

1. Explain the communications process.
2. What are the extremes of media richness?
3. Explain the differences between formal and informal communication channels.
4. What are the three types of barriers to communication and examples of each?
5. Explain multicommunicating.
6. What are some ways digital communication is altering traditional communication?
7. What is the downside of the digital age?
8. Explain how social media can be a benefit in business.
9. Explain the five listening styles and how to be a good listener.
10. What are some tips for becoming a good reader?

Management in Action

CASE Study *#4* **Hootsuite Uses Social Media to Manage Aspects of the Human Resources Function**

Ambrosia Humphrey's passion and drive are hard to miss—especially for the CEO with whom she had to share a desk when she began working at social media management company Hootsuite.

Humphrey, now vice president of talent at the Vancouver-based company, says she and CEO Ryan Holmes both have “disruptive” personalities and like finding new ways to do things. . . .

Hootsuite offers online dashboards in 15 languages to help companies manage and analyze their social media accounts, including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google Plus and others. . . .

Naturally, Hootsuite has folded media into its HR efforts for recruiting, onboarding, recognition, performance management and brand management. The company uses the private social network Yammer for internal communications and a social platform called 7Geese for performance management.

The effect of social media on Humphrey's own workplace is undeniable.

Shortly after Steve Johnson, Hootsuite's chief revenue officer, joined the company as its 26th employee in 2011, Humphrey decided to hold a recruiting fair with just five days to plan. Johnson was worried they'd have an empty room, but Humphrey kicked her social media machine into high gear and the place was packed. . . .

Humphrey is a realist about the fact that it's not possible to control exactly how and when each employee will use social media. She has built an HR team of 15, and her group is vastly outnumbered by employees with multiple social media accounts of their own. Each staff member receives some social media training and is then trusted to act responsibly.

“We're a social organization,” Humphrey says. “In my reality, if people aren't happy, they tweet about it.

That's a PR problem. I would rather have an ongoing dialogue with people. There's no need to be disgruntled and push it out somewhere else.”

She strives to make every HR initiative transparent so that employees don't share their grievances with the rest of the world, 140 characters at a time.

Training begins with social media certification through Hootsuite University, which educates individuals on what social media can do to help them in their job, how it can affect their careers, and how it can provide product training.

Humphrey follows the mantra “tweet to love not war” and sees herself as an ambassador of her company. Employees are encouraged to use the hashtag #hootsuitelife to present their perspectives on what it's like to work at the company. Postings include photos of rooftop meetings, links to media rankings of Hootsuite as a top workplace, and employee kudos to each other. Together, the postings give people a feel for the quirkiness of life at the company.

Schmidt sees #hootsuitelife as a perfect example of how Humphrey is willing to take risks that other HR leaders won't. “It's about empowering your employees,” he says. “All employees have the opportunity to be great brand ambassadors.”

Culture is one of Humphrey's top priorities, and Hootsuite's social media efforts are part of a larger commitment to transparency. Humphrey cites “Ask Me Anything” all-staff meetings with the CEO, “hackathons” where staff assemble to tackle problems (they teamed up to create a recruitment video one day), and a “working out loud” philosophy where people like to show their work and get feedback.

In a company blog, Humphrey pointed out that transparency fueled by social media can give companies the same kind of feedback from employees that they find to be so valuable when it comes to customers.

"Thanks to social media, feedback no longer needs to be a horoscope delivered too late; it's about active listening for both employee and organizational empowerment," she wrote. . . .

Like many people, Humphrey has found that social media can sometimes blur the lines between one's personal and professional lives. . . . Having her engagement make the local evening news and trend locally on Twitter was a touch mortifying, she admits—even for someone known to love transparency and social media.

Source: Excerpted from T. Lytle, "Social Work: Hootsuite's VP of Talent Takes Social Media to the Next Level," HR Magazine, August 2014, pp. 40–42. Copyright © 2014, Society for Human Resource Management, Alexandria, VA. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. To what extent is Hootsuite's use of social media consistent with recommendations about matching the richness of media to the situation at hand?
2. How does Hootsuite's use of social media tend to eliminate barriers to communication? Explain.
3. Which of the downsides to social media are occurring at Hootsuite? Explain.
4. What are the primary benefits of social media at Hootsuite?
5. What does this case teach you about the use of social media in today's organizations? Explain.

Legal/Ethical Challenge

Should Professors' Tweets Be Part of Their Academic Freedom to Comment on Controversial Topics?

Two professors experienced negative consequences because of the content of their tweets. Professor Steven Salaita, professor of indigenous studies, "wrote dozens of inflammatory tweets condemning Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's military assaults in Gaza," according to *The Wall Street Journal*. He engaged in these writings after quitting a tenured job at Virginia Tech but before his job offer from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana was formally approved. He had accepted an offer from the university. The university subsequently did not approve his job offer. This decision has rankled academic free-speech advocates. According to the *Journal*, a representative from the "Illinois branch of the American Association of University Professors said if the school voided a job offer due to tweets about the Palestinian-Israel conflict it 'would be a clear violation of Professor Salaita's academic freedom.'"

The second incident involved a journalism professor at the University of Kansas. According to the *Journal*, he was "temporarily suspended after he attacked the National Rifle Association in a tweet about the Washington Navy Yard shooting." He had tweeted

"the blood is on the hands of the #NRA. Next time, let it be YOUR sons and daughters. Shame on you. May God damn you."

Source: Excerpted from D. Belkin, "Tweets on Israel Cost Professor a New Job," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 14, 2014, p. A6.

SOLVING THE CHALLENGE

What do you think should be done with professors who tweet on controversial issues?

1. While these two professors may have shown bad judgment, they should not be severely punished. Academic freedom allows professors to comment on controversial issues and it is a violation of this right to revoke a job offer or suspend someone for their tweets on such matters.
2. They both got what they deserved. Academic freedom doesn't allow people to make outlandish comments. Professors, like any professional employees, should know that they represent their employer at all times. Offensive comments make for bad publicity.
3. If the tweets were made on personal devices, then the professors should not be penalized. Instead, sanctions should be applied if the tweets were made on university equipment.
4. Invent other options.