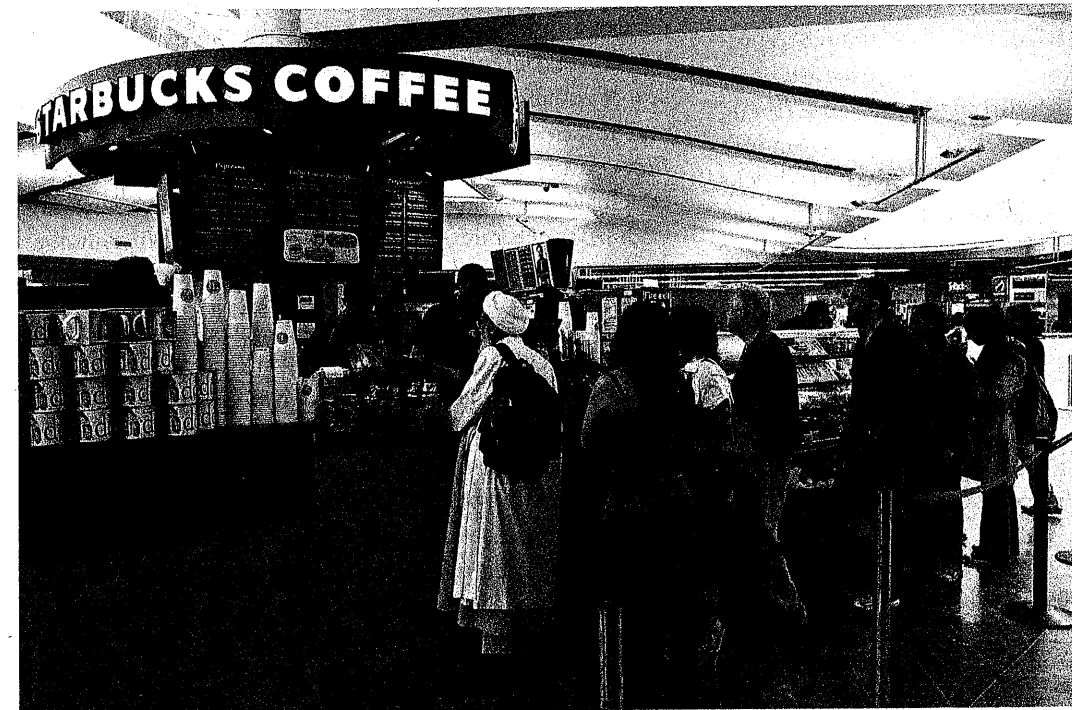


## Chapter 1

# Communicating and Leading at Work



## Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities
- 1.2 Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience
- 1.3 Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art
- 1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills

Howard Schultz grew up in the 1950s and had a variety of jobs, including tossing papers on his paper route, working in a knitting factory, and becoming a furrier. Vowing to escape the vocational history of his parents—not much pay, no benefits, and no job security—after college, he worked at Xerox and then for Hammerplast, a Swedish housewares company. But his career path took an interesting and lucrative turn when one of his housewares customers bought lots of drip-brewing thermoses.<sup>1</sup>

Although you're probably not familiar with Schultz's name, you are familiar with Starbucks. The company Schultz leads is the world's largest coffee retailer.<sup>2</sup> His ability to lead and influence others has made him one of the world's most innovative leaders. He bought Starbucks in 1987 when the company had only six stores; within five years Starbucks had 150 stores. At the beginning of the second decade of the twenty-first century, there were over 16,000 Starbucks stores worldwide.

Although Starbucks has had its ups and downs as a company, it has a founding leader who knows the importance of communication in helping Starbucks remain competitive.

Schultz attributes his leadership success to his communication skills, which he developed as a communication major at Northern Michigan University.<sup>3</sup> He believes leadership is anchored in developing relationships with people. Rather than communicating to employees, shareholders, and customers through advertising and mediated messages, Schultz prefers face-to-face communication. According to Schultz, Starbucks is successful not because of its high-gloss and expensive Madison Avenue advertising campaigns, but because of its grassroots word-of-mouth advertising based on the relationships that Starbucks employees form with customers.<sup>4</sup> In summarizing his success as a communicator, Schultz notes, "We're not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people business serving coffee."<sup>5</sup>

#### Leading Questions

1. Howard Schultz uses a personal relational style of leading his employees. How would you evaluate your relational leadership skills? What would you like to learn that would enhance your communication and leadership skills?
2. Schultz had a variety of jobs before becoming CEO. How have the jobs you've held contributed to developing your communication and leadership skills?
3. What do you think Schultz means when he says, "We're not in the coffee business serving people, but in the people business serving coffee"?

## 1.1: Communication and Leadership

### 1.1 Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities.

This book is about two things: **communication** and **leadership**. Specifically, it's about how you can apply communication skills to lead in the workplace. Communication and work go hand in hand; it's hard to talk about the workplace without also talking about the communication that makes work happen. And closely linked to any discussion of workplace communication is the art and science of leading others. Leaders develop relationships, build teams, and make presentations before groups of people, using effective communication principles and skills. One study found that CEOs rated leadership and communication as the top job skills needed in business and professional settings.<sup>6</sup>

To be effective in the workplace, you need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately to influence others in positive and ethical ways.

### 1.1.1: Communication and You

Would you be surprised if we told you we know precisely what you will do for a living? Perhaps you've known what your vocational goal was since you were in elementary school. Or you may still be uncertain as to what your specific career track will be. Regardless of whether your career goals are clear or fuzzy, we know what you will *do*. You will communicate. Research has consistently found that you will spend from 80 to 90 percent of your typical day communicating with others.<sup>7</sup> To live is to communicate. To work is to communicate. You can't help it. You *will* communicate with others.

