpose combined with a good sense of our audience supports any successful communication strategy.

Organizing Communication Effectively

Once we have clarified our purpose, conducted our audience analysis, and created a strategy, we are ready to select the best structure for organizing our communication as the audience will see or hear it. The organization of our communication needs to be part of our early thinking and planning because the audience and our relationship to them determine how best to deliver our messages. We may use a rough outline, decision tree, or other device to organize our thinking as we develop our ideas, but we need to stop and ask if that structure is the best way to communicate this message to this audience.

Structure depends on purpose, messages, audience, and medium. For instance, if our purpose is to persuade a hostile audience, we might want to begin indirectly, saving our main message or recommendation for the end. If we are addressing a decision maker who needs to see details before making a decision, we may want to present the facts upfront. If we are in a culture where relationships are valued more than results, we might want to begin by talking about general, nonbusiness topics before introducing the main subject of the communication. If, however, our audience consists of typical, busy executives, we will need to get to the main subject quickly, right upfront, or we risk losing their attention and trying their patience.

In thinking about our communication, we need to adopt the perspective of the audience and select and organize our information specifically for them within the context and according to the medium we have selected.

For example, in the case of text messages, instant messaging, and microblogging, we may not need to organize every outgoing message that carefully. However, we still need to ensure that any message sent through these and other social media fit into our overall plan for the structure and usage of those media. In other words, we need to organize our approach, even if we do not always need to organize our immediate message fully.

You may find the following questions helpful to determine the best approach to organizing your communication:

- What is the most effective way to open communication with *this* audience?
- How should I arrange the information I provide to ensure that the audience will follow the discussion easily, understand the main ideas, and be receptive to the information?
- What is the most effective way to end this communication?

Our audiences are busy, just as we are, and will be much more likely to respond positively to a blog post, an e-mail, or any other communication if we use the following guidelines:

- Get right to the main message.
- Stay on topic.
- Establish relevance to them.
- Organize the communication to be immediately accessible and relevant to their decision-making process.

How you open your communication will depend on audience analysis. The general rule for professional communication, however, is that **our purpose for writing or speaking usually comes first.** Background information is included only if we need it to establish a context for our communication or our relationship to the problem addressed. Likewise, we should place our recommendations at the beginning unless we have a specific reason for delaying them. If we delay the conclusions or recommendations until the end, many readers will go looking for them anyway, and listeners will become impatient waiting for them. Our audience wants to know immediately why we are writing or speaking to them. Therefore, with most business audiences, we need to deliver our main message immediately.

How we organize our communication once we move into the body of our discussion will depend on our analysis of our audience; however, the logic of the entire document or presentation, as well as that of each section of it, should be obvious to anyone. Our argument should be so logical that anyone can follow our reasoning and understand why one point follows another.

Selecting Organizational Devices

Usually, we use one or more of the following methods to organize individual sections and even the entire document or presentation:

1. **Deduction** (general to particular)—conclusions or recommendation, then the supporting facts, arguing from general principles to specific situations.
2. **Induction** (particular to general)—supporting information, facts that build to the conclusions or recommendations.
3. **Chronological**—first, second, and so forth, used to describe a process or procedure or relate events in the order they occurred as a narrative.
4. **Cause/effect**—because of X and Y, Z happened; a powerful and common form of analysis.
5. **Comparison/contrast**—similarities, then differences.
6. **Problem/solution**—explanation of the situation or problem, followed by ways to solve it.
7. **Spatial**—relationships of steps, pieces, or items to each other.

Frequently, the structure of our communication is either deductive or inductive. If deductive, we begin with an overarching argument or general principle, and then we provide levels of facts grouped logically by topic to support our major assertion. If inductive, we present our facts or groupings of facts first and build our argument from point to point, ending with a "therefore" and our conclusion.

Using the Pyramid Principle

In *The Pyramid Principle*, Barbara Minto illustrates how to structure an effective discussion in a business context by applying classical deductive and inductive logic.[7] The approach can be very helpful in ensuring that an argument is logical, complete, and effective in reaching different types of audiences in all contexts.

