leaders ON leadership

Clear Communication = Effective Collaboration

Simple, clear communication promotes simple, clear collaboration. That's the advice of Susan Docherty, who leads the U. S. sales, service, and marketing team at General Motors. Especially in the context of a group or team, with multiple points of view being expressed or people jockeying for position (or trying to get out of doing more work), it's important to be clear and to the point. When asked for advice about how to make collaboration effective, Docherty said,

> *Whether you have a really small team or a really big team, communication needs to be at the forefront. It needs to be simple. It needs to be consistent. And even when you're tired of what the message is, you need to do it again and again and again. Because everybody listens at different levels, and everybody comes to the table with a different perspective and a different experience. And the same words mean different things to different people.*
>
> *On some very key things, people need to internalize it, and they need to own it. And when they do, you'll know that you're effective as a leader, because you hear them saying it.*[37]

As Docherty suggests, one way you know your ideas are getting across to others is when you hear your friends or colleagues restating some of your ideas and suggestions. So listen to others to assess whether your ideas have been heard and understood. Whether you're part of a work team at General Motors or collaborating with others for a class project, what's the best way to make sure your ideas are accurately interpreted by others? Remember Susan Docherty's advice: Make messages clear and simple—then repeat as necessary.

just teenagers; increasingly when groups and teams need to collaborate in business and professional settings, especially if team members are not physically close to one another, they connect using technology rather than meeting face-to-face.

A **virtual team** is a team that interacts via a channel other than face-to-face communication. Email, video conferences, and a vast array of technological tools make it possible for us to be psychologically close to someone even if that person lives and works on the other side of the world. Because of the increased costs of travel, many businesses and professional organizations are doing more collaborative work using virtual teams.[38] And even if we work in the same building with our colleagues, we may nonetheless connect electronically rather than interacting face-to-face. Yet collaborating in virtual teams seems to have a tipping point. One study found that when virtual teams interacted via electronic channels more than 90 percent of the time, teams were *less* successful in achieving team outcomes.[39]

Your personal computer, your cell phone, and other technological tools give you the ability to collaborate with other people who are not all in the same place at the same time. To give you an idea of how rapidly worldwide Internet use is increasing, note these statistics: In 2005, over 950 million people used the Internet; that number had grown to over 2 billion people in 2011—and the numbers continue to grow exponentially.[40]

How is electronically-mediated, virtual teamwork different from live, face-to-face conversation? There are four key differences:[41]

- *Anonymity*: If you are interacting by text message or email only, you may not always know precisely with whom you are communicating when you receive a message.
- *Physical appearance*: There is typically less emphasis on a person's physical appearance and nonverbal communication online.
- *Distance*: Although we certainly can and do send email messages to people who live and work in the same building, there is typically greater physical distance between people who are communicating online.
- *Time:* You have greater control over the timing and pacing of the messages you send and receive. You can decide, for example, when to retrieve a text or email messages or when to respond to a message you receive. Your interaction with others can be **asynchronous**—which means your messages are out of sync with the time in which you send them; there often is a time delay between when you send and receive a message. Or they can be **synchronous**—the messages are received the moment they are sent.

terms & definitions

Virtual team a team that interacts via a channel other than face-to-face communication but rather uses email, video conferences, or other technological tools.

Asynchronous communication in which there is a time delay between when a message is sent and when it is received.

Synchronous communication which is received and responded to in real time.

Video conferencing allows virtual teams to collaborate, even when team members are in different parts of the country or the world.

Different types of technology make virtual communication possible. Let's take a closer look at these various technologies.

TELEPHONE CONFERENCES. The telephone conference call—one of the first uses of technology to support group and team meetings—involves a group of people agreeing to "meet" at a certain time by phone. To hold a conference call you need a special telephone service, available from most telephone companies, so that several people in different locations can be connected at the same time. Contemporary cell phones also have features that make conference calling easy.

EMAIL AND TEXT COLLABORATION. We don't need to tell you that email and text messaging are two of the most prevalent methods used to send and receive messages in organizations—or anywhere. If you're typical, you regularly send and receive email and/or text messages about both personal and work-related topics. In 2009 one report indicated that people in the United States sent a total of over 4 billion text messages per day.[42] The research on *group* use of email, however, is still in its early stages[43] and is somewhat contradictory.

- One research study suggests that electronic correspondence minimizes status differences that may be present if people meet face-to-face.[44]
- Another study found that language style has a significant impact on the impression created by email.[45] In general, someone who uses a more assertive language style (such as saying, "I want you to do this.") is perceived as more powerful, credible, and even physically attractive than someone whose language style is weak or timid. ("It might be nice if you consider doing this sometime.")
- Yet another research team found that groups that communicate by email while solving a problem are more likely to do a better job of analyzing the problem than groups that interact face-to-face.
- Being able to read and reread detailed information may help group members focus better on details and message content.

On the negative side:

- Although email and text messaging can be effective for discussing routine business, some messages (such as those intended to manage conflict) are best presented in person.[46]
- There is some evidence that groups that make decisions by email are *less* likely to reach agreement.[47]
- Once a message is sent, you can't take it back. Although it's possible to retract or apologize for something you've sent, as the Russian proverb puts it, "Once a word goes out of your mouth, you can never swallow it again."
- With text-only messages, there is some loss of emotional information communicated by facial expression, vocal inflection, gestures, and body posture that may lead to misunderstanding.[48]

Although emotional information may be less prevalent, we nonetheless try to express emotions when we send messages. We're sure you've noticed that some people use emoticons—keyboard symbols that are typed in certain combinations to express emotions—or

Understanding Team Dynamics

At his first day of work at Samsung, Shuntaro was assigned to a team that was developing new solar energy panels. He noticed that other team members were an average of ten minutes late to the two staff meetings held that day. Although Alex was the supervisor, the other team members treated him no differently than anyone else; in fact, they sometimes ridiculed Alex behind his back. The most influential member of the team was Hailey, who although quiet and soft-spoken, seemed to wield the most power because of her knowledge and experience. What Shuntaro was observing were team dynamics—the various factors that determine what it feels like to belong to a team.

Team Roles

How you communicate with others in a team is a function of your role. Your **role** is the consistent way you communicate with others on a team. Your role is based on your expectations of yourself and the expectations others have of you. There is also evidence that your personality and the personality characteristics of other team members have major influences on team role development.[56] All five of our communication principles for leadership have an impact on the development of your role in a team. How aware you are of your behavior and the behavior of others has a major impact on your verbal and nonverbal messages. Your role develops as you listen and respond and as other team members listen and respond to you, and as you adapt to the communication behavior of other team members.

Your role is worked out as you balance your own expectations of yourself and the expectations others have of you. If no leader has been assigned to a team you're part of, do you often take charge, or are you more comfortable blending in and taking directions from others? Are you the one who makes sure the team gets the work done instead of just having a good time? Maybe you're the team member who seems especially gifted in managing conflict and disagreement. Or, perhaps you have no typical pattern—your role depends on the group and who else is in the group. In business and corporate settings, your specific role may be prescribed by your job title or position. If you are the boss, you may be expected to be the procedural leader and conduct meetings, set the meeting agenda, or assign people to do certain jobs. But even if your position in the organization prescribes your role, there are still some roles that are shaped by the specific situation and job at hand. The roles people assume in teams can be classified into three types.

TASK ROLES. **Task roles** are those behaviors that help the group achieve its goal and accomplish its work: gathering and sharing research with the group, taking minutes of meetings, and writing ideas on a chalk board are examples of task role behavior.

SOCIAL ROLES. **Social roles** focus on behavior that manages relationships and affects the group climate; these roles help resolve conflict and enhance the flow of communication. Soothing hurt feelings and helping the group celebrate its accomplishments are examples of social role behavior.

INDIVIDUAL ROLES. **Individual roles** are those that focus attention on the individual rather than the group. These are roles that do *not* help the group; they emphasize individual accomplishments and issues rather than those of the entire group. Dominating group discussions to talk about personal issues or concerns, telling jokes that get the group off track, and constantly complaining are examples of individual roles.

Over sixty years ago, group communication scholars Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats identified a list of group roles that remains a classic way of identifying the group and individual roles that group and team members typically assume.[57] Table 9.1 presents a summary of these roles. As you look at the list of roles in Table 9.1, you may think to yourself, "Yes that's what I usually do in meetings. That's the role I usually take." And you can probably see roles that other team members usually take on. Most of us typically enact several roles when we collaborate with others. Effective team members adapt their behavior to what is happening or needed in the group.

terms & definitions

Role the consistent way someone communicates with others in a team, based on the person's own expectations and what others on the team expect of the person.

Task roles behaviors that help a group achieve its goal and accomplish its work.

Social roles behaviors that manage relationships and affect group climate; these roles help resolve conflict and enhance the flow of communication.

Individual roles behaviors that focus attention on an individual rather than the group.

