In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

ENHANCING STUDENTS' EMPLOYABILITY QUOTIENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper has two major purposes: (1) to examine from global, regional, and individual levels the kinds of skills employers and employees agree are critical in enhancing the employability of the college graduate; and (2) to present one programmatic answer to provide these skills.

Communication skills are shown to be the most vital skills to enhance employability. The role of personal qualifications, scholastic qualifications, specialized courses, part-time employment, and general, liberal arts courses in employability is addressed. Organizational communication, as a college major, is presented as one training background to meet stated needs in business, industry, education, and government.

INTRODUCTION

According to a recent report of the College Placement Council, "Only half as many job offers have been made to graduating students this year as were made by the same date last year" ("Graduating Students," 1983). While employment opportunities may be slightly better in 1984, the problem of finding fulfilling employment is still a significant one. With 540,000 college graduates unemployed, 1.4 million students graduating from college this spring, and approximately 10,000,000 new college graduates being dumped on the labor force during the present decade, university students need to take special note of what can be done to enhance their employability. The problem is further aggravated by perhaps as much as 80 percent of the current labor force seeking more fulfilling jobs. Thus, a fresh college diploma is not a guarantee of employment. It would appear more than ever that faculty advisement roles with students concerning employment opportunities and what can be done to enhance employability are critical.

Those in public and private sector have a unique responsibility to monitor job growth potentials, to recognize relevant, related skills needed to secure future employment opportunities, and,

importantly, to keep abreast of academic and training programs in their region that merit a solid recommendation.

It is ironic that there are solid and growing career opportunities in public, organizational, and mass communication that are relatively "undiscovered" by incoming freshmen until they are "exposed" in a general studies communication course or other related source. Unfortunately, by then most have declared a major, and have in mind a career plan. Considering the employment potential for well-prepared communication specialists and trainers, this delay is unfortunate.

As communication instructors, our consciousness has been raised regarding the importance of improving their employability quotient (EQ). Specifically, we believe that we have a responsibility to outline what skills we seek to develop in our communication majors that are relevant to future employment needs, and to encourage each vocational counselor to expose students during adolescence to such career options. Ultimately, we ask those in varied disciplines and professions to honestly and objectively make sure students are aware of career opportunities in organizational communication and related fields.

There are two major purposes for this paper: (1) to examine from a global, regional, and individual level the kinds of skills employers and employees agree are critical in enhancing the employability of the college graduate; and (2) to provide information about our organizational communication program at Central Missouri State University specifically designed to meet those needs.

IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THE MODERN WORK WORLD

A number of studies consistently identify the importance of communication skills, both oral and written, as vital to employability. In a recent survey--reported in a leading business communication journal--of top executives, chief executive officers, vice presidents and presidents, some interesting findings emerged. When asked what courses in the study of business administration best prepared persons for careers in general management, the respondents cited oral and written communication as the most important preparatory tools to their success (Hildebrandt et al., 1982). David Rockefeller's description of the chief corporate executive for the year 2000 suggests such a person must be "sensitive to public opinion and respectful of the public franchise over which he presides" and, in addition, "sensitive to the changing attitudes and aspirations of his work force" which would test the corporate executive's "human relation skills" (Madeline, 1980). Rockefeller anticipates the chief executive officer will spend increasingly more time "lobbying legislators, persuading dissident stockholders, and meeting face-to-face with special interest groups" (Madeline, 1980). Most importantly, the chief corporate executive at the turn of the century will have "a personal responsibility for advocacy, activism, and outspokenness," and must "represent articulately and coherently his company and industry to their critics" (Madeline, 1980). Thus,

the future as well as present role of communication is vital. It would appear the same communication skills would be applicable for entry-level skills as well.

Madeline (1980), referring to a writer in Fortune who discusses a major chemical firm's new public relations program, notes that the company chairman is spending a fourth of his time communicating with governmental, media, and public-interest groups, and that nearly 200 of the firm's managers now are giving speeches, lobbying, writing articles for op-ed pages of newspapers, and speaking out on issues affecting company concerns. Madeline (1980) notes:

> The ability to communicate clearly, effectively, persuasively--to gain understanding, and hopefully, allegiance--should be at the top of the list of skills developed by every careerist who wants to get anywhere near the top of most institutions in this country--government, business, education, what have you.