A number of recent studies underscore the need for and importance of communication skills for the twenty-first-century workplace.<sup>8</sup> Research supports two important conclusions: If you possess effective communication skills, you are much more likely to be successful. Without communication skills, you are less likely to be successful.

- **COMMUNICATION IS THE MOST VALUED WORKPLACE SKILL.** In a recent survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, communication skills were cited as *the single most important factor* in choosing managers.<sup>9</sup> The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills (including written and oral presentations), as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success.<sup>10</sup> One study found that as much as 75% of long-term success on the job is based on such "people skills" as communication and listening.<sup>11</sup> Communication skills, social skills, and teamwork skills—key skills emphasized in this book, are the most coveted.<sup>12</sup>
  - **WITHOUT EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS YOUR CAREER MAY SUFFER.** People who communicate effectively do well on the job. Others struggle to meet communication demands, making their jobs challenging.<sup>13</sup> In a national survey of employers, the lack of basic oral/written skills and effective business communication skills appeared to be a major stumbling block for new entrants into the job market.<sup>14</sup> Employers also ranked the leadership skills of four-year college graduates as deficient, noting their inability to collaborate, work in teams or groups, and solve problems.<sup>15</sup>
- A study of one specific career group, information technology (IT) workers, conducted by the research firm Robert Half Technology, reports that they need more than technical abilities—they also need to be well-rounded business professionals. Nearly 45% of respondents said their IT staff members must improve their project management skills and could improve verbal and written communication abilities. The report also suggested that IT staff often need to develop stronger organizational and interpersonal skills.<sup>16</sup>

When he was chairman of General Electric, Jack Welch said the key characteristic he looked for in a leader was her or his ability to communicate well. Specifically, he wanted "someone who is comfortable talking to *anyone—anybody* in the world, in New Delhi, Moscow, Cairo, Beijing—*anywhere!*"<sup>17</sup> Warren Buffett, one of the richest persons on the planet, once announced to MBA students at his alma mater, Columbia University, that he would offer \$100,000 to any student in the audience in return for 10% of future earnings. He then added that if the student would take a communication skill development course or public speaking training, he would increase his offer to \$150,000. Buffett is a major advocate of communication skill training and has noted that taking a communication training course was one of the best investments he had ever made.<sup>18</sup>

When you complete your study of business and professional communication, you will be able to include a set of communication skills on your resume that can enhance your career success. Communication skills are leadership skills. These essential skills will immediately make you competitive in a global marketplace.

### 1.1.2: Leadership and You

You may think you're not really interested in being a leader. You don't want to be the boss; you just want to work. Or you may aspire to a major leadership role such as being a corporate chief executive officer at a large company. Regardless of your professional goals, you *will* influence others through the way you communicate with people.

Simply stated, *to lead is to influence others*. There is a difference between being a leader and exerting leadership influence. Your very presence in an organization, regardless of your job description or level within the organization, will influence others. You influence others through your communication. This is why leadership and communication are connected. By enhancing your communication competence you will also enhance your leadership abilities. You don't have to be anointed "the leader" to use leadership skills. You can't help but use them. To help you accomplish your professional goals—whether working in a large corporation, a small business, or in a profession such as law, medicine, or education—this book can enhance what you'll spend most of your time doing at your job: communicating and influencing others.

## Career Corner

### Which Way Is North?

From your present location, can you, with 100 percent certainty, point north right now? If you wanted to go north, but didn't know which direction north was, it would be hard to get there. The same could be said for your career

goals. You need to know which direction you are headed. Which way is "north" in terms of your career goals?

Some people have known since childhood what their career or professional aspiration is. But for many others, the question of which way is "north" is difficult. There are several well-written books that can help you explore your own interests and backgrounds to help you find your path. Here are three of our favorites:

- Scott W. Ventrella, *Me, Inc.: How to Master the Business of Being You*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007.
- Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2014.
- Nicholas Lore and Anthony Spadafore, *Now What? The Young Person's Guide to Choosing the Perfect Career*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.

Whichever direction you choose as your true "north," one thing is for certain; you will use communication skills in your job.

## 1.2: Communication: Making Sense and Sharing Sense

### 1.2 Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience.

JetBlue Airlines, a low-cost airline from New York, apologized to its customers after customers were required to remain on a JetBlue aircraft for 11 hours during an ice storm. JetBlue managers used the company's website as well as YouTube to offer their apology to the traveling public.<sup>19</sup> However, many of the customers never saw the apology. What JetBlue learned was that just placing a message on a website doesn't mean that communication has occurred. Communication happens not when a message is crafted and sent but when the message has helped create meaning for someone.

### 1.2.1: The Nature of Communication

Reduced to its essence, *communication* is the process of acting on information.<sup>20</sup> Someone does something or says something, and there is a response from someone else in the form of an action, a word, or a thought. As JetBlue Airlines learned, presenting information to others does not mean that there is communication: *Information is not communication*. Would-be communicators often express exasperation when their efforts fail. "I put it in the memo. Why didn't you do what I asked?" "It's in the company policy statement." "It's on the website!" They assume that if they send a message, someone will receive it. Communication

does not operate, however, in a linear, input-output process. What you send is rarely what others understand. Human communication is more sophisticated than simply sending and receiving messages. *Human communication* is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.<sup>21</sup> Let's examine the key elements of this definition.

**COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT MAKING SENSE** We make sense out of what we experience when we interpret what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. To make sense out of a message we look for patterns or structure. We relate what happens to us at any given moment to something we've experienced in the past. An effective communicator attempts to learn as much as possible about his or her listeners in order to craft messages that make sense to them.

**COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT SHARING SENSE** We use words as well as nonverbal cues (such as gestures, facial expressions, clothing, music) to convey our thoughts and feelings to others. It's through the process of sharing our understanding of our experiences that we connect to other humans.

**COMMUNICATION IS ABOUT CREATING MEANING** Succinctly stated, *meanings are in people, not in words*. Both senders and receivers of messages *create* meaning in our hearts and minds based on our experiences, background, and culture. When, for example, you hear a rumor that there may be companywide layoffs you may think, "My job is safe; I'm a hard worker." Someone else who has had different experience may hear the rumor and create a different meaning for the same rumor, thinking, "Yikes, I may get fired!"

When we communicate with another person who is physically present, the communication is *transactional*, meaning that messages are sent and received simultaneously. As you talk to someone and create meaning, you respond to that person's verbal and nonverbal messages even as you speak.<sup>22</sup> Whether in a brief visit in someone's office, or during a lengthy meeting, even if you remain silent or embarrassingly nod off to sleep, your nonverbal behavior provides information to others about your emotions and interest, or lack of interest. The transactive nature of communication suggests that you cannot *not* communicate. People interpret your communication even when you are not intentionally expressing an idea or feeling. Here's another way to summarize this idea: Ultimately, people judge you by your behavior, not by your intent. And because you are always behaving in some way (even when you are asleep), there is always the potential for someone to make sense out of your behavior.

**COMMUNICATION OCCURS THROUGH VERBAL AND NONVERBAL MESSAGES** Words and nonverbal behaviors are symbols you use to create meaning that makes

sense to you. A *symbol* is something that represents a thought, concept, object, or experience. These words are symbols. Some symbols are nonverbal, such as your use of gestures, posture, tone of voice, clothing, and jewelry. Although the meaning you derive makes sense to you, for most of us nonverbal messages primarily communicate emotions—our feelings of joy or sadness, likes and dislikes, or our interest or lack of interest in others.

Our definition of human communication suggests that the message we express is not always the message that is interpreted as we intended it. Making sense and sharing sense with others is a fragile process.

### 1.2.2: The Components of Communication

The most basic components of communication include the source, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, and context. Understanding these elements can help you analyze your own communication with others. Let's explore these elements in greater detail.

- **SOURCE.** The *source* of the message is the originator of the ideas and feelings expressed. The source puts a message into a code that can be understood by a receiver. Putting ideas, feelings, and thoughts into a code is called *encoding*. Just the opposite of encoding is the process of *decoding*; this occurs when the receiver interprets the words or nonverbal cues.
- **MESSAGE.** The *message* is the information being communicated by the source. As you transactively communicate with others, it's important to understand that every human communication message has two key dimensions: the content and relational dimensions.

The *content* of a communication message is the new information, ideas, or suggested actions the speaker wishes to express. Another name for the content dimension that may be more appropriate for the workplace is *task dimension*. Leaders, including managers, supervisors, or those who take charge of a particular project, communicate content messages with others to accomplish certain tasks, to get work completed.

The *relational dimension* of a communication message is usually more implied; it offers cues about the emotions, attitudes, and amount of power and control the speaker feels toward others.<sup>23</sup> The relational dimension focuses more on nonverbal messages that convey cues about relationships among sender and receivers. Another way to distinguish between the content and relational dimensions of communication is to consider that the content of a message refers to *what* is said. The relational cues are provided in *how* the message was communicated. Although your supervisor may say "great job" about a project you've

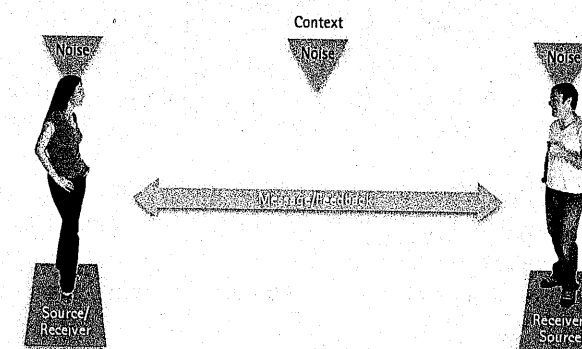
been working on, her lack of eye contact, monotone vocal inflection, and lackluster enthusiasm may actually suggest she is not all that pleased with your work.

- **RECEIVER.** The *receiver* of the message is the person or persons who interpret the message. When communicating with others, it's the receiver who will ultimately determine if your message was successful—whether it was understood and was appropriate. Effective communicators are receiver oriented; they understand that the listener is the one who ultimately makes sense of the message you express. If you're selling a product, for example, your prime focus should be on whether the customer understood your message.
- **CHANNEL.** The *channel* is the means by which the message is expressed to the receiver. If you're typical, you receive messages from a variety of channels. Increasingly, in business and professional settings (as well as in all communication situations), you are receiving messages via a mediated channel such as text messages, email, phone, video, or a Facebook post or tweet.
- **NOISE.** *Noise* is anything that interferes with the message being interpreted as it was intended. As we've emphasized, what we express isn't always interpreted as we intend. Noise happens. If there were no noise, then all of our messages would be interpreted accurately. But noise is always present. It can be literal—such as beeps coming from a BlackBerry or computer that tell you that you have incoming email—or it can be psychological, such as competing thoughts, worries, and feelings that capture your attention.
- **FEEDBACK.** Another element integral to communication is feedback. *Feedback* is the response to a message. Without feedback, communication is less likely to be effective. When your boss says, "Would you please give me a copy of the Williamson proposal?" you may say, "Is that the James Williamson proposal or the Kyra Williamson proposal?" Your quest for clarification in response to the request is feedback. Feedback can seek additional information, or simply confirm the message has been interpreted: "Okay, I'll have the Williamson proposal on your desk by this afternoon."
- **CONTEXT.** One final component of communication is *context*—the physical, historical, and psychological communication environment. As the saying goes, everyone has to be somewhere. All communication takes place in some context. A meeting held in the executive boardroom is likely to have different communication expectations and perhaps a different message from a brief conversation held around the water cooler. The context of the designer-decorated executive boardroom will likely result in more formal communication exchanges than conversation with people standing

around a workroom water cooler. The physical environment has an effect on how people communicate.