TABLE 9.1 A Classification of Group Roles

Task Roles	Description	Example
Initiator/contributor	Offers new ideas or approaches to the group; suggests ways of getting the job done.	"How about developing an agenda to help us organize our work?"
Information seeker	Asks for additional clarification, facts, or other information that helps the group with the issues at hand.	"Can anyone tell me how many times we have had to cancel our fall conference because of bad weather?"
Opinion seeker	Asks group members to share opinions or express a personal point of view.	"So, what do you all think of the new uniform that all of the service workers have been asked to wear?"
Information giver	Provides facts, examples, statistics, or other evidence that relates to the task confronting the group.	"Within the past year, the Vice President for Information Technology has told us to use two different information management systems."
Opinion giver	Offers opinions or beliefs about what the group is discussing.	"I think the new information technology policy will decrease our productivity."
Elaborator	Provides comments or examples to extend or add to the comments of others.	"Jessica, that's a good point. The same thing happened to me when I worked for our main competitor two years ago."
Coordinator	Clarifies and notes relationships among the ideas and suggestions that have been offered by others.	"Travis, your ideas sound a lot like Sondra's suggestion. Sondra, why don't you elaborate on your idea and we'll see if Travis agrees or disagrees with you."
Orienter	Summarizes what has occurred and seeks to keep the group focused on the task at hand.	"I think we're getting a bit off track here. Let's go back to the issue on the agenda."
Evaluator/critic	Assesses the evidence and conclusions that the group is considering.	"How recent are those statistics? I think there are newer figures for us to consider."
Energizer	Spurs the group to action by making comments to motivate the group to work harder.	"Come on, team. We can do it if we just keep at it! Don't stop now."
Procedural technician	Helps the group accomplish its goal by handling tasks such as distributing reports, writing ideas on a chalk board, or performing other tasks that help the group.	"I'll write your ideas on the board. After the meeting, I'll copy them and summarize them in an email to each of you."
Recorder	Makes a written record of the group's progress by writing down specific comments, facts, or the minutes of meetings.	"I'll take notes of today's meeting."

Social Roles	Description	Example
Encourager	Offers praise and support and confirms the value of other people and the ideas they contribute.	"You're doing a great job. Thanks for working overtime on this project."
Harmonizer	Manages conflict and mediates disputes between group members.	"Grover, you and Nicole seem to be agreeing more than you are disagreeing. Both of you want the same goal. Let's brainstorm some strategies that can help you both get what you want."
Compromiser	Resolves conflicts by trying to find an acceptable solution. Seeks new alternatives.	"Muriel, you want us to meet at 7:00 PM, and Samantha, you'd like us to start at 8:00. What if we started at 7:30? Would that work?"
Gatekeeper	Encourages people who talk too much to contribute less and invites those who are less talkative to participate.	"Blair, we've not heard what you think. What do you suggest we do?"

TABLE 9.1 *(continued)*

Follower	Goes along with the suggestions and ideas of other group members.	"I can support that option. You have summarized the issue about the same way I see it."
Emotion expresser	Verbalizes how the group may be feeling about a specific issue or suggestion.	"We seem to be frustrated that we are not making more progress."
Group observer	Summarizes the group's progress or lack of progress.	"We are making great progress on all of the issues except how much salary we should offer the new person we've just hired."
Tension reliever	Monitors stress within the group and offers suggestions for breaks, using humor or other appropriate strategies.	"Hey, what we need is a good laugh. Here's a joke I saw on the Internet today."
Individual Roles	**Description**	**Example**
Aggressor	Deflates or disconfirms the status of other group members or tries to take credit for the work of others.	"Lee, your idea is awful. We all know that what I suggested two meetings ago is clearly the best option."
Blocker	Is negative, stubborn, and disagreeable without an apparent reason.	"I just don't like it. I don't have to tell you why; I just don't like it."
Recognition seeker	Seeks the spotlight by dwelling on his or her personal accomplishments; seeks the praise of others.	"I offered that suggestion two meetings ago I'm the one who usually makes things happen for this team."
Self-confessor	Uses the group as a forum to disclose personal feelings and problems unrelated to the group's task.	"I'm not happy at home, so that's why I seem a bit off at this meeting. My kids are driving me crazy."
Joker	Wants to crack jokes, tell stories, and have fun instead of focusing on the task or what the group needs.	"Hey, let's just go have coffee. Then I'll tell you the gossip about Harvey in accounting. What a nutcase!"
Dominator	Tries to take control of the group, talks too much, and uses flattery or aggression to push his or her ideas on the group.	"Now here's what we're going to do: Martin, you will take notes today; Alice, you go get us some coffee; and Luke, I want you to just sit there in case I need you to run back to my office to get the Simpson file."
Special-interest pleader	Seeks to get the group to support a pet project or personal agenda.	"My boss would like it if we would support the new downtown renovation project. I'll stand a good shot at a promotion if I can get you on board."
Help seeker	Seeks to evoke a sympathetic response from others. Often expresses insecurity stemming from feelings of low self-worth.	" I'm not very good with people. I just feel like I don't relate well to others or have many friends."

What are the best or worst roles to assume? We recommend that you avoid assuming *any* individual role; by definition, these roles focus attention on an individual rather than the group. Groups need people to take on a balance of task and social roles, not draw attention to themselves.

What is the proper balance between task roles and social roles? Some experts recommend a 60:40 balance between task and social roles.[58] What is clear is that groups seem to operate most effectively when it's not all work and no play. Conversely, an out-of-balance group that focuses on just having a good time is not going to achieve its task goals. In general, more of the group's interactions should be about getting the work done than about having fun or managing the social climate—but don't forget to make sure that there are good working relationships among group members.[59]

Team Norms

When George Lucas, president of Lucasfilm, and Micheline Chau, chief operating officer of Lucasfilm, wanted to merge two separate units of the company into one unit, they decided it would be best to create new work norms by moving the teams together into one building rather than keeping them in their separate locations. They wanted the new teams to develop new collaborative norms for work productivity and procedures. **Norms** are standards that determine what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a group. Common team norms help develop team coordination and cooperation. Norms reflect what's normal behavior in the group; they influence how group members are supposed to behave—such as the type of language that is acceptable or the casualness of the clothes they wear. Norms can evolve into more formal rules, which are more explicit prescriptions that spell out how group members should interact.[60] Lucas and Chau believed the development of new common norms would help the new Lucas film team develop a better sense of team identity.

How can you discover what the norms of any group are? Watch the group. Listen and observe any repeated verbal or nonverbal behavior patterns. Note, for example, consistencies in the way people talk or dress. To help you spot norms in your groups, consider the following questions:

- What are group members' attitudes toward time (do meetings start and stop on time)?
- How do group members dress?
- Is it acceptable to use informal slang terms or to use obscenity?
- What kind of humor is acceptable?
- How does the group treat the leader?

terms & definitions

Norms standards that determine what is appropriate and inappropriate behavior in a group.

Communication interaction patterns communication patterns that emerge based on who talks to whom.

Noting when someone breaks a norm can also help you spot a norm. If a member waltzes into a meeting twenty minutes late and several folks grimace and point to their watches, that's a sure sign that a norm has been violated. The severity of the punishment corresponds to the significance of the norm.[61] Mild punishment is usually unspoken—silent glances or a frowning stare. More serious punishment can be a negative comment about the behavior in front of other group members or even expulsion from the group. You don't have to worry about whether your group will have norms or not; norms happen. You should, however, monitor the group norms to ensure that your behavior doesn't distract from the work of the group or to note whether an unproductive group norm has developed that the group should talk about.

Cliques may create rivalries or inhibit the flow of communication among team members. Fostering inclusiveness and open communication can help prevent conflict in a group.

Team Networks

Do you have your own Facebook page? Chances are you do. If you are a member of one of the popular social networking sites, you have some idea of the power and significance of social networks. People have a need to connect to others. And just as on Facebook, in groups and teams, **communication interaction patterns** emerge based on who talks to whom and how often. Some groups have an equal distribution of interaction among members; others develop distinct patterns of interaction between two or more people.[62] Whether we're communicating via the Internet or in person, it's normal to develop preferences for talking to certain people but not others. Group communication scholars have studied and classified the various patterns that emerge when people talk to one another in groups. Who you talk with in a group is a function of the communication networks and interaction patterns that emerge.

In most teams, people speak to certain individual people rather than to the team as a whole. We tend to speak to people who have more power and status. In addition, we talk to people we like more than to people we don't like. There will also be more communication directed toward someone on the team who holds an opinion different from the rest of the group. This person is called a **group deviate.** (Some members may call this person a pain in the neck.) Group members may spend considerable talk time trying to change a group deviate's opinion.

ALL CHANNEL. A group in which everyone talks to everyone else is called an all-channel network. As illustrated in Figure 9.1, all channels are open and used. There is considerable interaction and there are no cliques or subgroups that emerge. A **clique** is a smaller group of people within a larger group who form a common bond among themselves. Perhaps you have special friends on your team whom you seek out and who seek you out when you attend meetings. During meetings you probably sit together, share private jokes and stories, and may talk about other members. Although there is nothing wrong with having special friends and colleagues at work, cliques can become detrimental to a team if they foster rivalries within the team or if they inhibit the flow of communication with others. Teams should avoid cliques that can develop divisive power plays that foster conflict. You don't want cliques ratcheting up the emotional tension as the team seeks to deliberate rationally. The first step to avoiding cliques is to be aware that one exists. Then make a conscious effort to be less exclusive and more integrated into the conversation of the entire group.

CHAIN NETWORK. In a team with a chain network, people send messages through one person at a time rather than to all group members. Many business and professional organizations have a hierarchical chain communication pattern. For example, the president of the company sends a message to the vice president, who, in turn, talks to the director; the director talks to a manager, who eventually gives the message to the other employees. As you might suspect, passing a message through many different ears and minds often results in misunderstanding by the time the message reaches the last person in the chain.

WHEEL NETWORK. The wheel network pattern occurs when one person in the team or organization *receives* more messages from other members; this pivotal communicator also is the prime *source* of information to other team or organization members. Perhaps in your group of friends there is one person who seems to know everything that's going on. The wheel pattern emerges when there is a strong leader or when the group members do individual tasks and need someone to keep them informed about what others are doing.

What's the best interaction pattern? It depends. There may be times when the structured nature of the chain or wheel pattern may be called for. For example, during the huddle before a football play, when time is short, usually the quarterback does most of the talking while others listen (wheel network). But most teams function best if there is an all-channel pattern of communication, especially when the group is not too large and is trying to generate new, creative ideas.

