

CHAPTER 3

Meeting the Needs of the Audience

► REAL PEOPLE *in the workplace*

Phil Wegman, Program Director of Skills Enhancement for the Center for Business and Technology, sighed deeply and said, “I receive two to three calls *every day* from companies desperate for Spanish language training. They need to teach their supervisors how to communicate more effectively with customers as well as with employees for whom English is a second language.”

Phil’s client base is enormous, covering literally hundreds of fields. These include dental and medical, criminal justice, public safety, transit, government, and education, as well as industries such as hospitality management (hotels and restaurants), construction, casinos, manufacturing, warehousing, banking, retail, childcare, and accounting.

Police officers, nurses, physicians, and paramedics, for example, have asked Phil to provide them occupational language training that is “work specific and real life.” Then, when an emergency situation occurs, the safety personnel can ask, in Spanish, French, German, or Chinese, “Where does it hurt?”

McDonald’s, Hardee’s, and Burger King supervisors need to know enough Spanish to be able to say to their staff, “Here’s how you ring up this sale,” “Here’s how you make this meal,” or “Here’s how you clean this piece of equipment.” Of equal importance, companies ask Phil to teach their supervisors how to answer customer questions or to take customer orders. Many fast-food restaurants have on staff a worker who is fluent in a second language. However, the pace is so hectic in fast food that the restaurants can’t always pull that one employee off the job to handle the situation. Thus, *all* supervisors need the proper language skills to provide direct commands, make simple statements, or answer common questions in a foreign language.

There is one more key component to language knowledge, Phil states. “When a company teaches its employees a different language, the company honors that culture. The company tells its client base, ‘We’re trying to learn who you are and what makes you unique.’” The company is learning cross-cultural information to minimize barriers; the company is saying to its staff and customers, “We respect who you are and we want to work with you. That’s just good business.” ◀



CHAPTER GOALS

When you complete this chapter, you will be able to do the following:

1. Recognize the audience's knowledge of the subject matter, role, and diversity so you can write and speak more successfully.
2. Define terms that might be confusing for different audiences.
3. Consider your audience's role (management, lateral colleague, subordinate, vendor, or customer) when you speak or write.
4. Recognize the diversity of your audience, including gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, physical limitations, and culture.
5. Consider the importance of multicultural and cross-cultural audiences in both your written and oral expression.
6. Avoid biased language in relation to your audience's age, physical limitations, and gender.
7. Achieve audience involvement to build rapport and motivate the reader. You can achieve audience involvement if you avoid commands, ask questions, use positive words, employ "you usage," focus on audience benefit, and personalize text with names.

WWW

To learn more about audience, visit our Web Companion at <http://www.prenhall.com/gerson>.

Phil's Communication Challenge

According to Phil, "Arctic Cooling Technologies is a manufacturer of cooling towers and air-cooled condensers for power generation, industrial, refrigeration, and heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) markets. To help manufacture cooling towers, equipment, and parts, Arctic employs several non-native workers for whom English is a second language. These employees are excellent workers, but the company realizes that language barriers can cause problems with productivity, quality, and safety. Because of this, the company called me and asked for my help to provide them customized language training. Arctic's 30 Spanish-speaking manufacturing employees needed to improve their English skills so they could communicate with their supervisors, understand the oral and written instructions related to machine operation, and communicate with the company's human resources department regarding their employee benefits, retirement packages, and 401(k)s. The English-speaking supervisors needed to learn 'workable Spanish,' enough knowledge to say, 'Good morning,' 'Hello,' 'Goodbye,' or to ask, 'How are you?' 'Any questions?' or 'How can I help?'

My challenge was to write a proposal to Arctic responding to their request for language training. Before I could write the proposal, I needed to discover

- What my audience's level of education was
- Whether their knowledge of English was beginning, intermediary, or advanced
- How much time the company wanted to devote to language training
- If the company would provide the employees release time for training
- Whether the training would be mandatory or voluntary
- How much money the company would allocate for training
- How the company planned to assess the success of the training classes"

See pages 87–89 to learn how Phil met his communication challenge.

RECOGNIZING THE AUDIENCE

In the business world, you will never write or speak in a vacuum. When you write your memo, e-mail message, letter, report, brochure, or Web site text, *someone* will read it. When you give an oral briefing, convene a meeting, communicate with customers in a salesroom, or make a speech at a conference, *someone* will be listening. The question is, "Who?"

- Who is your audience?
- What does this reader or listener know?
- What does this reader or listener not know?

- What must you write or say to ensure that your audience understands your point?
- How do you communicate to more than one person (multiple audiences)?
- What is your audience's position in relation to your job title?
- What diversity issues (gender, age, sexual orientation, cultural, multicultural) must you consider?
- What tone should you use when communicating?
- How do you ensure audience involvement?

If you do not know the answers to these questions, you might fail to communicate. Your letter may contain jargon or acronyms the reader will not understand. The tone of the memo may be inappropriate for management, for your subordinates, or for your customers. Your verbal communication might not factor in your audience's unique culture and language. To communicate successfully, you must recognize your audience's level of understanding. You must factor in your audience's unique traits, which could have an impact on your communication success. These could include many variables, as shown in Table 3.1.

Knowledge of the Subject Matter

What does your audience know about the subject matter? Do they work closely with you on the project? That would make them *specialists* in your field. Does the audience have general knowledge of the subject matter, even though their expertise is elsewhere? That would make the audience *semi-specialists* in your field. Is the audience totally unknowledgeable about the subject matter? That would make them a *lay audience*. Finally, could your audience be a combination of these types? If so, you would be confronted with a *multiple audience*.

Specialists

Specialists work in a field in which they display expertise. They might work directly with you in your department, or they might work in a similar capacity for another company. Wherever they work, they are your colleagues because they share your educational background, work experience, or level of understanding. If you are a computer programmer, for example, another computer programmer who is working on the same or similar system is a specialist. If you are an accountant working with tax laws, other accountants are specialists.

Table 3.1 Audience Variables

Knowledge of the Subject Matter • Specialists • Semi-specialists • Lay audience • Multiple readers and listeners
Roles • Management • Coworker • Subordinate • Customer • Vendor • Other business professionals
Issues of Diversity • Gender • Age • Race and/or religion • Sexual orientation • Disabilities • Language and/or culture of origin—<i>multicultural</i> or <i>cross-cultural</i>

Once you recognize that your audience consists of specialists, what does this tell you? These readers have the following characteristics:

- They are experts in the field you are writing about. If you write an e-mail message to one of your department colleagues about a project you two are working on, your associate is a specialist. If you write a letter to a vendor requesting specifications for one of their company's systems, that reader is a specialist.
- Specialists understand the terminology of their field. Communication with other specialists can include jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations.
- Specialists require minimal detail regarding standard procedures or scientific, mathematical, or technical theories.
- Specialists read to discover new knowledge or for updates regarding the status of a project.
- Specialists need little background information regarding a project's history or objectives unless the specific subject matter of the correspondence is new to them. If, for example, you are writing a status report to your first-line supervisor, who has been involved in a project since its inception, then you will not need to flesh out the project's history.

Figure 3.1 is a letter written from a specialist (a state department of transportation employee) to another specialist (a contractor).

Semi-Specialists

Semi-specialists include coworkers in other departments. Semi-specialists also might include bosses, subordinates, or colleagues who work in similar professions. For instance, if you are a computer programmer, the accountants, human resources supervisor, and graphic artists in your company are semi-specialists. These individuals have worked around your company's products or services and, therefore, are familiar with the subject matter.

Your bosses are often semi-specialists because they might no longer work closely with the equipment. Although they might have been actively involved at one time, as they moved more and more into management, they moved further and further away from hands-on knowledge.

Your subordinates might be semi-specialists because of their levels of education or work experience. Finally, colleagues at other companies might be semi-specialists if they are not familiar with your company's procedures or in-house jargon, acronyms, and abbreviations.

Additional information:

See Chapter 10, "Traditional Correspondence: Memos and Letters," and Chapter 7, "Oral Presentations and Nonverbal Communication in the Workplace."

Lay Audience

Customers and clients who neither work for your company nor have any knowledge about your field of expertise are the lay audience. If you work in telecommunications for a telephone company, for example, and you write a letter to a client regarding a problem with the company's phone line, your audience is a lay reader. If your field of expertise is bio-medical equipment and you write a procedures manual for the patient who is the end user, you are writing to a lay audience. Although you understand your subject matter, your reader or listener is not an expert in the field. These people are learning about a subject matter which is outside of their daily realm of experience.

Communicating to a lay audience is difficult. It is easy to write or speak to a specialist who thoroughly understands the subject matter you are discussing. However, communicating to a lay audience totally outside your field of expertise is demanding. To communicate successfully to a lay audience, remember that these people share the following characteristics:

- Lay audiences are unfamiliar with your subject matter. They do not understand the product or service. Therefore, you should communicate simply. That is not to say that you should insult the lay audience with a remedial discussion or with a patronizing tone. Explain your topic clearly. Achieve clarity through precise word usage, depth of detail, and simple graphics.

FIGURE 3.1 Specialist Writing to Specialist

Specialists professionally involved in this project would be familiar with the project number. No further background information is needed.

"Sheet C3.1" and "C7.1" are construction documents that only these specialists have access to, not ones readily available to the public.

"Road striping," "stop bars," "signal head #10," "5-section," and "cross slope," common terms in this industry, are clear to specialists.

"ROW," an abbreviation for "right of way," does not need to be defined since it is often used by these specialists.

Missouri Department of Transportation
5117 East 31st Street
Kansas City, MO 64128

April 17, 2009

Mr. Bob Walker
DTR Construction
7120 W. 130th Road
Parkston, MO 76221

Reference: Project No. BRO-451 (17)

Dear Mr. Walker:

We have completed our review of the Highway 135 and Hillside Drive intersection improvements for Parkton Independent School District. The following revisions need to be made to the plans before we can continue our review:

1. On sheet C3.1, road striping revisions are needed. Left turn arrows must be painted 75' behind all new stop bars.
2. On sheet C7.1, signal head #10 needs to be a 5-section head instead of a 3-section head, in accordance with Missouri ordinance 733BR911A. We also need to see the D37 and D38 specifications for these signal designs.
3. Please provide us with a larger typical cross-section of Highway 135. A note on this cross-section should be placed to match the existing cross slope of the highway.
4. We need a legal description of new ROW along the frontage. Also, let me confirm our phone conversation on April 4. The Department of Transportation will honor the gas company's easement for future Highway 135 construction.