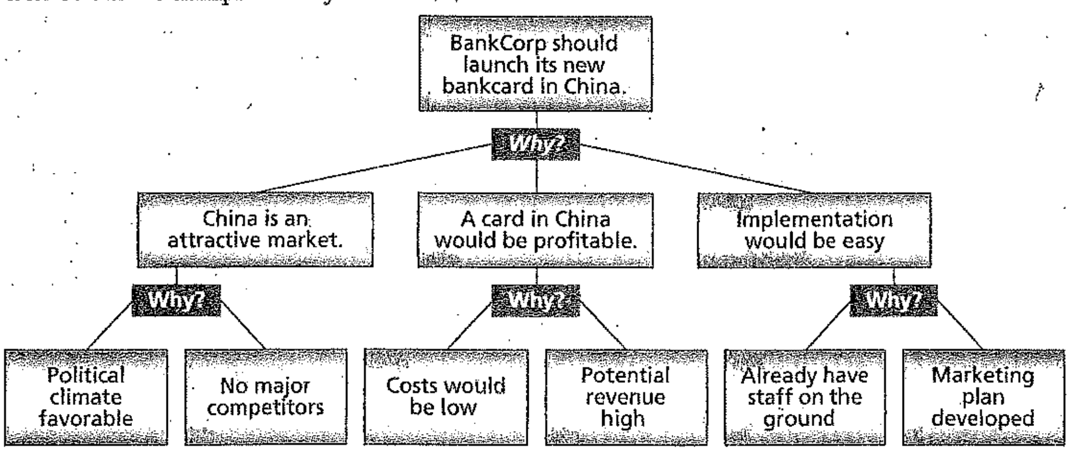
The Pyramid Principle emphasizes the "top-down" approach to organizing and presenting a message. It consists of one overarching summary statement, with levels of support linked in a dialogue (answering why, what, or how) below it. This dialogue is similar to the approach we use to create a decision tree to generate ideas. We start with our conclusion or recommendation at the top and then work through the levels of support, testing each level to make sure it answers "why," "what," or "how" for the level above it (Exhibit 2.7).

The Pyramid Principle is governed by the following rules:

1. The pyramid must be Mutually Exclusive, Collectively Exhaustive (MECE). That means that the topics at each level should not overlap with each other and that the evidence to support each should be balanced and as complete as necessary and reasonable.
2. Each level must summarize the ideas grouped below it.
3. The "ideas in each grouping must always be the same kind of idea."[8]
4. The "ideas in each grouping must always be logically ordered."[9]

Placing the levels in a sentence is helpful to test the logic and flow of a pyramid-structured argument. The sentence should make sense, flow

EXHIBIT 2.7 Example of a Pyramid



easily, and be parallel. For example, for the pyramid in Exhibit 2.7, the sentence would read

> BankCorp should launch its new bankcard in China because China is an attractive market, a card in China would be profitable, and implementation would be easy.

Using the Pyramid Principle helps us structure a complete and logical argument. As we create the pyramid, we can easily see gaps in our evidence, establish the balance of our argument, and determine if each level logically supports the next. We can see if we have too much support for any one topic and not enough for another. A pyramid also makes it easy for us to see that each level of our argument clearly and logically supports the level above it and that we have not duplicated support under any of the topic boxes. In addition, drawing a pyramid helps if we are working with a team to create a document or presentation. With all topics and supporting details visually displayed, we can easily divide the topics into tasks, avoid duplication of effort, and determine quickly where the team needs to do more analysis.