In an effort to improve management education for post secondary institutions and corporate management education programs, Robert Hahn (1982) of the Harvard Graduate School of Education has developed an "Inventory of General Learning Goals for Managers." Note the emphasis on communication skills in the top 10 ranking of 25 general learning goals in industry management education:

Rank Order	General Learning Goals
1.5	To develop ability to interact easily and productively with others
1.5	To develop ability to think critically about received ideas
3	To develop ability to balance conflicting viewpoints
4	To develop ability to listen effectively
5	To develop ability to communicate ideas orally
6	To develop self-confidence and self-esteem
7	To develop tolerance and trust in relations with others
8	To develop self-awareness and self-understanding
9	To develop capacity for self-evaluation
10	To develop capacity for assuming responsibility

The first nine of the top ten learning goals identified by Hahn are communication based. Thus, from an upper-management viewpoint, communication skills are very important!

Company recruiters looking for recent graduates to fill entry-level management positions consider certain factors essential for employability. The Endicott Report (1976) suggests recruiters visiting college campuses cite six factors as critical to the employability of college graduates. Each factor is listed in order of importance.

1. Personal qualifications, including maturity, initiative, enthusiasm, appearance, the ability to work with people, and effective communication, both oral and written.

2. Scholastic qualifications as shown by grades in all subjects or in a major field.

3. Specialized courses relating to a particular field of work.

4. Kind and amount of part-time and summer employment while in college.

5. Experience in campus activities, especially leadership and participation in extracurricular life.

6. General or liberal arts courses designed to provide a broad and cultural background.

These six factors are also supported by our Assistant Director of Placement at CMSU (Shirley Fulda, Personal Communication, September 28, 1983). Asked what they look for in job candidates beyond specific academic credentials and relevant work experience, recruiters cite communication skills as very important. The college relations manager for Travenol Laboratories notes, ". . . we place a very high degree of importance on communication skills. Verbal and written skills are essential for a successful career at our company" ("Wanted: Poise," 1981).

Thus far we have punctuated the general importance of a variety of communication skills to specific jobs. Perhaps these skills can best be identified in the DiSalvo, Larsen, and Seiler (1975) study aimed at identifying the skills needed by recent college graduates employed in business organizations. On the basis of their survey, the authors concluded that ten types of communication skills were important to job success: (1) advising, (2) persuading, (3) instructing, (4) interviewing, (5) routine information exchange, (6) public speaking, (7) small group leadership, (8) giving orders, (9) small-group problem solving, and (10) listening.

Hanna (1978) made an effort to discover (1) what should be stressed in speech communication courses not now stressed, (2) what should be deleted, and (3) what instruction should be continued with even greater emphasis. He summarized his findings by saying that for courses oriented to career training in the business world "communication skills involved in motivating people, delegating authority, listening, direction giving and group problem solving" must be emphasized (Hanna, 1978). Thus, communication skills are vital to entry-level and upper-management job functions. Moreoever, the evidence suggests that the kinds of communication skills reiterated over and over are precisely those in which communication majors are most proficient.

Unsolicited comments from recent graduates with majors in communication at CMSU further substantiate the importance of communication skills. One graduate writes: "I cannot tell you how much this position (Representative Tourism Development for City of Orlando, Florida) is like organizational communication . . . . I love it!" (Paula Foster, Personal Communication, 1982, September 21).

Another writes of his position as a Personnel Specialist for a major firm. He mentions that his responsibilities in recruitment and in interviewing and selecting persons for a number of positions within the firm are dependent on communication skills acquired in our program. He concludes by saying:

> I think you know, while students are at school they tend to take classes for granted and find it difficult to apply that knowledge to the business environment. I can't help but remember how insecure I felt about how Organizational Communication was going to apply. After being exposed to the "real" business environment I am convinced of the program's value and would somehow like to alleviate that insecurity in other Organizational Communication students. (Steve Sanders, Personal Communication, 1982, February 12)

A third student also writes testifying to the importance of communication skills in the business world of Wall Street:

> The situation I am in, is that I am working on Wall Street for the Toronto Dominion Foreign Exchange Banking firm. Over the summer I was hired temporarily to work until school started, at which time a position opened within the firm. Enticed with an excellent salary, and a growth position in Credit and Loan Administration, I accepted the offer. Although I obviously had no prior business experience, they were impressed with my interpersonal skills, which is a vital aspect of the job because of my interaction with various clientele from around the world. The business aspect of the position I am learning from scratch, and finding it a rewarding experience. It would be encouraging to mention to your present Speech Communication majors, that even in the business world of Wall Street, excellent communication skills are one of the most important aspects of a potential applicants strength when getting considered for a position. (Gregory V. Carter, Personal Communication, 1982, April 15)

A lawyer who completed our program writes of the importance of his background in speech communication:

> Perhaps more so than some other professions, the world of law is the world of communication. Mastery of writing and speech . . . [is a ticket] to great success. While my skills are somewhat less than a mastering of the art, the department's offerings of non-verbal, audience adaptation, and public speaking were crucial to me and mandatory for good communication skills. It is also too bad that the prospective law student cannot repeat Argumentation and Debate several times, as anyone who envisions himself as a

courtroom advocate must deal with much the same things. (Victor A. Titus, Personal Communication, 1979, April 12)