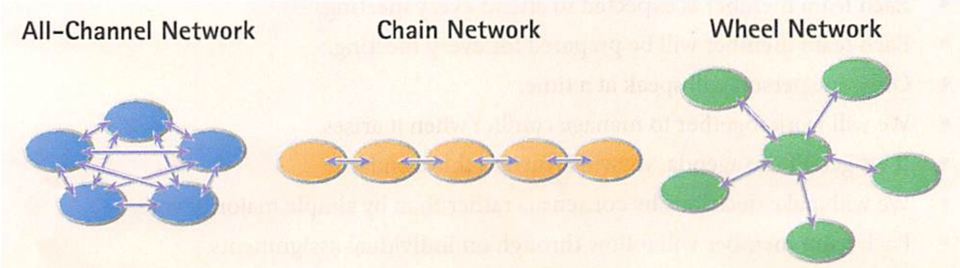


FIGURE 9.1 **Team Communication Networks**

terms & definitions

Group deviate a team member who holds an opinion different from the rest of the group; group members may spend considerable talk time trying to change this person's opinion.

Clique a smaller group of people within a larger group who form a common bond among themselves.

As you participate in or lead team meetings, be aware of the general pattern of communication. Are all members participating? Do some people whisper their ideas only to a few and not share with the rest of the group? Is a group deviate monopolizing the conversation or blocking progress? By being observant of interaction patterns, you can help the team enhance cohesiveness and develop appropriate roles to get the work done.

Improving Team Dynamics

Now that you can describe team roles, norms, and networks, you may wonder if there are specific ways to improve team dynamics. One way to clarify roles is to establish clear ground rules about how the team should best operate. Making sure the team has a clear mission statement contributes to good dynamics: Effective teams have a clear, elevating goal. Managing differences in status and power can also help reduce tension. And implementing strategies to enhance team cohesiveness can help teams work together more effectively.

How to Develop Team Ground Rules

Team ground rules are explicit, agreed-on prescriptions for acceptable and appropriate behavior. An effective team takes the time to develop clear rules that will help to organize routine tasks and procedures. Although team norms typically develop without anyone explicitly spelling out what the norm should be, a team may decide to develop more explicit rules to help get the work accomplished. For example, although it may be a norm that meetings usually start on time, a team could decide to establish a ground rule that all meetings will *always* begin on time. There's evidence that teams are more effective if they develop explicit rules that help the team operate efficiently.[63] Rules help keep order so that meaningful work can be accomplished. Rules also state what the team or organization values. Honesty, fairness, adherence to schedules, and personal safety are typical values embedded in team ground rules.

How does a team develop ground rules? Soon after the formation of a team, the team leader may facilitate a discussion to establish the ground rules. If a team has no designated leader, any team member can say, "To help us get organized and accomplish our task, let's develop some ground rules." Teams clearly operate better if team members develop their own ground rules rather than having them imposed from "on high." Following are some questions that can help a group develop clear and appropriate ground rules:

- How should we record the results of our meetings?
- Who should set meeting agendas?
- How long should our meetings last?
- Should we have a regular meeting time and place?
- What should a member do if he or she can't attend a meeting?
- Should we make our decisions by majority vote or seek a consensus on every decision?

These questions might result in the following team ground rules:

- Every meeting will begin on time.
- Each team member is expected to attend every meeting.
- Each team member will be prepared for every meeting.
- Only one person will speak at a time.
- We will work together to manage conflict when it arises.
- If we get off the agenda, we will return to the agenda.
- We will make decisions by consensus rather than by simple majority vote.
- Each team member will follow through on individual assignments.
- If someone brings up an important topic that is not on our agenda, we will write it on a sticky note, place it in the "parking lot," and return to it later rather than get off our agenda.

terms & definitions

Team ground rules explicit, agreed-on prescriptions for acceptable and appropriate behavior, which help the team organize routine tasks and procedures.

How to Develop a Team Mission Statement

A **team mission statement** is a concise description of a team's goals or desired outcomes. A clearly worded mission statement helps a team know not only whether it's on task or off task but also when it has completed the task.

A good team mission statement should pass the SMARTS test—it should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound, and should Stretch the team.[64]

- *Specific*: It should clearly describe what the team should accomplish.
- *Measurable*: The team must be able to assess whether the mission was achieved.
- *Attainable*: The mission statement should be realistic given the time and resources of the teams.
- *Relevant*: The mission should be appropriate to what the team has been assigned to do.
- *Time-bound*: Teams should set a deadline or time frame for achieving the mission.
- *Stretch*: The goal should be a bit of a challenge so as to stretch the team.

Here are examples of team mission statements that pass the SMARTS test:

- Our team will make 10 percent more widgets by the end of the month.
- Our team will sell more life insurance policies than any other sales team in our sales area.
- Our team will attract two new businesses to our community, which will result in an increased tax base by the end of the year.

How to Manage Team Status Differences

Status refers to an individual's importance and prestige. Your status in a group influences whom you talk to, who talks to you, and even what you talk about. Although some people underestimate their perceived status and influence in a group, research suggests that you are probably quite aware of your own status level when communicating with others.[65] Your perceived importance affects both your verbal and your nonverbal messages. Typically, a person with high status

- Talks more than those of lower status.
- Directs comments to other high-status group members.
- Has more influence on the decisions the group makes.
- Is listened to by group members.
- Makes more comments to the entire group.[66]

Being aware of status differences can help you predict who talks to whom. If you can discern status differences, you'll also be better able to predict the type of messages communicated.

Status influences group communication, but just because a person has high status does not mean that his or her ideas are good ones. Don't let status differences influence your perceptions of the value of the ideas contributed. Some groups get into trouble because they automatically defer to the person with more status without reviewing the validity of the ideas presented. Similarly, don't dismiss ideas out of hand because the person who suggested them doesn't have high status or prestige. Focus on the quality of the message, not just on the messenger.

How to Manage Team Power Differences

Power is the ability to influence others' behavior. You have power if you can get others to do what you want. Although status (prestige and importance) and power (ability to influence) sometimes go hand in hand, a group member could have status and still not be able to influence how others behave. You could, for example, be the designated team leader but not be perceived as having much influence on the team because your ideas aren't valued or you may have no resources to back up what you say and do. Because leadership is the process of

terms & definitions

Team mission statement a concise description of a team's goals or desired outcomes.

Status an individual's importance and prestige.

Power the ability to influence others' behavior.

influencing others through communication, it's important to understand the sources of power and those factors that enhance someone's ability to influence others.[67] Ultimately who does and doesn't have power in a group influences how people relate to one another.

A power struggle often creates ripples of conflict and contention through a group. And on the surface a conflict may seem to revolve around a simple disagreement, such as when a report is due, but underlying the disagreement may be a power struggle. The real issue may be who gets to decide when the report is due.

Power struggles also frequently focus attention on individual group members. People with less power tend to participate less in group discussion, unless they're trying to gain power. A group in which power is not balanced could have problems; the "power people" might dominate the discussion. When one or more members dominate the discussion, the group loses the contributions and insights of others. Research supports the conclusion that teams with equal power distribution usually have better quality outcomes.[68]

One classic discussion of how individuals become powerful identified five power bases: legitimate, referent, expert, reward, and coercive power. These power bases explain why certain people have power and why others don't.[69]

LEGITIMATE POWER. You have **legitimate power** if someone elected or appointed you to a position of power. Your power source comes from holding a position of responsibility. The president of your university or college has the legitimate power to establish and implement school policy. Senators from your state, the chief executive officer of a company, or the manager of a department store are other examples of people who have legitimate power. A group or team member who has been designated team leader or elected chair or president of the group is given legitimate power to influence how the group operates.

REFERENT POWER. You have **referent power** if people like you. Put simply, people we like have more power over us than people we do not like. If you are working on a committee with your best friend, your friend exerts power over you in that you may give more credence to what your friend recommends. Just the opposite occurs if you are working with someone you don't like; you will be more likely to ignore that person's advice.

EXPERT POWER. Knowledge is power. People who have **expert power** are perceived as informed or knowledgeable and have more influence than people who are perceived as uninformed.

REWARD POWER. People who can grant favors, money, promotions, or other rewards have **reward power**. Someone who can take away a punishment or other unpleasant experience (rescinding a restrictive dress code or establishing a more flexible work schedule, for example) also has reward power. People who have greater power to reward typically are sent more positive, supportive messages than people who don't have the ability to reward others. But reward power is effective only if a person being rewarded finds the reward (or the removal of a punishment) satisfying or useful. What is rewarding to one person may not be rewarding to another person.

COERCIVE POWER. You have **coercive power** if you can punish others; coercive power is the flip side of reward power. If someone can cut your salary, lower your grade, demote you, or force you to do unpleasant jobs, that person has coercive power. The power results from the perception that the person with the power will actually use the power. If someone has the authority to punish, but if group members don't perceive that the person will use this power, then he or she doesn't really have power.

Even though we have categorized power into five different types, don't get the idea that group members have just one type. In reality, every group or team member typically has more than one source of power. For example, a group member who is the elected leader (legitimate power) may be able to offer rewards (reward power) or punishment (coercive power).

terms & definitions

Legitimate power power that stems from being elected or appointed to a specific position or office.

Referent power power that stems from being liked.

Expert power power derived from having knowledge and expertise.

Reward power power arising from the ability to grant favors, money, or other rewards.

Coercive power power stemming from the ability to punish others.