Creating a Storyboard

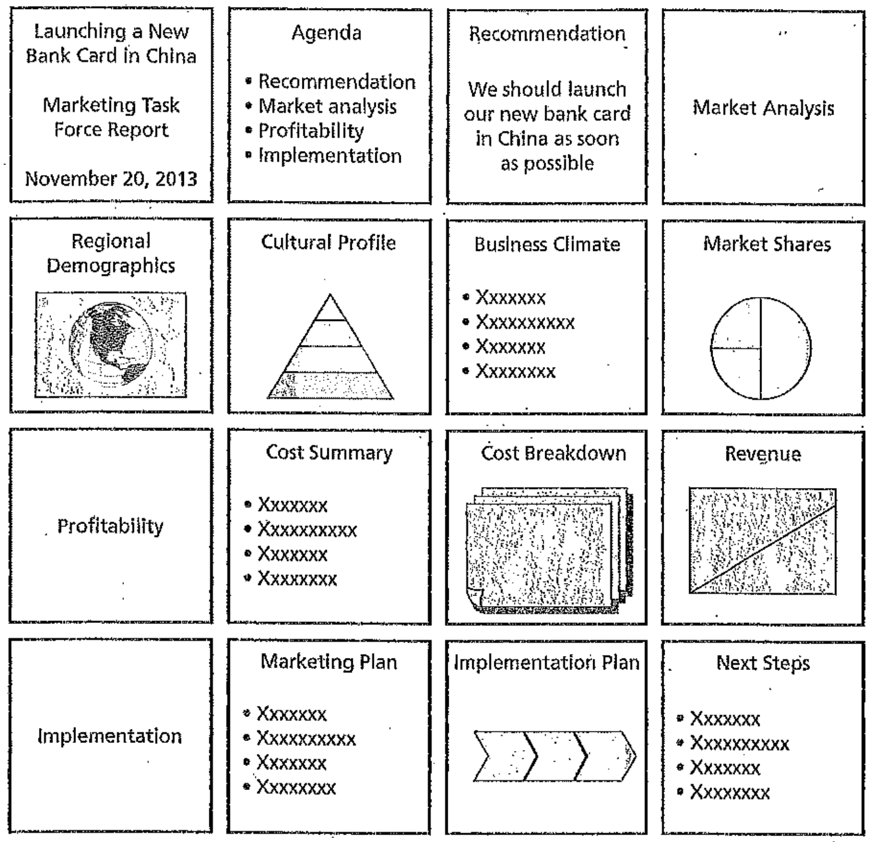
Another technique for working out and mapping the structure of a document or presentation is a storyboard. A storyboard is particularly useful when working in a team to prepare a presentation. It allows everyone to see the logical flow and encourages each team member to imagine the individual graphics needed to support each idea. It also helps in dividing these pieces up for completion by the individual team members (Exhibit 2.8).

This storyboard contains what is called "ghost" slides, which suggest the content without actually showing it. They work well in helping us select the types of charts that would best support our conclusions and work particularly well with a team, making it easier to divide the slides up across the team members as they complete the data gathering necessary to fill in the information.

Ensuring a tight, logical organization for any communication is an important step in creating documents and presentations that deliver our intended messages to audiences so that they are receptive to them. Using a plan or map of the argument, whether a pyramid, an outline, a decision tree, or a storyboard, will strengthen simple messages and is essential in more complex communication. We should always establish a logical structure and think carefully about the organizational devices that will work best with our different audiences.

This chapter has focused on clarifying messages and developing a communication strategy, both essential skills for anyone wanting to master leadership communication. In addition, the chapter has illustrated how best to organize ideas so that they will reach different

EXHIBIT 2.8
Example of a Storyboard for a Presentation, Video, or Podcast



audiences as intended. Applying the principles and guidelines in this chapter to all the types of communication discussed in the remaining chapters of the book will help ensure that whatever type of communication activity involved will more likely accomplish the purpose and result in the action the sender of the message desires, which is the hallmark of effective leadership communication.

Application 2.1
Case Study:
Superior Foods

The Case: Superior Foods Corporation Faces a Challenge

On his way to the plant office, Jason Starnes passed by the production line where hundreds of gloved, uniformed workers were packing sausages and processed meats for shipment to grocery stores around the world.