A Loss Prevention Manager for Montgomery Ward writes:

> My responsibilities are for the security and safety of both employees and property . . . . I constantly use my communication education and feel it has been an asset to have . . . . I've found the debate class has enabled me to better defend my issues. To be honest with you, I wondered if I made the right choice of receiving a major in Organizational Communication. I don't have doubts anymore . . . . I know I made the right decision. (Richard Valdiviez, Personal Communication, 1983, April 21)

While it is not fair to claim a student's career lies in the hands of another, we, as educators, cannot shirk our responsibilities to students in informing them of the high correlation between communication skills and employability. A worker without competency in communication skills or the ability to work with people often will find his/her path to promotion blocked. If not employed, that worker will have greater problems acquiring fulfilling employment.

NEEDED SKILLS: OUR RESPONSE

If the idea of majoring in a field such as communication raises several questions, one viable option is a major in organizational communication management. Normally resource persons are asked some of the following questions and need answers for their student clients regarding such a program.

1. What is Organizational Communication?

   Organizational communication is the study of the flow of messages within formal organizations, which includes the sending and receiving of messages between the organization and its divisions, between the organization and personnel and among personnel within the organization. An organizational communication specialist is essentially a communication manager--one who facilitates activities so as to encourage efficient and effective use of material, economic, and human resources.

2. What is the objective of the degree program?

   The objective is to prepare effective practitioners of communication in organizations. This person will be able to apply communication knowledge and skills to a wide range of administrative, managerial, and human relations situations. Examples include directing and maintaining efficient communication systems, providing in-service communication training to others, and advising managers in the use of efficient and effective communication procedures for serving in a management capacity.

3. What positions (jobs) do organizational communication majors obtain?

Communication majors are prepared for management positions in business, industrial, or governmental agencies. Majors are particularly suited for entry positions in personnel, in-service training, sales or promotional work. Above all, interpersonal and/or public communication should be an essential job requisite. Recent graduates have been placed with such employers as Xerox, Bendix, Farmland Industries, Kansas City Power & Light, Silver Dollar City, Worlds of Fun, Harper & Row, Armour-Dial, a chamber of commerce, and the Kansas City Chiefs.

4. What are some of the advantages of the program?

An emphasis in communication provides the graduate with tremendous flexibility. Many employers provide the specific training they desire for the particular jobs. However, typically they are not prepared to train employees in effective communication skills vital to job success.

5. What are practical minors to complement the major?

Any minor which supports the interest of the student will complement a major in organizational communication. Suggested minors include management, marketing, business administration, psychology, mass communication, public relations, or sociology.

6. How does one get into the program?

While procedures may vary from campus to campus, at CMSU students entering the program should have a 2.5 or above cumulative grade-point average on a 4.0 scale. An advisement checklist can be secured to aid the student. (This is available to the reader upon request.)

We would like to share with you a working list of instructional skills objectives we have for our majors who emphasize organizational communication and identify the specific courses in personal communication skills from which we develop these competencies.

Small Group Facilitation: Ability to develop and facilitate effective functioning of small groups within an organization, both in terms of accomplishing the group's task and establishing an atmosphere of cooperation within the group. (Introduction to Communication, Group Communication)

Interviewing: Ability to assess individual capabilities and establish rapport with potential employees, lead in giving appraisal, survey public attitudes, orient publics to new ideas, gather information, and report concisely. (Argumentation and Debate, Interviewing Principles and Practice)

Problem-Solving/Decision-Making: Ability to analyze problem, to make decisions concerning specific strategies to solve the problem, and to evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions. (Small Group Communication, Audience Adaptation, Speech Writing and Criticism)

Human Relations: Ability to establish communication which invites credibility, trust, and confidence among groups and persons within the organization. Ability to facilitate positive and productive relationships between co-workers and between members of various levels of an organization. Ability to communicate constructive praise and tactful criticism and to establish rapport and credibility with hostile individuals or those holding divergent or antagonistic points of view. (Improving Listening Abilities, Interpersonal Communication, Audience Adaptation, Nonverbal Communication, Theories of Interpersonal Communication)

Listening: Ability to receive, interpret, understand and respond to both verbal and nonverbal messages from clients or employees, in terms of both the information given and the feelings expressed. (Introduction to Communication, Improving Listening Abilities, Nonverbal Communication, Interviewing: Principles and Practice)