Figure 1.1 shows the transactional nature of communication. We send messages at the same time we receive them. Even as we talk, we are also interpreting our partner's nonverbal and verbal responses. We also monitor the degree to which the other person understands our message, since noise can interfere with the quality and accuracy of the meaning of messages.

Figure 1.1: Communication as Transaction



## 1.3: Leadership: Influencing Others Through Communication

### 1.3 Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art.

In 1910, J. C. Hall hopped on a train to Kansas City with a couple of boxes of imported postcards under his arm and a vision for making money. He started a mail-order postcard business from his Kansas City YMCA room. After some initial success, however, he found that people weren't buying postcards like they used to. He needed to change the focus of his business. His brother Rollie joined him in 1915, and together they started making their own greeting cards. Things were going well until a fire destroyed their entire greeting card stock. Having listened to his customers' needs, J. C. decided to hire an illustrator to make Christmas cards. Good move: Business boomed.

J. C.'s other brother, William, joined the business and under J. C.'s leadership, and the brothers continued their success. In 1928 they started printing the word "Hallmark" on the backs of the cards. When J. C. died in 1982, he left \$100 million to charity. Today Hallmark Cards has annual sales of more than \$4 billion.<sup>24</sup>

J. C. was successful for two reasons. First, he was a master communicator. He knew what his customers wanted;

he listened to them. He used his communication skills to adapt to a changing marketplace. He crafted messages that connected to people. Second, he knew how to lead others. Whether it was working with his brothers to build the family business or being an innovative leader in establishing the greeting card industry, J. C. successfully influenced others. Can you learn the same principles and skills of leading others that J. C. Hall used to establish a \$4 billion company? We believe the answer is an unequivocal yes.



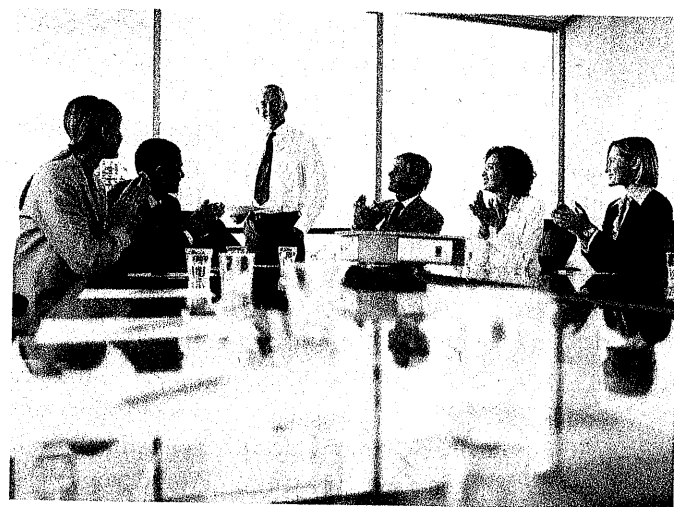
Whether it's who comes out on top on *the latest reality show* or who becomes the next president of the United States, we're often fascinated with who emerges as number one. More specifically, we're interested in who becomes a leader, what a leader does, and how a leader maintains his or her leadership position.<sup>25</sup> Typically it's the leader who both sets the tone and establishes the work agenda of an organization or a team.

### 1.3.1: The Relationship Between Leadership and Communication

A key question we explore in this book is what are the underlying communication principles that enhance leadership? As we noted earlier, to lead is to influence. Here's a complete definition of leadership: *Leadership* is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Researchers have emphasized several different perspectives on leadership.

- **LEADERS HELP MAKE SOMETHING HAPPEN.** James MacGregor Burns, in his classic book *Leadership*, described leadership this way: "Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers."<sup>26</sup>
- **LEADERS CREATE THE EXTRAORDINARY.** According to Alan Keith, "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen."<sup>27</sup>
- **LEADERS ARE ETHICAL.** Leaders can make something extraordinary happen by influencing others through either ethical or unethical means. An ethical leader doesn't try to coerce others through brute force or knowingly using inaccurate or inappropriate appeals to fear.

We believe that what these perspectives have in common is that *leadership occurs through communication*, both verbal messages (what a leader says) and nonverbal messages (what a leader does). We also emphasize that leadership is not something only one person does. In most teams, groups, and organizations, there are many people who influence others. In fact, each team member undoubtedly influences what the group does or does not achieve.<sup>28</sup> So it's likely that you will provide leadership even though you may not be formally designated as "the leader." In an effectively led team, team members feel greater satisfaction, are more productive, and are less likely to be absent.<sup>29</sup> The quality of leadership influences virtually every aspect of what it feels like to be in any organization. In this first chapter we introduce you to the concept of leadership and describe five communication principles that can positively affect how you lead others. Although leadership is essentially a process of influencing others through your communication with them, we note how leading others is different from merely managing others.



An effective leader influences others through both verbal and nonverbal communication and with strong presentation skills.

