

Introduction to Business Communication and Professionalism**Objectives**

Demonstrate your learning during the semester and provide a portfolio of written work. Show what you learned in Business Communication, create a set of writing samples that can be used if requested for job applications, analyze your own communication, and set goals for future professional communication.

Overview

A portfolio would be commonly brought to an interview that focuses on communication and writing skills. In that type of professional portfolio, traditional elements include a hook, a bio statement, and samples of work.

Your assignment. Complete a personalized, semester-long portfolio project intended to integrate the material covered in class. Unlike a portfolio brought to a job, you will also demonstrate your analysis of your communication skills. Both good and bad communication have a lot to analyze. Your analysis or "critical approach" should focus on the "why" and the "how" (Hoger, 1998, p. 64-65). The portfolio should reflect your self-assessment of your writing and presentation skills, and your communication plans for the future.

Each portfolio will be individualized to each student. Aim to consider how you can demonstrate expertise on your field (e.g., marketing, accounting, finance, etc.) in what you write and the goals you set for yourself.

Contents. Use activities, writing, and exercises from the class. You should revise drafts from earlier in the semester for the final portfolio.

Tell your story of your growth as a communicator with the portfolio. The format is a written document and should demonstrate excellence in business communication. Think of presenting a report on your work in this class during the semester to a supervisor or another professor. You will prove what you have learned and talk about how you have improved or plan to improve. Peer review will take place for several of the written documents. Use the peer review feedback as you revise for a final draft. Also, it is recommended you also take your documents to the Writing Center or Business Communication Center for feedback and run them through Grammarly (however, you are still responsible for proofreading the contents on your own as well).

Formatting. This assignment will be assessed on your document layout as well. Think carefully about how you can make the portfolio a cohesive document with a logical, visual flow. How will you gain the reader's attention (hint: an engaging/professional cover page)? How will you make it clear to the reader what the layout of the document is (hint: table of contents)? How will you help a reader identify different sections and where they are (hint: headings and page numbers)?
**If you need help with formatting, I have included some links to tutorials in this document.

Submission. Upload the final .PDF or Word Document to eLearning as one compiled document. **Do not submit as separate attachments or a series of unconnected documents** (as we learn in BCOM, consider how you can make reading the document easy for the reader). The total length is up to you as long as you include all categories described below. Tell your story and integrate the topics covered in the course.

Introduction to Business Communication and Professionalism**Portfolio Major Sections**

REMEMBER: Complete each item, try to get feedback on its editing from others, and include it in the portfolio. Each item should show a significant time investment and attention to detail. All aspects should be polished, with careful, thoughtful editing.

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. A short self-analysis of your business communication skills and an introduction (could be a version of your LinkedIn "About Me")
4. Writing Section. The documents in this section should be error-free and polished. If a document was peer-reviewed, it should be revised from your initial submission for peer review. Elements in the writing section:
 - a. 1/2 to 2/3 of a page (single-spaced) reflection about your writing skills. This essay introduces the writing section.
 - b. Report (Gary recommendation)
 - c. Email
 - d. Comets to the Core essay
 - e. At least 2 other documents that you have written this semester that could prove your competence as a communicator. Please do not submit a document from a job or internship if you are under a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).
 - i. Provide a short introductory paragraph of background as to how each document reflects your communication competence.
 - ii. How many documents should you include? A high-quality portfolio would show a variety of 5+ documents.
 - iii. This could include texts or emails exchanged with a supervisor or coworker, communication with classmates, or a cover letter sent for an internship. You could include creative work here such as website design, a blog or social media post, a newspaper column, etc. Please do not include papers from other classes.
 - iv. If you feel uncomfortable sharing documents here are two alternatives to this section:
 1. Vaguely discuss the communication you do at work (so as to not violate the NDA) and focus on the communication skills you use. I care about the communication, not the subject matter in the professional exchange. You do not have to have a specific example/document or talk about a work project explicitly but, for instance, how you exhibit professionalism via texting or email. You could talk about mistakes you've learned from, etc.
 2. Find examples of business communication and analyze them. You could look at corporate marketing, annual reports, etc. Include examples (portions of them if they are long) and explain the quality of each document.
5. Oral & Visual Communication Section. This section showcases your development as a speaker (interpersonally, publicly, etc.)
 - a. 1/2 to 2/3 of a page (single-spaced) reflection of your speaking skills. This introduces the oral communication section.
 - b. LinkedIn Screenshots: Portions of your portfolio with an explanation of why they are effective. You can also include what you intend to improve after the course.

