

were made in Beijing (China) and Hino. Software for the LightSpeed was written in Haifa (Israel), Bangalore (India), Buc, and Waukesha.²³

Effective global communication was a challenge and a necessity to successfully develop the LightSpeed series. As Brian Duchinsky, who was GE's general manager for global CT at the time, put it, "If we sat around in this cornfield west of Milwaukee, we wouldn't come up with the same breadth of good ideas. But yet, getting six countries on the phone to make a decision can be a pain."²⁴

GE managers facilitated effective communication in a number of ways—participating in daily conference calls, making sure teams in different countries depended on one another, developing an internal website devoted to the LightSpeed, encouraging teams to ask one another for help, and holding face-to-face meetings in different locations. Although much communication took place electronically, such as through conference calls, face-to-face meetings were also important. As Bob Armstrong, who was GE's general manager for engineering at the time, indicated, "You need to get your people together in one place if you want them to really appreciate how good everyone is, and how good you are as a team."²⁵

LO16-2

Describe the communication process, and explain the role of perception in communication.

sender The person or group wishing to share information.

message The information that a sender wants to share.

encoding Translating a message into understandable symbols or language.

noise Anything that hampers any stage of the communication process.

receiver The person or group for which a message is intended.

medium The pathway through which an encoded message is transmitted to a receiver.

Effective communication is necessary for managers and all members of an organization to increase efficiency, quality, responsiveness to customers, and innovation and thus gain a competitive advantage for the organization. Managers therefore must understand the communication process well if they are to perform effectively.

The Communication Process

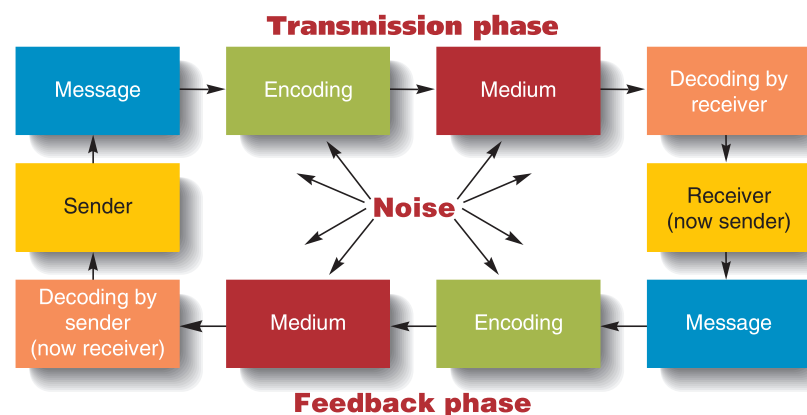
The communication process consists of two phases. In the *transmission phase*, information is shared between two or more individuals or groups. In the *feedback phase*, a common understanding is ensured. In both phases, a number of distinct stages must occur for communication to take place (see Figure 16.1).²⁶

Starting the transmission phase, the **sender**, the person or group wishing to share information with some other person or group, decides on the **message**, what information to communicate. Then the sender translates the message into symbols or language, a process called **encoding**; often messages are encoded into words. **Noise** is a general term that refers to anything that hampers any stage of the communication process.

Once encoded, a message is transmitted through a medium to the **receiver**, the person or group for which the message is intended. A **medium** is simply the pathway, such as a phone call, a letter, a memo, or face-to-face communication in a meeting, through which an encoded message is transmitted to a receiver. At the next stage, the receiver interprets

Figure 16.1

The Communication Process



decoding Interpreting and trying to make sense of a message.



If a picture is worth a thousand words, so too is nonverbal communication; facial expressions, body language, posture, and eye contact all send powerful messages.

verbal communication

The encoding of messages into words, either written or spoken.

nonverbal communication

The encoding of messages by means of facial expressions, body language, and styles of dress.

and tries to make sense of the message, a process called **decoding**. This is a critical point in communication.

The feedback phase is initiated by the receiver (who becomes a sender). The receiver decides what message to send to the original sender (who becomes a receiver), encodes it, and transmits it through a chosen medium (see Figure 16.1). The message might contain a confirmation that the original message was received and understood or a restatement of the original message to make sure it has been correctly interpreted, or it might include a request for more information. The original sender decodes the message and makes sure a common understanding has been reached. If the original sender determines that a common understanding has not been reached, sender and receiver cycle through the whole process as many times as needed to reach a common understanding. Feedback eliminates misunderstandings, ensures that messages are correctly interpreted, and enables senders and receivers to reach a common understanding.

The encoding of messages into words, written or spoken, is **verbal communication**. We can also encode messages without using written or spoken language.

Nonverbal communication shares information by means of facial expressions (smiling, raising an eyebrow, frowning, dropping one's jaw), body language (posture, gestures, nods, and shrugs), and even style of dress (casual, formal, conservative, trendy). The trend toward increasing empowerment of the workforce has led some managers to dress informally to communicate that all employees of an organization are team members, working together to create value for customers.

Nonverbal communication can be used to back up or reinforce verbal communication. Just as a warm and genuine smile can back up words of appreciation for a job well done, a concerned facial expression can back up words of sympathy for a personal problem. In such cases, the congruence between the verbal and the nonverbal communication helps to ensure that a common understanding is reached.

Sometimes when members of an organization decide not to express a message verbally, they inadvertently do so nonverbally. People tend to have less control over nonverbal communication, and often a verbal message that is withheld gets expressed through body language or facial expressions. A manager who agrees to a proposal that she or he actually does not like may unintentionally communicate her or his disfavor by grimacing.

Sometimes nonverbal communication is used to send messages that cannot be sent through verbal channels. Many lawyers are well aware of this communication tactic. Lawyers are often schooled in techniques of nonverbal communication, such as choosing where to stand in the courtroom for maximum effect and using eye contact during different stages of a trial. Lawyers sometimes get into trouble for using inappropriate nonverbal communication in an attempt to influence juries. In a Louisiana court, prosecuting attorney Thomas Pirtle was admonished and fined \$2,500 by Judge Yada Magee for shaking his head in an expression of doubt, waving his arms indicating disfavor, and chuckling when the attorneys for the defense were stating their case.²⁷

The Role of Perception in Communication

Perception plays a central role in communication and affects both transmission and feedback. In Chapter 5 we defined *perception* as the process through which people select, organize, and interpret sensory input to give meaning and order to the world around them. We mentioned that perception is inherently subjective and is influenced by people's personalities, values, attitudes, and moods as well as by their experience and knowledge. When senders and receivers communicate with each other, they are doing so based on their own subjective perceptions. The encoding and decoding of messages and even the choice of a medium hinge on the perceptions of senders and receivers.

In addition, perceptual biases can hamper effective communication. Recall from Chapter 5 that *biases* are systematic tendencies to use information about others in ways that result in

inaccurate perceptions. In Chapter 5 we described a number of biases that can cause unfair treatment of diverse members of an organization. The same biases also can lead to ineffective communication. For example, *stereotypes*—simplified and often inaccurate beliefs about the characteristics of particular groups of people—can interfere with the encoding and decoding of messages.

Suppose a manager stereotypes older workers as being fearful of change. When this manager encodes a message to an older worker about an upcoming change in the organization, she may downplay the extent of the change so as not to make the older worker feel stressed. The older worker, however, fears change no more than do his younger colleagues and thus decodes the message to mean that only a minor change is going to be made. The older worker fails to adequately prepare for the change, and his performance subsequently suffers because of his lack of preparation for the change. Clearly this ineffective communication was due to the manager's inaccurate assumptions about older workers. Instead of relying on stereotypes, effective managers strive to perceive other people accurately by focusing on their actual behaviors, knowledge, skills, and abilities. Accurate perceptions, in turn, contribute to effective communication.

The Dangers of Ineffective Communication

Because managers must communicate with others to perform their various roles and tasks, managers spend most of their time communicating, whether in meetings, in telephone conversations, through email, or in face-to-face interactions. Indeed, some experts estimate that managers spend approximately 85 percent of their time engaged in some form of communication.²⁸

Effective communication is so important that managers cannot just be concerned that they themselves are effective communicators; they also have to help their subordinates be effective communicators. When all members of an organization can communicate effectively with one another and with people outside the organization, the organization is much more likely to perform highly and gain a competitive advantage.

When managers and other members of an organization are ineffective communicators, organizational performance suffers and any competitive advantage the organization might have is likely to be lost. Moreover, poor communication sometimes can be downright dangerous and even lead to tragic and unnecessary loss of human life. For example, researchers from Harvard University studied the causes of mistakes, such as a patient receiving the wrong medication, in two large hospitals in the Boston area. They discovered that some mistakes in hospitals occur because of communication problems—physicians not having the information they need to correctly order medications for their patients or nurses not having the information they need to correctly administer medications. The researchers concluded that some of the responsibility for these mistakes lies with hospital management, which has not taken active steps to improve communication.²⁹

Communication problems in airplane cockpits and between flying crews and air traffic controllers are unfortunately all too common, sometimes with deadly consequences. In the late 1970s two jets collided in Tenerife (one of the Canary Islands) because of miscommunication between a pilot and the control tower, and 600 people were killed. The tower radioed to the pilot, “Clipper 1736 report clear of runway.” The pilot mistakenly interpreted this message to mean that he was cleared for takeoff.³⁰ Unfortunately communication problems persist in the airline industry. In 2009 a Northwest Airlines Airbus A320 flew 150 miles past its Minneapolis destination while the crew of the airplane was out of contact with air traffic controllers for over an hour.³¹ A safety group at NASA tracked more than 6,000 unsafe flying incidents and found that communication difficulties caused approximately 529 of them.³² And NASA has its own communication difficulties.³³ In 2004 NASA released a report detailing communication problems at the International Space Station jointly managed and staffed by NASA and the Russian space agency; the problems included inadequate record keeping, missing information, and failure to keep data current.³⁴

Information Richness and Communication Media

LO16-3

Define information richness, and describe the information richness of communication media available to managers.

information richness The amount of information that a communication medium can carry and the extent to which the medium enables the sender and receiver to reach a common understanding.

To be effective communicators, managers (and other members of an organization) need to select an appropriate communication medium for each message they send. Should a change in procedures be communicated to subordinates in a memo sent through email? Should a congratulatory message about a major accomplishment be communicated in a letter, in a phone call, or over lunch? Should a layoff announcement be made in a memo or at a plant meeting? Should the members of a purchasing team travel to Europe to cement a major agreement with a new supplier, or should they do so through conference calls and email messages?

Managers deal with these questions day in and day out.

There is no one best communication medium for managers to rely on. In choosing a communication medium for any message, managers need to consider three factors. The first and most important is the level of information richness that is needed. **Information richness** is the amount of information a communication medium can carry and the extent to which the medium enables the sender and receiver to reach a common understanding.³⁵ The communication media that managers use vary in their information richness (see Figure 16.2).³⁶ Media high in information richness can carry an extensive amount of information and generally enable receivers and senders to come to a common understanding.