## Leaders Communicating @ Work

### The Leadership-Communication Link

Because of the relationship between communication and leadership principles, in each chapter we feature leadership advice from chief executive officers or other experienced leaders from a variety of organizations. Although you may wonder whether the advice offered by leaders at the upper echelon of power applies to you, we assure you that it does. Communication and leadership principles have universal application, regardless of level of responsibility.

When asked about his key principles of leadership, chief executive officer of the Container Store, Kip Tendell, offered specific communication strategies for developing a positive, productive work climate:

The way we create a place where people do want to come to work is primarily through two key points. One of our foundation principles is that leadership and communication are the same thing. Communication is leadership. So we believe in just relentlessly trying to communicate everything to every single employee at all times, and we're very open. We share everything. We believe in complete transparency. There's never a reason, we believe, to keep the information from an employee, except for individual salaries.<sup>30</sup>

For Tendell, leadership and communication are inextricably linked, and both help to explain and predict what it feels like to work in an organization. His key message: It's important to study both communication and leadership principles.

- Because of the communication-leadership connection, regardless of your level of leadership aspirations, when you study communication, you're also learning how to lead others.
- It's through communication that you influence an organization's work climate. Positive communication messages result in a supportive work climate, where workers are more productive and feel comfortable sharing their concerns and ideas.
- Possessing good communication skills can help you make authentic connections to others—to be transparent, honest, and real.

So regardless of the group, team, or organization in which you participate, communicating well and being open to create transparency are leadership behaviors that will serve you well.

### 1.3.2: Leading Versus Managing

There are differences between being a leader and being a manager. A *manager* is someone who has been appointed to coordinate and facilitate, whereas a leader influences others even if he or she has not been designated to assume a specific leadership role. Metaphorically speaking, a manager's job is to keep the trains running on time; the leader's job is to design the trains. Managers keep things organized and emphasize accomplishing specific tasks. Leaders are focused not just on short-term accomplishments but also on how the team, group, or organization will accomplish its goals over the long term.

Can a manager also be a leader? Yes, a good manager can also become a leader when influencing others. The typical function of a manager is to influence the more routine, mundane, and repetitive elements of the work. A manager becomes a leader when he or she takes on more innovative tasks and influences the group or organization

in new and creative ways. The same person can both lead and manage.

### 1.3.3: Leading Versus Following

The relationship between leaders and followers is linked: A leader can't lead unless there are those who follow her or him; you can't have one without the other. If the key role of a leader is to influence others through communication, the prime task of a follower is to respond ethically and appropriately to the influence of a leader.

The word *follower* sometimes connotes a person who may wait to be told what to do rather than move forward on his or her own initiative. Without effective followers, however, little would get accomplished. So followers have more power and influence in organizations than they may perceive they have.

An effective follower does more than respond to a micromanaging leader; good followers use their own ideas and strategies to achieve their work goals. Precisely what do effective followers do? One researcher found that skilled followers engage in two activities: (1) They are independent and critical thinkers rather than passive and noncritical thinkers, and (2) they actively engage in the work, rather than waiting to be told what to do.<sup>31</sup> In most situations, the best followers are those who rate highly on both of these important attributes.

### 1.3.4: Leading and Technology

Another aspect of leadership involves the increased use of technology to do our work. We live in a digital age. Ubiquitous phone, text, and email messages are increasingly how we complete work tasks. However, technology and relationship scholar Sherry Turkle points out that even though we may be linked to others, we are nonetheless often literally alone, separated from others, while communicating electronically. As Turkle notes, "Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other."<sup>32</sup> So much of your leadership influence happens via technology. Whether you work in an office, an office cube, or telecommute from home, you will increasingly accomplish what you do using technology.

To be online rather than communicate face to face is to use electronically mediated communication (EMC). Using mediated communication messages in the workplace is not new. People have used letters, another form of mediated messages, to conduct business for hundreds of years. In the 1800s, the introduction of telegraphs and telephones increased the pace of communication. Today, a plethora of electronic tools have resulted in an even quicker-paced work environment. These tools have powerful implications for leadership and workplace communication. Among the most important is that others can influence us almost 24/7 making work an ever-present part of our lives.

Sherry Turkle suggests the implications are even deeper, “Those little devices in our pockets don’t only change what we do, they change who we are.”<sup>32</sup>

Chances are you will spend considerable time working in virtual groups and teams connected to team members via Skype, or using software programs such as *GoToMeeting* to conduct your business. Webinars, seminars that are held via the Internet using voice or video or both, are saving companies money because people can work collaboratively without traveling to another city, state, or country. But it takes knowledge and skill to use technology effectively.

Throughout this book we will highlight this influential link between leadership, communication, and technology with a special feature called #Technology and Communication @ Work. As shown here, it is important to know the channel or type of technology that will best communicate your message.

## #Technology and Communication @ Work

### Matching Your Media to Your Message

People across the world today have increasingly easy access to communication via text messages, email, instant messaging, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, or other electronic means. This access, coupled with the increasing likelihood that you will be communicating with people from other cultures, means that you may need to decide when you need to share news face-to-face and when it may be more efficient to communicate virtually. One practical theory, called *media richness theory*, suggests that you can use the *richness* of different communication methods to help you evaluate when it is best to communicate in person rather than participate in mediated communication. A method or channel of communication is said to be rich if it has these characteristics:<sup>33</sup>

1. There is the possibility of instant feedback.
2. Both verbal and nonverbal cues can be processed by senders and receivers.
3. There is natural, informal use of language rather than formal language.
4. Messages are customized to individuals rather than communicated to a mass of people.

Face-to-face communication is media rich; writing a memo that goes out to all employees is media lean. The continuum of media-rich and media-lean methods of communication is presented here.