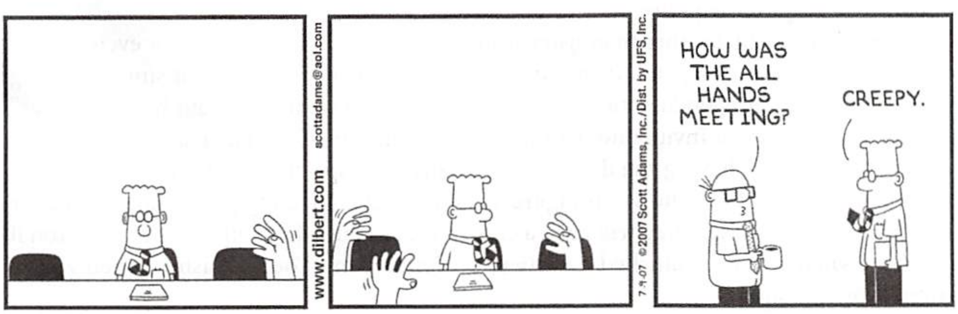
virtually no interaction and the "meeting" is so heavily structured that one person does all or most of the talking, you're really attending a presentation or briefing, not a meeting. If the person doing most of the talking is giving her spiel with PowerPoint slides, that's a good indication that the speaker views her primary purpose as imparting information rather than soliciting feedback. If the only task during such a meeting is to share information, you may not really need a meeting at all—perhaps a "meeting in a memo" or email will suffice.

There certainly are times when you want to share information in person to emphasize its importance or to get a reaction from others—such as when you need to explain a change in policy, procedures, or sales goals. If you want reactions to what you present, make sure to budget time for discussion and reactions. Sometimes you may need to give information during the early part of the meeting and then move into discussion before taking action. However, if the goal is to explain a new policy and you want or expect minimal discussion, then you're presenting a briefing, rather than holding a meeting.

Briefings have an important function in business and professional settings; sometimes, particularly in businesses with global divisions, the purpose can be simply to see other team members once a week to get an update on projects and assess team member needs. However, a briefing does differ from a collaborative meeting. There is value in the ritual of seeing other people on the team and enhancing relationships. But if people think they are going to attend a meeting and it's really a speech or a briefing, the participants may end up feeling frustrated rather than enlightened.

DISCUSSING INFORMATION An information-discussing meeting is one in which there is considerable interaction and give-and-take, such as nurses reviewing a medical case, real estate agents providing feedback about a new electronic multiple listing website, or student teachers discussing policies. The goal is to gather and assess reactions to information, policies, or procedures. It's important not to let a discussion meeting become a series of long-winded speeches. You want to encourage interaction. Also, at a discussion meeting it is easy for conversations to get off the topic. The meeting leader or meeting participants should be particularly careful to keep the goals of the discussion in mind so that the comments remain relevant. If gathering information is a key meeting goal, it's important to develop strategies to ensure that meeting participants can freely share information, particularly new ideas or statistics. There is a tendency for group members to only share information that all group members already know. It's important when the goal is to discuss information to encourage all group members to participate in the conversation and share ideas, data, opinions, and information.[12] There are structured conversation techniques that can ensure that all members feel free to participate; we'll discuss those strategies later in the chapter.

TAKING ACTION A meeting to take action often involves making a decision, solving a problem, or implementing a decision or solution. For example, deciding who to hire for a job vacancy or figuring out how to save money on travel expenses involves taking action. Prior to taking action, a team must gather information, analyze the information, and discuss it. A meeting can have a single agenda item of making a decision; but if so, team members have likely had prior conversations and have shared information and options, and come to the meeting with the background needed to make the decision.



leaders ON leadership

We've Got to Stop Meeting Like This

The best meetings do more than simply shovel piles of information at people. They provide an opportunity for discussion, on-task conversation, and on-point dialogue. If a meeting is where people merely give speeches, then it's not a meeting—it's a speech. Susan Docherty, whom we noted in the last chapter served as the leader of the United States sales, service, and marketing team at General Motors, abhors "speechy" meetings, especially meetings that overly rely on mind-numbing PowerPoint presentations. She notes,

> *I actively despise how people use PowerPoint as a crutch. I think PowerPoint can be a way to cover up sloppy thinking, which makes it hard to differentiate between good ideas and bad ideas. I would much rather have somebody type something longhand, send it in ahead of the meeting and then assume everybody's read it, and then you start talking, and let them defend it. The question from the beginning of the meeting to the end of the meeting is, "Have we added value: yes or no?" And I would say that if the meeting is mostly the presentation of a deck of PowerPoint slides, you conveyed information, but you didn't actually add value.*[13]

Make sure your meetings aren't merely occasions for people to give speeches. If you're the meeting leader, develop an agenda that includes an opportunity for discussion. If you're a meeting participant, gently and politely ask for a memo that summarizes key information, a policy summary, or data analysis *before* the meeting. There may be times when information needs to be shared with other members during the meeting; but if that's the primary function of the meeting, consider writing a memo, sending an email, sharing a podcast, or distributing a video.

Many, if not most, meetings have multiple goals. Those attending a meeting may first hear information presented, then discuss the information, and finally take some action to accomplish the meeting goal. If you are the meeting leader, before beginning to draft your agenda, you need to know the meeting goal; you want to identify what you would like to have happen as a result of the meeting. A typical goal might be, "At the end of this meeting we will have decided who to hire for the new advertising job," or "At the end of the meeting we will have discussed and evaluated the sales figures for the last three months." Without a specific goal, it's likely you'll accomplish little.

Developing the Meeting Agenda

Once you have identified goals and assessed what you need to talk about, it's time to develop an agenda—to arrange the items in the most effective way to achieve your goals. An **agenda** is the written list of issues, questions, or topics that serves as the primary tool to help you structure the order in which you talk about each topic. If you are leading a meeting, it's your responsibility to develop the meeting agenda. The agenda is your key tool to give your meeting structure. Here are the key steps to developing a meeting agenda:

1. IDENTIFY MEETING ISSUES AND QUESTIONS Your first task in developing your agenda is to consider all of the topics, issues, and questions you need to discuss to achieve your meeting goals. As you start to identify the various agenda items, you don't need to worry about what order to place them (you'll make those decisions later). First, just identify the agenda items. Once you have a first draft of your agenda items, you arrange the topics and issues in a logical structure.

We recommend that rather than using a single word as an agenda item, or even using a short phrase, *make each agenda item a question to be answered.* Instead of simply writing "hiring policy" on the agenda, write, "What changes should we make in our hiring policy?" By using a question you invite interaction. You and other meeting participants also know precisely why you are having the discussion—to answer a specific question. Using a question as an agenda item, as shown in Figure 10.2, also helps meeting participants be better prepared for the meeting. They will have a clearer idea about what will be discussed. You'll also know when you have finished a particular agenda item. You're finished when you've answered the question.

terms & definitions

Agenda a written list of issues, questions, information, or topics to be discussed or tasks to be completed in a meeting.

Meeting Place: The Centennial Building, Abernathy Conference Room

Meeting Time: Tuesday, September 19, at 3:30 PM

Meeting Goals: At the end of the meeting, meeting participants should be able to

1. Identify positive and negative reactions to the finance report.
2. Describe how the new employment policy will influence hiring practices.
3. Identify strategies to increase sales.

I. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Are there any other agenda items we need to discuss today?

B. What are positive and negative reactions to the finance report distributed before the meeting?

C. How will the new employment policy influence hiring practices?

II. ACTION ITEMS

What can be done to improve our sales figures during the next sales period?

III. INFORMATION ITEMS

Announcements

FIGURE 10.2 Sample Agenda

2. GROUP ISSUES AND QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO MEETING GOALS Organize the agenda around your meeting goals. Use subheadings of information items, discussion items, and action items to signal to team members the goal of the discussion. If your meeting goal is to discuss the pros and cons of the new strategic plan, then your agenda would likely include such straightforward questions as, "What are the benefits of the new strategic plan?" and "What are the disadvantages of the new strategic plan?"

3. ESTIMATE HOW MUCH TIME TO BUDGET FOR EACH QUESTION OR ISSUE Before making final decisions about which items you will discuss, estimate how long you think the team will need to discuss each item. How much time you budget for a discussion will help you decide where to place the item on the agenda.

4. STRATEGICALLY SEQUENCE AGENDA ITEMS There is an art to determining the order in which you introduce agenda items. Your goal in developing the agenda sequence is to maximize the efficient use of meeting time while also balancing structure and interaction.

Some meeting management experts suggest putting your most important item first because usually what is introduced first takes the most time. When you have lots of money in your bank account you probably don't monitor every penny you spend; but when you're down to only a few dollars in your account, you're aware of everything you spend. This same analogy holds in meetings. It's time rather than money that is the "currency" of meetings. When you are at the beginning of your meeting you have a "full bank account" of time, so team members may be more likely to talk without monitoring how long they talk. So rather than beginning a meeting with routine information items that are likely to spark digressions from the agenda, it may be best to make your first agenda item something of vital importance to the group that clearly relates to one or more of your meeting goals.

Consider these additional meeting agenda sequencing tips and suggestions:

- Start your meeting by actively involving members in finalizing the agenda; ask them for reactions to how you have structured the discussion. Ask participants if they have other items to include on the agenda in an effort to avoid digressions and surprise agenda additions later.
- Consider making your first agenda item a question or issue that will immediately involve all meeting members in active discussion. By placing a high-priority item early in the meeting, you take advantage of having people talk about an issue when they are fresher.

- Consider placing the most challenging issues for discussion in the middle of the meeting, thus giving the group a chance to get oriented at the beginning and ease out of the discussion at the end.
- If you have an issue that you know is contentious and will generate conflict, place it after an agenda item on which you think the team will reach agreement. Use the positive energy of the issue of agreement to help when there are issues that may divide the team.
- You may want to first string together several small issues so you can dispense with them before getting into the meat of the meeting. Quickly zipping through several agenda items can give the team energy.
- Consider placing routine reports at the end of the meeting; if you run out of time you can distribute the information in a memo or by email.