Once the plans have been revised according to the itemized points above, please resubmit them. You can fax them to Orle Vernon, the Department of Transportation's Parkton project contact. His fax number is 816-555-2121. If I can answer any questions, call me at 816-100-9911.

Sincerely,

Dale Askew
Permit Specialist

cc: Orle Vernon
Parkton Independent School District

- Since lay audiences do not understand your work environment, they will not understand any of your in-house jargon, abbreviations, or acronyms. Define unfamiliar terms.
- A lay audience might need background information. When explaining information to the lay audience, provide sufficient causes, results, or rationale.

FIGURE 3.2 Specialist Writing to Lay Audience

Missouri Department of Transportation
5117 East 31st Street
Kansas City, MO 64128

May 6, 2009

Jamie Wilson
The Bellaire Daily
205 Main
Bellaire, MO

Dear Jamie:

District 6 of the Missouri Department of Transportation is proud to introduce a free feature available for your newspaper. *TransporT* is a bimonthly column from the department personnel who service your newspaper's coverage area. This column delivers *useful* information about transportation issues related to your readers' unique needs. It's a great way to familiarize your readers with the people responsible for the planning, building, and maintaining of roads your city uses every day.

I have enclosed a copy of this month's *TransporT* news column for your review. Please use any of the information you would like in *The Bellaire Daily*. I'll continue to send *TransporT* columns to you twice a month. Later this summer, I'll contact you to see how your readers are enjoying the columns and to find what additional information they might like to read.

Thanks so much for your help, Jamie. If you have any questions, please call me at (813) 555-1212 or e-mail me at joe_b@modot.com.

Sincerely,

Joe Baker
Senior Public Affairs Specialist

Figure 3.1, shown earlier in this chapter, talks about highly technical aspects of transportation, such as slopes, striping, and easements. This letter to a lay audience just mentions "roads."

Positive words, such as "proud," "free," "useful," "great way," and "enjoying," are used to build rapport.

Communicating effectively requires that you recognize the differences among specialists, semi-specialists, and lay audiences. If you incorrectly assume that all readers or listeners are experts in your field, you will create problems for yourself as well as for your readers. Figure 3.2 is a letter written from a specialist (a state department of transportation employee) to a lay reader (a newspaper editor).

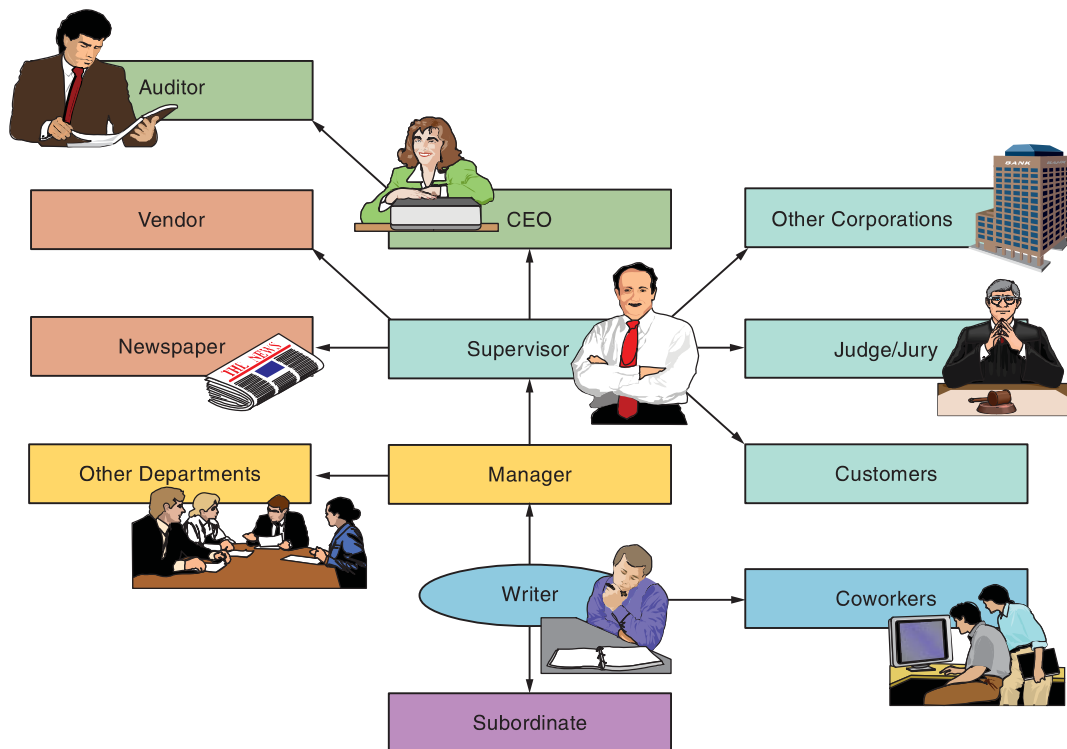
Multiple Audiences

Information is not always communicated to just one type of audience. Sometimes your correspondence has multiple audiences. You will write or speak to specialists, semi-specialists, and lay audiences simultaneously. For example, when writing a report, people might assume that the first-line supervisor will be the only reader. This is not the case, however. The first-line supervisor could send a copy of your report to the manager, who could then submit the same report to the executive officer. Similarly, your first-line supervisor might send the report to your colleagues or to your subordinates.

Your report might be sent to other departments. In fact, the report could go outside your company to clients, vendors, newspapers, agency auditors, or eventually to the court system (juries, lawyers, and judges). Figure 3.3 shows what this communication challenge looks like.

Communicating to multiple audiences with different levels of understanding and different reasons for reading creates a challenge. When you add the necessity of using the

FIGURE 3.3 Multiple Audiences



appropriate tone for all of these varied readers, the writing challenge becomes even greater. How do you meet such a challenge? The first key to success is recognizing that multiple audiences exist and that they share the following characteristics:

- Your intended audience will not necessarily be your only readers. Others might receive copies of your correspondence or hear your speech.
- Some of the multiple readers will not be familiar with the subject matter. You will have to provide background data (objectives, overviews) to clarify the history of the report for these readers. In a short letter, memo, report, or e-mail, this background information should be brief. Provide a reference line suggesting where the readers can find out more about the subject matter if they wish—"Reference: Operations Procedure 321 dated 9/21/09." In longer reports, background data will appear in the summary or abstract, as well as in the report's introduction.
- Summaries, abstracts, introductions, and references are especially valuable when you consider one more fact regarding written communication: reports, memos, letters, and e-mail are kept on file. When you write the correspondence initially, you can assume that your reader or readers have knowledge of the subject matter. Months (or years) later when the report is retrieved from the files, will your readers still be familiar with the topic? Will you still have the same readers? Future readers need background information.
- Correspondence for multiple readers must have a matter-of-fact, businesslike tone. You should not be too authoritative, since upper-level management might read the memo, letter, or report. However, you should not be patronizing, since lower-level subordinates might also read the correspondence.

Additional information:

See Chapter 17, "Short, Informal Reports."

Defining Terms for Different Audiences

Multiple audiences often need terms defined. To communicate successfully with multiple audiences, do any or all of the following:

- Define words or phrases either parenthetically or in a glossary. For example, you could define ATM parenthetically: ATM (asynchronous transfer mode). Then,

FIGURE 3.4 Effective Memo for Multiple Audiences

Date: July 7, 2009
To: Distribution
From: Rochelle Kroft
Subject: Revision of Operating Procedure (OP) 354 dated 5/31/09

The reissue of this procedure was the result of extensive changes requested by Engineering, Manufacturing, and Quality Assurance. These procedural changes will be implemented immediately according to Engineering Notice (EN) 185.

Some important changes are as follow:

1. *Substitutions*: An asterisk (*) can no longer be used to identify substitutable items in requirement lists. Engineering will authorize substitutions in work orders (WOs). Substitutions also will be specified by item numbers rather than by generic description names.
2. *Product Quality Requirements* (PQRs): These will be included in WOs either by stating the requirements or by referring to previous PQRs.
3. *Oral Instructions*: When oral instructions for process adjustments are given, the engineer must be present in the department.

All managers will review OP 354 and EN 185. Next, the managers will review the changes with their supervisors to make sure that each supervisor is aware of his or her responsibilities. These reviews will occur immediately.

Distribution:

Rob Harken	Manuel Ramos
Julie Burrton	Jeannie Kort
Hal Lang	Jan Hunt
Sharon Myers	Earl Eddings

Use the designation "Distribution" for multiple readers.

A parenthetical abbreviation following a technical term allows you to use the abbreviation in subsequent references.

Abbreviations can be used after prior parenthetical definition.

Throughout the memo, use an objective tone (passive voice) vs. a directive (active voice) that could offend management or some other reader. The correct tone can ensure that the memo is read.

readers will not misconstrue ATM as the more commonly understood *automatic teller machine*. You could also use a glossary, as follows:

HTTPS	Hypertext Transfer Protocol, Secure	example
TDD	telecommunication device for the deaf	
TTY	teletypewriter	

- Use a sentence to define terms, either in a glossary or following the unfamiliar terms.

Hypertext Transfer Protocol is a computer access code that provides secure communications on the Internet, an intranet, or an extranet.	example
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Effective Memo for Multiple Audiences

The memo in Figure 3.4 is written to a multiple audience. “To: Distribution” is a common way to direct correspondence to numerous readers. The multiple readers affect the memo’s content. Terms such as “operating procedure,” “engineering notice,” and “product quality requirements” are followed by parenthetical abbreviations—(OP), (EN), and (PQR). If

these abbreviations alone had been presented, certain specialists would have understood them. Other readers in the distribution list, however, might not have known what OP, EN, or PQR meant. To communicate with all readers in multiple audiences, the writer must correctly use both the written-out terms and the abbreviations.

The tone of the memo is appropriate for readers with different levels of responsibility. Although it contains no direct commands, which may be offensive to management, the memo is still assertive. The matter-of-fact tone simultaneously suggests to management that these actions will be carried out and informs subordinates to do so.

MULTICULTURALISM

Multicultural Communication

Many corporations are doing business internationally. In fact, your company might market its products or services worldwide. International business requires multicultural communication, the sharing of written and oral information between businesspeople from many different countries (Nethery).