The second factor that managers need to take into account in selecting a communication medium is the *time* needed for communication because managers' and other organizational members' time is valuable. Managers at United Parcel Service, for example, dramatically reduced the amount of time they spent on communicating by using videoconferences instead of face-to-face communication, which required that managers travel overseas.³⁷

The third factor that affects the choice of a communication medium is the *need for a paper or electronic trail* or some kind of written documentation that a message was sent and received. A manager may wish to document in writing, for example, that a subordinate was given a formal warning about excessive lateness.

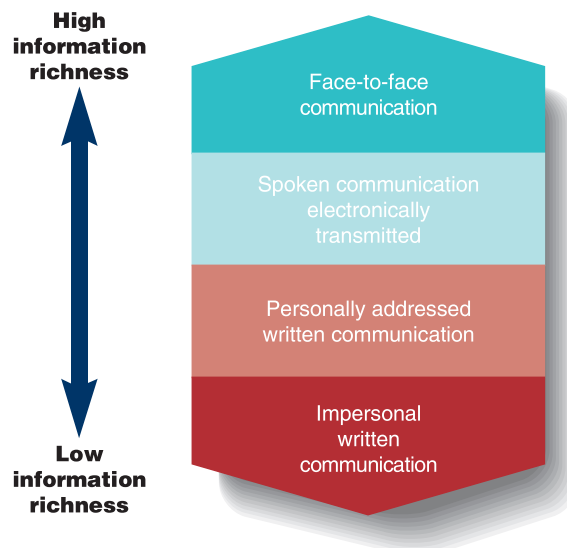
In the remainder of this section we examine four types of communication media that vary along these three dimensions (information richness, time, and paper or electronic trail).³⁸

Face-to-Face Communication

Face-to-face communication is the medium that is highest in information richness. When managers communicate face-to-face, they not only can take advantage of verbal communication but also can interpret each other's nonverbal signals such as facial expressions and body

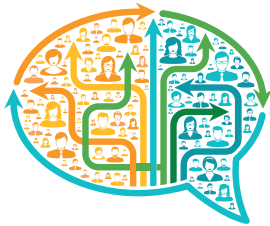
Figure 16.2

The Information Richness of Communication Media



language. A look of concern or puzzlement can sometimes say more than a thousand words, and managers can respond to such nonverbal signals on the spot. Face-to-face communication also enables managers to receive instant feedback. Points of confusion, ambiguity, or misunderstanding can be resolved, and managers can cycle through the communication process as many times as needed to reach a common understanding.

With the growing proliferation of electronic forms of communication, such as email, some managers fear that face-to-face communication is being shortchanged to the detriment of building common understandings and rapport.³⁹ Moreover, some messages that really should be communicated face-to-face or at least in a phone conversation, and messages that are more efficiently communicated in this manner, are nonetheless sent electronically.⁴⁰ As indicated in the accompanying “Management Insight” feature, managers need to carefully consider whether face-to-face communication is being shortchanged in their organizations and, if it is, take steps to rectify the situation.



Management Insight

Knowing When Face-to-Face Communication Is Called For

Anyone who has participated in one of those frustrating email exchanges where messages shoot back and forth and it seems to take forever to resolve a problem or reach a common understanding knows there must be a better way. In such cases a face-to-face conversation (or if that is not possible, a phone conversation) often will lead to better outcomes all around.



“No Email Friday” bolsters in-person conversations and strengthens employee ties.

According to Ron McMillan, a consultant to managers at all ranks and coauthor of best-selling books on communication, email should not be relied on to communicate information that is complex, important, or sensitive.⁴¹ In such cases face-to-face communication (or even a phone conversation) can convey more information than email can, and it is much more effective at generating a common understanding. Research conducted by Albert Mehrabian, professor emeritus of psychology at UCLA, suggests that more meaning is conveyed by nonverbal communication from facial expressions and body language and from tone of voice and vocal inflection than is conveyed by the actual words that are used when communicating.⁴² And of course nonverbal communication, tone of voice, and vocal inflection are all missing when email is used. JoAnne Yates, a professor at the Sloan School of Management at MIT, suggests that email is best for simple information that will be readily understood.⁴³

Sara Roberts, founder and chief executive officer of Roberts Golden Consulting in San Francisco, recognizes the value of face-to-face communication.⁴⁴ Although consultants in her firm regularly communicate with each other, clients, and suppliers via email and this is often efficient and effective, Roberts believes rapport and collaboration can suffer when email is used extensively. So she instituted “No Email Fridays” at her firm. On Fridays employees are not to use email unless it is clearly necessary (such as to reply to a client who wants an urgent email response).⁴⁵ As Roberts put it, “No Email Friday helps us to remember we really could go over to that person sitting right over there and collaborate more.”⁴⁶ In fact a growing number of organizations are experimenting with “no email Fridays” to encourage more face-to-face communication and phone conversations.⁴⁷

Allowing opportunities for face-to-face communication can be especially important when trying to effectively communicate with employees located in other countries. For

example, Greg Caltabiano, CEO of Teknovus Inc., which is based in Petaluma, California, and has offices in Asia, arranges for U.S. employees to go to Asia and Asian employees to come to the United States to engage in face-to-face communication to build mutual understanding.⁴⁸

management by wandering around A face-to-face communication technique in which a manager walks around a work area and talks informally with employees about issues and concerns.

Management by wandering around is a face-to-face communication technique that is effective for many managers at all levels in an organization.⁴⁹ Rather than scheduling formal meetings with subordinates, managers walk around work areas and talk informally with employees about issues and concerns that both employees and managers may have. These informal conversations give managers and subordinates important information and at the same time foster the development of positive relationships. William Hewlett and David Packard, founders and former top managers of Hewlett-Packard, found management by wandering around to be a highly effective way of communicating with their employees.

Because face-to-face communication is highest in information richness, you might think it should always be the medium of choice for managers. This is not the case, however, because of the amount of time it can take and the lack of a paper or electronic trail resulting from it. For messages that are important, personal, or likely to be misunderstood, it is often well worth managers' time to use face-to-face communication and, if need be, supplement it with some form of written communication documenting the message.

Advances in information technology are giving managers new communication media that are close substitutes for face-to-face communication. Many organizations, such as American Greetings Corp. and Hewlett-Packard, are using *videoconferences* to capture some of the advantages of face-to-face communication (such as access to facial expressions) while saving time and money because managers in different locations do not have to travel to meet with one another. During a videoconference, managers in two or more locations communicate with each other over large TV or video screens; they not only hear each other but also see each other throughout the meeting.

In addition to saving travel costs, videoconferences sometimes have other advantages. Managers at American Greetings have found that decisions get made more quickly when videoconferences are used because more managers can be involved in the decision-making process and therefore fewer managers have to be consulted outside the meeting itself. Managers at Hewlett-Packard have found that videoconferences have shortened new product development time by 30 percent for similar reasons. Videoconferences also seem to lead to more efficient meetings. Some managers have found that their meetings are 20–30 percent shorter when videoconferences are used instead of face-to-face meetings.⁵⁰

Taking videoconferences a leap forward, Cisco Systems has developed its TelePresence line of products, enabling individuals and teams in different locations to communicate live and in real time over the Internet with high-definition life-size video and excellent audio that make it feel like all participants, no matter where they are, are in the same room.⁵¹ One morning Cisco CEO John Chambers was able to participate in meetings with employees and teams in India, Japan, Cleveland, and London in less than four hours by using TelePresence.⁵² Other companies, such as HP, have developed similar products. What distinguishes these products from older videoconferencing systems is the lack of transmission delay and the sharp, clear, life-size video quality.⁵³

Spoken Communication Electronically Transmitted

After face-to-face communication, spoken communication electronically transmitted over phone lines (and the World Wide Web and the Internet) is second highest in information richness (see Figure 16.2). Although managers communicating over the telephone do not have access to body language and facial expressions, they do have access to the tone of voice in which a message is delivered, the parts of the message the sender emphasizes, and the general manner in which the message is spoken, in addition to the actual words themselves. Thus telephone conversations can convey extensive amounts of information. Managers can ensure that mutual understanding is reached because they can get quick feedback over the phone and answer questions. When Greg Caltabiano, CEO of Teknovus Inc., wanted to improve

communication between engineers in California who design semiconductors for fiber optic networks and employees and customers in Asia, he encouraged the engineers to communicate via the telephone instead of by email.⁵⁴

Skype enables people to communicate using voice and video over the Internet.⁵⁵ Thus Skype enables access to nonverbal forms of communication, and video conferences and interviews can be conducted over the Internet with Skype. For example, some business schools who interview top applicants for their PhD programs require an in-person interview prior to making admission decisions. Given the high costs of airline tickets for top overseas candidates, some schools arrange for interviews with these applicants to be conducted via Skype.

Voice mail systems and answering machines also allow managers to send and receive verbal electronic messages over telephone lines. Voice mail systems are companywide systems that let senders record messages for members of an organization who are away from their desks and allow receivers to access their messages even when hundreds of miles away from the office. Such systems are obviously a necessity when managers are frequently out of the office, and managers on the road are well advised to periodically check their voice mail.

Personally Addressed Written Communication

Lower in information richness than electronically transmitted verbal communication is personally addressed written communication (see Figure 16.2). One advantage of face-to-face communication and electronically transmitted verbal communication is that they both tend to demand attention, which helps ensure that receivers pay attention. Personally addressed written communications, such as memos and letters, also have this advantage. Because they are addressed to a particular person, the chances are good that the person will actually pay attention to (and read) them. Moreover, the sender can write the message in a way that the receiver is most likely to understand. Like voice mail, written communication does not enable a receiver to have his or her questions answered immediately; but when messages are clearly written and feedback is provided, common understandings can still be reached.

Even if managers use face-to-face communication, sending a follow-up in writing is often necessary for messages that are important or complicated and need to be referred to later on. This is precisely what Karen Stracker, a hospital administrator, did when she needed to tell one of her subordinates about an important change in how the hospital would be handling denials of insurance benefits. Stracker met with the subordinate and described the changes face-to-face. Once she was sure the subordinate understood them, she handed her a sheet of instructions to follow, which essentially summarized the information they had discussed.