Always distribute an agenda to meeting participants *before* the meeting. Without an agenda or some knowledge of what will be discussed at the meeting, participants won't know how to prepare. In addition to asking for feedback about the meeting agenda before you begin the meeting, periodically ask meeting participants if the agenda is serving its purpose. Ask, "Are we still discussing useful information?" or "Is our agenda helping us achieve our meeting goals?"

In addition to distributing copies of the agenda before the meeting and having copies of the agenda to distribute when you meet, it's sometimes useful to display the meeting agenda using a flipchart, a PowerPoint slide, or some other visual means. Having a common image to look at can help keep a group focused on its goal.

Having adequate structure is important not only for meetings that take place in person, but also for virtual groups that meet via teleconference or the Internet. Research suggests that a virtual team will make better decisions during a meeting if it has appropriate instructions for framing the decision as well as enough time to process the information. Table 10.1 summarizes potential meeting agenda problems and how to manage those problems.

Leading Team Meetings

Leaders often are the ones who determine whether to have a meeting. They help set the meeting goal and shape the agenda. Although the leader is a key influence in making these

TABLE 10.1 Meeting Agenda Pitfalls and Strategies for Managing Them

Potential Pitfall	Suggested Strategy
Participants tend to spend too much time on early agenda items.	Make the first agenda item something worthy of discussion rather than beginning with a trivial report or announcement.
Participants find a way to talk even if you don't want them to talk.	Invite input and discussion early in the meeting rather than having participants trying to interrupt.
Participants aren't prepared for the meeting; they have not read what they were supposed to read.	Clarify the team's ground rules about being prepared for meetings. Consider taking a few minutes to have participants read information or have them prepare by writing ideas or suggestions using this silent-brainstorming technique.
Participants won't stick to the agenda.	Remind the group what the meeting goals are, or, with input from the group, change agenda items.
A meeting is scheduled late in the day or participants are tired.	Begin with an agenda item that involves all meeting participants rather than having participants sitting silently at the beginning of the meeting.
The agenda includes a controversial item that will create conflict and disagreement.	Put one or more noncontroversial items on the agenda ahead of the conflict-producing item. Addressing easier agenda items first will establish a feeling of accomplishment and agreement before the group tackles the more controversial item.

TABLE 6.1 **DRGRAC Method of Delegating**

	Downward Communication for Delegation
Desired Results	• Describe the task or project. • Define its purpose and note how it fits into the big picture. • Detail what the end result should look like. • Describe the intended outcomes.
Guidelines	• Describe guidelines for accomplishing the project. • Detail the rules for completing the project (e.g., it must be completed by a particular deadline, with a budget not to exceed a certain amount). • Discuss feasible deadlines for completing the project.
Resources	• Detail resources for completing the project (money, tools, materials, technology, special training). • Identify other personnel who will be involved, if any, and describe their roles.
Accountability	• Detail how the employee will be evaluated. • Establish agreed-on standards of performance and measures of success. • Describe individual responsibilities. • Establish metrics, or measures, for such things as quality (What level of quality is to be achieved? How will it be measured?), time (How will time be measured? Workdays only? Weekends?), and cost (What is over budget? Under budget? What's acceptable?). • Agree on a date to review progress.
Consequences	• Describe the rewards of accomplishing the project with the available resources. • Describe the consequences of not accomplishing the project with the available resources.

responsibilities. **Delegation** is a manager's assignment of a specific task or project to an employee.[38] Have you ever had a manager who told you to complete a project but didn't tell you how to do it, give you any additional help, or tell you when the project was due? When this happens, employees can feel "dumped on"; the manager is being too task focused and not person focused. To manage from the middle of the task-person continuum, managers must learn to delegate carefully by focusing not only on the task, but also on the person; and they must understand what the employee needs to complete the project. DRGRAC is an acronym that will help you delegate effectively to others.[39] Table 6.1 presents the DRGRAC method of delegation.

In many ways, DRGRAC is a quick summary of five types of downward messages. It covers job instructions, job rationale, policy and procedures, feedback, and motivation. The DRGRAC method of delegation and downward communication focuses equally on the task and the person. In each step, there is obvious attention to the task. Each step also protects the manager/employee relationship because each person in the relationship has a complete understanding of the desired results, guidelines, resources, accountability, and consequences. DRGRAC promotes a mature relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

terms & definitions

Delegation a manager's assignment of a specific task or project to an employee.

Skills for Relating to Your Customers and Clients

Relating to your customers and clients is becoming increasingly important to your success in business and professional settings, especially because we live in a service economy.[40] A service economy is based on businesses' ability to anticipate the needs of customers and to

Communication Ethics @ Work

Mixing Business with Pleasure

Best known for his snarky sense of humor and famous "Top Ten" lists, CBS funnyman *Late Show* host David Letterman made waves for an entirely different reason in the fall of 2009.[41] When word got out that he had an office romance with an intern on his staff, then another, then another, the story grew to scandalous proportions. Although release of this story was sensational (as it included stories from coworkers, graphic details, and the juicy little tidbit that Letterman was in a committed relationship at the time), it did highlight an ever-increasing issue for leaders in the workplace: office romance. Just how common is workplace romance? In a survey by Careerbuilder.com, 40 percent admitted to dating a coworker, with an additional 12 percent who hadn't but said they would.[42] Of the 40 percent who had dated a coworker, 42 percent said they had dated a boss or supervisor. Three of ten respondents also said they married someone they met at work. Leaders are now recognizing that workplace romances are inevitable.

Historically, workplace romance has been considered taboo. But now companies are recognizing that by permitting office romance, employees get what they consider an important benefit of working for the company: an opportunity to enhance their social life. However, an office romance almost certainly will have an effect on the interpersonal dynamics within a group.[43] In a related survey, 85 percent of respondents said that although common, workplace romances are a potential distraction for everyone at work. In addition, relationships between supervisor/subordinate, such as those Letterman engaged in, can have devastating consequences. There is the risk of retribution if the romance sours. Also, "third-party" employees can feel left out or begin to question the fairness of evaluations or rewards. In addition, these types of relationships have the potential to make the work environment so uncomfortable, that parties could file sexual harassment or hostile workplace complaints.

How does a leader navigate these legally and ethically murky waters? Do you believe the potential rewards for office romance outweigh the potential risks? As a leader, would you encourage or discourage these types of relationships? Would you participate in one?

develop and market products and services that meet these needs. For example, the late Steve Jobs, cofounder and CEO of Apple, identified a consumer need for portable and personalized tablet computers designed to deliver audiovisual media—including books, magazines, movies, music, and games—to users. Under his leadership, Apple developed and delivered the iPad to millions of people throughout the world.

Researchers are learning that task-focused relationships do not necessary result in satisfied or loyal customers.[44] With minor exceptions, customers who are treated in a depersonalized manner walk away feeling unsatisfied. To enhance the quality of the service provider–customer relationship, **outward communication,** which is the communication that occurs between a service provider and a customer, needs to be focused on meeting the needs of the customer. Wendy Zabava Ford has conducted a number of research studies examining customer-service communication.[45] Ford's research finds that personalized service, which occurs within a person-focused relationship, is "tailored service, or service that attempts to address the unique needs of the individual customer."[46] Examples of communication behaviors associated with personalized service include asking questions to identify customers' specific needs, offering options and advice to customers, and spontaneously sharing information on topics of interest to customers.

One service company that continues to set the standard for customer service is Disney. Much has been written about how Disney trains it employees or cast members to communicate and interact with customers (guests).[47] Whenever the word "Guest" is used in any of their internal or external communication, the "G" is capitalized as a symbolic way of showing how critically important the customer is to the Disney organization. To make sure guests received personalized customer service, Disney cast members practice the following "7 Guest Service Guidelines":[48]

1. Make eye contact and smile. Begin and end every interaction with a Guest with direct eye contact and a sincere smile.
2. Greet and welcome each and every Guest. Extend an appropriate greeting to every Guest you come into contact with. In some areas of the park, themed greetings are offered.

terms & definitions

Outward communication communication between a service provider and a customer.

Understanding the nature of relational conflict on the job is the first step in learning how to manage conflict at work. The elements of our definition will guide you in diagnosing the conflict and identifying the causes of the conflict. Also, knowing how relational conflict is communicated (through competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, or accommodating) allows you to be prepared to manage conflict, which is the focus of the next section of this chapter.

Skills for Managing Emotions

One problem that most people have when trying to manage conflict is controlling their emotions. Most conflicts provoke emotional responses: anger, hurt feelings, frustration, fear, or defensiveness. Of all the emotions that people can feel on the job, frustration and anger are the most commonly experienced emotions.[52] According to Anne Kreamer, who studies and reports on workplace emotions, the main cause of the frustration and anger is coworkers who are not doing their share of the work.[53] So what do you do with your emotions at work? Should you check them at the office door or should you recognize and process them? Kreamer argues that "it's high time we get rational about emotions in the workplace."[54]

Emotions play an instrumental role in how you solve problems. Again, research data does not support the old assumption that emotions only get in the way of rational thinking. Cognitive neuroscientists Mary Helen Immordino-Yang and Antonio Damasio argue that emotions and thinking should not be separated.[55] *Emotional thought* is the term they use to describe how people solve problems.[56] The emotional and thinking systems in the brain work together in a synthetic manner to solve important problems. For example, if you've ever been caught not doing your share of the work on an important project, you probably felt embarrassed and ashamed. These emotions have a "stickiness" that remain in your memory and prevent you from repeating the same mistake.