When should you use more media-rich methods of communication (which may involve travel and the expense of gathering in one place at one time), and when is it acceptable to use more efficient media-lean communication approaches? Here are a few tips.

#### ⊗ Use media-rich methods if:

- Your message is likely to be misunderstood because it's highly detailed and complex.
- Your message is important to people (such as about their compensation).
- There is a high potential for interpersonal conflict.
- You want to know immediately how people will respond to your message.

#### ⊗ Use media-lean methods if:

- The information is routine and noncontroversial, such as announcing the time and place of a meeting
- You will follow up the presentation of detailed information with a face-to-face meeting later.
- You want to communicate a simple message to many people quickly, such as the closing of a street or a parking garage for repairs.
- You already have a good interpersonal relationship with your intended audience because you have spent time in face-to-face collaboration on other projects.

### Applying Your Skills

Given the principles of media richness theory, consider how best to collaborate with team members in these situations: You've had an e-meeting via the Internet with your colleagues. It's your job to distribute the minutes of the meeting. Should you use a media-rich or media-lean method of communicating the minutes to your coworkers?

#### WRITING PROMPT

As project manager, you've noticed increased conflict and relational tension between the team working in Houston, Texas, and the team based in Mexico City. During the last conference phone call it was clear the tensions were escalating between the two groups. To manage the conflict, should you use a media-rich or media-lean context? Specifically, what would be a good forum to help manage the conflict?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

## 1.4: Leading Others: Applying Communication Principles at Work

### 1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills.

As you begin your study of business and professional communication, the number of terms, ideas, and skills to learn

about leadership and communication may seem overwhelming. To help you make sense out of the many ideas and the information that we present, we frame our study of business and professional communication around five fundamental principles that can enhance your communication skills and leadership abilities.<sup>34</sup> Together, these five principles provide you with a framework for understanding how communication works at work:

Principle One: Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others.

Principle Two: Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages

Principle Three: Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages

Principle Four: Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others

Principle Five: Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others

You may be taking a course in business and professional communication with the hope of just getting a good job and keeping it. Or you may already have a job and you have visions of someday climbing a bit higher on the corporate ladder. We've encouraged you to consider your professional career not only as just getting and keeping a job but also recognizing your potential to influence others using your leadership skills. These five principles can serve as a useful framework for assessing your communication and leadership skills regardless of your specific career objective.

### 1.4.1: Principle One: Leaders Are Aware of Their Communication with Themselves and Others

The first principle is to be aware of your interactions with others while at work. Effective communicators who skillfully lead others are conscious or “present” when communicating. Ineffective communicators mindlessly or thoughtlessly say and do things they may later regret. Being aware of your own (and others') communication involves two important processes:

- First, it's important to be aware of what motivates or drives a person to communicate. For example, if you know that one of your colleagues is getting a divorce, you may want to cut your coworker some slack when that person seems a bit edgy or tense during a staff meeting. Becoming aware of what motivates you and others to communicate will help you adapt your communication to make it more effective, which is the focus of our fifth communication principle.
- Second, it's important to be aware of how people perceive or see situations differently. No two people

perceive a situation similarly. You may see a situation one way and a person who works for you may see it differently. For example, if you have no children but a colleague does have a child, you may not be interested at all in the new child-care facility that will be opened near your work, but your coworker is ecstatic not to have to pick up his daughter across town. Often, perceptual differences result in a number of communication problems at work simply because of differences; people can view the same situation with different interpretations. To be an effective leader or follower, regardless of the type of work involved, it's important to be aware of your own thoughts, assumptions, and communication behavior, and the behavior of others as well.

## Communication Ethics @ Work

### What's Your Ethics Credo?

In the workplace it's especially important to be aware and mindful of your personal and professional ethics. *Ethics* are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right or wrong. An ethical communicator is one who considers the thoughts, feelings, and considerations of the people with whom a communicator is interacting. Ethics are essential because of the trust others place in you, especially when you manage their money or have access to their private information such as medical or financial records. The National Communication Association's Credo for Communication Ethics reemphasizes the importance of being an ethical communicator:

Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others.<sup>35</sup>

#### WRITING PROMPT

What's your personal ethics credo? As you work with others in business and professional contexts, what are key ethical principles that guide you in communicating with others? Imagine you are being interviewed for a job and the interviewer asks you what your ethical principles are. What would you say?

▶ The response entered here will appear in the performance dashboard and can be viewed by your instructor.

Submit

### 1.4.2: Principle Two: Effectively Use and Interpret Verbal Messages

The second principle is to effectively use and interpret verbal messages. We communicate through a *language*, which consists of symbols and a system of rules that make it possible for people to understand one another. As we noted earlier, symbols are words, sounds, visual images, or even gestures that represent thoughts, concepts, objects, or experiences. These words are symbols you use to derive meaning that makes sense to you. The effective communicator both encodes and decodes messages accurately; he or she selects appropriate verbal symbols, or words, to form a message and interprets carefully the messages of others. Because a number of today's organizations are global, with offices located throughout the world, it's becoming more important for employees to communicate verbally—to speak, read, and write—in at least two languages.

As a leader you will have ample opportunity to instruct others in how to complete a particular task. It's essential that your followers understand your verbal messages and that you understand their verbal messages. Mastering the principle of effectively using and interpreting verbal messages will enhance your role as a VIP—a *verbally* important person who understands the power of words to influence others.