Jason's company, Superior Foods Corporation, based in Wichita, Kansas, employed 30,000 people in eight countries and had beef and pork processing plants in Arkansas, California, Milwaukee, and Nebraska City. Since a landmark United States–Japan trade agreement signed in 1988, markets had opened up for major exports of American beef, now representing 10 percent of U.S. production. Products called "variety meats"—including intestines, hearts, brains, and tongues—were very much in demand for export to international markets.

Jason was in Nebraska City to talk with the plant manager, Ben Schroeder, about the U.S. outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad cow disease) and its impact on the plant. On December 23, 2011, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had announced that bovine spongiform encephalopathy had been discovered in a Holstein cow in Washington State. The global reaction was swift: Seven countries imposed either total or partial bans on the importation of U.S. beef, and thousands of people were chatting about it on blogs and social networking sites. Superior had moved quickly to intercept a container load of frozen Asian-bound beef from its shipping port in Los Angeles, and all other shipments were on hold.

After walking into Ben's office, Jason sat down across from him and said, "Ben, your plant has been a top producer of variety meats for Superior, and we have appreciated all your hard work out here. Unfortunately, it looks like we need to limit production for a while—at least three months, or until the bans get relaxed. I know Senator Nelson is working hard to get the bans lifted. In the meantime, we need to shut down production and lay off about 25 percent of your workers. I know it is going to be difficult, and I'm hoping we can work out a way to communicate this to your employees."

The Assignment

After reading the Superior Foods case, complete the following actions:

1. Clarify your purpose(s) for communicating with the employees at the Nebraska plant. Consider what the employees will want to know and how they will need to feel about Superior Foods.
2. Use one of the idea-generation approaches introduced in this chapter to determine your primary messages.
3. Draft a message to the employees, paying very careful attention to the organization and presentation method.

Source: Case developed by Beth O'Sullivan and assignment by Deborah J. Barrett, Rice University, 2004. Used with permission.

Application 2.2 Case Study: Spree Cruise Lines

The Case: Spree Cruise Lines

At 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Tara Hoopes, manager of corporate communications for Spree Cruise Lines, arrived at her office at Spree's corporate headquarters to find several messages already in her inbox. The New Orleans city attorney, Mike Litke, had contacted several people at corporate headquarters, suggesting that the company may be liable for damages to two buildings close to where their latest cruise vessel had launched, and people in the company wanted to know how to approach discussing the situation with him and others.

Please call the investor relations office at ext. 3620—need to discuss the upcoming shareholder meeting.

Please call the City Attorney in New Orleans—she's claiming that several small, historic buildings incurred foundation and mortar damage yesterday. Thinks it might have been caused by vibrations from the *Sensation* leaving.

The 750-foot *Sensation* had set sail from New Orleans on Sunday afternoon, bound for a five-night cruise to Cozumel and Cancun. Tara checked the statistics on the vessel and its itinerary:

- Built in 1994, cruising speed 20 knots, gross tonnage 50,000, slated for dry-dock repairs in several months.
- Carrying 1,200 passengers on board, mostly U.S. Americans, about 35 percent under age 35, 40 percent between the ages of 35 and 55, and the remainder senior citizens.
- Staffed by Captain Hernan Galati, Chief Engineer Scotty Ferguson, and veteran Cruise Director Ned Carnahan. Additional staff on board: 650 crew members representing 20 countries.
- Cruising to Cozumel with a Sunday departure, followed by a day at sea on Monday and arrival in Cozumel on Tuesday morning. On Tuesday night, was scheduled to depart for Cancun, docking there all day Wednesday before returning to New Orleans on Friday.

Tara reached for the phone just as it rang. Ned Carnahan and Captain Galati were on the line. Before she could tell them about the full situation in New Orleans, they presented her with some problems of their own.