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- c. Presentation Reflection: You have already completed reflection tables for this class based on your presentation. In this reflection section, provide a short analysis of your performance and that of the group with a primary focus on lessons learned and future goals in presentations (can mention inspiration from other groups that presented).
 - d. Slides (individually prepared – not your group slides)
 - e. At least 2 other documents or reflections that demonstrate your speaking skills. For example, this could include a discussion of a presentation in another class this semester. You could talk about an interview you had for a job or internship. You could talk about your ability to video conference or do presentations online.
6. Additional Development Section: This section incorporates other elements of development beyond writing and speaking.
- a. 1/2 to 2/3 of a page (single-spaced) reflection of your skill development based on the topics in this section.
 - b. Feedback and Criticism: Often, it is difficult to critique others. But that is something you have been asked to do throughout your peer reviews and presentation feedback. What have you learned from giving and receiving feedback? How do these experiences (and other experiences of feedback beyond this class) impact how you will give and receive feedback/critique in the future? If you'd like, you could display this analysis in a **SWOT** format.
 - c. Lab Reflection: Review the major lessons learned in the lab. What was most valuable? What was least valuable? You can format this as a review.
7. A short conclusion with communication goals specific to your field and future goals.
8. An appendix
- a. Optional
 - b. Could include other things you want to show off from this semester

In addition to featuring work and reflections from this semester, consider how this portfolio will showcase your skills in document design? How can you make the portfolio (1) easy to read, (2) visually interesting, and (3) feel like a cohesive document?

Resources to help with formatting in Word:**Images:**

- Inserting images: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/word-2016-essential-training/illustrating-with-pictures-and-shapes?u=70198226>
- Positioning and sizing images: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/word-2016-essential-training/positioning-rotating-and-sizing-pictures?u=70198226>
- Wrapping text around your images: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/word-2016-essential-training/wrapping-text-around-graphics?u=70198226>

Headers, footers, and page numbers: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/word-2016-essential-training/using-headers-footers-and-page-numbering?u=70198226>

Table of Contents: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/word-quick-tips/create-a-table-of-contents-in-word?u=70198226>

Introduction to Business Communication and Professionalism**Grading Model**

Instructors grade a portfolio holistically. I use the rubrics for individual assignments like the resume rubric in my overall analysis, but I do not assign points for sub-sections that add up to a total score based on the detailed assignment rubrics. Instead, those rubrics are used broadly, and I look for how the evidence supports the claims made in the introduction sections of the portfolio. The goal is to grade your mastery and to do so as anonymously as possible when looking at each portfolio.

References

Hoger, E. (1998). A portfolio assignment for analyzing business communications. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 61(3), p. 64-66. doi: doi.org/10.1177/108056999806100307

See below for the portfolio rubric.

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| | Incomplete (F) | Poor (D) | Fair (C) | Good (B) | Excellent (A) |
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| INTRODUCTION, CONCLUSION, & ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT (20%) | Your supervisor would consider the poor quality of work, missing sections, lack of analysis and/or your sloppiness as a sign that you may need to be replaced. This section shows a misunderstanding of communication basics and conventions. Management would look for someone else to do this job. | Your supervisor would be troubled by the poor quality of work. You do not demonstrate personal reflection and/or an understanding of business communication. Your sections have significant errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. The section must be rewritten before being sent or distributed within or outside of your department. Management may feel time has been wasted on the part of you or your supervisor. | Your supervisor would ask you to revise and edit before allowing people outside of your department to see the document. The sections are either incomplete, lack in-depth reflection, or display of just the minimum of communication knowledge. There are many errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. Management would be dissatisfied and have to spend some time suggesting edits and revisions. | Your supervisor would send this document with minor editing. You had very few errors and showed significant consideration of professional communication. Your work would "get the job done" as it meets the expectations of professional writing. Documents meet all criteria, and with few exceptions, exceed expectations. Management would be satisfied and have to spend minimal time suggesting any edits. | Your supervisor would send this document or approve the work without any changes. Exceeds criteria, provides deep insight, and gives the reader a holistic understanding of their strengths, weaknesses, and ability to communicate. No easily noticeable errors and significant consideration of audience. Management would be impressed and remember your work when a promotion is discussed. |
| WRITING SECTION (40%) | Your supervisor would consider the poor quality of work, missing sections and/or your sloppiness as a sign that you may need to be replaced. This section shows a misunderstanding of communication basics and conventions. Management would look for someone else to do this job. | Your supervisor would be troubled by the poor quality of work. Revision and editing are essential. Parts of this section show no improvement. You do not demonstrate an understanding of professional writing. There are significant errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. The section must be rewritten before being sent or distributed within or outside of your department. Management may feel time has been wasted on the part of you or your supervisor. | Your supervisor would ask you to revise and edit before allowing people outside of your department to see the document. The documents demonstrate little improvement and meet minimum expectations of professional writing. There are many errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. Management would be dissatisfied and have to spend some time suggesting edits and revisions on some of the documents. | Your supervisor would send this document with minor editing. You had very few errors and showed significant consideration of audience. Your work would "get the job done" as it meets the expectations of professional writing. Documents demonstrate improvement and meet expectations of professional writing. Management would be satisfied and have to spend minimal time suggesting any edits. | Your supervisor would send this document or approve the work without any changes. Exceeds expectations of professional writing. No easily noticeable errors and significant consideration of audience. Documents demonstrate clear improvement. Management would be impressed and remember your work when a promotion is discussed. |
| ORAL COMM (20%) | Your supervisor would consider the poor quality of work, missing sections and/or your sloppiness as a sign that you may need to | Your supervisor would be troubled by the poor quality of work. You do not demonstrate an understanding of professional and public speaking. Your reflections | Your supervisor would ask you to revise and edit before allowing people outside of your department to see the document. The documents are either incomplete, | Your supervisor would send this document with minor editing. You had very few errors and showed significant consideration of professional | Your supervisor would send this document or approve the work without any changes. Exceeds criteria and demonstrates well-thought-out reflection/analysis |