Email and text messages also fit into this category of communication media because senders and receivers are communicating through personally addressed written words. The words, however, appear on their computer screens or smartphones rather than on paper. Email is so widespread in the business world that some managers find they have to deliberately take time out from managing their email to get their work done, think about pressing concerns, and come up with new and innovative ideas.⁵⁶ According to the Radacati Group, an independent market research firm, the average email account in corporations today receives about 18 megabytes of email and attachments per workday; the volume of email is expected to increase over time.⁵⁷ To help their employees effectively manage email, a growing number of organizations are instituting training programs to help employees learn how to more effectively use email by sending clearer messages, avoiding email copies to multiple parties who do not really need to see it, and writing clear and informative subject lines.⁵⁸ For example, Capital One trains employees to (1) write clear subject lines so recipients know why they are receiving a message and can easily search for it and retrieve it later, and (2) convey information clearly and effectively in the email body.⁵⁹

Ultimately, for messages that are sensitive or potentially misunderstood, or that require the give-and-take of a face-to-face or telephone conversation, relying on email can take considerably more time to reach a common understanding.⁶⁰ Additionally, given the lack of nonverbal cues, tone of voice, and intonation in email, senders need to be aware of the potential for misunderstandings.⁶¹ Based on her research, Kristin Byron, a professor of management at Syracuse University, suggests that recipients may have a tendency to perceive

some of the email they receive as more negative than the senders intended.⁶² Senders who are rushed, for example, may send short, curt messages lacking greeting and closing lines because they are so busy.⁶³ Recipients, however, might read something more negative into messages like these.⁶⁴

The growing popularity of email has also enabled many workers and managers to become *telecommuters*—people who are employed by organizations and work out of offices in their own homes. It is estimated that there are around 30 million telecommuters in the United States.⁶⁵ Many telecommuters indicate that the flexibility of working at home lets them be more productive and, at the same time, be closer to their families and not waste time traveling to and from the office.⁶⁶ In a study conducted by Georgetown University, 75 percent of the telecommuters surveyed said their productivity increased, and 83 percent said their home life improved once they started telecommuting.⁶⁷

Unfortunately the widespread use of email has been accompanied by growing abuse of email. There have been cases of employees sexually harassing coworkers through email, sending pornographic content via email, and sending messages that disparage certain employees or groups.⁶⁸ To counter disparaging remarks making their way to employees' in-boxes (and being copied to coworkers), Mark Stevens, CEO of MSCO, a 40-person marketing firm in Purchase, New York, instituted a policy that forbade employees from using email or Blackberries to communicate messages that criticized someone else.⁶⁹

Managers need to develop a clear, written policy specifying what company email can and should be used for and what is out of bounds. Managers also should clearly communicate this policy to all members of the organization, as well as tell them what procedures will be used when email abuse is suspected and what consequences will result if the abuse is confirmed. According to a survey conducted by the ePolicy Institute, of the 79 percent of companies that have an email policy, only about 54 percent actually give employees training and education to ensure that they understand it.⁷⁰ Training and education are important to ensure that employees know not only what the policy is but also what it means for their own email use.

Additionally, email policies should specify how much personal email is appropriate and when the bounds of appropriateness have been overstepped. Just as employees make personal phone calls while on the job (and sometimes have to), so too do they send and receive personal email. In fact, according to Waterford Technologies, a provider of email management and archive services based in Irvine, California, about one-third of email to and from companies is personal or not work-related.⁷¹ Clearly, banning all personal email is impractical and likely to have negative consequences for employees and their organizations (such as lower levels of job satisfaction and increased personal phone conversations). Some companies limit personal email to certain times of the day or a certain amount of time per day; others have employees create lists of contacts from whom they want to receive email at work (family members, children, baby-sitters); still others want personal email to be sent and received through web-based systems like Gmail and Hotmail rather than the corporate email system.⁷²

According to the American Management Association, while the majority of organizations have a written policy about email use, some do not have written guidelines for instant messaging.⁷³ *Instant messaging* allows people who are online and linked through a buddy or contact list to send instant messages back and forth through a small window on their computer screens without having to go through the steps of sending and receiving email.⁷⁴

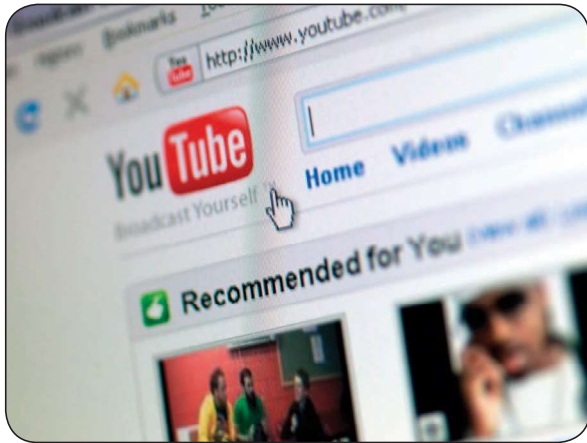
What about surfing the Internet on company time? According to a study conducted by Websense, approximately half of the employees surveyed indicated that they surfed the web at work, averaging about two hours per week.⁷⁵ Most visited news and travel sites, but about 22 percent of the male respondents and 12 percent of the female respondents indicated that they visited pornographic websites.⁷⁶ Of all those surveyed, 56 percent said they sent personal email at work. The majority of those surveyed felt that sending personal email and surfing the web had no effect on their performance, and 27 percent thought that doing so improved their productivity.⁷⁷ Other statistics suggest that while overall there is more Internet use at home than at work, individuals who use the Internet at work spend more time on it and visit more sites than do those who use it at home.⁷⁸ As indicated in the accompanying "Ethics in Action" feature, personal email and Internet surfing at work present managers with some challenging ethical dilemmas.



Ethics in Action

Monitoring Email and Internet Use

A growing number of companies provide managers and organizations with tools to track the websites their employees visit and the email and instant messages they send.⁷⁹ For example, network forensic software enables managers to record and replay everything that takes place on employees' computer monitors and can also track keystrokes.⁸⁰ Currently a majority of large corporations in the United States monitor their employees' email and Internet usage; the percentage is higher among organizations in certain industries.⁸¹ Most of the organizations that monitor email tell their employees about the monitoring.⁸² However, the means by which they let employees know are not necessarily effective. For example, putting information about email monitoring in an employee handbook might be ineffective if most employees do not read the handbook.⁸³



Intrusive monitoring policies may have unintended negative consequences in organizations.

Monitoring employees raises concerns about privacy.⁸⁴ Most employees would not like to have their bosses listening to their phone conversations; similarly, some believe that monitoring email and tracking Internet use are an invasion of privacy.⁸⁵ Given the increasingly long working hours of many employees, should personal email and Internet use be closely scrutinized? Clearly, when illegal and unethical email use is suspected, such as sexually harassing coworkers or divulging confidential company information, monitoring may be called for. But should it be a normal part of organizational life, even when there are no indications of a real problem?

Essentially this dilemma involves issues of trust. And given that there is no federal legislation to protect employees from having their companies monitor company-supplied machines such as computers, laptops, and cell phones, employees themselves can take steps to protect their own privacy.⁸⁶ Lewis Maltby, founder of the National Workrights Institute, which is devoted to safeguarding privacy at work, suggests that when sending sensitive or personal information, employees can use their own equipment (e.g., private cell phone or laptop) and an outside Wi-Fi provider so that their employing organization cannot access the information.⁸⁷ Employees also need to be careful about what email messages they send and avoid sending private and sensitive email on workplace systems. Once email messages are sent, they live on in the recipients' computers and systems and can potentially come back to haunt senders or be subpoenaed in a court of law.⁸⁸

Impersonal Written Communication

Impersonal written communication is lowest in information richness but is well suited for messages that need to reach many receivers. Because such messages are not addressed to particular receivers, feedback is unlikely, so managers must make sure messages sent by this medium are written clearly in language that all receivers will understand.

Managers often find company newsletters useful vehicles for reaching large numbers of employees. Many managers give their newsletters catchy names to spark employee interest and also to inject a bit of humor into the workplace.⁸⁹ Increasing numbers of companies are distributing their newsletters online. For example, IBM's employee newsletter w3 is distributed to employees online and is updated daily.⁹⁰

Managers can use impersonal written communication for various messages, including announcements of rules, regulations, policies, newsworthy information, changes in procedures,

and the arrival of new organizational members. Impersonal written communication also can convey instructions about how to use machinery or how to process work orders or customer requests. For these kinds of messages, the paper or electronic trail left by this communication medium can be valuable for employees.

Just as with personal written communication, impersonal written communication can be delivered and retrieved electronically, and this is increasingly the case in companies large and small. Unfortunately the ease with which electronic messages can spread has led to their proliferation. Many managers' and workers' electronic in-boxes are so backlogged that often they do not have time to read all the electronic work-related information available to them. The problem with such **information overload** is the potential for important information to be ignored or overlooked (even that which is personally addressed) while tangential information receives attention. Moreover, information overload can result in thousands of hours and millions of dollars in lost productivity.

information overload The potential for important information to be ignored or overlooked while tangential information receives attention.

blog A website on which an individual, group, or organization posts information, commentary, and opinions and to which readers can often respond with their own commentary and opinions.

Some managers and organizations use blogs to communicate with employees, investors, customers, and the general public.⁹¹ A **blog** is a website on which an individual, group, or organization posts information, commentary, and opinions and to which readers can often respond with their own commentary and opinions.⁹² Some top managers write their own blogs, and some companies such as Cisco Systems and Oracle have corporate blogs.⁹³ Just as organizations have rules and guidelines about employee email and Internet use, a growing number of organizations are instituting employee guidelines for blogs.⁹⁴ At IBM over 25,000 employees have blogs on IBM's internal computer network.⁹⁵ Guidelines for the use of blogs include following IBM's code of conduct (especially with regard to confidentiality, respect, and privacy), refraining from criticizing competitors, and refraining from mentioning customers' names without obtaining prior permission; bloggers must also reveal their own identity on their blogs (anonymous blogs are not permitted).⁹⁶

social networking site A website that enables people to communicate with others with whom they have some common interest or connection.

A **social networking site** such as Facebook or Twitter is a website that enables people to communicate with others with whom they might have some common interest or connection. Participants in these sites create customized profiles and communicate with networks of other participants.⁹⁷ Millions of people in the United States and other countries communicate via social networking sites.⁹⁸ While communication through social networking sites can be work-related, some managers are concerned that their employees are wasting valuable time at work communicating with their friends through these sites. According to a recent study sponsored by Robert Half Technology, over 50 percent of the U.S. companies included in the study prohibit employees from accessing social networking sites such as Twitter, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Facebook while at work.⁹⁹ Around 19 percent of the companies permit communicating through social networking sites for work-related reasons, and 16 percent permit some personal communication through these sites. Just 10 percent of the companies surveyed permit full use of social networking sites while on the job.¹⁰⁰

LO16-4

Describe the communication networks that exist in groups and teams.