The Global Economy

Coca-Cola, which produces 300 different brands in 200 countries, generates 70 percent of its income from outside the United States (“Around the World”). To accommodate its worldwide audience, Microsoft offers the Windows XP Professional operating system in 25 different languages (“Multilingual Features in Windows XP Professional”). Black & Veatch, a global engineering company, has locations in Argentina, Australia, Botswana, Brazil, China, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Swaziland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Vietnam, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

FAQs

Q: Why is “multiculturalism” important in workplace communication? Doesn’t everyone in the United States speak English?

A: No, not everyone in the United States speaks English. Look at these facts:

- “50 million people in the U.S., 19 percent of the population, . . . speak a language other than English at home and 22 million . . . have limited English proficiency” (Gardner).
- Between 1990 and 2000, the number of Americans speaking a language other than English at home grew by 15.1 million (a 47 percent increase) and the number with limited English proficiency grew by 7.3 million (a 53 percent increase).

Q: OK, so many people in the United States speak a language other than English. But, shouldn’t we write for the majority of our audience?

A: Your audience will be diverse—and the “majority” in the United States is changing.

- “America’s population has become increasingly diverse as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians and people from many other segments rapidly contribute to the cultural richness of our population.”
- Hispanics in 2006 numbered 44.2 million and are expected to surge to 51.4 million by 2011.
- Asian/Pacific Islanders surpassed 13 million in 2006.
- African Americans numbered nearly 36 million in 2006.
- Asians, Blacks & Hispanics accounted for more than 70 percent of population growth, and Hispanics accounted for more than 50 percent since 2000.
- By 2011 the population in the three largest ethnic groups will be more than 107 million and Hispanics will represent nearly half of that population.
- On July 1, 2006, America had 113.5 million households. Of this total, nearly 13 million were Hispanic, nearly 11.5 million African American and nearly 4 million Asian. (Melgoza)

Margaret Keating, Vice President-Operations for Hallmark Cards Inc., oversees Hallmark's North American global operations. Her workforce of 6,000 employees is geographically dispersed. Much of her time is spent writing clear and concise communication to be translated into different languages (Cardarella D19).

The Challenges of Multicultural Communication

The Internet and e-mail affect global communication and global commerce. With these technologies, companies can market their products internationally and communicate with multicultural clients and coworkers at a keystroke. An international market is great for companies since a global economy increases sales opportunities. However, international commerce also creates written and oral communication challenges.

Medtronic, a leading medical technology company, does business in 120 countries. Many of those countries mandate that product documentation be written in the local language. To meet these countries' demands, Medtronic translates its manuals into 11 languages: French, Italian, German, Spanish, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Greek, Portuguese, Japanese, and Chinese (Walmer 230). Multilingual reports create unique communication challenges as well. Each language version must be identical in content, readability, tone, style, and emphasis. Therefore, external audit firms must read each language version for accuracy (Courtis and Hassan 395).

Multicultural Team Projects

What about international, multilingual project work teams? If, for example, your U.S. company is planning to build a power plant in China, you will work with Chinese engineers, financial planners, and regulatory officials. To do so effectively, you will need to understand that country's verbal and nonverbal communication norms. You also will have to know that country's management styles, decision-making procedures, sense of time and place, and local values, beliefs, and attitudes.

The world's citizenry does not share the same perspectives, beliefs, values, political systems, social orders, languages, or habits. Successful workplace communication takes into consideration language differences, nonverbal communication differences, and cultural differences. Due to the multicultural makeup of your audience, you must ensure that your writing, speaking, and nonverbal communication skills accommodate language barriers and cultural customs. The classic example of one company's failure to recognize the importance of translation concerns a car that was named Nova. In English, "nova" is defined as a star that spectacularly flares up. In contrast, "*no va*" in Spanish is translated as "no go," a poor advertisement for an automobile.

Communicating Globally . . . in Your Neighborhood

Cross-Cultural Workplace Communication

Multiculturalism will not just affect you when you communicate globally. You will be confronted with multicultural communication challenges even in your own city and state. Another term for this challenge is *cross-cultural communication*, writing and speaking between businesspeople of two or more different cultures within the same country (Nethery).

How big a challenge is this? "About 19 million people in the United States are not proficient in English" (Sanchez A1). In addition, look at the statistics regarding America's melting pot shown in Figure 3.5.

These numbers are estimated to change. The U.S. Department of Labor's study of the civilian labor force by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin projects that in 2014, the White population will fall in percentage to 67 percent, the Black population will fall to 12 percent, and the Asian population will stay the same at 5 percent. The Hispanic population, however, will grow to 16 percent, as shown in Figure 3.6.

One of the challenges presented by the increasingly multicultural nature of our society and workplace is language. Language barriers are an especially challenging situation

FIGURE 3.5 Occupational Employment in Private Industry by Race/Ethnic Group/Sex and by Industry, United States, 2005.

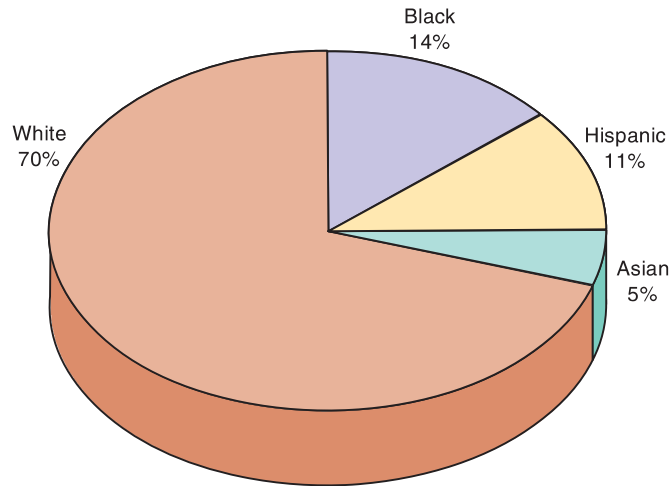
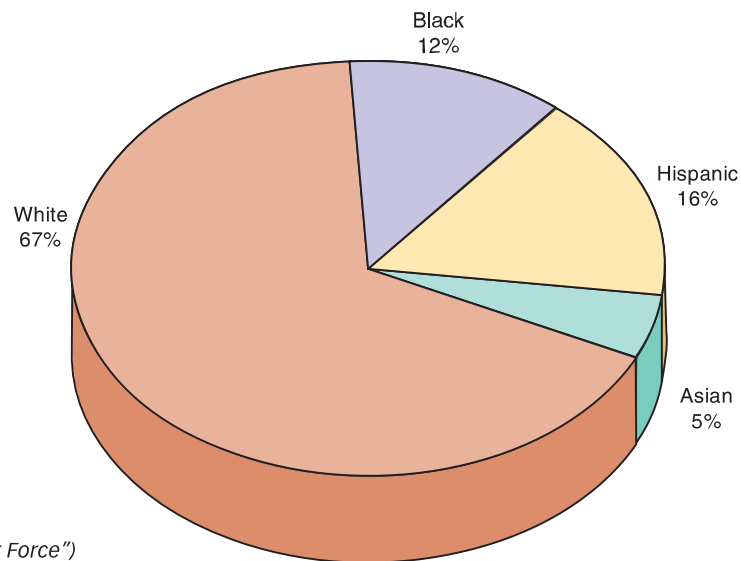


FIGURE 3.6 Occupational Employment in Private Industry by Race/Ethnic Group/Sex and by Industry, United States, 2014



for hospitals, police and fire personnel, and governmental agencies where failure to communicate effectively can have dangerous repercussions.

One hospital reported that it has “13 staff members supplying Spanish, Arabic and Somali translations . . . ? In 2001, nearly 21,000 Spanish interpretations were performed at [the hospital]. The numbers for 2002 . . . exceeded 29,000 interpretations.” However, this hospital’s successful use of translators to help with doctor-patient communication is rare. “Only about 14 percent of U.S. hospitals provide training for volunteer translators.” Most hospitals depend on the patient’s relatives. “In one case studied, an 11-year-old sibling translated. The child made 58 mistakes” (Sanchez A4). Imagine how such errors can negatively impact healthcare and medical records.

The communication challenges are not just evident for employees in healthcare and other community infrastructures. Industries as diverse as banking, hospitality (restaurants and hotels), construction, agriculture, meat production and packing, and insurance also face difficulties when communicating with clients and employees for whom English is a second language.

Keys to Successful Communication in a Multicultural Environment

Define Acronyms and Abbreviations

Acronyms and abbreviations cause a problem for most readers. Although you and your immediate colleagues might understand such terminology, many readers won't. This is especially true when your audience is not native to the United States. For example, corporate employees often abbreviate the job title "system manager" as "sysmgr." However, in German, the title "system manager" is called the "system leiter;" in French, it's "le responsable." The abbreviation "sysmgr." would make no sense in either of these countries (Swenson WE-193).

Avoid Jargon and Idioms

The same dilemma applies to *jargon* and *idioms*, words and phrases that are common expressions in English but that could be meaningless outside our borders. Every day in the United States, we use "on the other hand" as a transitional phrase and "in the black" or "in the red" to denote financial status. What do these idioms mean in a global market? Similarly, the computer industry says, "The system crashed so we rebooted." A literal translation of this jargon into Chinese, German, or French might confuse the readers (Swenson WE-194).

Distinguish Between Nouns and Verbs

Many words in English act as both nouns and verbs. This is especially true with computer terms, such as "file," "scroll," "paste," "code," and "help." If your text will be translated, make sure that your reader can tell whether you're using the word as a noun or a verb (Rains 12).

Watch for Cultural Biases or Expectations

Your text will include words and graphics. As a workplace communicator, you need to realize that many colors and images that connote one thing in the United States will have different meanings elsewhere. For example, the idioms "in the red" and "in the black" will not necessarily communicate your intent when they are translated. Even worse, the colors black and red have different meanings in different cultures. Red in the United States connotes danger; therefore, "in the red" suggests a financial problem. In China, however, the word "red" has a positive connotation, which would skew your intended meaning. The word "black" often implies death and danger, yet "in the black" suggests financial stability. Such contradictions could confuse readers in various countries.

Animals represent a multicultural challenge. In the United States, we say you're a "turkey" if you make a mistake, but success will make you "soar like an eagle." The same meanings don't translate in other cultures. Take the friendly piggy bank, for example. It represents a perfect image for savings accounts in the United States, but pork is a negative symbol in the Mideast. If you are "cowed" by your competition in the United States, you lose. Cows, in contrast, represent a positive and sacred image in India (Horton 686–93).