### 1.4.3: Principle Three: Effectively Use and Interpret Nonverbal Messages

*Nonverbal communication* is communication other than written or spoken language that creates meaning for someone. Unspoken messages can communicate powerful ideas with greater impact than mere words alone. Our emotions are communicated primarily through our use of nonverbal messages. A leader patting an employee on the back or an employee slamming shut an office door not only conveys a message but also communicates emotions. If you have ever said, "It's not what he said that bothered me; it's the way he said it," then you already understand the power of nonverbal communication. A potential customer might tell you in her verbal message that she will call you next week. However, you know she will not call you because her nonverbal message was lacking sincerity. Again, it's not *what* she said ("I will call you next week") but how she said it (insincere voice, lack of eye contact, or fidgeting) that created and conveyed the meaning to you.

Understanding and interpreting nonverbal messages are especially important skills to have in the workplace. In one survey of more than 550 managers from 50 businesses and organizations, 92% of the respondents agreed that nonverbal communication was either "important" or "very important" in a variety of business situations.<sup>36</sup> This text provides you with skills to help you put into practice this vital communication principle for leadership.

### 1.4.4: Principle Four: Listen and Respond Thoughtfully to Others

Although effective leadership requires people to develop and send messages to others that are meaningful, it is equally if not more important for leaders to listen and receive messages from others. Listening involves being *other-oriented*, which occurs when we consider the needs, motives, desires, and goals of others. A crucial part of leadership is being able to meet the needs of the people you lead. There is evidence that the skill of being other-oriented or empathic is decreasing. One study found that college students in the early part of the twenty-first century are 40% less empathic than college students in the 1980s and 1990s—empathy skills seemed to drop off after about 2000.<sup>37</sup> Listening to others is essential to being empathically other-oriented. The only way you know what people need is to listen to them. What are they telling you? What are they not telling you? Listening is so important to leadership that Stephen Covey, a well-known leadership expert, featured listening as one of his seven habits of highly effective people. Covey noted, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."<sup>38</sup>

Listening is a process. It involves receiving messages as well as responding thoughtfully to what others are saying. Responsive messages involve asking questions related to what the person is talking about, restating in your own words what you hear the other person saying, and being nonverbally responsive by leaning forward, making eye contact, and nodding your head. Responsive messages are affirming. They communicate to other people that they have been listened to and that you understand them.

### 1.4.5: Principle Five: Appropriately Adapt Messages to Others

A one-size-fits-all approach to communication doesn't work in the twenty-first century. For messages to have an impact, they must be tailored to the people receiving them. Your ability to lead and influence others effectively depends on your ability to adapt messages appropriately to others.<sup>39</sup> When you adapt a message to others you make choices about how best to develop a message to achieve your communication goal.

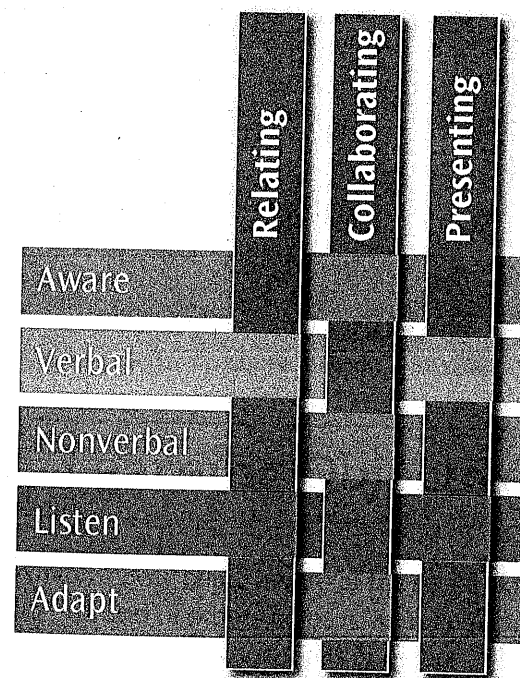
The workplace is full of diversity; chances are you will be working with people from all over the planet. Even men and women don't always understand each other because of gender differences in communication. Another way to tailor your communication is to adapt to another person's personality. Some people are talkative; others are quiet. Some people enjoy a good argument; others find arguing upsetting. As the #Technology and Communication @ Work feature discusses, you should also customize your choice of communication media. Your ability to adapt and adjust your communication makes others more comfortable and enhances understanding.

In the workplace, you communicate—make sense and share sense with others—to achieve specific work objectives. You achieve those objectives through three sets of communication skills:

- *Relating to others* Communication in the interpersonal context helps develop and manage workplace relationships.
- *Collaborating with others* Communication in the team context allows people to collaborate, or work cooperatively, with others.
- *Presenting messages to others* Communication in the public context takes place through effective business and professional presentations, such as presenting a progress report to a higher management team.

Although each context is different, the communication principles remain the same. As you see in Figure 1.2, you

Figure 1.2: Communication Principles for a Lifetime



use the same five principles to develop and manage relationships as you do to make effective sales presentations to potential customers. What's different is how the communication principles are applied. You will see how the five communication principles are woven throughout the three contexts (interpersonal, team, and public) and how the context determines how the principles are applied to achieve communication goals as you assume leadership roles.

## Recap

### Communication Principles for Leadership

Communication Principle	Application
Principle One: Be <b>aware</b> of your communication with yourself and others.	Be mindful of your communication and conscious of what motivates you and others to communicate.
Principle Two: Effectively use and interpret <b>verbal</b> messages.	Select appropriate symbols to clearly communicate messages to others, and decode others' messages carefully.
Principle Three: Effectively use and interpret <b>nonverbal</b> messages.	Use unspoken symbols to communicate the emotional and relational aspects of your message.
Principle Four: <b>Listen</b> and respond thoughtfully to others.	Actively listen to others, using responses to ensure and demonstrate that you have understood the message correctly.
Principle Five: Appropriately <b>adapt</b> messages to others.	Customize messages to enhance message clarity; consider the personal, social, and cultural characteristics of listeners.