Sunday Night Aboard the *Sensation*

Ron and Marilyn Nelson stood on the stern deck, enjoying the view. It had been an exciting day, watching the huge ship dwarf the buildings on shore as they departed New Orleans. They had already explored the ship, delighted to find an Internet café, a sushi bar, two pools, and the rock-climbing wall. They had listened carefully to the announcements over the ship's public address system and had skimmed the *Spree Fun*, the ship's newsletter, which listed a wide array of excursions to book before their arrival on shore. As they had waited in line to book their excursions, Marilyn noticed the weather maps hanging on the wall in the main deck lobby.

"Looks like a tropical storm over in the Bay of Campeche," she noted.

"Don't worry," Ron said. "This is a huge vessel, and its engines are strong enough to outrun any storm!" Ron was an ocean engineer by trade, and he was an authority on anything that floated on or happened under water. He added, "We're on vacation—let's enjoy it!"

They booked a catamaran sail/snorkel trip and a horseback-riding excursion to visit the Mayan ruins at Tulum, leaving plenty of time for shopping in Cozumel and Cancun.

Now, standing on the stern of the vessel, there was no evidence of a storm. Ron and Marilyn watched the two wakes made by the twin engines—frothy white foam that trailed from the ship into a moonlit sea. They went down the back staircase into a quiet, unused bar and lounge area. The glassware on the metal shelving was clinking together loudly, making an eerie echo across the room. Other parts of the ship were noisy with the voices of excited passengers, but as they passed into the quiet cigar lounge, they could clearly hear a loud, rhythmic bumping sound. Ron remarked, "There is something wrong here; it sounds like the dual engine props aren't synchronized."

Later that night, Marilyn could not sleep. It seemed that the vibration was getting worse and the plastic grids over the lighting system in the cabin were rattling loudly. Concerned, she got up and went to the Internet café to check information about cruise ships. Were they meant to make so much noise? She chatted with a couple of friends online, who told her that they hadn't had noise like that on their cruises, which only worried her more. Finally, she posted to her Facebook status: "Listening to the loud vibration on the *Sensation*—been going on for hours. Should I be worried?" Responses began coming in quickly, and soon Marilyn's network was re-posting the news in other places. The buzz had begun.

In the Captain's Quarters

At 6:00 a.m. Monday morning, Scotty Ferguson, chief engineer, knocked at Captain Galati's door. He said, "Sir, the propulsion unit running the left engine prop won't hold up—we've got to shut it down. Running it could result in permanent damage, but we might have to restart if we need the full 20-knot engine speed to outrun the storm later in the cruise."

"Scotty, are you sure?" asked the captain. "It will take us three days to reach Cozumel if we travel on half power. And we'll have to skip Cancun and turn right around to get back to dock by Friday. The guests have already booked their on-shore excursions. Let's get Ned up here."

Ned, the cruise director, grumbled to himself as his stateroom phone rang. He thought to himself, Just one last cruise on this old ship; corporate promised I could move to a European route if I just finished this one last cruise. He spoke briefly with the captain and told him he would be right up.

On his way to the captain's quarters, he thought about what Captain Galati had told him, and his mind worked quickly—I think we'd better call Tara at corporate, tell the passengers, refund or reschedule all the on-shore excursions, monitor the Internet café to see how many people have already contacted travel agents to disembark in Cozumel—and what about that storm?

Even though passenger tickets clearly stated that itinerary changes could occur and that Spree would reimburse only $30 per person, it was Ned's job to keep the passengers happy—not to mention what this could mean for *Sensation's* future marketing plans. He was already calculating the financial impact to the cruise line and he couldn't help wondering if the minor engine troubles on the last cruise hadn't been properly repaired.

Tara's Phone Call

"Hello, Tara, we've got a delicate situation here," Ned said.

Captain Galati interrupted, "We have to shut down one engine immediately. I know the passengers will be upset, but the integrity of the ship is my first concern."

"Of course, Captain," Tara said. "Tell me what's going on."

They reported the damage to the engine's propulsion system and their decision to shut down one engine and reduce their cruising speed to 10 knots. The arrival into Cozumel would be delayed; rather than arriving at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, they would most likely arrive at 4:00 p.m. To ensure a timely return to New Orleans by Friday, they would have to depart Cozumel at 2:00 a.m. Wednesday, skipping the Cancun destination altogether and cruising straight through.