Avoid Humor and Puns

Humor is not universal. In the United States, people talk about regional humor. If a joke is good in the South but not in the North, how could that same joke be effective overseas? Microsoft's software package Excel is promoted by a logo that looks like an "X" superimposed over an "L". This visual pun works in the United States because we pronounce the letters "X" and "L" just as we would the name of the software package. If your readers are not familiar with English, however, they might miss this clever sound-alike image (Horton 686).

Realize That Translations Might Take More or Less Space

If your writing will be conveyed on disk or on the Internet rather than on paper, you must consider software's line-length and screen-length restrictions. For example, a page of hard-copy text in the United States will consist of approximately 55 lines that average 80 characters per line. How could this present a problem? The standard sheet of paper in

Table 3.2 Translations Increase Word Length

English Word	Translations into Other Languages
Print	<i>Impression</i> (French)
File	<i>Archivo</i> (Spanish)
View	<i>Visualizzare</i> (Italian)
Help	<i>Assistance</i> (French)
E-mail	<i>Courriel</i> (Swiss)

the United States measures $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$. In contrast, the norm in Europe for standard-sized paper is A4— 210×297 millimeters, or $8.27'' \times 11.69''$.

Why is the size of paper important? This has nothing to do with language barriers, right? Here is the problem: If you format your text and graphics for an $8\frac{1}{2}'' \times 11''$ piece of paper in Atlanta, travel to London, download the files on a computer there, and hit Print, you might find that what you get is not what you hoped for. The line breaks will not be the same. You will not be able to three-hole punch and bind the text. The margins will be off, and so will the spacing on your flowchart or table (Scott 20–21).

An even greater problem occurs when you are writing for the Internet. On a Web site, you will provide a navigation bar and several frames. Why is this a problem? A page of English text translates to the same length in any language, right? The answer is no. The word count of a document written in English will expand more than 30 percent when translated into some European languages. For example, the four-letter word “user” has 12 characters in German (Hussey and Homnack RT-46). In Table 3.2, notice how English words become longer when translated into other languages (Horton 691).

The Swiss government is trying to curb what it defines as “the encroachment of English.” To do so, the government’s French Linguistics Service is asking its citizens to avoid using the word “spam,” instead opting for *courier de masse non sollicité*, meaning “unsolicited bulk mail” (“Swiss fight encroachment of English” A16).

Avoid Figurative Language

Many of us use sports images to figuratively illustrate our points. We “tackle” a chore; in business, a “good defense is the best offense”; we “huddle” to make decisions; if a sale isn’t made, you might have “booted” the job; if a sale is made, you “hit a home run.” Each of these sports images might mean something to native speakers, but they may not communicate worldwide. Instead, say what you mean, using precise words (Weiss 14).

Be Careful with Numbers, Measurements, Dates, and Times

If your text uses measurements, you are probably using standard American inches, feet, and yards. However, most of the world measures in metrics. Thus, if you write 18 high $\times$ 20 wide $\times$ 30 deep, what are the measurements? There is a huge difference between 18 $\times$ 20 $\times$ 30 inches and 18 $\times$ 20 $\times$ 30 millimeters. In the United States, we tend to abbreviate dates as MM/DD/YY: 05/03/09. In the United Kingdom, however, this could be perceived as March 5, 2009, instead of May 3, 2009. See Table 3.3 for additional examples of interpreting day and time. Time is another challenge. Table 3.4 shows how different countries write times.

In addition to different ways of writing time, you must also remember that even within the United States, 1:00 p.m. does not mean the same thing to everyone. Is that central time, Pacific time, mountain time, or eastern time?

Another challenge with time occurs when we incorrectly assume that everyone everywhere abides by the same work hours. In the United States, the average workweek is 40 hours, and the typical workday is from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, this is not the norm globally. French laws have reduced the workweek to 35 hours. Many Middle Eastern countries close work “for all or part of Friday,” the beginning of Sabbath. Offices in parts of southern Europe shut down for a traditional two-hour lunch (noon to 2 p.m.)

Table 3.3 Different Ways of Understanding and Writing the U.S. Date 05/03/09

Country	Date
United States	May 3, 2009
United Kingdom	March 5, 2009
France	5 mars 2009
Germany	5. Marz 2009
Sweden	09-05-03
Italy	5.3.09

Table 3.4 Different Ways of Writing the U.S. Time 5:15 p.m.

Country	Time
United States	5:15 p.m.
France	17:15
Germany	17.15
Quebec, Canada	17 h 15

(St. Amant “Communication” 28). Therefore, if you write an e-mail telling a coworker in Spain or Jordan that you will call at 2:00 p.m. his or her time, that could be an inappropriate time for your audience.

Finally, even simple words like “today,” “yesterday,” or “tomorrow” can cause problems. Japan is 14 hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time. Thus, if you need a report “tomorrow,” do you mean tomorrow—the next day *your time*—or tomorrow—two days from your reader’s time?

To solve these problems, determine your audience and make changes accordingly. That might mean

- Writing out the date completely (January 12, 2009)
- Telling the reader what standard of measurement you will use (“This document provides all measurements in metrics.”)
- Telling the reader what scheme of time presentation you will use (“This document relates time using a 24-hour clock rather than a 12-hour clock.”)
- Using multiple formats (“Let’s meet at 2:30 p.m./14:30.”)
- Avoiding vague words like “today,” “tomorrow,” or “yesterday”
- Recognizing that people have different work schedules globally

Use Stylized Graphics to Represent People

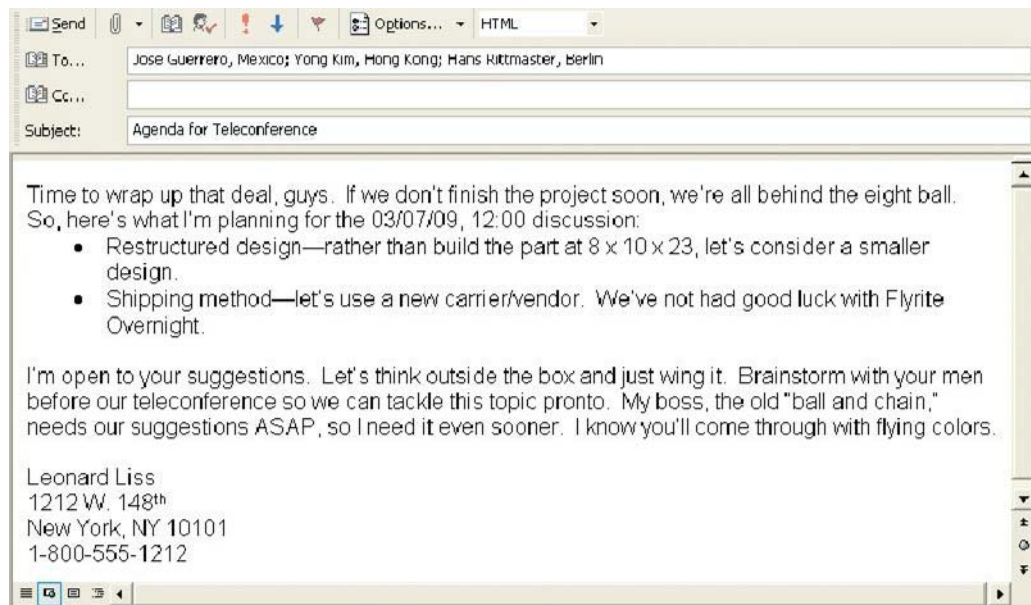
A photograph or realistic drawing of people will probably offend someone and create a cultural conflict. You want to avoid depicting race, skin color, hairstyles, and even gender. To solve this problem, avoid shades of skin color, choosing instead pure white or black to represent generic skin. Use simple, abstract, even stick figures to represent people. Stylize hands so they are neither male nor female—and show a right hand rather than a left hand, if possible (a left hand is perceived as “unclean” in some countries) (Flint 241).

Recognizing the importance of the global marketplace is smart business and a wise move on the part of the workplace communicator. Figure 3.7 is an example of poor communication in an e-mail message for a multilingual audience. This e-mail fails for many reasons:

1. **Date**—Does “03/07/09” mean March 7, 2009, or July 3, 2009?
2. **Time**—“12:00” not only fails to specify the time zone, but creates the question whether midnight or noon is intended.

BEFORE

FIGURE 3.7 Flawed E-Mail Message for a Multilingual Audience



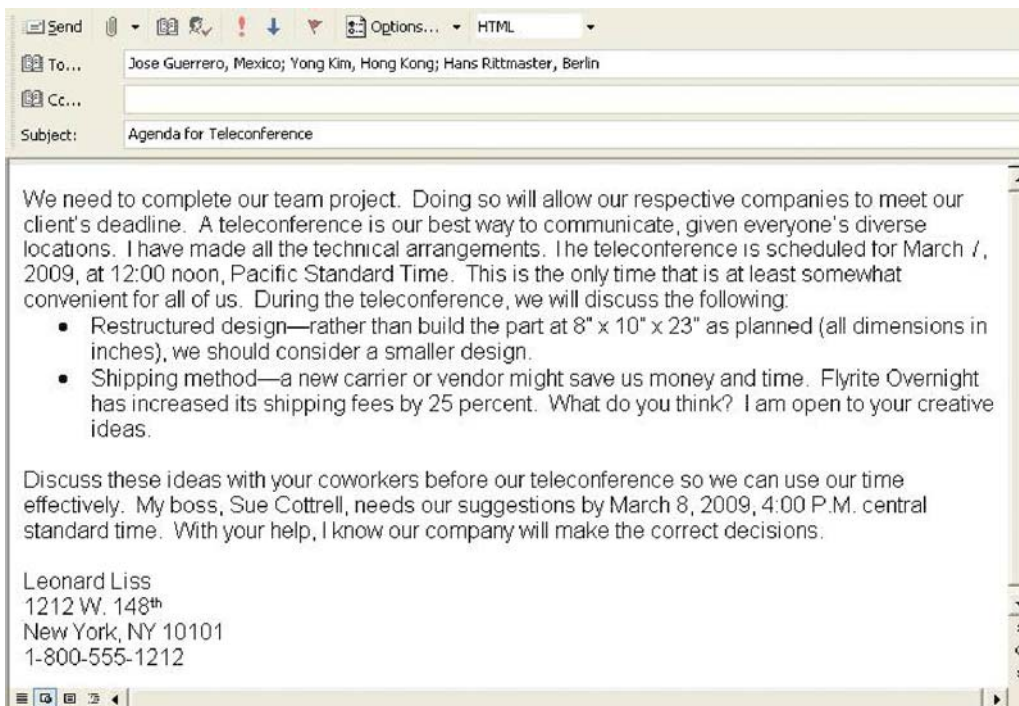
3. **Figurative language**—“Wrap up that deal,” “behind the eight ball,” “think outside the box,” “just wing it,” “brainstorm,” “tackle this topic,” “ball and chain,” and “flying colors” all are idiomatic phrases. Though these phrases might communicate within the United States, they may not translate internationally.
4. **Informal tone**—Informality is common in most stateside businesses, but this is not true in all countries. Germany and Japan, for example, are far more formal in their business communication expectations. Thus, “guys” and the contractions could cause problems creating incorrect tone.
5. **Sexist language**—“Guys” and “men” should be avoided when writing any correspondence. The implication is that only men will be involved in the discussions, which of course is completely erroneous.
6. **Measurements**—“8 × 10 × 23” is confusing. Is the writer discussing inches, feet, or meters?
7. **Slash marks**—“New carrier/vendor” could mean either “new carrier *or* vendor,” or “new carrier *and* vendor.” Which is it?
8. **Undefined abbreviations or acronyms**—“ASAP” must be defined. Though all readers within the United States might understand this to mean “as soon as possible,” you cannot assume the same level of understanding internationally.
9. **Cultural sensitivity**—In the United States, we might see humor in referring to a boss as “the old ball and chain” (though this is highly doubtful). In Japan, however, where saving face is a cultural norm, potentially offending a superior would be a problem.