Although some people want to express their anger and frustration to show the other person their level of anger and frustration and to release bottled-up emotions, these emotional outbursts usually ignite the other person's emotions and result in emotional contagion. Like conflict in general, emotions are like a virus that spreads very quickly from one person to another.[57] We have a tendency to mimic each other's behaviors. If you approach a conflict situation in a hostile or defensive manner, the other person, maybe even without knowing it, starts mimicking your behaviors and begins feeling hostile and defensive too.[58] If you're going to be successful at managing a conflict, you must become aware of the contagion effect and try to prevent it from occurring. Although you do not have control over the other person's emotions, you can affect his or her emotions indirectly by managing your own emotions during a conflict conversation. Here are a few suggestions for how you might prevent the contagion effect.

SELECT A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME AND PLACE TO DISCUSS THE CONFLICT. Let the other person know that you would like to discuss something important and find out when the other person might be available. Make sure this time works for you and your schedule too. If you or the other person is tired, there's a risk of becoming locked in an emotion-charged confrontation. It's best to have a conflict conversation when you're both well-rested. Also, make sure you have some privacy for your conversation.

MONITOR THE EMOTIONAL TEMPERATURE. Let the other person know that you expect the conversation to be respectful and that if the conversation becomes too emotional, you will call a "time-out" or postpone the conversation until the emotions have subsided. For example, you might say, "I know we both feel strongly about the decision not to promote Leslie to unit manager, but I hope we can calmly discuss other alternatives for her career development." Verbal messages like this acknowledge feelings but also reinforce expectations for being polite to one another.

BE NONVERBALLY RESPONSIVE TO OTHERS. Emotions are conveyed primarily through nonverbal messages. And remember that we don't have as much control over our nonverbal messages as we do our verbal messages; emotions have a tendency to "leak" out of us in our nonverbal behavior. Many times these leaked cues convey negative emotions. Although it is natural to have a closed body orientation (to cross arms and pull back) during conflict conversations, try remaining nonverbally responsive to the other person. Make appropriate eye contact. Ensure an open body position by facing the person, uncrossing arms and legs, leaning forward, and using appropriate head nods. Nonverbally responsive messages have a tendency to defuse or neutralize negative emotions.

AVOID PERSONAL ATTACKS, NAME-CALLING, PROFANITY, AND GUNNY-SACKING. Because conflict situations are usually emotionally charged, it is easy to resort to what conflict researchers refer to as "below-the-belt" fighting.[59] This type of conflict is expressed by attacking the individual and making the conflict personal. Profanity, which is usually not acceptable in the workplace, or a personal attack is usually reciprocated by the other person. This cycle of negative emotional expression needs to be broken if there is to be any hope of managing the conflict constructively. Another way to manage emotions is to avoid engaging in gunny-sacking, or kitchen-sink fighting.[60] Gunny-sacking occurs when a person begins discussing a single conflict situation and then continues to unload or dump on the other person all of the things that have been bothering him or her. Essentially, it's emptying the "gunny-sack" of grievances. This type of conflict management is perceived as unfair by most people and increases negative emotions. To avoid gunny-sacking, limit the scope of your conflict conversation to a single issue rather than multiple issues.

Skills for Managing Conflict Conversations

Imagine you're having a problem with your coworker Michael. Rather than talking behind his back, you discuss the problem with Michael directly. But while you're talking, something happens almost without your knowing it: Michael "spins" the conversation so that the problem seems to be about you and not him. It happens quite often, and it can be frustrating. If we're not careful, people can hijack conflict conversations. When this happens, we walk away from the conflict conversation asking ourselves, "How did that happen? Why did I let him do that?" In reality, the problem is not just the other person's and it's not just yours. Because you and the other person are interdependent, the problem belongs to both of you.

To keep your conflict conversation on track and work toward a solution acceptable to both individuals, consider structuring your conversation using what we refer to as the PUGSS model of conflict management. Each letter of the PUGSS acronym represents a different part of the conversation:[61]

- P = Describe the *Problem*
- U = Achieve *Understanding*
- G = Identify *Goals*
- S = Brainstorm *Solutions*
- S = Select the best *Solution*

The advantage to using the PUGSS model is that it keeps conflict conversations focused, and it helps people prepare their conflict messages. Here's how the process works.

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM. What is the other person saying or doing that is bothering you? Using "I" language, describe the problematic behavior. "This is what I see you doing. This is what I hear you saying. This is how I'm feeling."

ACHIEVE UNDERSTANDING. Make sure the other person understands the problem. Simply ask, "Do you know why this is a problem?" You might want to ask the person to paraphrase what she or he hears you saying to confirm understanding. If the person doesn't understand, which is common, then continue to describe the problem but in a different way. It is important not to continue to the next step in the conversation until you're confident that the other person understands the problem.

Also, make sure the person doesn't hijack or deflect the conversation and make the problem about you. For example, if you're discussing with an employee the fact that the person is frequently late, the employee may change the subject and mention that you need to be less rigid and more understanding. If this occurs, tell the person that you'd be happy to follow up at another time to hear his or her thoughts about your being rigid and not understanding. Then redirect the conversation back to the employee's tardiness problem. In other words, keep the conversation focused on the employee's behaviors, not on yours. That's a different conversation that should be conducted at another time.

IDENTIFY GOALS. Next, let the other person know what you want and need. Find out what the other person wants and needs. Once you have identified individual goals, identify the goals you have in common. Build on your common goals. For example, if you're working with an employee who is constantly late to work, you might mention that the goal you have in common is for this person to remain employed. You might say, "I know you want to keep your job, and I want you to keep your job too. Our goal is the same. Now let's work together to reach this goal." People are usually surprised to find out that they have a number of common or similar goals.

BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS. Now that the problem and goals have been identified, it's time to find a solution. Ask, "What can we do to fix the problem? How can we ensure that both of our goals are met?" Withhold all evaluation and generate as many creative solutions as possible.

SELECT THE BEST SOLUTION. Finally, select the best solution. Evaluate each of the brainstormed solutions and compare each to the goals you've identified. If a solution doesn't meet the goals of both people, then it's not the *best* solution. Continue evaluating each solution until you come up with one that meets all the goals identified earlier.

Figure 6.4 reflects how PUGSS might unfold in a real relational conflict in the workplace. This particular conflict, which actually occurred, involves two employees who work in the same office. One of the employees, Marisa, brings her infant daughter to work because she has been unable to arrange child care. The other employee, Rick, is distracted by the child's crying and often ends up doing Marisa's work.

For most people, working through conflict is troublesome and difficult because there's so much uncertainty. We have no idea how the conflict conversation is going to go. This uncertainty produces a lot of anxiety. One of the advantages of using PUGSS to structure your conflict conversations is that it makes managing and resolving conflict like working through a script. To reduce the uncertainty and anxiety, we encourage you to plan your conflict conversations and structure them using the PUGSS model.

There is simply no way to escape relational conflict at work. To manage conflict when it occurs, first ensure that the workplace climate is conducive to managing conflict. Workplace environments that are supportive, trusting, caring, and accepting ensure that relational conflict is managed well. Second, manage your emotions carefully by managing

Describing the *Problem*

Rick:	Do you have a second? I have a problem and I know that you can help me fix it.
Marisa:	Sure, come in. What's the problem? How can I help?
Rick:	Something has been bothering me.
Marisa:	What is it?
Rick:	I haven't been able to get much work done lately. I begin a project that requires concentration and then I hear your child crying. The other day she cried from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00. I was feeling very frustrated.
Marisa:	Yes, she was not having a good day. I'm so sorry.
Rick:	I have also had other employees assign me work that is usually given to you. Yesterday, the Director of Marketing asked me to stuff all of these envelopes and I don't even report to her. I feel like I'm getting dumped on because others don't want to burden you with additional work. I'm feeling a bit abused by this situation, and I'm frustrated and anxious.

Achieving *Understanding*

Rick:	Do you understand why this is a problem for me?
Marisa:	I think so. Here's what I hear you saying: My child bothers you and others are dumping my work on you because they perceive me as having too much to do, with my child and everything else.
Rick:	Your child is not the distraction, but her crying is.
Marisa:	I also didn't know that others perceived me as ineffective.
Rick:	I don't think anybody thinks you're ineffective at all—I just think they perceive you as having your hands full with your workload and your child.
Marisa:	I understand. Again, I apologize for this and I'm glad you brought this problem to my attention. Let's fix it.
Rick:	What do you suggest we do to fix the problem?

Identifying *Goals*

Marisa:	What do you need to get your job done?
Rick:	I need a quiet work environment. I also need others to know that you're available so they stop giving me your work. I don't feel our work is equally distributed. What do you need?
Marisa:	I need to be able to care for my daughter and work at the same time. Being a single working mother is challenging.
Rick:	Well, yes—I can't even imagine how hard it must be.
Marisa:	Well, we both need our jobs and we like working here. . . .
Rick:	Also, we're good friends and I don't think we want this to damage our friendship.
Marisa:	I agree completely. What do you see as being a workable solution?

Brainstorming *Solutions*

Rick:	How about having your parents care for her while you're working?
Marisa:	I could see if I could change offices so we wouldn't bother you.
Rick:	How about seeing if the company might help you finance daycare?
Marisa:	How about you change your work schedule and work nights? Is that a possibility?
Rick:	Could you get a babysitter with whom you could exchange babysitting services? For example, you sit with the other person's child on the weekends and this person could sit with your child during the week.

FIGURE 6.4 **The PUGSS Approach to Conflict**

Selecting the Best *Solution*

Marisa:	Why don't I see if I could change my office so that my daughter and I will be out of your way?
Rick:	I think that would meet my need for a quiet workplace; however, I still believe people will perceive you as having your hands full and they will come to me. Is it possible for your parents to care for your child during the day?
Marisa:	Well, unfortunately my parents aren't capable of caring for my daughter. They're not comfortable around babies. My mother pops Valium every time we step foot in the house and my dad leaves once my daughter begins to cry.
Rick:	What about exchanging babysitting services with a neighbor?
Marisa:	That idea might work. . . . My neighbor is a firefighter and he works two 24-hour shifts during the weekend. I could watch his kids all weekend, and I believe he would be willing to watch my daughter during the workday.
Rick:	That would meet both of my needs and yours. Do you agree?
Marisa:	I do agree. All I want is good childcare for my daughter and to keep my job.