Tara's cell buzzed; her boss had sent a text. "Check Twitter buzz on *Sensation*—we have a problem." A quick search showed her that the passengers were aware of the potential problem already; they'd been buzzing about it all night. And then there was the city attorney.

Tara thought for a moment. "Ned, Captain Galati, we have a bigger problem than you might realize. Your passengers have already been talking to friends and family about the noise, and people on shore are getting worried. The city attorney here is also suggesting that our ship may have damaged some buildings as it left port. There's a lot at stake for Spree here. I think we'd better talk about how best to approach the situation."

The Assignment

1. Identify all of the key audiences for the communication surrounding this incident. What do you know about each of them? Are there other audiences linked to this audience, either as secondary or "future" audiences?
2. Answer the following questions about the audiences identified in question 1.
   a. What is the message you want to send to each key audience?
   b. What information does the audience *already know* and what information do they *need or want to have* about the situation?
   c. How does this audience feel at this point and how would you like them to feel at the conclusion of the situation or after receiving your communication?
   d. How will you motivate or persuade them to accept your messages?
3. Develop a communication strategy considering the following questions:
   a. What are your key objectives for this communication? (Consider personal as well as departmental and corporate objectives.)
   b. Who is the best spokesperson to deliver this message and why? What other people could serve as spokespersons?
   c. What is the best channel, or medium, to use to communicate with this audience? Also consider the option of using several channels for these communications.
   d. When is the best time to communicate the information?
   e. Are there cultural or other contextual considerations you should keep in mind?
   f. How will you know if your communication has been successful?

Source: Spree case and assignment developed by Beth O'Sullivan, Rice University, January 2004. Updated by Sandra Elliott, April 2009. Used with permission.

Application 2.3 Using the Pyramid Principle to Organize an Argument

Use the Pyramid Principle to structure an argument based on the facts provided here. First, establish an assertion at the first level in answer to the following question: Should AmeriHotels build a new, upscale hotel in Metroburg, near a new major downtown convention center and sports arena? Second, identify at least three primary supporting ideas. Third, group the facts under the supporting ideas.

1. No other hotels exist within walking distance of Metroburg's new convention center or the sports arena.
2. Experts predict a downturn in hotel bookings for at least the near term (one to three years) and possibly longer.
3. No restaurants exist outside of the convention center or sports arena, and the restaurants that do exist within the convention center offer "fast food" only.
4. Members of several ethnic groups and other local residents, many of whom had residences displaced by the convention center and sports arena developments, may oppose building permits.
5. The new convention center is in a high-crime area.
6. There are three other four-star, upscale hotels in the vicinity (within a short driving distance) of the new convention center.
7. The city of Metroburg has obtained funds for park and landscaping efforts in the area.
8. Studies indicate that businesses thrive in the areas surrounding large urban convention centers and sports complexes/arenas, particularly in the accommodations/dining sectors.
9. Some statistics indicate a high correlation between sports arenas in large urban areas and increased numbers of outside visitors who stay overnight.
10. The city of Metroburg has committed to increased police presence/patrol in the area.
11. AmeriHotels has a spotty record concerning minority hiring and relationships.
12. Last year, AmeriHotels adopted a new vision statement promising that the company would make diversity and community-based hiring a top priority.
13. AmeriHotels has experience building in inner-city locations.
14. AmeriHotels has asked its followers on Facebook and Twitter for their thoughts, and the response has been generally positive.
15. One group, the Alliance for Inner City Development, has openly posted videos to its Website in which members of the local community say they will be priced out of their homes and will be forced to leave.
16. There is land near the new convention center and sports arena available for purchase and development.
17. Property values in the Metroburg downtown area have skyrocketed in the last year.

Source: This pyramid exercise was adapted from an exercise originally designed by June Ferrill, Rice University.