Communication Networks

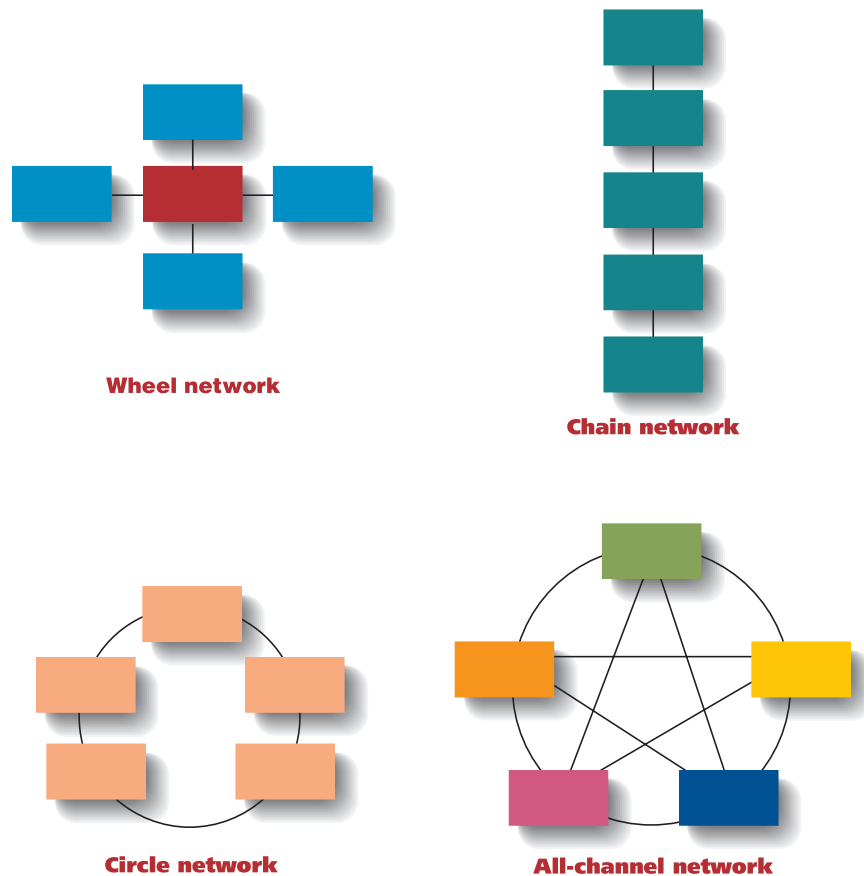
communication networks The pathways along which information flows in groups and teams and throughout the organization.

Although various communication media are used, communication in organizations tends to flow in certain patterns. The pathways along which information flows in groups and teams and throughout an organization are called **communication networks**. The type of communication network that exists in a group depends on the nature of the group's tasks and the extent to which group members need to communicate with one another to achieve group goals.

Communication Networks in Groups and Teams

As you learned in Chapter 15, groups and teams, whether they are cross-functional teams, top management teams, command groups, self-managed work teams, or task forces, are the building blocks of organizations. Four kinds of communication networks can develop in groups and teams: the wheel, the chain, the circle, and the all-channel network (see Figure 16.3).

Figure 16.3
Communication Networks in Groups and Teams



WHEEL NETWORK In a wheel network, information flows to and from one central member of the group. Other group members do not need to communicate with one another to perform at a high level, so the group can accomplish its goals by directing all communication to and from the central member. Wheel networks are often found in command groups with pooled task interdependence. Picture a group of taxi drivers who report to the same dispatcher, who is also their supervisor. Each driver needs to communicate with the dispatcher, but the drivers do not need to communicate with one another. In groups such as this, the wheel network results in efficient communication, saving time without compromising performance. Although found in groups, wheel networks are not found in teams because they do not allow the intense interactions characteristic of teamwork.

CHAIN NETWORK In a chain network, members communicate with one another in a predetermined sequence. Chain networks are found in groups with sequential task interdependence, such as in assembly-line groups. When group work has to be performed in a predetermined order, the chain network is often found because group members need to communicate with those whose work directly precedes and follows their own. Like wheel networks, chain networks tend not to exist in teams because of the limited amount of interaction among group members.

CIRCLE NETWORK In a circle network, group members communicate with others who are similar to them in experiences, beliefs, areas of expertise, background, office location, or even where they sit when the group meets. Members of task forces and standing committees, for example, tend to communicate with others who have similar experiences or backgrounds. People also tend to communicate with people whose offices are next to their own. Like wheel and chain networks, circle networks are most often found in groups that are not teams.

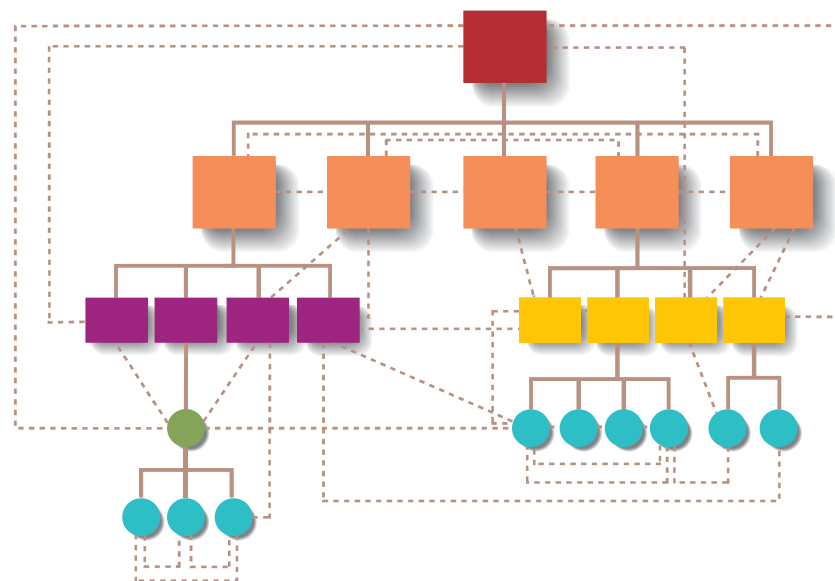
ALL-CHANNEL NETWORK An all-channel network is found in teams. It is characterized by high levels of communication: every team member communicates with every other team member. Top management teams, cross-functional teams, and self-managed work teams frequently have all-channel networks. The reciprocal task interdependence often found in such teams requires that information flows in all directions. Computer software specially designed for use by work groups can help maintain effective communication in teams with all-channel networks because it gives team members an efficient way to share information.

Organizational Communication Networks

An organization chart may seem to be a good summary of an organization's communication network, but often it is not. An organization chart summarizes the *formal* reporting relationships in an organization and the formal pathways along which communication takes place. Often, however, communication is *informal* and flows around issues, goals, projects, and ideas instead of moving up and down the organizational hierarchy in an orderly fashion. Thus an organization's communication network includes not only the formal communication pathways summarized in an organization chart but also informal communication pathways along which a great deal of communication takes place (see Figure 16.4).

Communication can and should occur across departments and groups as well as within them and up and down and sideways in the corporate hierarchy. Communication up and down the corporate hierarchy is often called *vertical* communication. Communication among employees at the same level in the hierarchy, or sideways, is called *horizontal* communication. Managers obviously cannot determine in advance what an organization's communication network will be, nor should they try to. Instead, to accomplish goals and perform at a high level, organizational members should be free to communicate with whomever they need to contact. Because organizational goals change over time, so do organizational communication networks. Informal communication networks can contribute to an organization's competitive advantage because they help ensure that organizational members have the information they need when they need it to accomplish their goals.

Figure 16.4
Formal and Informal Communication Networks in an Organization



— Formal pathways of communication summarized in an organization chart.

- - - Informal pathways along which a great deal of communication takes place.

grapevine An informal communication network along which unofficial information flows.

The **grapevine** is an informal organizational communication network along which unofficial information flows quickly, if not always accurately.¹⁰¹ People in an organization who seem to know everything about everyone are prominent in the grapevine. Information spread over the grapevine can be about issues of either a business nature (an impending takeover) or a personal nature (the CEO's separation from his wife).

External Networks

In addition to participating in networks within an organization, managers, professional employees, and those with work-related ties outside their employing organization often are part of external networks whose members span a variety of companies. For example, scientists working in universities and in corporations often communicate in networks formed around common underlying interests in a particular topic or subfield. As another example, physicians working throughout the country belong to specialty professional associations that help them keep up-to-date on the latest advances in their fields. For some managers and professionals, participation in such interest-oriented networks is as important as, or even more important than, participation in internal company networks. Networks of contacts who are working in the same discipline or field or who have similar expertise and knowledge can be very helpful, for example, when an individual wants to change jobs or find a job after a layoff. Unfortunately, as a result of discrimination and stereotypes, some of these networks are off-limits to certain individuals due to gender or race. For example, the term *old boys' network* alludes to the fact that networks of contacts for job leads, government contracts, or venture capital funding have sometimes been dominated by men and less welcoming of women.¹⁰²

Information Technology and Communication

Advances in information technology have dramatically increased managers' abilities to communicate with others as well as to quickly access information to make decisions. Advances that are having major impacts on managerial communication include the Internet, intranets, groupware, and collaboration software. However, managers must not forget that communication is essentially a human endeavor, no matter how much it may be facilitated by information technology.

LO16-5

Explain how advances in technology have given managers new options for managing communication.

Internet A global system of computer networks.

The Internet

The **Internet** is a global system of computer networks that is easy to join and is used by employees of organizations around the world to communicate inside and outside their companies. Over 245 million people in the United States alone use the Internet, and Internet use has dramatically increased around the world.¹⁰³ Table 16.1 lists the 20 countries with the most Internet users.¹⁰⁴

On the Internet, the World Wide Web is the “business district” with multimedia capabilities. Companies' home pages on the web are like offices that potential customers can visit. In attractive graphic displays on home pages, managers communicate information about the goods and services they offer, why customers should want to purchase them, how to purchase them, and where to purchase them. By surfing the web and visiting competitors' home pages, managers can see what their competitors are doing.¹⁰⁵ Each day hundreds of new companies add themselves to the growing number of organizations on the World Wide Web.¹⁰⁶ According to one study, the six “web-savviest” nations (taking into account use of broadband connections) in descending order are Denmark, Great Britain, Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the United States.¹⁰⁷ By all counts, use of the Internet for communication is burgeoning.

Intranets

Growing numbers of managers are finding that the technology on which the World Wide Web and the Internet are based has enabled them to improve communication within their own companies. These managers use this technology to share information within their own companies

Table 16.1
Top 20 Countries in Internet Usage as of June 30, 2012

Country	Internet Users
China	538,000,000
United States	245,203,319
India	137,000,000
Japan	101,228,736
Brazil	88,494,756
Russia	67,982,547
Germany	67,483,860
Indonesia	55,000,000
United Kingdom	52,731,209
France	52,228,905
Nigeria	48,366,179
Mexico	42,000,000
Iran	42,000,000
Korea	40,329,660
Turkey	36,455,000
Italy	35,800,000
Philippines	33,600,000
Spain	31,606,233
Vietnam	31,034,900
Egypt	29,809,724

Source: "Top 20 Countries with the Highest Number of Internet Users," Internet World Stats Usage and Population Statistics, www.internetworldstats.com/top20.htm, June 2, 2014. Used by permission.

intranet A company-wide system of computer networks.

through company networks called **intranets**. Intranets are being used at many companies including Chevron, Goodyear, Levi Strauss, IBM, Pfizer, Chrysler, Motorola, and Ford.¹⁰⁸

Intranets allow employees to have many kinds of information at their fingertips. Directories, manuals, inventory figures, product specifications, information about customers, biographies of top managers and the board of directors, global sales figures, meeting minutes, annual reports, delivery schedules, and up-to-the-minute revenue, cost, and profit figures are just a few examples of the information that can be shared through intranets. Intranets can be accessed with different kinds of computers so that all members of an organization can be linked together. Intranets are protected from unwanted intrusions, by hackers or by competitors, by firewall security systems that ask users to provide passwords and other identification before they are allowed access.¹⁰⁹

The advantage of intranets lies in their versatility as a communication medium. They can be used for a number of different purposes by people who may have little expertise in computer software and programming. While some managers complain that the Internet is too crowded and the World Wide Web too glitzy, informed managers are realizing that using the Internet's technology to create their own computer networks may be one of the Internet's biggest contributions to organizational effectiveness.