Finally, using the word “pronto” is cowboy slang. To communicate internationally, you must consider each country’s cultural norms—and be careful to avoid offense or confusion.

In contrast, Figure 3.8 corrects these communication problems:

AFTER

FIGURE 3.8 Effective E-Mail Message for a Multilingual Audience



Additional information:

See Chapter 9, "Electronic Communication: E-Mail Messages, Instant Messages, Text Messages, and Blogging."

AVOIDING BIASED LANGUAGE

In addition to recognizing your audience's level of knowledge, roles, and cultural diversity, you also must consider your audience's age, physical limitations, and gender.

Ageist Language

A word like "elderly" could imply feebleness. The words "Old folks" create a negative image. To avoid these biases, write "people over 70" or "retirees." Better yet, avoid reference to age.

BEFORE	AFTER
Professor Jones, an elderly teacher at State University, is publishing a textbook despite his age.	Professor Jones, a State University teacher, is publishing a textbook.

Biased Language About People with Disabilities

The word "handicap" creates a negative image. "Disability" is generally preferred. However, any euphemism can be offensive. You should avoid reference to a person's disabilities. If you need to refer to a physical problem, do so without negative characterizations.

BEFORE	AFTER
Debbie Brown, a blind market researcher, won "Employee of the Month."	Debbie Brown, a market researcher, won "Employee of the Month."
The AIDS victim changed insurance carriers.	The AIDS patient changed insurance carriers.
John suffers from diabetes.	John is diabetic.
Sheila is confined to a wheelchair.	Sheila uses a wheelchair.

Sexist Language

Women constitute half of the workforce in the United States. Thus, you must avoid gender-biased language in your communication. Gender-biased language occurs through

- Omission
- Unequal treatment
- Stereotyping
- Word choice

Omission

When your writing ignores women or refers to them as secondary, you are being biased. The following examples show biased comments and their nonbiased alternatives.

BEFORE	AFTER
The computer information specialists and their wives and children attended the company picnic.	The computer information specialists and their families attended the company picnic.
The congressional legislation on foreign trade agreements was proposed by a woman, Claire McGowan.	The congressional legislation on foreign trade agreements was proposed by Claire McGowan.
When conducting his quarterly review, the auditor must always check for errors.	When conducting a quarterly review, the auditor must always check for errors.
As we acquired scientific knowledge, men began to examine long-held ideas more critically.	As we acquired scientific knowledge, people began to examine long-held ideas more critically.

Unequal Treatment

Modifiers that describe women in physical terms not applied to men are patronizing.

BEFORE	AFTER
The poor women could no longer go on; the exhausted men . . .	The exhausted men and women could no longer go on.
Mrs. Acton, a statuesque blonde, is Joe Granger's assistant.	Jan Acton is Joe Granger's assistant.

Stereotyping

If your writing implies that only men do one kind of job and only women do another kind of job, you are stereotyping. For example, if you suggest that men hold all management jobs and women hold all subordinate positions, this is stereotyping.

BEFORE	AFTER
Current tax regulations allow a head of household to deduct for the support of his children.	Current tax regulations allow a head of household to deduct for child support.
The manager is responsible for the productivity of his department; the foreman is responsible for the work of his linemen.	Management is responsible for departmental productivity. Supervisors are responsible for their personnel.
The secretary brought her boss his coffee.	The secretary brought the boss's coffee.
The teacher must be sure her lesson plans are filed.	The teacher must file all lesson plans.

Pronouns

Biased language disappears when you use pronouns that treat all people equally. Pronouns such as “he,” “him,” or “his” are masculine. Sometimes you read disclaimers by manufacturers stating that “although these masculine pronouns are used, they are not intended to be biased. They are only used for convenience.” This is an unacceptable statement. Use of “he,” “him,” and “his” exclusively creates a masculine image.

BEFORE	AFTER
Sometimes the doctor calls on his patients in their homes.	Sometimes the doctor calls on patients in their homes.
The typical child does his homework after school.	Most children do their homework after school.
A good lawyer will make sure that his clients are aware of their rights.	A good lawyer will make sure that his or her clients are aware of their rights.

To avoid this bias, avoid masculine pronouns. Instead, use the plural, generic “they” or “their.” You also can use “he or she” and “his or her.” Sometimes you can solve the problem by omitting all pronouns.

Nouns

Use nouns that are nonbiased. To achieve this, avoid nouns that exclude women and denote that only men *or* women are involved. These are called “gender-tagged words.” Most of them have an actual gender attached to them. Usually, this involves the word “man” or “men.” However, the suffix “ess” is a feminine ending, also creating a gender tag, just as “princess” equals a woman, while “prince” is a man.

BEFORE	AFTER
mankind	people
manpower	workers, personnel
the common man	the average citizen
wise men	leaders
businessmen	businesspeople
policemen	police officers
firemen	firefighters
foreman	supervisor
chairman	chairperson <i>or</i> chair
stewardess	flight attendant
waitress	server

Figures 3.9 and 3.10 illustrate a biased and unbiased letter from a company to a customer.

ACHIEVING AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

Recognizing your audience entails knowing their levels of knowledge, roles in relation to your job, multiculturalism, and diversity issues, such as age, physical limitations, and gender. By understanding these audience concerns, you can communicate more effectively. An additional goal is to achieve audience involvement. Effective workplace communication must build rapport to achieve audience buy-in. You want to persuade your audience

FIGURE 3.9 Biased Letter

A biased and outdated salutation such as “Sir” implies that only a man will read the letter. Over 50 percent of the workforce is female, so you could alienate many readers.

Avoid biased word usage that could offend many readers.

Avoid biased “gender-tagged” words that will alienate some readers.

Stereotypical comments should also be avoided.

Stereotypical comments should be omitted.

Biased “gender-tagged words” will offend some readers and should be avoided.

DiBono and Sons Landscaping
1349 Elm
Oakland Hills, IA 20981

April 2, 2009

Owner
TurboCharge, Inc.
2691 Sommers Rd.
Iron Horse, IA 20992

Dear Sir:

Interested in beautifying your company property, with no care or worries? We have been in business for over 25 years helping men just like you. Here’s what we can offer:

1. Shrub Care—Your workmen will no longer need to water shrubs. We’ll take care of that with a sprinkler system geared toward your business’s unique needs.
2. Seasonal System Checks—Don’t worry about your foreman having to ask his workers to turn on the sprinkler system in the spring or turn it off in the winter. Our repairmen take care of that for you as part of our contract.
3. New Annual Plantings—We plant rose bushes and daffodils that are so pretty, your secretary will want to leave her desk and pick a bunch for her office. Of course, you might want to do that for her yourself. ☺
4. Trees—We don’t just plant annuals. We can add shade to your entire property. Just think how beautiful your parking lot will look with elegant elms, oaks, and maples. Then, when you have that company picnic, your employees and their wives will be surrounded by nature.

Call today for prices. Let our skilled craftsmen work for you!

Sincerely,

Richard DiBono

to accept your point of view—*willingly*. This requires the correct motivational tone, when writing or speaking up to management, down to subordinates, laterally to coworkers, or out to customers. Follow these suggestions to involve your audience.

Avoid Commands

Do not write or say, “You must” or “You should.” Write “I recommend that,” “Our team suggests that,” or “I propose.” Words like “recommend,” “suggest,” and “propose” show that you respect everyone’s involvement and right to a say in the matter. By avoiding a commanding tone, you encourage your audience’s participation.

Ask Questions

You could write to management, “Would you consider implementing . . . ?” To your subordinates, you could write, “What are your thoughts about increasing . . . ?” To customers, you might say, “What can we do to improve your . . . ?” Questions such as these speak

FIGURE 3.10 Unbiased Letter

DiBono and Sons Landscaping
1349 Elm
Oakland Hills, IA 20981

April 2, 2009

Owner
TurboCharge, Inc.
2691 Sommers Rd.
Iron Horse, IA 20992

Subject: Sales Information

Interested in beautifying your company property, with no care or worries? We have been in business for over 25 years helping **business owners** just like you. Here's what we can offer:

- Shrub Care—Your **employees** will no longer need to water shrubs. We'll take care of that with a sprinkler system geared toward your business's unique needs.
- Seasonal System Checks—Don't worry about your **supervisor** having to **ask his or her** workers to turn on the sprinkler system in the spring or turn it off in the winter. Our **staff** takes care of that for you as part of our contract.
- New Annual Plantings—We plant rose bushes and daffodils that are so pretty, **all of your employees** will want vase-filled flowers on **their** desks.
- Trees—We don't just plant annuals. We can add shade to your entire property. Just think how beautiful your parking lot will look with elegant elms, oaks, and maples. Then, when you have that company picnic, your employees and **their families and friends** will be surrounded by nature.

Call today for prices. Let our skilled **experts** work for you!

Sincerely,

Richard DiBono

Unbiased words
are boldfaced for
emphasis.

directly to the audience's need to be a participant. You show concern for the audience and involve them in the process.