FIGURE 6.4 (*continued*)

conflict at the appropriate time and place, explaining your expectations for how you will treat each other during the conflict conversation, being nonverbally responsive, and avoiding personal attacks, name-calling, profanity, and gunny-sacking. Third, plan and structure your conflict conversations to ensure that you reach a solution you both can agree on.

Skills for Managing Bullies

Although we're used to hearing about bullies on playgrounds and in high school hallways, we're not used to hearing about them in business and professional contexts. Unfortunately, bullying in the workplace is becoming more and more of a problem at work. Communication researcher Pamela Lutgen-Sandvik and her colleagues report that 1 in 3 of all workers in the United States have been bullied sometime during their work history.[62] According to Lutgen-Sandvik, **workplace bullying** is an extreme, negative, and persistent form of emotional workplace abuse achieved primarily through verbal and nonverbal communication.[63] Four characteristics differentiate workplace bullying from other forms of employee abuse: (1) bullying communication behaviors are extreme and intense, (2) the behaviors persist over long periods and result in negative effects, (3) targets or those bullied believe these communication acts are intentional, and (4) targets feel they cannot defend themselves in the situation.[64] Examples of bullying may include some of the following behaviors:

When someone criticizes you when there is no reason to justify the criticism
When someone falsely blames you
When someone treats you differently than the rest of your work group
When someone swears at you
When someone intentionally excludes you from important activities
When someone shouts at you or humiliates you
When someone makes you the target of practical joke
When someone excessively monitors you

A leader is held responsible for managing these difficult and often challenging situations. There are a number of strategies for managing bullies in the workplace. Figure 6.5 examines two best practices: talking to the bully and writing a letter to the bully.

terms & definitions

Workplace bullying an extreme, negative, and persistent form of emotional workplace abuse achieved primarily through verbal and nonverbal communication.

Talk to the bully

Appropriate when . . .	There are times when the working relationship is constructive. The problems are recent.
Not appropriate when . . .	There have been threats or threatening behavior.
Before the meeting, do the following:	Identify the bullying behaviors. Write down the behaviors in a journal; be specific including time and frequency of events.
At the meeting, do the following:	Use the PUGGS model from above. Clearly describe the behaviors to the bully. Say that these behaviors are unacceptable. Describe the appropriate behaviors. Seek agreement.
Benefits	Issues can be resolved quickly. Relationships can be improved.

Write a letter to the bully

Appropriate when . . .	Talking to the person has not brought about the expected results. A meeting is not possible due to time or location.
Not appropriate when . . .	The person is unprepared to talk about the difficulties directly.
Before writing the letter, do the following:	Identify the behaviors that you want the person to change. Identify alternative, appropriate behaviors.
While writing the letter, do the following:	Clearly describe the negative behaviors. Explain why the behaviors are inappropriate. Describe the appropriate behaviors. Ask the person to acknowledge receipt of the letter.
Avoid the following:	Do not make the letter too long. Avoid making it personal. Address the behaviors. Rather than saying. "You were disrespectful," say, "Your behaviors were . . ."

FIGURE 6.5 **Two Approaches to Managing Bullies in the Workplace**

Communication Skills FOR A Digital Age

The Do's and Don'ts of Using Facebook for Work[65]

Many of today's entrepreneurs are using their Facebook for work and for pleasure. Because of their careful use of social media, these ambitious leaders are blurring the lines between their private and public lives in a seamless manner. One example of this is Ms. Randy Yezak, an animal science major from Texas A & M University, who uses her Facebook to sell necklaces, bracelets, earrings, rings, and other accessories under the name "Southern Jewlz," in addition to managing her personal relationships. Her two-year-old business has 8,000 fans on Facebook and her online sales have doubled in a six-month period.[66]

Applying Your Skills[67]

- *Don't have two profiles—one for personal and one for professional.* If Facebook learns that you have two profiles, they may shut down your account. The lines between personal and professional are blurring. You should be transparent and confident enough to let them blur. Of course there are some photos that you may not want your workplace colleagues to view. Facebook has excellent privacy settings that can be customized so your professional connections are limited in what they can view. Become familiar with these privacy settings.
- *Do create a Facebook page for your business.* Profiles are meant for people, whereas pages are meant for business. Because pages were meant for businesses, they have different features that make them more valuable for a business. For example, business pages don't need to "accept" friend requests; they can get "liked" by anyone. Also, business pages come with viewer information so you know if you're reaching your customers and market on Facebook.
- *Don't turn off wall posts for your business page.* The point of Facebook is to interact with your customers. Turning off wall posts or comments screams to your customers, "We don't want to hear from you." Be prepared for what customers might post, and be ready to respond in a timely and authentic manner. Every time a user interacts with your page, that interaction gets in front of that user's network, spreading your reach far beyond your existing customer base. Use this unique opportunity carefully.
- *Do update your business page on a regular basis.* If you ignore it, your customers are going to ignore it as well. Your Facebook page should be an interactive platform where you and your customers interact regularly. If you update your business page with interesting content, your users are more likely to engage with your page, and their interactions get shown to their networks, expanding your reach exponentially. This virality is what makes Facebook such an incredibly powerful tool for businesses.

Negotiating Solutions at Work

Another important tool essential to effective leadership is negotiation, which is a particular type of conflict management. **Negotiation** has been defined as an exchange of proposals and counterproposals as a means of reaching a satisfactory settlement to a conflict.[68] Whereas all negotiation is a form of conflict management, not all conflict management is negotiation. For example, if you supervise an employee who comes to work under the influence of alcohol, you have a conflict that needs to be managed. There is no negotiation. The employee violated one of the workplace rules that usually results in immediate termination. In contrast, negotiation occurs when there is room for bargaining or for give-and-take. You give some and the employee gives some until you reach a solution that suits both of you. In short, you exchange proposals and counterproposals until you can agree. During negotiation, your proposals change and evolve. It's rare to leave the negotiation process with your first proposal untouched.

You will use negotiation strategies during the interview process when a company offers you a job. You have an idea of what the position and your skills are worth; however, the company also has an idea of a starting salary for you. That's when you begin the negotiation process. For example, you will take the job for $35,000. The company offers $27,000 and an extra week of vacation. After a strategic conversation, you and the company's representative agree on an annual salary of $31,000 without the extra week of vacation. This illustrates the exchange of proposals and counterproposals. Another example would be when you're

terms & definitions

Negotiation an exchange of proposals and counterproposals as a means of reaching a satisfactory settlement to a conflict.

trying to arrange your work schedule. You have certain scheduling needs, and your manager has certain scheduling needs. Ideally, negotiation occurs when you and your manager exchange proposals for your schedule and revise the proposals until you reach a satisfactory settlement. Negotiation can allow you to create a better fit between the requirements of the organization and your needs, abilities, and preferences.[69] Negotiation allows you to tailor a particular job so that it fits you.

In the next section, we examine six negotiation strategies and communication skills for negotiating win-win solutions. Coupling the negotiating strategies with the negotiation communication skills will allow you to be effective in your leadership position by continually enhancing your relationships with your manager, coworkers, those you lead, and your clients and customers.

Negotiating Strategies

A **negotiating strategy** is the overall approach you take when you exchange proposals and counterproposals with another person when negotiating a settlement to a conflict. Stephen Covey, an expert in leadership studies, suggests that your negotiating strategy is influenced by your paradigm.[70] A **paradigm** is a worldview; it's a way of thinking or a set of attitudes that guide your communication and behavior. Six paradigms that may guide people in negotiation include win-win, win-lose, lose-win, lose-lose, win, and win-win or no deal.[71] Which paradigm influences how you approach the negotiating process? Becoming aware of your paradigm and how it influences your negotiating strategies will enhance your ability to negotiate solutions more effectively in the workplace.

WIN-WIN. This negotiating strategy seeks mutual benefit; it uses a cooperative rather than a competitive approach to finding a solution. People with a win-win paradigm are empathic listeners; they try to see and understand the problem from the other person's perspective. Win-win negotiators also are appropriately assertive, which means that they make their needs and their feelings known without attacking the other person; they make requests. For example, "For both of us to be successful, I need you to increase your share of the market by the end of next month. In return, I'm willing to give you additional resources to help you make that happen." This message conveys a win-win strategy in that both individuals are getting their needs met.

WIN-LOSE. This negotiating strategy is unfortunately quite common among people in business and professional settings. In fact, in many businesses, this is standard operating procedure. This approach uses competition rather than cooperation in negotiating solutions to problems. People acting on the basis of a win-lose paradigm are more concerned with the self than with the other person and his or her needs. Win-lose negotiators are verbally aggressive—they are more likely to attack the other person's character or make demands to get their way. It is important to understand the difference between verbally aggressive people and assertive people. "I'm going to work the Monday through Friday schedule; you're not going to get your selfish way this time" is an example of verbal aggression. In contrast, "I would like to request a Monday through Friday work schedule so that I may take care of my aging parents on the weekend" is an example of being appropriately assertive.

LOSE-WIN. This negotiating strategy is one typically used by someone who is submissive, which means that the person yields or gives in to the needs of the other person while ignoring his or her own needs and burying his or her own feelings. A person who negotiates on the basis of a lose-win paradigm is a people pleaser but often ends up being dissatisfied.

LOSE-LOSE. This strategy might be best expressed as "If I'm going down, you're going down with me." The lose-lose approach is a destructive attitude rather than a negotiating strategy. This approach is never recommended. Although it may not be your own approach

terms & definitions

Negotiating strategy the overall approach taken in an exchange of proposals and counterproposals during negotiation of a settlement to a conflict.