Groupware and Collaboration Software

groupware Computer software that enables members of groups and teams to share information with one another.

Groupware is computer software that enables members of groups and teams to share information with one another to improve their communication and performance. In some organizations, such as the Bank of Montreal, managers have had success in introducing groupware into the organization; in other organizations, such as the advertising agency Young & Rubicam, managers have encountered considerable resistance to groupware.¹¹⁰ Even in companies

where the introduction of groupware has been successful, some employees resist using it. Some clerical and secretarial workers at the Bank of Montreal, for example, were dismayed to find that their neat and accurate files were being consolidated into computer files that would be accessible to many of their coworkers.

Managers are most likely to be able to successfully use groupware as a communication medium in their organizations when certain conditions are met:¹¹¹

1. The work is group- or team-based, and members are rewarded, at least in part, for group performance.
2. Groupware has the full support of top management.
3. The culture of the organization stresses flexibility and knowledge sharing, and the organization does not have a rigid hierarchy of authority.
4. Groupware is used for a specific purpose and is viewed as a tool that enables group or team members to work more effectively together, not as a personal source of power or advantage.
5. Employees receive adequate training in the use of computers and groupware.¹¹²

Employees are likely to resist using groupware and managers are likely to have a difficult time implementing it when people are working primarily on their own and are rewarded for individual performance.¹¹³ Under these circumstances, information is often viewed as a source of power, and people are reluctant to share information with others by means of groupware.

Consider three salespeople who sell insurance policies in the same geographic area; each is paid based on the number of policies he or she sells and on his or her retention of customers. Their supervisor invested in groupware and encouraged them to use it to share information about their sales, sales tactics, customers, insurance providers, and claim histories. The supervisor told the salespeople that having all this information at their fingertips would allow them to be more efficient as well as sell more policies and provide better service to customers.

Even though they received extensive training in how to use the groupware, the salespeople never got around to using it. Why? They all were afraid that giving away their secrets to their coworkers might reduce their own commissions. In this situation, the salespeople were essentially competing with one another and thus had no incentive to share information. Under such circumstances, a groupware system may not be a wise choice of communication medium. Conversely, had the salespeople been working as a team and had they received bonuses based on team performance, groupware might have been an effective communication medium.

For an organization to gain a competitive advantage, managers need to keep up-to-date on advances in information technology such as groupware. But managers should not adopt these or other advances without first considering carefully how the advance in question might improve communication and performance in their particular groups, teams, or whole organization. Moreover, managers need to keep in mind that all of these advances in IT are tools for people to use to facilitate effective communication; they are not replacements for face-to-face communication.

collaboration software Groupware that promotes and facilitates collaborative, highly interdependent interactions and provides an electronic meeting site for communication among team members.

Collaboration software is groupware that aims to promote collaborative, highly interdependent interactions among members of a team and to provide the team with an electronic meeting site for communication.¹¹⁴ Collaboration software gives members of a team an online work site where they can post, share, and save data, reports, sketches, and other documents; keep calendars; have team-based online conferences; and send and receive messages. The software can also keep and update progress reports, survey team members about different issues, forward documents to managers, and let users know which of their team members are also online and at the site.¹¹⁵ Having an integrated online work area can help organize and centralize the work of a team, help ensure that information is readily available as needed, and also help team members make sure important information is not overlooked. Collaboration software can be much more efficient than email or instant messaging for managing ongoing team collaboration and interaction that is not face-to-face. Moreover, when a team does meet face-to-face, all documents the team might need in the meeting are just a click away.¹¹⁶

For work that is truly team-based, entails a number of highly interdependent yet distinct components, and involves team members with distinct areas of expertise who need to closely coordinate their efforts, collaboration software can be a powerful communication tool. The

New York–based public relations company Ketchum Inc. uses collaboration software for some of its projects. For example, Ketchum managed public relations, marketing, and advertising for a charitable program of Fireman’s Fund Insurance Co. By using the eRoom software provided by Documentum (a part of EMC Corporation), Ketchum employees working on the project at six different locations, employee representatives from Fireman’s, and a graphics company that was designing a website for the program were able to share plans, documents, graphic designs, and calendars at an online work site.¹¹⁷ Members of the Ketchum–Fireman team got email alerts when something had been modified or added to the site. As Ketchum’s chief information officer Andy Roach put it, “The fact that everyone has access to the same document means Ketchum isn’t going to waste time on the logistics and can focus on the creative side.”¹¹⁸

Another company taking advantage of collaboration software is Honeywell International Inc. Managers at Honeywell decided to use the SharePoint collaboration software provided by Microsoft, in part because it can be integrated with other Microsoft software such as Outlook.¹¹⁹ For example, if a team using SharePoint makes a change to the team’s calendar, that change will be automatically made in team members’ Outlook calendars.¹²⁰ Clearly, collaboration software has the potential to enhance communication efficiency and effectiveness in teams.

Wikis, a result of the open-source software movement, are a free or very low-cost form of collaboration software that a growing number of organizations are using. Wikis enable the organizations not only to promote collaboration and better communication but also to cut back on the use of email,¹²¹ as indicated in the accompanying “Information Technology Byte” feature.



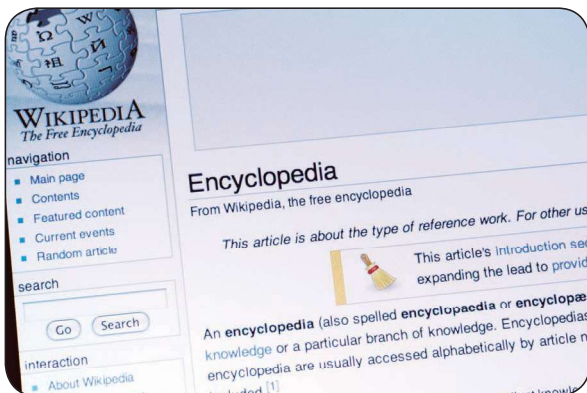
Information Technology Byte

Collaborating with Wikis

According to Websense, a company that provides World Wide Web, email, and other communications security solutions in San Diego, California, approximately 20 percent of all email sent and received is legitimate.¹²² And while many organizations have invested in filtering software to keep spam from flooding employees’ in-boxes, according to Websense, 76 percent of messages that make their way into employees’ in-boxes are spam.¹²³ Darren Lennard, a managing director at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein, an investment bank in London, was receiving approximately 250 email messages a day, of which only 15 percent were relevant to his job. Every day Lennard’s first and last activities were to clear out his in-box on his BlackBerry—until frustration got the better of him, after a long and grueling workday, and he smashed his BlackBerry on the kitchen countertop in his home.¹²⁴

In particular, wikis (in Hawaiian, the word *wiki* means “fast”), which are relatively easy to use and low-cost or free, are becoming increasingly popular as collaborative communication tools.¹²⁵ A wiki uses server software to enable users to create and revise web pages quickly on a company intranet or through a hosted Internet site. Users who are authorized to access a wiki can log onto it and edit and update data, as well as see what other authorized users have contributed. Wikis enable collaboration in real time, and they keep a history so that users can see what changes were made, for example, to a spreadsheet or a proposal.¹²⁶ Some web-based collaboration software providers, such as Basecamp, provide customers with wikis as part of their services.¹²⁷

Soar Technology Inc., an artificial intelligence company in Ann Arbor, Michigan, that does work for the U.S. Office of Naval Research, has found that relying on wikis for collaboration has reduced the time it takes to complete projects by 50 percent.¹²⁸ According to Jacob Crossman, an engineer at Soar, wikis save time because they do away with the



Wikis allow a wide range of people from multiple locations to contribute their specific skills and knowledge to the same task, resulting in a truly collaborative process.

need for multiple email messages with attachments and eliminate the typical confusion that surrounds multiple iterations of the same document.¹²⁹ Lennard created a wiki to figure out how to increase profits on a certain kind of trade. In the past he would send email messages with attachments to multiple colleagues, have to integrate and make sense of all the responses he received back from them, and then perhaps follow up with subsequent email. Instead, on the wiki page he created, colleagues contributed ideas, commented on each others' ideas, and revised and edited in real time. Lennard estimates that what would have taken about two weeks to accomplish through email took about two days using a wiki.¹³⁰

Even though IBM has its own collaboration software, Lotus Notes, IBM employees rely on wikis for collaboration to such a great extent that IBM created Wiki Central to manage the wikis. Wiki Central manages over 20,000 IBM wikis and has over 100,000 users.¹³¹ For example, some teams use wikis to coordinate the development of computer software. Wiki Central also gives employees tools to improve and enhance the functioning of their wikis, such as the “polling widget” (used for electronic voting) and the “rating widget” (used to evaluate proposals).¹³² Clearly, managers have multiple options to ensure efficient, effective, and collaborative communication.¹³³

Communication Skills for Managers

LO16-6

Describe important communication skills that managers need as senders and as receivers of messages and why it is important to understand differences in linguistic styles.

Some of the barriers to effective communication in organizations have their origins in senders. When messages are unclear, incomplete, or difficult to understand, when they are sent over an inappropriate medium, or when no provision for feedback is made, communication suffers. Other communication barriers have their origins in receivers. When receivers pay no attention to or do not listen to messages or when they make no effort to understand the meaning of a message, communication is likely to be ineffective. Sometimes advanced information technology, such as automated phone systems, can hamper effective communication to the extent that the human element is missing.

To overcome these barriers and effectively communicate with others, managers (as well as other organizational members) must possess or develop certain communication skills. Some of these skills are particularly important when managers *send* messages; others are critical when managers *receive* messages. These skills help ensure that managers will be able to share information, will have the information they need to make good decisions and take action, and will be able to reach a common understanding with others.

Communication Skills for Managers as Senders

Organizational effectiveness depends on the ability of managers (as well as other organizational members) to effectively send messages to people both inside and outside the organization. Table 16.2 summarizes seven communication skills that help ensure that when managers send messages, they are properly understood and the transmission phase of the communication process is effective. Let's see what each skill entails.

SEND CLEAR AND COMPLETE MESSAGES Managers need to learn how to send a message that is clear and complete. A message is clear when it is easy for the receiver to understand and interpret, and it is complete when it contains all the information that the sender and receiver need to reach a common understanding. In striving to send messages that are both clear and complete, managers must learn to anticipate how receivers will interpret messages and must adjust messages to eliminate sources of misunderstanding or confusion.