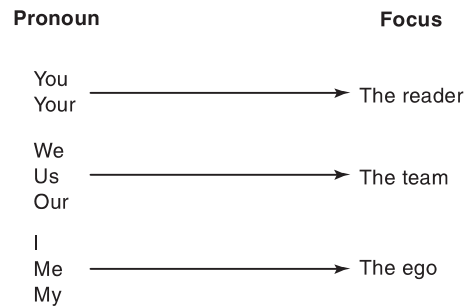
Use Positive Words or Phrases

“Please” and “thank you” are positive words. Do not write, “I need you to order. . . .” By revising this to read “Please order,” you alter the tone and encourage action rather than dictate. Positive words motivate, whether you are writing up or down. Following are examples of positive words which you can use to create motivational tone.

advantage	effective	happy	profitable	successful
asset	efficient	please	satisfied	thank you
benefit	enjoyable	pleased	succeed	value
confident	favorable	pleasure	success	worthwhile

To clarify the importance of positive words, following are examples of negative writing and positive revisions.

FIGURE 3.11 Audience Focus



BEFORE	AFTER
I cannot process your request. You failed to follow the instructions.	So that we may process your request more rapidly, please fill in line 6 on the printed form.
The error is your fault. You kept the books incorrectly.	To ensure better customer service, let's review our bookkeeping practices.
I have received your e-mail complaining about the department's quality control practices.	Thank you for suggesting ways to improve the department's quality control procedures.
The invoice you sent was useless by the time it arrived.	To help us maintain our payment schedules, please submit invoices by the 15th of each month.
Your bill is now three weeks overdue. Failure to pay immediately will result in lower credit ratings.	If you're as busy as we are, you've probably misplaced our recent bill (mailed three weeks ago). Please send in your payment this week to maintain your high credit ratings.

Making something positive out of something negative is a challenge, but the rewards for doing so are great. If you attack your audience with negatives, you lose. When you involve your audience through positive words, you motivate them to work with you and for you.

Involve Your Audience with “You Usage”

Limit your use of first-person pronouns like “I,” “Me,” and “My.” Your audience wants to know what is in it for them, not how you will benefit. To achieve a different focus on the audience or the team, emphasize “you usage.” Use second-person pronouns like “You” and “Your.” Third-person pronouns, such as “We,” “Us,” and “Our,” also are effective to create a sense of team between the writer and audience. Figure 3.11 summarizes these focuses.

When you use “You” or “Your,” you are speaking directly to your reader(s). The audience reads the words “You” or “Your” and sees themselves in the pronoun, envisioning that they are being spoken to, focused on, and singled out. By focusing on the pronouns “You” or “Your” in your workplace communication, you involve your audience in the correspondence. “We,” “Us,” and “Our” are team words to connote group involvement. These pronouns are especially valuable when writing to multiple audiences or when writing to subordinates. In either instance, “We,” “Us,” and “Our” imply to the readers that, “We’re all in this together.” Such a team concept helps motivate by making the readers feel an integral part of the whole. “I,” “Me,” and “My” focus on the writer or speaker. These pronouns can connote egocentricity. To avoid egocentric word usage, emphasize “You” and “Your” and downplay “I,” “Me,” and “My.”

BEFORE	AFTER
Dear Sir: With regard to lost policy 123, enclosed is a lost policy form. Complete this form and return it ASAP. Upon receipt, the company will issue a replacement policy. Claims Procedure To obtain service under the Emissions Performance Warranty, take the vehicle to the company dealer as soon as possible after it fails an I/M test along with documentation showing that the vehicle failed an EPA-approved emissions test.	Dear Mr. Salinas: Your lost policy 123 can be replaced easily. I've enclosed a form to help us replace it for you. All you need to do is fill it out. As soon as we get the form, we'll send you your replacement policy. Claims Procedure How do you get service under the Emissions Performance Warranty? To get service under this warranty, take your car to the dealer as soon as possible after it has failed an EPA-approved test. Be sure to bring along the document that shows your car failed the test.

Focus on Audience Benefit

To encourage cooperation at all levels (management, coworkers, subordinates, vendors, and customers), show your readers or listeners how everyone will benefit by pursuing your plan. In your letter, memo, report, or e-mail, state the benefit clearly. You can do this anywhere, but here are some options:

- State the benefit early (subject line, first paragraph, or abstract)
- Conclude with the benefit

Placing the benefit early in the communication will interest and involve your audience. For example, you could write, "Congratulations! Your sales force sold 45 percent more maintenance contracts than last quarter." Placing the benefit at the end could provide a motivational close, leaving readers with a positive impression. You could encourage participation at all levels by concluding as follows: "When this action is completed, the company will achieve a 35 percent increase in sales."

Figure 3.12 achieves audience involvement through reader benefit in many ways.

Personalize Your Text with Names

Companies *don't* write to companies; *people write to people*. When you write or speak, you are communicating to people. People want to be treated like individuals. One simple way to personalize is by referring to your audience by name. Within the correspondence, write, "Jim, please report on . . ." or in the face-to-face meeting say, "Mrs. Harken, when did you experience the troubles with your cable?" Doing so personalizes your communication.

Potential Problems

You might encounter the following problems when you personalize with names:

- If you are writing *up to management*, be cautious. If you rarely or never communicate with your company's CEO, for example, using a first name would be inappropriate. If, however, you work closely with your management and regularly communicate on a first-name basis, then continue doing so.
- When you write *outside the company*, using a first name would be inappropriate if you do not have a relationship with your audience. Refer to this person by his or her last name.
- If you are speaking to someone and *you do not know how to pronounce his or her name*, avoid using that person's name.
- If you do not know a person's *marital status* (Mrs. or Miss), use Ms.

Figure 3.13 is impersonal and negative. It does not motivate. Instead, it commands and degrades. Figure 3.14, in contrast, uses pronouns, personalization, and positive words to encourage action and build rapport.

Additional information:

See Chapter 10, "Traditional Correspondence: Memos and Letters."

FIGURE 3.12 Memo Focusing on Audience Benefit

Positive words, such as "improved," "strengthen," "please," "effective," and "Thank you," focus on audience benefit.

Date: January 2, 2009
To: Mary Ortega
From: Jim Goodwin
Subject: Improved Billing Control Procedures

Three times in the last quarter, one of the billing cycles excluded franchise taxes. This was a result of the CRT input being entered incorrectly.

To strengthen internal controls and reduce the chance of future errors, please implement the following steps, effective January 15, 2009.

1. Input Ask the accounting clerk to complete the control screen entry form.
2. Entry Ensure that the CRT entry clerk will enter the control screen input and use local print to produce a hard copy.
3. Verification Have the junior accountant compare the hard copy to the control screen and initial when it's correct.
4. Notification Tell the junior accountant to inform data processing when they should start the billing process.

The new procedure will provide more timely and accurate billing to our customers. Customer service will be happier with accounting. We all will have more pride in our contributions. Thank you for your help with this solution.

BEFORE

FIGURE 3.13 Impersonal and Negative Memo

Using a negative tone will alienate and offend many readers.

Using a commanding tone might cause the reader to react negatively. In contrast, creating a "team-oriented" tone will encourage readers to act.

Concluding with a threatening tone will not inspire the reader or encourage participation.

Date: July 22, 2009
To: Martha Collins
From: Bob Kaplan
Subject: Assignment of Contract Administration Project

Work to date on the Contract Administration Project has been too slow. Your staff must make up for other departments' failures to meet our deadline. Here is what you have to do:

1. Analyze other operating companies to see how they create neutrality when administering contracts.
2. Demand that our consultants achieve impartiality.
3. Develop standards for all operating procedures across all departments.
4. Give me a report immediately upon your conclusion of these requirements.

You and your staff must get this right this time. Otherwise, the company will suffer severe setbacks in our competitive bidding process.

AFTER

FIGURE 3.14 Personal and Positive Memo

Date: July 22, 2009
To: Martha Collins
From: Bob Kaplan
Subject: Assignment of Contract Administration Project

Martha, thank you for accepting the Contract Administration Project. To accomplish our goal of competitive bidding, I need your help. Please follow these guidelines with your team:

1. Analyze other operating companies to see how they ensure neutrality when administering contracts.
2. Coordinate our consultants to guarantee that they achieve impartiality.
3. Develop standards for all operating procedures across all departments.
4. Prepare a report for our advisory team. They will need it by the end of the month.

Your successful completion of this project, Martha, will help us improve all future contract administrations. I'm confident that you will do a great job, and I know our company and employees will benefit.

Use the reader's name and positive words such as "thank you" to personalize and promote goodwill.

Showing the reader respect for ability will encourage teamwork.

Positive words and pronoun usage will encourage teamwork and action on the part of the audience.

Ending in a motivational tone will inspire and encourage the reader.

AUDIENCE CHECKLIST

- _____ 1. What is the audience's level of understanding regarding the subject matter?
 - Specialist
 - Semi-specialist
 - Lay
 - Multiple
- _____ 2. Given your audience's level of understanding, have you written accordingly?
 - Have you defined acronyms, abbreviations, and jargon?
 - Have you supplied enough background data?
- _____ 3. What is your role in relation to the audience?
 - Do you work for the reader?
 - Does the reader work for you?
 - Is the reader a peer?
 - Is the reader a client?
 - Is the reader a vendor?
- _____ 4. What response do you want from the audience? Do you want the audience to act, respond, confirm, consider, decide, or file the information for future reference?
- _____ 5. Will the audience act according to your wishes? What is the audience's attitude toward the subject (and you)?
 - Negative
 - Positive
 - Noncommittal
 - Uninformed
- _____ 6. Is the audience in a position of authority to act according to your wishes (can he or she make the final decision)? If not, who will make the decision?
- _____ 7. Have you considered diversity?
 - Have you avoided biased language that could offend various age groups, people of different sexual orientations, people with physical challenges, or people of different cultures and religions?
- _____ 8. Have you considered that people from different countries and people for whom English is a second language will be involved in the communication? This might mean that you should
 - Clarify time and measurements
 - Define abbreviations and acronyms
 - Avoid figurative language and idiomatic phrases unique to one culture
 - Avoid humor and puns
 - Consider each country's cultural norms
- _____ 8. Have you avoided sexist language?
 - Have you used "their" or "his or her" to avoid sexist singular pronouns like "his"?
 - Have you used generic words such as "police officer" versus sexist words like "policeman"?
 - Have you avoided excluding women, writing sentences such as "All present voted to accept the proposal" versus the sexist sentence "All the men voted to accept the proposal"?
 - Have you avoided patronizing, writing sentences such as "Mr. Smith and Mrs. Brown wrote the proposal" versus the sexist sentence "Mr. Smith and Judy wrote the proposal"?
- _____ 9. Have you motivated the audience to act?
 - Have you involved the audience by using pronouns or a person's name?
 - Have you shown the audience benefit by using positive words and verbs?
- _____ 10. Have you considered the audience's preferences regarding style?
 - Is use of a first name appropriate?
 - Should you use a last name?

