

teams allows people to collaborate with others. Finally, communication in the public context takes place through effective business and professional presentations. Although each context is different, the communication principles remain the same. You use the same five principles to develop and manage relationships as you do to make effective sales presentations to potential customers. What's different is how the communication principles are applied. You will see how the five communication principles are woven throughout the three contexts (interpersonal, team, and public) and how the context determines how the principles are applied to achieve communication goals as you assume leadership roles. In the model in Figure 1.2 you note that the same five principles are present regardless of whether the skill is relating, collaborating, or presenting. In each context, you draw on all five fundamental principles.

Relating to Others: Interpersonal Communication

A **relationship** is an ongoing connection we make with others through interpersonal communication.⁴⁷ To relate to someone is to give and take, listen and respond, act and react. When we talk about a good or positive relationship with someone, we often mean that we are together, or “in synch.” You will develop and manage relationships with your manager, your coworkers, with the people you lead, and with your customers and clients. Communication allows the relationships to develop. Without communication, there are no relationships. To relate to others effectively, you should be aware of your communication and effectively use verbal and nonverbal messages, listen and respond, and appropriately adapt your messages to others in interpersonal situations.

Interpersonal communication occurs when at least two people interact with each other and mutually influence each other, usually for the purpose of developing and managing the relationship. You engage in interpersonal communication when you interview for a job or visit with a colleague. You communicate with an interviewer with the hope of influencing the person and developing a relationship—convincing him or her that you're the most qualified for the position. When talking with a colleague, you may be swapping office stories or just talking about the weather.

Yet true interpersonal communication occurs not simply when you interact with someone, but when you treat the other person as a unique human being. Think of all human

terms & definitions

Relationship an ongoing connection developed with another person through interpersonal communication.

Interpersonal communication communication that occurs when two people interact to mutually influence each other, usually for the purpose of managing relationships.

Media richness theory theory that a communication medium is rich if it has (1) potential for instant feedback, (2) verbal and nonverbal cues that can be processed by senders and receivers, (3) natural language, and (4) a focus on individuals.



FIGURE 1.2 Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership

Communication Skills FOR A Digital Age

Matching Your Media to Your Message

In the movie *Up in the Air*, Ryan Bingham, played by George Clooney, has the job of firing people. He chooses to handle this difficult and delicate task in person. A new colleague thinks it would save money to fire people via video conference. The movie ultimately makes the point that live-and-in-person is a better, kinder way of sharing such profound news.

Technology has made it easier to share information quicker and easier with many people in an organization. You can just as easily be e-connected to your colleagues in the next room or in the next continent because of the Internet and a vast array of technological tools. Because of the ease in using technology, coupled with the increasing likelihood that you will be communicating with people from other cultures, you may need to decide when you need to share news face-to-face and when it may be more efficient to communicate virtually, such as using text messages, email, instant messaging, Skype, YouTube, Facebook, or other electronic means.

The practical theory, called **media richness theory**, helps explain when it is best to communicate in person rather than participate in mediated communication. A method or channel of communication is said to be rich if it has the following characteristics:⁴⁸

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

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

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

Use media-rich methods if:

- Your message is likely to be misunderstood because it's highly detailed and complex.

- Your message is important to people (such as about their compensation).
- There is a high potential for interpersonal conflict.
- You want to know immediately how people will respond to your message.

Use media-lean methods if:

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

Applying Your Skills

Given the principles of media richness theory, consider how best to collaborate with team members in the following situations:

1. You've had an e-meeting via the Internet with your colleagues. It's your job to distribute the minutes of the meeting. Should you use a media-rich or media-lean method of communicating the minutes to your coworkers?
2. As project manager, you've noticed increased conflict and relational tension between the team working in Houston, Texas, and the team based in Mexico City. During the last conference phone call it was clear the tensions were escalating between the two groups. To manage the conflict, should you use a media-rich or media-lean context? Specifically, what would be a good forum to help manage the conflict?
3. Because of the aging baby boomers in the organization, the human resources department has developed a new retirement policy for the company. The new policy is somewhat complicated because of the various formulas for calculating retirement benefits. Workers in the organization are assigned to project teams. It's your job to communicate the new policy to project team members. Should you use a media-rich or media-lean method of communicating to the employees?

Communication Ethics @ Work

What's Your Ethics Credo?

Ethics are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right or wrong. An ethical communicator is one who considers the thoughts, feelings, and considerations of the people with whom a communicator is interacting. The National Communication Association has developed a Credo for Communication Ethics to emphasize the importance of being an ethical communicator:

Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness,

fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others.⁴⁶

In the workplace it's especially important to be mindful of your ethical principles because of the trust others place in you, especially when managing other people's money or having access to private information such as medical or financial records.

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

each other because of gender differences in communication. Your ability to lead and influence others effectively depends on your ability to adapt messages appropriately to others.

Another way to tailor your communication is to adapt to another person's personality. Some people are talkative; others are quiet. Some people enjoy a good argument; others find arguing upsetting. Your ability to adapt and adjust your communication makes others more comfortable and enhances understanding. In Chapter 5 we discuss this principle in greater detail by discussing how you can lead more effectively by adapting to personality, culture, and gender differences.

Leading Others: Applying Communication Skills at Work

In the workplace you communicate—make sense and share sense with others—to achieve specific work objectives. You achieve those objectives through three sets of communication skills: you relate, you collaborate, and you present messages to others. Communication in the interpersonal context helps develop and manage workplace relationships. Communication in

terms & definitions

Ethics the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right and wrong.

Communication Principles for Leadership

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