ENCODE MESSAGES IN SYMBOLS THE RECEIVER UNDERSTANDS Managers need to appreciate that when they encode messages, they should use symbols or language that the receiver understands. When sending messages in English to receivers whose

Table 16.2
Seven Communication Skills for Managers as Senders of Messages

- Send messages that are clear and complete.
- Encode messages in symbols that the receiver understands.
- Select a medium that is appropriate for the message.
- Select a medium that the receiver monitors.
- Avoid filtering and information distortion.
- Ensure that a feedback mechanism is built into messages.
- Provide accurate information to ensure that misleading rumors are not spread.

jargon Specialized language that members of an occupation, group, or organization develop to facilitate communication among themselves.

native language is not English, for example, it is important to use common vocabulary and to avoid using clichés that, when translated, may make little sense and sometimes are either comical or insulting. **Jargon**, specialized language that members of an occupation, group, or organization develop to facilitate communication among themselves, should never be used when communicating with people outside the occupation, group, or organization.

SELECT A MEDIUM APPROPRIATE FOR THE MESSAGE As you have learned, when relying on verbal communication, managers can choose from a variety of communication media, including face-to-face communication in person, written letters, memos, newsletters, phone conversations, email, voice mail, faxes, and videoconferences. When choosing among these media, managers need to take into account the level of information richness required, time constraints, and the need for a paper or electronic trail. A primary concern in choosing an appropriate medium is the nature of the message. Is it personal, important, nonroutine, or likely to be misunderstood and in need of further clarification? If it is, face-to-face communication is likely to be in order.

SELECT A MEDIUM THE RECEIVER MONITORS Another factor that managers need to take into account when selecting a communication medium is whether the medium is one that the receiver monitors. Managers differ in the communication media they pay attention to. Many managers simply select the medium that they themselves use the most and are most comfortable with, but doing this can often lead to ineffective communication. Managers who dislike telephone conversations and too many face-to-face interactions may prefer to use email, send many email messages per day, and check their own email often. Managers who prefer to communicate with people in person or over the phone may have email addresses but may be less likely to respond to email messages. No matter how much a manager likes email, sending email to someone who does not respond to email may be futile. Learning which managers like things in writing and which prefer face-to-face interactions and then using the appropriate medium enhances the chance that receivers will actually receive and pay attention to messages.

A related consideration is whether receivers have disabilities that hamper their ability to decode certain messages. A blind receiver, for example, cannot read a written message. Managers should ensure that employees with disabilities have resources available to communicate effectively with others. For example, deaf employees can effectively communicate over the telephone by using text-typewriters that have a screen and a keyboard on which senders can type messages. The message travels along the phone lines to special operators called *communication assistants*, who translate the typed message into words that the receiver can listen to. The receiver's spoken replies are translated into typewritten text by the communication assistants and appear on the sender's screen. The communication assistants relay messages back and forth to each sender and receiver.¹³⁴ Additionally, use of fax and email instead of phone conversations can aid deaf employees.

filtering Withholding part of a message because of the mistaken belief that the receiver does not need or will not want the information.

AVOID FILTERING AND INFORMATION DISTORTION **Filtering** occurs when a sender withholds part of a message because she or he (mistakenly) thinks the receiver does not need the information or will not want to receive it. Filtering can occur at all levels in an organization and in both vertical and horizontal communication. Rank-and-file workers may

filter messages they send to first-line managers, first-line managers may filter messages to middle managers, and middle managers may filter messages to top managers. Such filtering is most likely to take place when messages contain bad news or problems that subordinates are afraid they will be blamed for. Managers need to hear bad news and be aware of problems as soon as they occur so they can take swift steps to rectify the problem and limit the damage it may have caused.

Some filtering takes place because of internal competition in organizations or because organizational members fear their power and influence will be diminished if others have access to some of their specialized knowledge. By increasing levels of trust in an organization, taking steps to motivate all employees (and the groups and teams they belong to) to work together to achieve organizational goals, and ensuring that employees realize that when the organization reaches its goals and performs effectively, they too will benefit, this kind of filtering can be reduced.

information

distortion Changes in the meaning of a message as the message passes through a series of senders and receivers.

Information distortion occurs when the meaning of a message changes as the message passes through a series of senders and receivers. Some information distortion is accidental—due to faulty encoding and decoding or to a lack of feedback. Other information distortion is deliberate. Senders may alter a message to make themselves or their groups look good and to receive special treatment.

Managers themselves should avoid filtering and distorting information. But how can they eliminate these barriers to effective communication throughout their organization? They need to establish trust throughout the organization. Subordinates who trust their managers believe they will not be blamed for things beyond their control and will be treated fairly. Managers who trust their subordinates give them clear and complete information and do not hold things back.

INCLUDE A FEEDBACK MECHANISM IN MESSAGES Because feedback is essential for effective communication, managers should build a feedback mechanism into the messages they send. They either should include a request for feedback or indicate when and how they will follow up on the message to make sure it was received and understood. When managers write letters and memos or send faxes, they can request that the receiver respond with comments and suggestions in a letter, memo, or fax; schedule a meeting to discuss the issue; or follow up with a phone call. By building feedback mechanisms such as these into their messages, managers ensure that they get heard and are understood.

rumors Unofficial pieces of information of interest to organizational members but with no identifiable source.

PROVIDE ACCURATE INFORMATION **Rumors** are unofficial pieces of information of interest to organizational members but with no identifiable source. Rumors spread quickly once they are started, and usually they concern topics that organizational members think are important, interesting, or amusing. Rumors, however, can be misleading and can harm individual employees and their organizations when they are false, malicious, or unfounded. Managers can halt the spread of misleading rumors by giving organizational members accurate information about matters that concern them.

Providing accurate information is especially important in tough economic times like the recession in the late 2000s.¹³⁵ During a recession, employees are sometimes laid off or find their working hours or pay levels cut back and often experience high levels of stress. When managers give employees accurate information, this can help reduce their stress levels as well as motivate them to find ways to help their companies weather the tough times.¹³⁶ Moreover, when the economy does turn around, employees who received accurate information from their bosses may be more likely to remain with their organizations rather than pursue other opportunities.

Table 16.3
Three Communication Skills for Managers as Receivers of Messages

- Pay attention.
- Be a good listener.
- Be empathetic.

Communication Skills for Managers as Receivers

Managers receive as many messages as they send. Thus managers must possess or develop communication skills that allow them to be effective receivers of messages. Table 16.3 summarizes three of these important skills, which we examine here in greater detail.

PAY ATTENTION Because of their multiple roles and tasks, managers often are overloaded and forced to think about several things at once. Pulled in many different directions, they sometimes do not pay sufficient attention to the messages they receive. To be effective, however, managers should always pay attention to messages they receive, no matter how busy they are. When discussing a project with a subordinate, an effective manager focuses on the project and not on an upcoming meeting with his or her own boss. Similarly, when managers are reading written communication, they should focus on understanding what they are reading; they should not be sidetracked into thinking about other issues.

BE A GOOD LISTENER Managers (and all other members of an organization) can do several things to be good listeners. First, managers should refrain from interrupting senders in the middle of a message so that senders do not lose their train of thought and managers do not jump to erroneous conclusions based on incomplete information. Second, managers should maintain eye contact with senders so that senders feel their listeners are paying attention; doing this also helps managers focus on what they are hearing. Third, after receiving a message, managers should ask questions to clarify points of ambiguity or confusion. Fourth, managers should paraphrase, or restate in their own words, points senders make that are important, complex, or open to alternative interpretations; this is the feedback component so critical to successful communication.

Managers, like most people, often like to hear themselves talk rather than listen to others. Part of being a good communicator, however, is being a good listener—an essential communication skill for managers as receivers of messages transmitted face-to-face and over the telephone.

BE EMPATHETIC Receivers are empathetic when they try to understand how the sender feels and try to interpret a message from the sender's perspective, rather than viewing the message from only their own point of view. Marcia Mazulo, the chief psychologist in a public school system in the Northwest, recently learned this lesson after interacting with Karen Sanchez, a new psychologist on her staff. Sanchez was distraught after meeting with the parent of a child she had been working with extensively. The parent was difficult to talk to and argumentative and was not supportive of her own child. Sanchez told Mazulo how upset she was, and Mazulo responded by reminding Sanchez that she was a professional and that dealing with such a situation was part of her job. This feedback upset Sanchez further and caused her to storm out of the room.

In hindsight, Mazulo realized that her response had been inappropriate. She had failed to empathize with Sanchez, who had spent so much time with the child and was deeply concerned about the child's well-being. Rather than dismissing Sanchez's concerns, Mazulo realized, she should have tried to understand how Sanchez felt and given her some support and advice for dealing positively with the situation.

Understanding Linguistic Styles

Consider the following scenarios:

- A manager from New York is having a conversation with a manager from Iowa City. The Iowa City manager never seems to get a chance to talk. He keeps waiting for a pause to signal his turn to talk, but the New York manager never pauses long enough. The New York manager wonders why the Iowa City manager does not say much. He feels uncomfortable when he pauses and the Iowa City manager says nothing, so he starts talking again.
- Elizabeth compliments Bob on his presentation to upper management and asks Bob what he thought of her presentation. Bob launches into a lengthy critique of Elizabeth's presentation and describes how he would have handled it differently. This is hardly the response Elizabeth expected.
- Catherine shares with co-members of a self-managed work team a new way to cut costs. Michael, another team member, thinks her idea is a good one and encourages the rest of the team to support it. Catherine is quietly pleased by Michael's support. The

group implements “Michael’s” suggestion, and it is written up as such in the company newsletter.

- Robert was recently promoted and transferred from his company’s Oklahoma office to its headquarters in New Jersey. Robert is perplexed because he never seems to get a chance to talk in management meetings; someone else always seems to get the floor. Robert’s new boss wonders whether Robert’s new responsibilities are too much for him, although Robert’s supervisor in Oklahoma rated him highly and said he is a real “go-getter.” Robert is timid in management meetings and rarely says a word.

linguistic style A person’s characteristic way of speaking.

What do these scenarios have in common? Essentially, they all describe situations in which a misunderstanding of linguistic styles leads to a breakdown in communication. The scenarios are based on the research of linguist Deborah Tannen, who describes **linguistic style** as a person’s characteristic way of speaking. Elements of linguistic style include tone of voice, speed, volume, use of pauses, directness or indirectness, choice of words, credit taking, and use of questions, jokes, and other manners of speech.¹³⁷ When people’s linguistic styles differ and these differences are not understood, ineffective communication is likely.

The first and last scenarios illustrate regional differences in linguistic style.¹³⁸ The Iowa City manager and Robert from Oklahoma expect the pauses that signal turn taking in conversations to be longer than the pauses made by their colleagues in New York and New Jersey. This difference causes communication problems. The Iowan and transplanted Oklahoman think their Eastern colleagues never let them get a word in edgewise, and the Easterners cannot figure out why their colleagues from the Midwest and South do not get more actively involved in conversations.

Differences in linguistic style can be a particularly insidious source of communication problems because linguistic style is often taken for granted. People rarely think about their own linguistic styles and often are unaware of how linguistic styles can differ. In the example here, Robert did not realize that when dealing with his New Jersey colleagues, he could and should jump into conversations more quickly than he used to do in Oklahoma, and his boss never realized that Robert felt he was not being given a chance to speak in meetings.

The aspect of linguistic style just described, length of pauses, differs by region in the United States. Much more dramatic differences in linguistic style occur cross-culturally.