Phil Met His Challenge

To meet his communication challenge, Phil used the *P³* process.

Planning

To plan his proposal, Phil first considered the following:

- **Goals**—provide Spanish language skills to non-Spanish-speaking supervisors and basic English skills to Spanish-speaking manufacturing employees. The goal is to improve employer/employee relations, create a safe and more efficient workplace, and ensure quality workmanship.
- **Audience**—corporate employees and supervisors
- **Channels**—e-mail messages, face-to-face interviews, cover letters, and a proposal
- **Data**—drawn from interviews



Planning for the proposal, Phil says, “I need to accomplish the following:

1. **Company needs assessment**—I plan to meet with Arctic management to identify company needs and to establish training priorities. I need to analyze the difficulties limited English-speaking employees were having in terms of interaction with supervisors and other employees, communication breakdowns, or lost work time due to difficulties adapting to American culture.
2. **Participant assessment**—I need to meet with the training participants to assess their language abilities and needs more thoroughly. I can use oral interviews, testing, and job shadowing to gather data.
3. **Methods of instruction**—Based on my findings, I will determine whether to use modeling, intensive drills, oral responses, learning pairs and triads, role-playing, or simulations. When I gather data from research, I then can write the proposal to Arctic.”

Packaging

After Phil researched Arctic’s language needs, he wrote a rough draft of the proposal. The proposal was prefaced by a cover letter in which Phil hoped to show Arctic how the training sessions would be structured and what benefits the company would derive. He gave the draft of the cover letter (see Figure 3.15) to a colleague for feedback.

Perfecting

According to Phil, “It’s my job to propose the most cost-effective solution to my client’s problems with multicultural communication. I have to consider how to best customize our course offerings and to determine which of my specialists would work well with the client’s employees and management. By assisting companies to communicate better with all of their employees, I am doing a service for our entire community. Good employees benefit not only themselves and the company but also society by being productive on the job. My perfected cover letter (Figure 3.16) offers the specific ways in which we can meet the client’s needs to improve multicultural communication.”

FIGURE 3.15 Colleague-Suggested Revisions to Phil's Cover Letter
(Shown with Track Changes)

Comment: delete the "th" Phil. The date alone is sufficient.

February 24~~th~~, 2009

Joan T. Osborn
Manager, Learning and Development Americas
Arctic Cooling Technologies
7401 W 129th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213

Comment: I'd expand this subject line, adding something like "Workplace English" for clarity.

SUBJECT: TRAINING PROPOSAL

Comment: wordy—how about just writing "We are pleased to propose an on-site . . .?"

We are pleased to present to you a proposal to offer an on-site Workplace English program to limited English-speaking Arctic employees. Following a language assessment to determine the appropriate level of instruction, we will develop a comprehensive curriculum to improve each participant's English language skills and knowledge.

Comment: "we developed."

The program will offer an easy and quick way to learn limited amounts of everyday workplace English. Instruction will be divided into three components: Speaking in English, Listening in English, and Workplace Application English. Aspects of U.S. culture will also be included in each session to discuss some of the most fundamental aspects of everyday U.S. culture that are often misunderstood.

Comment: Throughout you use full block alignment. Let's switch to ragged right.

Speaking in English teaches participants how to say practical, common phrases and questions in American English. We will focus on pronunciation, expressions, and questions for use in everyday interactions. Listening in English teaches the participants how to comprehend many basic and common expressions, phrases, and questions used in everyday English. Workplace-specific English teaches participants to comprehend and respond to workplace-specific language including phrases and terms that are regularly used in the workplace.

Comment: add "ask"

Each participant will receive a manual with CD's that can be used to maintain the language skills they have acquired.

Comment: Let's boldface the major headings and itemize these parts for easier access. The long paragraph is hard to read.

We propose offering on-site classes limited to a maximum of 15 participants for 6 weeks to meet two hours, twice a week, for a total of 24 hours. A once per week meeting format for 12 weeks could also be provided. All instructional material will be provided to participants. The \$3,300 estimated budget for this program includes curriculum development, instructional manuals, and on-site training. Following completion of the program a follow-up plan will be developed to help each participant maintain and improve his or her English language skills.

Comment: This is just written "CDs" without the apostrophe.

We look forward to finalizing this training program. Thank you for the opportunity to present this proposal to you for your careful consideration. We pride ourselves on providing quality training, language development, career planning, consulting, and economic development services.

Comment: The passive voice in this sentence creates what I think English teachers call a dangling modifier. Let's write, "When the training program is complete, I will develop a follow-up plan to help . . ."

Comment: delete

FIGURE 3.16 Perfected Letter for Arctic Training Workshop

12345 College Boulevard
Overland Park, Kansas 66210
913.469.3845
Fax 913.469.4415
www.centerforbusiness.org



February 24, 2009

Joan T. Osboru
Manager, Learning and Development Americas
Arctic Cooling Technology
7401 W. 129th Street
Overland Park, KS 66213

Phil says, "Focusing on the needs of the audience is an important part of my job. The P³ Communication Process allows me to create the best possible written document to address my audience's needs."

Subject: Training Proposal for Arctic Workplace English

We are pleased to propose an on-site Workplace English program to limited English-speaking Arctic employees. Following a language assessment to determine the appropriate level of instruction, we developed a comprehensive curriculum to improve each participant's English language skills and knowledge.

The program will offer an easy and quick way to learn limited amounts of everyday workplace English. Instruction will be divided into three components: Speaking in English, Listening in English, and Workplace-Specific English. Aspects of U.S. culture will also be included in each session to discuss some of the most fundamental aspects of everyday U.S. culture that are often misunderstood. Following is an overview of what we can offer Arctic:

Speaking in English: This training component teaches participants how to say practical, common phrases, and to ask questions in American English. We will focus on pronunciation, expressions, and questions for use in everyday interactions.

Listening in English: In this training unit, participants learn many common expressions, phrases, and questions used in everyday English.

Workplace-Specific English: Here, participants learn how to comprehend and respond to workplace-specific language including phrases and terms that are regularly used in the workplace.

Each participant will receive a manual with CDs that can be used to maintain the language skills they have acquired.

We propose offering on-site classes limited to a maximum of 15 participants for 6 weeks to meet two hours, twice a week, for a total of 24 hours. A once-per-week meeting format for 12 weeks could also be provided. All instructional material will be provided to participants. The \$3,300 estimated budget for this program includes curriculum development, instructional manuals, and on-site training. When the training program is complete, I will develop a follow-up plan to help each participant maintain and improve his or her English language skills.

We look forward to finalizing this training program. Thank you for the opportunity to present this proposal. We pride ourselves on providing quality training, language development, career planning, consulting, and economic development services.

Sincerely,

Phil Wegman
Program Director

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

1. To communicate successfully both orally and in writing, you must recognize your audience's level of understanding.
2. Consider whether your audience is a specialist, semi-specialist, lay reader, or multiple when you communicate.
3. You can define terms parenthetically or in a glossary.
4. The tone you express in a communication should be determined by your audience's level of authority.
5. Be positive and avoid commands when you want audience involvement.
6. Use the pronoun "you" frequently to achieve audience involvement.
7. You have to consider the diverse makeup of your audience to communicate effectively.
8. Sexist language creates problems for communicators.
9. To communicate globally, consider your word choices carefully.
10. Be aware that cultural differences exist worldwide, and workplace communication has to adjust to these cultural differences.

WWW Find additional audience exercises, samples, and interactive activities at <http://www.prenhall.com/gerson>.

MEETING WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

CASE STUDIES

1. Dove Hill, GA, experienced severe thunderstorms on March 15, 2009. GAI (Goodwin & Associates Insurance Co.) insured much of the territory affected by this storm. Over 1,200 houses insured by GAI had water damage. As written, the homeowner's policy provided full-replacement coverage for water damage. In the homeowner's policies, water damage was limited to situations such as the following:
 - A hailstorm smashes a window, permitting hail and rain to access a home.
 - A heavy rain soaks through a roof, allowing water to drip through a ceiling.
 - A broken water pipe spews water into a home.

In contrast, homes which suffered water damage due to flooding were not covered, unless the homeowners also had taken out a separate flood damage policy from the National Flood Insurance Program. For insurance purposes, "flood" is defined as "the rising of a body of water onto normally dry land." For example, flood damage can include a river overflowing its banks or a heavy rain seeping into a basement. Of the 1,200 homes suffering water damage, only 680 homes qualified for full replacement coverage. The remaining homes suffered flood damage and were thus not covered.

Assignment

Write a letter from GAI to a homeowner denying coverage for the water damage claim. You are writing as a specialist to a lay reader. You want to maintain a good business relationship, despite the bad news. Build rapport while specifying the denial in lay terms.

2. Financial Trust & Annuity (FTA), a bank with over 100 sites throughout the Southwest, is growing at approximately 15 percent per year. To accommodate this growth, the bank needs to hire more tellers. Good business demands that FTA hire diversity: people with disabilities, employees from many races and cultures, men and women, and a variety of age ranges. Doing so will help ensure that the bank's

tellers represent people from all walks of life and that the bank will design its services to appeal to a diverse customer base. In addition, another goal is to hire a percentage of employees who can speak Spanish, Arabic, or Chinese. This will help FTA communicate with a key constituency of its emerging customer base.

Assignment

You are the human resources manager. To meet FTA's hiring needs, write a job advertisement. Include the following information:

- Teller job description
- Pay range
- Fringe benefits
- Work hours
- Qualification for the job (include preferred years of experience, needed skills, and language preferences)

In addition, write a statement addressing the bank's commitment to diversity. To accomplish these goals, research comparable job advertisements, either from the newspaper, online sources, or local bank bulletin boards.

ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE CASE STUDY

Kimberly Evans works as a claims adjuster for an insurance company. Her office is a cubicle, centrally located in the middle of dozens of other open cubicles. She interacts successfully with her customers and coworkers on the phone and via e-mail.