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| be replaced. This section shows a misunderstanding of speaking basics and conventions. Management would look for someone else to do this job. | have significant errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. The section must be rewritten before being sent or distributed within or outside of your department. Management may feel time has been wasted on the part of you or your supervisor. | lack in-depth reflection, or display of just the minimum of oral communication knowledge. There are many errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. Management would be dissatisfied and have to spend some time suggesting edits and revisions. | and public speaking. Your work would "get the job done" as it meets the expectations of professional writing. Documents meet all criteria, and with few exceptions, exceed expectations. Management would be satisfied and have to spend minimal time suggesting | of professional and public speaking. No easily noticeable errors and significant consideration of audience. Management would be impressed and remember your work when a promotion is discussed. |
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| be replaced. This section shows a misunderstanding of speaking basics and conventions. Management would look for someone else to do this job. | have significant errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. The section must be rewritten before being sent or distributed within or outside of your department. Management may feel time has been wasted on the part of you or your supervisor. | lack in-depth reflection, or display of just the minimum of oral communication knowledge. There are many errors, stylistic issues, and content choice issues. Management would be dissatisfied and have to spend some time suggesting edits and revisions. | and public speaking. Your work would "get the job done" as it meets the expectations of professional writing. Documents meet all criteria, and with few exceptions, exceed expectations. Management would be satisfied and have to spend minimal time suggesting any edits. | of professional and public speaking. No easily noticeable errors and significant consideration of audience. Management would be impressed and remember your work when a promotion is discussed. |
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| COHESION (10%) | Incoherent (F) | Inconsistent (D) | Logical (C) | Congruous (B) | Harmonious (A) |
| | Submission was uploaded as a series of documents, and virtually no effort was made to ensure consistency between sections. Missing materials. | Direct contradictions can be quickly and easily identified. Little effort put toward presenting various analyses as a single unified submission. Missing materials or difficult to find materials. | Various submissions were uploaded as a single uniform document with limited contradictions, errors, or unexplained decisions. All basic materials included. | Virtually no contradictions exist within the submission, and some level of explanation for decisions that may appear unrelated or at-odds. All materials included and effectively introduced. | Analysis and communication decisions made clearly based on career aspirations. All materials included. Portfolio goes "above and beyond" on some sections such as including evidence of communication ability. |
| DESIGN & FORMAT (10%) | Unreadable (F) | Unclear (D) | Readable (C) | Distinct (B) | Superb (A) |
| | Significant portions of the assignment were illegible because of format, design, and/or use of a prohibited file format (.pages, .numbers, etc.) | Although the submission was legible, it was confusing and/or difficult to read because of font size, use of color, or overall organization. | Design was simple, and in no way inhibited the reader from understanding any portion of the submission. Organization issues were minor. | Submission was not only legible and well-organized, but it was also structured in a way that placed the reader's experience as a priority. | Design was consistent throughout the submission, and expressed the author's personality and message in a professional and creative way. |