Paradigm a worldview; a way of thinking or a set of attitudes that guide your communication and behavior.

It was Mark Twain who wrote, "Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow." Based on the number of projects that many of us postpone and the piles of work that sometimes accumulate on our desks, many of us seem to agree with Mr. Twain. Few people in business and organizational settings claim to be underworked or to have too much time on their hands. Just the opposite is true. There never seems to be enough time to accomplish all of the tasks on our "to do" lists—that is, assuming we make "to do" lists. This chapter is about not only techniques for managing our "to do" lists but also some broad principles to help us manage our time. Time, it appears, is a precious commodity—there never seems to be enough of it. And research suggests we're filling more of our time with work. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. citizens worked five more hours per week in 2006 than they did just three years earlier in 2003.[1]

"I like work: it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours."

—Jerome K. Jerome

Some people appear to accomplish more work than others. What is it they know that helps them enhance their efficiency and effectiveness? They understand how to manage time—or so it would appear. But is time really something that can be managed? We all have the same number of seconds, minutes, and hours in a day. Time is a fixed commodity. We believe that it's not *time* that needs to be managed, but something else. It probably won't surprise you that that "something else" is *communication*. As we noted in the early pages of this book, you spend more time communicating with others each day than you do in any other activity. We believe that the best way to enhance your work productivity is through a careful examination of how you communicate with others. How you manage incoming and outgoing messages is central to increasing work efficiency. Although this appendix draws on principles and practices of time management experts, it emphasizes the role of communication in overall work efficiency.

Time management is the use of techniques for analyzing and prioritizing goals and objectives in order to increase efficiency and productivity. By efficiently managing what you spend most of your time doing (communicating), you'll increase your productivity. And by increasing your productivity you will enhance your ability to lead others. Leaders who manage their time well are also better able to manage their communication with others. It takes time to manage the myriad of messages that leaders manage.

What are the essential time management/communication management competencies?

Here's a preview of the essential time management/communication management strategies we will discuss:

- First, it's vital to identify your goals and objectives. Without a clear sense of what you wish to accomplish, it will be harder to manage your time and communication to attain those goals.
- Second, it's important to make a master list of the tasks you need to accomplish to achieve your goals.
- Third, it's not enough to compile a comprehensive list of your tasks; you need to develop priorities. Determining what you need to do first, second, third, and so on, is a key element in effectively managing your time and your communication.
- Fourth, life is punctuated with interruptions. Someone who effectively manages time anticipates potential interruptions and has developed a strategy for working through or around them.
- Finally, you can have goals, make lists, prioritize, and even anticipate interruptions, but unless you take action—turn your plans into behavior—you'll likely see little benefit. So the final task in effectively managing your time is to turn plans into action.

To emphasize the link between managing time and managing communication, we draw on our five familiar principles of communication to frame our discussion of specific strategies that can enhance your efficiency.

Being aware of your communication with yourself and others is an anchoring principle for increasing communication efficiency. Ineffective workers are oblivious to such problems as getting off task or getting distracted. By developing strategies to help you identify when you're off task and to increase awareness of your communication strengths, you can improve your ability to manage your time.

terms & definitions

Time management the use of techniques for analyzing and prioritizing goals and objectives in order to increase efficiency and productivity.

Principles two and three, effectively using and interpreting verbal and nonverbal messages, are also important in managing your time wisely. Your ability to make written lists and to prioritize the items on those lists are key verbal competencies that, if used wisely, can increase your productivity. Managing interruptions involves using several nonverbal communication behaviors so as to increase efficiency.

The fourth principle, being able to listen and thoughtfully respond, is critical to increasing your efficiency. There are many times when hearing a message accurately in the first place would have saved time, energy, and expense of redoing a project or task. Accurately interpreting what others say is directly linked with increased efficiency and goal achievement.

Finally, the fifth principle of appropriately adapting messages to others is key to managing time. Being able to assess situations and appropriately customize messages and behaviors to accomplish tasks are essential to both effective communication and achievement of goals.

Even without reading this appendix, you probably have a good sense of what a good time manager does, as well as what people do who are less skilled in efficiently managing their time. Table A.1 lists the results of a survey that identified the top ten time wasters. To help you get a sense of the time management issues that confront you, make a note of the behaviors on the list that you have found yourself doing. Note how many of the time wasters relate to how we communicate with others. Whether it's the phone, email, text messages, visitors, meetings, socializing, or explicitly poor communication, directly or indirectly most of those factors recognized as time wasters are linked to how we communicate with others. A first step to improving your response to those obstacles is being aware of those behaviors that decrease productivity.

Besides noting time wasters that you may be guilty of from time to time, another way to increase your awareness of your time management competence is to conduct a time audit. Take a moment to complete the time audit form in Rating Scale A.1. After each activity listed, estimate how much time (rounded off to quarter and half hours) you spend in a 24-hour period doing each activity. The scale indicates a target amount, which you may or may not agree with, but which gives you something to compare your own time estimates to. Once you've estimated how much time you spend performing each activity, review your estimates to determine if you're comfortable with the time you currently spend on these tasks. If you'd like to spend more time doing an activity (such as sleeping or pursuing a hobby) draw an arrow pointing up next to that activity. If you want to spend less time performing an activity (such as traveling or commuting to and from work or school), draw an arrow pointing down to indicate you'd rather spend less time doing this task. Your time management audit can begin to reveal how you'd like to spend your time on a typical day.

TABLE A.1 The Ten Biggest Time Wasters[2]

1. Management by crisis
2. Telephone/email interruptions
3. Inadequate planning
4. Attempting too much
5. Drop-in visitors
6. Ineffective delegation
7. Personal disorganization
8. Lack of self-discipline
9. Inability to say no
10. Procrastination

RATING SCALE A.1 **Where Your Time Goes**[3]

Daily Activity (Monday–Friday)	Number of Hours Target	Actual
Utility Time		
Sleeping	8	____
Bathing, Dressing	1/2	____
Eating	1½	____
Traveling	1½	____
Total Utility Time	11½	____
Employment Time/Academic Time		
Working/Studying/Attending Classes/Teaching	8	____
Breaks	1/2	____
Waiting	1/4	____
Socializing	1/4	____
Total Employment Time	9	____
Discretionary (Leisure) Time		
Watching TV	1	____
Athletic and Health Activities	1/2	____
Hobbies, Housework	1	____
Family and Social Activities	1	____
Total Discretionary Time	3½	____
Total	**24**	**24**

Develop Written Goals and Objectives

Without a map, directions, or a GPS system, it's difficult to navigate from one city to another or to find an unfamiliar address. Just as you need a map or a GPS to help you get where you're going, you also need a map of your work destinations. To manage your time well (and manage your communication, too), you need to establish goals and objectives to clearly identify where you want to go. Being able to develop clear and well-written goals and objectives is the first step in working and communicating more efficiently.[4]

Develop Goals

A **goal** is a clear statement that identifies what you'd like to accomplish in the future. Achieving a goal typically involves accomplishing several short-term tasks. Some time-management experts recommend that you develop a personal goal statement of your mission in life.[5] A personal goal statement prescribes outcomes you'd like to accomplish, such as earning a college degree, becoming more philanthropic, or becoming the chief executive officer of your company. Here are some examples of goal statements:

- Within the next two years I would like to complete my master's degree.
- Within the next four years I would like to have a major leadership position at a Fortune 500 company on the West Coast.
- By the end of the year, our department should have completed transferring our records from the old electronic filing system to the new Internet-based filing system.

Each of these goals articulates long-term outcomes that involve multiple steps and processes. Although it can be a challenge to clearly identify your long-term goals, it's worth the effort and thought. Taking time to become aware of your goals is one of your most important time/communication management tools.

Develop Objectives

An **objective**, like a goal, identifies what you'd like to achieve, but an objective is more immediate than a goal. Completing a specific task by the end of the day or week, making a purchase, and writing a report for your boss are examples of objectives.

A well-worded objective meets four criteria: it is specific, measurable, attainable, and observable.[6]

- *Specific:* An objective should precisely and clearly identify what you'd like to achieve.
- *Measurable:* Your objective should be able to be assessed or measured; you need to be able to determine whether the objective has been accomplished.
- *Attainable:* Appropriate objectives are realistic; they can be accomplished given the resources that you have or can obtain.
- *Observable:* A well-written objective should be stated in terms of an observable behavior, such as completing a report or project.

A key to developing well-worded objectives is to ensure that you use action verbs (*write*, *read*, *complete*) that clearly indicate what action you must take to accomplish your objective. Also, it helps to specify a time frame to indicate when you'd like to have the objective completed. Note the following examples:

- By the end of the week, I will finish writing the report about the proposed merger project.
- By the end of the month, I will make fifteen cold sales calls and follow up on each call with a letter to each potential customer.
- By the end of the year, I will complete sixty hours of required training to maintain my general education equivalent requirements.

Each of these objectives meets our four criteria (each is specific, measurable, attainable, and observable) and includes verbs that specify action steps (*write* a report, *make* sales calls, *complete* training).

Time management expert David Allen believes that the best way to begin accomplishing goals and objectives is to identify the next specific action step that you could take to implement the outcome you'd like to achieve.[7] For example, if you want to complete a report by the end of the week, what is the next precise action step you should take? Perhaps that action step is as simple as going to your computer, turning it on, and beginning to write. Or perhaps you need to make a phone call to a colleague to get data that you will include in the report. Whatever the next action step, that is the precise task you should identify. Making a written note of that next step may be just the prompt you need to take action.

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Goal a clear statement identifying something to be accomplished in the long term.

Objective a statement of something specific, measurable, attainable, and observable to be achieved in the short term.