## Summary: Communicating and Leading at Work

1.1: Review how communication skills determine leadership qualities.

Communication principles and skills are beneficial to any professional or career but especially to any career that involves leading others. To be effective in the workplace, you need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately to influence others in positive and ethical ways.

1.2: Recognize that communication occurs only when it reaches the desired audience.

*Human communication* is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages. People who communicate effectively do well on the job.

**1.3: Examine how the leadership quality of influencing others through communication is an art.**

*Leadership* is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Leading is different from managing. A manager coordinates and facilitates to keep things organized and accomplish a task. Leadership involves more opportunities and expectations to influence the behavior of others.

**1.4: Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills.**

Five communication principles are fundamental to enhancing leadership and business and professional communication skills. We refer to these principles throughout the book as a way of organizing the skills and applications of human communication.

- Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others. Being mindful of your communication is important to help you improve your communication.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages. Words are powerful and influence our thoughts, our actions, and our relationships with others.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages. Unspoken cues provide important information about our emotions, feelings, and attitudes.

- Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others. Being able to interpret accurately the messages of others enhances comprehension and relational empathy.
- Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others. It is important to adapt messages to others to enhance both understanding and empathy.

**SHARED WRITING: YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES**

What are your best leadership attributes, and what leadership skills should you work to enhance? Make a list of your strongest leadership attributes, as if you were being considered for a leadership role in a business or professional setting. Make a second list of the leadership skills and competencies you'd like to enhance. Note the role and function of communication in your two lists.

▶ A minimum number of characters is required to post and earn points. After posting, your response can be viewed by your class and instructor, and you can participate in the class discussion.

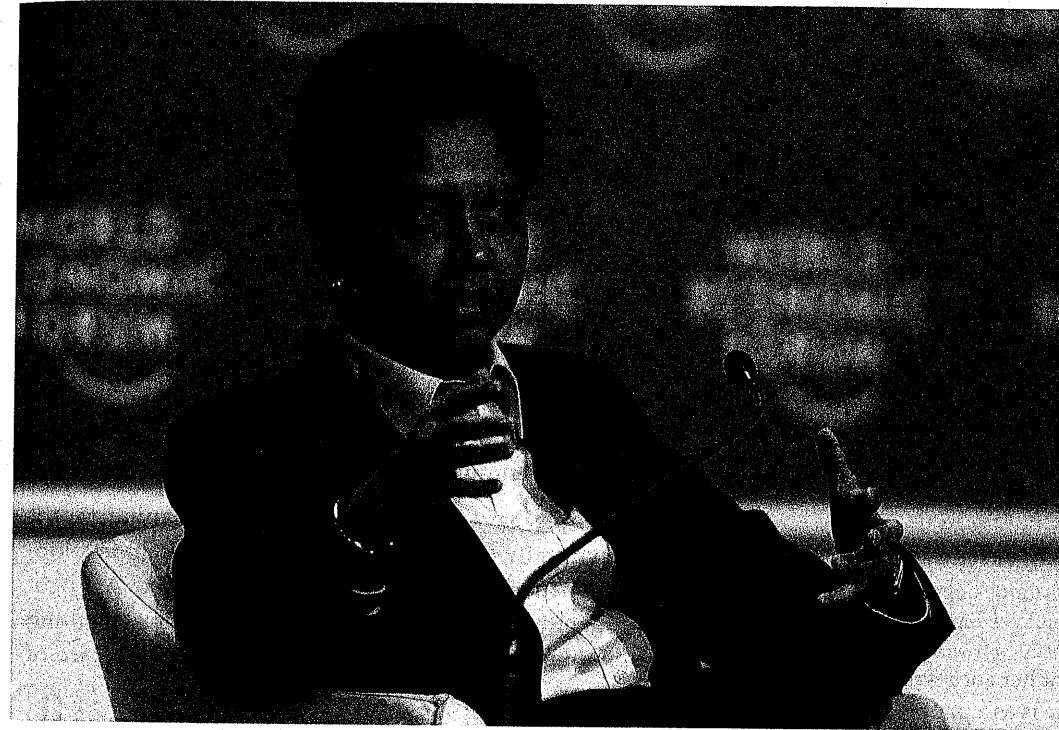
Post

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**Chapter 1 Quiz: Communicating and Leading at Work**

## Chapter 2

# Being Aware of How You Communicate at Work



### Learning Objectives

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>2.1</b> Analyze how being aware of the social skills of the self and of others helps to adapt effectively to the communication skills of others</p> <p><b>2.2</b> Evaluate the different motivational approaches followed in organizations</p> | <p><b>2.3</b> Recognize the need to be aware of organizational culture for effective communication</p> <p><b>2.4</b> Express the need to remain ethical in all forms of roles in an organization</p> |
|--|--|

Although you may not recognize the name Indra Nooyi, you're probably familiar with many of the products she is responsible for producing, including Pepsi, Gatorade, and Fritos. Nooyi is CEO of PepsiCo, which is responsible for Pepsi products as well as Tropicana, Frito Lay, Gatorade, and Quaker Oats products. *Fortune* magazine has listed her as one of the "50 Most Powerful Women" and *Forbes* magazine has listed her as one of the "World's 100 Most Powerful Women."

Although Nooyi considers herself a normal person, who juggles being a corporate leader with being a mother, a wife, a daughter, and a daughter-in-law, much of her success is grounded in her awareness of who she is as a person and her awareness of others, which was cultivated through her relationship with her paternal grandfather who taught her to be a thoughtful and mindful person. My grandfather "taught me to be a lifelong student. Don't ever think you've arrived, and remember