Cross-cultural differences in linguistic style can lead to misunderstandings.

CROSS-CULTURAL DIFFERENCES Managers from Japan tend to be more formal in their conversations and more deferential toward upper-level managers and people with high status than are managers from the United States. Japanese managers do not mind extensive pauses in conversations when they are thinking things through or when they think further conversation might be detrimental. In contrast, U.S. managers (even managers from regions of the United States where pauses tend to be long) find lengthy pauses disconcerting and feel obligated to talk to fill the silence.¹³⁹

Another cross-cultural difference in linguistic style concerns the appropriate physical distance separating speakers and listeners in business-oriented conversations.¹⁴⁰ The distance between speakers and listeners is greater in the United States, for example, than it is in Brazil or Saudi Arabia. Citizens of different countries also vary in how direct or indirect they are in conversations and the extent to which they take individual credit for accomplishments. Japanese culture, with its collectivist or group orientation, tends to encourage linguistic styles in which group rather than individual accomplishments are emphasized. The opposite tends to be true in the United States.

These and other cross-cultural differences in linguistic style can and often do lead to misunderstandings. For example, when a team of American managers presented a proposal for a joint venture to Japanese managers, the Japanese managers were silent as they thought about the implications of what they had just heard. The American managers took this silence as a sign that the Japanese managers wanted more information, so they went into more detail about the proposal. When they finished, the Japanese were silent again, not only frustrating the Americans but also making them wonder whether the Japanese were interested in the project. The American managers suggested that if the Japanese already had decided they did not want to pursue the project, there was no reason for the meeting to continue. The Japanese were bewildered. They were trying to carefully think out the proposal, yet the Americans thought they were not interested!

Communication misunderstandings and problems like this can be overcome if managers learn about cross-cultural differences in linguistic styles. If the American managers and the Japanese managers had realized that periods of silence are viewed differently in Japan and in the United States, their different linguistic styles might have been less troublesome barriers to communication. Before managers communicate with people from abroad, they should try to find out as much as they can about the aspects of linguistic style that are specific to the country or culture in question. Expatriate managers who have lived in the country in question for an extended time can be good sources of information about linguistic styles because they are likely to have experienced firsthand some of the differences that citizens of a country are not aware of. Finding out as much as possible about cultural differences also can help managers learn about differences in linguistic styles because the two are often closely linked.

GENDER DIFFERENCES Referring again to the four scenarios that open this section, you may be wondering why Bob launched into a lengthy critique of Elizabeth's presentation after she paid him a routine compliment on his presentation, or you may be wondering why Michael got the credit for Catherine's idea in the self-managed work team. Research conducted by Tannen and other linguists has found that the linguistic styles of men and women differ in practically every culture or language.¹⁴¹ Men and women take their own linguistic styles for granted and thus do not realize when they are talking with someone of a different gender that differences in their styles may lead to ineffective communication.

In the United States, women tend to downplay differences between people, are not overly concerned about receiving credit for their own accomplishments, and want to make everyone feel more or less on an equal footing so that even poor performers or low-status individuals feel valued. Men, in contrast, tend to emphasize their own superiority and are not reluctant to acknowledge differences in status. These differences in linguistic style led Elizabeth to routinely compliment Bob on his presentation even though she thought he had not done a particularly good job. She asked him how her presentation was so he could reciprocate and give her a routine compliment, putting them on an equal footing. Bob took Elizabeth's compliment and question about her own presentation as an opportunity to confirm his superiority, never realizing that all she was expecting was a routine compliment. Similarly, Michael's enthusiastic support for Catherine's cost-cutting idea and her apparent surrender of ownership of the idea after she described it led team members to assume incorrectly that the idea was Michael's.¹⁴²

Do some women try to prove they are better than everyone else, and are some men unconcerned about taking credit for ideas and accomplishments? Of course. The gender differences in linguistic style that Tannen and other linguists have uncovered are general tendencies evident in *many* women and men, not in *all* women and men.

Where do gender differences in linguistic style come from? Tannen suggests they begin developing in early childhood. Girls and boys tend to play with children of their own gender, and the ways in which girls and boys play are quite different. Girls play in small groups, engage in a lot of close conversation, emphasize how similar they are to one another, and view boastfulness negatively. Boys play in large groups, emphasize status differences, expect leaders to emerge who boss others around, and give one another challenges to try to meet. These differences in styles of play and interaction result in different linguistic styles when boys and girls grow up and communicate as adults. The ways in which men communicate emphasize status differences and play up relative strengths; the ways in which women communicate emphasize similarities and downplay individual strengths.¹⁴³

Interestingly, gender differences are also turning up in how women and men use email and electronic forms of communication. For example, Susan Herring, a researcher at Indiana University, has found that in public electronic forums such as message boards and chat rooms, men tend to make stronger assertions, be more sarcastic, and be more likely to use insults and profanity than women, whereas women are more likely to be supportive, agreeable, and polite.¹⁴⁴ David Silver, a researcher at the University of Washington, has found that women are more expressive electronic communicators and encourage others to express their thoughts and feelings, while men are briefer and more to the point.¹⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, some men find email to be a welcome way to express their feelings to people they care about. For example, real estate broker Mike Murname finds it easier to communicate with, and express his love for, his grown children via email.¹⁴⁶

MANAGING DIFFERENCES IN LINGUISTIC STYLES Managers should not expect to change people's linguistic styles and should not try to. To be effective, managers need to understand differences in linguistic styles. Knowing, for example, that some women are reluctant to speak up in meetings, not because they have nothing to contribute but because of their linguistic style, should lead managers to ensure that these women have a chance to talk. And a manager who knows certain people are reluctant to take credit for ideas can be careful to give credit where it is deserved. As Tannen points out, "Talk is the lifeblood of managerial work, and understanding that different people have different ways of saying what they mean will make it possible to take advantage of the talents of people with a broad range of linguistic styles."¹⁴⁷

Summary and Review

LO16-1, 16-2

COMMUNICATION AND MANAGEMENT Communication is the sharing of information between two or more individuals or groups to reach a common understanding. Good communication is necessary for an organization to gain a competitive advantage. Communication occurs in a cyclical process that entails two phases: transmission and feedback.

LO16-3 INFORMATION RICHNESS AND COMMUNICATION MEDIA Information richness is the amount of information a communication medium can carry and the extent to which the medium enables the sender and receiver to reach a common understanding. Four categories of communication media, in descending order of information richness, are face-to-face communication (includes videoconferences), electronically transmitted spoken communication (includes voice mail), personally addressed written communication (includes email), and impersonal written communication.

LO16-4 COMMUNICATION NETWORKS Communication networks are the pathways along which information flows in an organization. Four communication networks found in groups and teams are the wheel, the chain, the circle, and the all-channel network. An organization chart summarizes formal pathways of communication, but communication in organizations is often informal, as is true of communication through the grapevine.

- LO16-5 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION** The Internet is a global system of computer networks that managers around the world use to communicate within and outside their companies. The World Wide Web is the multimedia business district on the Internet. Intranets are internal communication networks that managers can create to improve communication, performance, and customer service. Intranets use the same technology that the Internet and World Wide Web are based on. Groupware is computer software that enables members of groups and teams to share information with one another to improve their communication and performance.
- LO16-6 COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR MANAGERS** There are various barriers to effective communication in organizations. To overcome these barriers and effectively communicate with others, managers must possess or develop certain communication skills. As senders of messages, managers should send messages that are clear and complete, encode messages in symbols the receiver understands, choose a medium appropriate for the message and monitored by the receiver, avoid filtering and information distortion, include a feedback mechanism in the message, and provide accurate information to ensure that misleading rumors are not spread. Communication skills for managers as receivers of messages include paying attention, being a good listener, and being empathetic. Understanding linguistic styles is also an essential communication skill for managers. Linguistic styles can vary by geographic region, gender, and country or culture. When these differences are not understood, ineffective communication can occur.

Management in Action



Topics for Discussion and Action

Discussion

1. Which medium (or media) do you think would be appropriate for each of the following kinds of messages that a subordinate could receive from his or her boss: (a) a raise, (b) not receiving a promotion, (c) an error in a report prepared by the subordinate, (d) additional job responsibilities, and (e) the schedule for company holidays for the upcoming year? Explain your choices. **[LO16-3]**
2. Discuss the pros and cons of using the Internet and World Wide Web for communication within and between organizations. **[LO16-1, 16-2, 16-3, 16-5]**
3. Why do some organizational members resist using groupware? **[LO16-5]**
4. Why do some managers find it difficult to be good listeners? **[LO16-6]**

5. Explain why subordinates might filter and distort information about problems and performance shortfalls when communicating with their bosses. What steps can managers take to eliminate filtering and information distortion? **[LO16-6]**
6. Explain why differences in linguistic style, when not understood by senders and receivers of messages, can lead to ineffective communication. **[LO16-6]**

Action

7. Interview a manager in an organization in your community to determine with whom he or she communicates on a typical day, what communication media he or she uses, and which typical communication problems the manager experiences. **[LO16-1, 16-2, 16-3, 16-4, 16-5, 16-6]**

Building Management Skills



Diagnosing Ineffective Communication **[LO16-1, 16-2, 16-3, 16-4, 16-5, 16-6]**

Think about the last time you experienced very ineffective communication with another person—someone you work with, a classmate, a friend, a member of your family. Describe the incident. Then answer the following questions:

1. Why was your communication ineffective in this incident?
2. What stages of the communication process were particularly problematic and why?
3. Describe any filtering or information distortion that occurred.
4. Do you think differences in linguistic styles adversely affected the communication that took place? Why or why not?
5. How could you have handled this situation differently so communication would have been effective?

Managing Ethically **[LO16-3, 16-5]**



Many employees use their company's Internet connections and email systems to visit websites and send personal email and instant messages.

Questions

1. Either individually or in a group, explore the ethics of using an organization's Internet connection and email system for personal purposes at work and while away from the office. Should employees have some rights to use this resource? When does their behavior become unethical?
2. Some companies track how their employees use the company's Internet connection and email system. Is it ethical for managers to read employees' personal email or to record websites that employees visit? Why or why not?

Small Group Breakout Exercise



Reducing Resistance to Advances in Information Technology [LO16-5]

Form groups of three or four people, and appoint one member as the spokesperson who will communicate your findings to the class when called on by the instructor. Then discuss the following scenario:

You are a team of managers in charge of information and communication in a large consumer products corporation. Your company has already implemented many advances in information technology. Managers and workers have access to email, the Internet, your company's own intranet, groupware, and collaboration software.

Many employees use the technology, but the resistance of some is causing communication problems. A case in point is the use of groupware and collaboration software. Many teams in your organization have access to groupware and are encouraged to use it. While some teams welcome this communication tool and actually have made suggestions for improvements, others are highly resistant to sharing documents in their teams' online workspaces.

Although you do not want to force people to use the technology, you want them to at least try it and give it a chance. You are meeting today to develop strategies for reducing resistance to the new technologies.