Because she is a hardworking and dedicated adjuster, Kimberly often eats lunch in her cubicle. During her lunch break, she frequently browses the Internet on her computer. Her two passions are politics and religion, so she visits Web sites dedicated to these two topics. Her computer screen is visible to all of her coworkers, bosses, and customers who visit the office.

Question: Is it ethical for Kimberly to display her religious and political interests on company computers? Justify your answer based on information provided in Chapter 1.

INDIVIDUAL AND TEAM PROJECTS

Achieving Audience Involvement

1. Rewrite the following sentences, focusing on personalization by adding pronouns or names.
 - a. The company will require further information before processing this request.
 - b. It has been decided that a new procedure must be implemented to avoid further mechanical failures.
 - c. The department supervisor wants to extend a heartfelt thanks for the fine efforts expended.
 - d. I think you have done a great job. I want you to know that you have surpassed this month's quota by 12 percent. I believe I can speak for the entire department by saying thank you.
 - e. If the computer overloads, simultaneously press Reset and Control. Wait for the screen command. If it reads "Data Recovered," continue operations. If it reads "I/O Error," call the computer resource center.
2. Achieve reader benefit in the following sentences by avoiding negative words, using positive words instead.
 - a. We cannot lay your cable until you sign the attached waiver.
 - b. John, don't purchase the wrong program. If we continue to keep inefficient records, our customers will continue to complain.

- c. You have not paid your bill yet. Failure to do so might result in termination of services.
 - d. If you incorrectly quote and paraphrase, you will receive an F on the assignment.
 - e. Send me the requested information by January 12.
3. Rewrite the following flawed correspondence. Its tone is too negative and commanding, regardless of the audience. Soften the tone to achieve better audience involvement and motivation.

Date: October 15, 2009
 To: Distribution
 From: Darryl Kennedy
 Subject: Fourth Quarter Goals

Due to a severe lack of discipline, the company failed to meet third quarter goals. To avoid repeating this disaster for the fourth quarter, this is what you all must do—**ASAP**.

1. Demand that the sales department increase cold calls by 15 percent.
2. Require weekly progress reports by all sales staff.
3. Penalize employees when reports are not provided on time.
4. Tell managers to keep on top of their staff, prodding them to meet these goals.

Remember, when one link is weak in the chain, the entire company suffers.
DON'T BE THE WEAK LINK!

Recognizing the Audience

Find examples of writing directed to specialists, semi-specialists, or lay audiences. To do so, read professional journals, find procedures and instructions, look at marketing brochures, read trade magazines, or ask your colleagues and coworkers for memos, letters, or reports.

Once you have found these examples, bring them to class. In small groups, discuss your findings to determine whether they are written for specialists, semi-specialists, or lay readers. Use the following Audience Evaluation Form to record your decisions.

Audience Evaluation Form					
Example #	1	2	3	4	5
Type (Circle One)	Specialist Semi-Specialist Lay	Specialist Semi-Specialist Lay	Specialist Semi-Specialist Lay	Specialist Semi-Specialist Lay	Specialist Semi-Specialist Lay
Criteria <i>Language</i> • Abbreviations • Acronyms • Jargon					
<i>Content</i> • General • Specific • Background					
<i>Tone</i> • Formal • Less Formal • Least Formal					

Recognizing Issues of Diversity

1. Rewrite the following sentences for multicultural, cross-cultural audiences.
 - a. Let's meet at 8:30 p.m.
 - b. The best size for this new component is $16 \times 23 \times 41$.
 - c. To keep us out of the red, we need to round up employees who can put their pedal to the metal and get us out of this hole.
 - d. We need to produce fliers/brochures to increase business.
 - e. The meeting is planned for 07/05/09.
2. Rewrite the following flawed correspondence. Be sure to consider your multicultural/cross-cultural audience's needs.

To: Andre Castro, Barcelona; Sunyun Wang, Singapore; Nachman Sumani, Tel Aviv
From: Ron Schaefer, New York
Subject: Brainstorming

I need to pick your brains, fellows. We've got a big one coming up, a killer deal with a major European player. Before I can make the pitch, however, let's brainstorm solutions. The client needs a proposal by 12/11/09, so I need your input before that date. Give me your ideas about the following:

1. What should we charge for our product, if the client buys in bulk?
2. What's our turnaround time for production?
3. What plans should we suggest for international rollout?
4. What kinds of training should we implement for the new systems?

E-mail me your feedback by tomorrow, 1:00 p.m. my time, at the latest. Trust me, guys. If we boot this one, everyone's bonuses will be lost. :)

Avoiding Biased Language

1. Rewrite the following sentences to avoid sexist language.
 - a. All the software development specialists and their wives attended the conference.
 - b. The foremen met to discuss techniques for handling union grievances.
 - c. Every technician must keep accurate records for his monthly activity reports.
 - d. The president of the corporation, a woman, met with her sales staff.
 - e. Throughout the history of mankind, each scientist has tried to make his mark with a discovery of significant intellectual worth.
2. Rewrite the following flawed correspondence. Be sure to achieve effective audience understanding and involvement. To do so, avoid sexist language and define highly technical terms. Search online to find any abbreviations or acronyms that need defining (or invent definitions). Remember: Though the immediate readers might understand all of the terminology, other readers might not.

West Central Auditors

"Your Technical Engineering and Energy Resource Experts"

1890 River
Pocato, Idaho 89022

March 12, 2009

Marks-McGraw, Inc.
2145 Oceanview
Clackamas, Oregon

Gentleman:

We will visit your plant next week for the TEA. To ensure that our visit goes smoothly, we plan this procedure:

- Your plant foreman will have his engineer assemble his CAD drawings for the power plant at Brush Prairie.
- Our men will review these drawings against TE specs, such as specific cost estimates for energy usage and energy data.
- Our ER group will then help your men plan and prepare your facilities for technology changes mandated by the DOE's office of the EERE.
- We also want to review your engineer's plans for any building envelopes. Make sure he brings all relevant correspondence he has had with his clients.

This audit should take approximately seven man-hours. If we have to go off-site for lunch or breaks, the job will take even longer. Therefore, please ask your secretary to provide drinks and food for our six representatives. Tell her that we have no dietary concerns, so anything she provides will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jim Wynn, Team Manager

DEGREE-SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENTS

List ten terms (jargon, acronyms, and/or abbreviations) unique to your degree program. Then, envisioning a lay audience, parenthetically define and briefly explain these terms. To test the success of your communication abilities, orally share these highly technical terms with other students who have different majors. First, state the term to see if they understand it. If they do not, provide the parenthetical definition. How much does this help? Do they understand now? If not, add the third step—the brief explanation. How much information do the readers need before they understand your highly technical terms?

PROBLEM-SOLVING THINK PIECES

1. HBM has suffered several lawsuits recently. A former employee sued the company, contending that it practiced "ageism" by promoting a younger employee over him. In an unrelated case, another employee contended that she was denied a raise due to her ethnicity. To combat these concerns, HBM has instituted new human resources practices. Their goal is to ensure that the company meets all governmental personnel regulations, including those required by the EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), the FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act), and the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). HBM is committed to achieving diversity in its workplace.

HBM now needs to hire a new office manager for one of its branch operations. It has three outstanding candidates. Following are their credentials:

- **Carlos Gutierrez**—Carlos is a 27-year-old recent recipient of an MBA (Masters in Business Administration) from an acclaimed business school. At this university, he learned many modern business applications, including capital budgeting, human resources management, organizational behavior, diversity management, accounting and marketing management, and team management strategies. He has

been out of graduate school for only two years, but his work during that time has been outstanding. As an employee at one of HBM's branches, he has already impressed his bosses by increasing the branch's market share by 28 percent through innovative marketing strategies he learned in college. In addition, his colleagues enjoy working with him and praise his team-building skills. Carlos has never managed a staff, but he is filled with promise.

- **Cheryl Huff**—Cheryl is a 37-year-old employee of a rival mortgage company, Farm-Ranch Equity. She has a BGS (Bachelor of General Studies) from a local university, which she acquired while working full time in the mortgage/real estate business. At Farm-Ranch, where she has worked for over 15 years, she has moved up the ladder, acquiring many new levels of responsibility. After working as an executive assistant for five years, she then became a mortgage payoff clerk for two years, a loan processor for two years, a mortgage sales manager for four years, and, most recently, a residential mortgage closing coordinator for the last two years. In the last two positions, she managed a staff of five employees.

According to her references, she has been dependable on the job. Her references also suggest that she is a forceful taskmaster. Though she has accomplished much on the job, her subordinates have chafed at her demanding expectations. Her references suggest, perhaps, that she could profit from some improved people skills.

- **Rose Massin**—Rose is 47 years old and has been out of the workforce for 12 years. During that absence, she raised a family of three children. Now, the youngest child is in school, and Rose wants to reenter the job market. She has a bachelor's degree in business, and was the former office manager of this HBM branch. Thus, she has management experience, as well as mortgage experience.

While she was branch manager, she did an outstanding job. This included increasing business, working well with employees and clients, and maintaining excellent relationships with lending banks and realtors. She was a highly respected employee and was involved in civic activities and community volunteerism. In fact, she is immediate past-president of the local Rotary Club. Though she has been out of the workforce for years, she has kept active in the city and has maintained excellent business contacts. Still, she's a bit rusty on modern business practices.

Assignment

Who will you hire from these three candidates? Based on the information provided, make your hiring decision.

WEB WORKSHOP

1. As director of human resources for your company, your job is to write a non-discrimination policy. To do so, access an online search engine to find other companies' non-discrimination policies. Compare and contrast what you find. Then, based on your research, write your company's policy.
2. You are head of international relations at your corporation. Your company is preparing to go global. To ensure that your company is sensitive to multicultural concerns, research the cultural traits and business practices at five countries of your choice. To do so, access an online search engine and type in "multicultural business practices in _____" (specify the country's name). Report your findings either orally or in a memo.

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. Why should you consider your audience before you speak or write in business?
2. Distinguish a specialist from a semi-specialist.
3. What is a lay audience?
4. What is a multiple audience?
5. Why is it important to consider your audience's role when you communicate?
6. How can you achieve audience involvement?
7. What do you consider when you recognize that your audience is diverse?
8. What are three things you should do to write effectively for a multicultural audience?
9. Why should you avoid idioms, slang, acronyms, and biased language in your workplace communication?
10. What is "you-usage," and why is it important?