1. One resistant group of employees is made up of top managers. Some of them seem computer-phobic and are highly resistant to sharing information online, even with sophisticated security precautions in place. What steps will you take to get these managers to have more confidence in electronic communication?
2. A second group of resistant employees consists of middle managers. Some middle managers resist using your company's intranet. Although these managers do not resist the technology per se and do use electronic communication for multiple purposes, they seem to distrust the intranet as a viable way to communicate and get things done. What steps will you take to get these managers to take advantage of the intranet?
3. A third group of resistant employees is made up of members of groups and teams who do not want to use the groupware that has been provided to them. You think the groupware could improve their communication and performance, but they seem to think otherwise. What steps will you take to get these members of groups and teams to start using groupware?

Exploring the World Wide Web [LO16-5]



Atos SE is a global information technology company that provides IT services to major corporations to improve, facilitate, integrate, and manage operations, information, and communication across multiple locations. Visit Atos's website at <http://atos.net/en-us/home/we-are.html> and read about this company and the services it provides to improve communication. How can companies like

Atos help managers improve communication effectiveness in their organizations? What kinds of organizations and groups are most likely to benefit from services provided by Atos? Why is it beneficial for some organizations to contract with firms like Atos for their IT and communication needs rather than meet these needs internally with their own employees?

Be the Manager [LO16-1, 16-2, 16-3, 16-6]



You supervise support staff for an Internet merchandising organization that sells furniture over the Internet. You always thought that you needed to expand your staff, and just when you were about to approach your boss with such a request, business slowed. Thus your plan to try to add new employees to your staff is on hold.

However, you have noticed a troubling pattern of communication with your staff. Ordinarily, when you want a staff member to work on a task, you email that subordinate the pertinent information. For the last few months, your email requests have gone unheeded, and your subordinates seem to respond to your requests only after you visit them in person and give them a specific deadline. Each time they

apologize for not getting to the task sooner but say they are so overloaded with requests that they sometimes even stop answering their phones. Unless someone asks for something more than once, your staff seems to feel the request is not that urgent and can be put on hold. You think this state of affairs is dysfunctional and could lead to serious problems down the road. Also, you are starting to realize that your subordinates seem to have no way of prioritizing tasks—hence some very important projects you asked them to complete were put on hold until you followed up with them about the tasks. Knowing you cannot add employees to your staff in the short term, what are you going to do to improve communication with your overloaded staff?

The Wall Street Journal Case in the News

[LO16-1, 16-2, 16-3, 16-5, 16-6]



“Help! I’m on a Conference Call”

The conference call is one of the most familiar rituals of office life—and one of the most hated.

Abuses are rife. People on the line interrupt others, zone out or multi-task, forgetting to hit “mute” while talking to kids or slurping drinks.

Sales executive Erica Pearce has seen teleconferences interrupted by home FedEx deliveries, crying children and the sound of a co-worker vacuuming his house. “Nobody could hear,” she says of the cleaning. As leader of the meeting, she said into the phone, “If you’re vacuuming, I appreciate that, and you’re welcome to come to my house afterward. But you need to be on mute.”

Another conference call ended when a participant put his line on hold, starting a stream of elevator music, says Ms. Pearce of Scottsdale, Ariz., a global account executive for a software company. Conference-call complaints are so widespread that a recent comedy video showing how ridiculous conference-call behavior such as secretly playing solitaire would look “in real life” has drawn more than 6 million views.

But conference calls aren’t going anywhere; they are too useful for businesses dealing with far-flung workplaces, flexible schedules and a clampdown on business-travel expenses. Time spent in audio conferences in the U.S. is expected to grow 9.6% a year through 2017, according to Wainhouse Research, a Boston market-research firm; about 65% of all conferencing is still done by audio calls.

There are ways to fix the problems. For instance, meeting leaders must set firmer ground rules than they do for face-to-face meetings and tighter, more explicit agendas. Leaders also have to work harder to get participants talking, both by

asking more questions and by listening more.

Many conference calls are split between people in a conference room and others on a muddy-sounding call-in line. This often makes remote participants “feel like second-class citizens, like, ‘The cool kids are here,’” says Laura Stack, author of “Execution Is the Strategy.”

She advises leaders to have all participants say their names when they speak so remote callers know what’s going on. If someone cracks a joke and the room bursts into laughter, the leader should “let the others know who said what and repeat the joke,” says Ms. Stack, a Denver productivity consultant and trainer.

One of the biggest problems with virtual meetings is that it is hard for participants to build rapport with each other, a hurdle cited by 75% of 3,301 businesspeople surveyed in 2012 by RW3, a New York culture and leadership training company. The absence of nonverbal cues such as facial expressions makes many people hesitant to speak up and makes it harder to pay attention. In the survey, 71% of participants cited a lack of participation by others as a problem with virtual meetings.

To build relationships, Ms. Pearce takes time during the teleconferences she leads to have participants who don’t know each other introduce themselves, explain their roles in the project at hand and tell what they want out of the meeting, she says.

For teleconferences, agendas and goals should be clearer and more explicit than for face-to-face meetings. “You need to script them more tightly” to keep people’s attention from wandering, says Daniel Mittleman, an associate professor in computing and digital media at DePaul University, Chicago. Teleconferences

requiring interaction should be no larger than seven to nine people, experts say.

Meeting leaders should talk less than in face-to-face meetings and listen more, says Paul Donehue, president of Paul Charles & Associates, a Londonderry, N.H., sales-management consulting firm. For a problem-solving teleconference, for example, a leader might talk 40% of the time and listen 60%, compared with a 55%-to-45% ratio when meeting face-to-face for the same purpose, Mr. Donehue says.

Leaders should spend as much time on preparing questions to ask participants as on writing the agenda, Mr. Donehue says. He advises leaders to use a form with spaces to note comments by individual participants during the meeting. This helps leaders listen closely and hold participants’ attention by citing their earlier input.

Managing conflicts is harder in teleconferences. Not everyone can sense when a silent participant is frustrated or angry. “There’s sometimes a little passive-aggressiveness in that silence,” Ms. Stack says. “Some people just check out, thinking, ‘OK, you dummies, go ahead and do that. I’m going to sit here on mute.’” She suggests posing a question: “‘Jane, you’re kind of quiet. What are your thoughts?’ You sometimes get an explosion,” but this can get important issues out in the open, Ms. Stack says.

Participants can help meetings run more smoothly by volunteering to serve as moderator, keeping people on-topic and sticking to time limits. Divvying up moderating and note-taking duties can free meeting leaders to participate and keep people engaged, Ms. Stack says. Some managers encourage any participant to moderate, breaking in if a speaker wanders off-topic and asking that

everyone stick to the agenda, says Steven M. Smith, senior consultant in Seattle for SolutionsIQ, a management consulting and training firm.

Time-zone differences can irritate people who have to rise at midnight to meet with colleagues in the U.S., says Michael Schell, chief executive officer of RW3. "It's important to move the meeting times around" to be fair, he says. Also, meetings should start promptly; taking 10 minutes to get coffee might seem normal at 9 a.m. in New York, but it can seem disrespectful to a colleague in Australia who got out of bed to join the call, Mr. Schell says.

Videoconferencing can solve some of the problems. The technology is increasingly inexpensive and easy to use, and a growing number of applications, such as Vidyo and Blue Jeans

Network, can connect users on a variety of devices, including webcams, laptops, tablets or smartphones, says David Coleman, founder and managing director of Collaborative Strategies Inc., San Mateo, Calif.

The technology can create other challenges, though. Mr. Smith says participants who aren't tech-savvy often consume valuable meeting time getting used to unfamiliar systems.

Videoconferencing also can make people self-conscious. Many people avoid video, Ms. Stack says, because they don't want to put on makeup or change their workout clothes. "I cannot tell you how many times I've heard people say, 'I don't know what's wrong with my webcam. I can't get it to work, so I'm just going to be here in voice,'" she says.

Source: Laura Landro, "The Doctor's Team Will See You Now," *The Wall Street Journal*, February 18, 2014. Copyright © 2014 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. Reproduced with permission via Copyright Clearance Center.

Questions for Discussion

1. How and why can conference calls facilitate effective communication in organizations?
2. How and why might conference calls have the potential to lead to ineffective communication in organizations?
3. What are some potential sources of noise in the communication process during conference calls?
4. When are conference calls likely to be most and least effective in organizations?

CHAPTER 17

Managing Conflict, Politics, and Negotiation

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to:

- LO17-1** Explain why conflict arises, and identify the types and sources of conflict in organizations.
- LO17-2** Describe conflict management strategies that managers can use to resolve conflict effectively.
- LO17-3** Understand the nature of negotiation and why integrative bargaining is more effective than distributive negotiation.
- LO17-4** Describe ways in which managers can promote integrative bargaining in organizations.
- LO17-5** Explain why managers need to be attuned to organizational politics, and describe the political strategies that managers can use to become politically skilled.



A MANAGER'S CHALLENGE

Indra Nooyi Collaborates and Builds Alliances at PepsiCo

How can managers effectively collaborate and build alliances? By all accounts, Indra Nooyi is a powerful business leader.¹ As CEO and chairman of PepsiCo, she oversees a company with over \$66 billion in net revenues and around 274,000 employees; Pepsi-Cola, Lay's, Doritos, Tropicana, Mountain Dew, Gatorade, and Quaker are among Pepsi's many well-known brands.² She effectively uses her vision for PepsiCo, "Performance with Purpose," to both motivate and guide Pepsi employees and communicate PepsiCo's stance on important issues such as health, obesity, and protecting the natural environment around the world.³ In 2014 she was ranked 13th on *Forbes* magazine's list of "The 25 Most Powerful Women in the World."⁴

Nooyi, born and raised in India, was senior vice president of strategic planning at PepsiCo before assuming the top post on October 1, 2006.⁵ When the PepsiCo's board of directors was deciding who would be the next CEO of the company, two senior executives at PepsiCo were under consideration, Nooyi and Michael White, vice chairman.⁶ When Nooyi found out that the board had chosen her, one of her top priorities was to ensure that White would stay at PepsiCo, the two would maintain the great relationship they had with each other that had evolved from years of working together, and she would have his support and advice.⁷ At the time, White was on vacation at his beach house in Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Nooyi flew to Cape Cod and the two walked on the beach, had ice cream together, and

even played a duet (Nooyi and White both are fond of music and in this case, he played the piano and she sang). Prior to leaving Cape Cod, she told White, "Tell me whatever I need to do to keep you, and I will."⁸ Ultimately White decided to remain at PepsiCo as CEO of PepsiCo International as well as vice chairman of PepsiCo.⁹ At a meeting announcing Nooyi's appointment, Nooyi told employees, "I treat Mike as my partner. He could easily have been CEO." White said, "I play the piano and Indra sings."¹⁰ Nooyi was named Chairman of PepsiCo in 2007. In 2009 White retired from PepsiCo.¹¹

Nooyi excels at building alliances both inside and outside of PepsiCo. Given the breadth of her responsibilities, she decided to increase the team of top managers she works closely with. She has good relations with key decision makers around the world in both government and business.¹²



Indra Nooyi, CEO and chairman of PepsiCo, excels at building alliances both inside and outside of PepsiCo.