Persuasion: Ability to persuade clients or employees (as individuals or as groups) to accept a policy, believe a claim, or take a specific course of action, and to defend the position from attack. (Audience Adaptation, Presentational Speaking, Speech Writing and Criticism)

Motivation/Leadership Development: Ability to motivate others in a given job situation by being sensitive and responsive to their needs. (Small Group Communication, Interviewing: Principles and Practice)

Conflict Resolution: Ability to handle conflict between individuals or groups within an organization by diagnosing the conflict and selecting strategies to better manage the conflict. (Interpersonal Communication and Communication in Organizations)

Speaking Competence: Ability to think through, organize, and present information concisely and coherently in a variety of situations including presentations utilizing audio-visual resources. (Audience Adaptation, Presentational Speaking, Speech Writing and Criticism)

Preventing and Handling Rumors: Ability accurately to perceive, recall, and report visual and auditory messages to handle distorted messages. (Communication in Organizations)

Conducting Conferences: Ability to conduct meetings, coordinate group undertakings, maintain communication and understanding, and solve problems. (Small Group Communication, Special Projects in Speech--Communication Training)

Additional competencies/skills developed at the Master's level include the following:

Communication Analysis and Program Implementation: Ability to diagnose large or small organizational communication systems using survey, interviewing, or observational techniques and to identify strengths and weaknesses in human communication. Ability to conduct feedback sessions for small and larger groups of managers and other employees, to assist them in developing communication objectives and strategies for implementation, and to facilitate implementation of those strategies for improvement. Our courses Communication Assessment and Studies in Organizational Communication address these skill areas.

Training and Developing: Ability to design, implement, and evaluate training programs for team building and conflict resolution; for conference, meeting, and leadership skills; for public speaking and business presentations; for interpersonal communication, interviewing techniques, and appropriate nonverbal behavior. Our courses Presentational Speaking in Professional Settings and Communication Training develop competencies in this area.

Various Communication Services: Ability to serve as a resource person for line and staff personnel's communication needs, e.g. edit speeches, conduct background audience analysis, research ideas for presentations, suggest alternate delivery and presentation strategies, etc. Our graduate courses Professional Interviewing, Graduate Internship in Organizational Communication, and Communication in Organizations build upon competencies provided in our undergraduate program.

The capstone of our program is an internship. The purposes of the internship are as follows:

1. To provide the student with the opportunity to apply the theory and principles learned in the classroom and to gain the practical experience important to future employment.

2. To enable the intern sponsoring organization to contribute to the development of the profession by the guidance and counsel of future professional personnel.

3. To develop meaningful contact between the educational process and the professional practice.

The general requirements for the internship include these:

1. Each intern must be consistently supervised throughout her/his internship period. The preferred supervisor will be a person skilled in interpersonal and organizational communication.

2. At the end of each calendar week, the student intern must give a report to the faculty advisor, containing a work log of duties performed during the week and, in applicable, copies of written work produced. These reports will provide a basis for the intern's grade and will be retained for inclusion in

the final report, which becomes the property of the department. The faculty advisor may make evaluative recommendations to the intern concerning the intern's attitude, conduct, skills, and professionalism.

3. Contact will be maintained by the faculty advisor with the supervisor. This contact normally will include at least one, and preferably two, on-site conferences by the faculty advisor. Telephone conferences will be maintained as necessary.

4. Payment is not required for an intern; it is up to the individual and agency to agree on any compensation.

While it might be said that the organizational communication program, terminal skills, and internship procedures outlined may be unique to our students, a significant problem is identified and one viable solution presented.

SUMMARY

In this paper we have identified the communication skills we believe are relevant to a successful career in the business world. We have also provided information about our organizational communication program in the Department of Communication at Central Missouri State University. We strongly urge our academic and business colleagues to share this information with university and potential graduate students so they can take courses vital to enhancing their employability quotient.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
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1984 April 5-7

RESUMES: THE QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

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ABSTRACT

The job search becomes increasingly challenging each year. One of the two tools essential in the job search is the resume. A successful resume is one that produces the desired action for the job seeker--an interview.

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics considered important by personnel directors when reviewing resumes. Findings were obtained from questionnaires completed by 166 respondents located throughout the Midwest. Information pertained to personal details, education, experience, references, format, length, duplication, preferences, and reasons for rejection.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of educators is to try to equip students with the knowledge and skill necessary to be effective, productive individuals in the work force. Students spend years in a classroom environment absorbing information that may (or may not) help them when they finally reach the ranks of the employed. How much time is spent teaching them how to obtain that job? This is, after all, the toughest assignment they must face. The job search becomes increasingly challenging each year. While the approach used to obtain a job has not changed, the competition has definitely increased.

The two tools essential in the job search are the letter of application and the resume. According to C. Randall Powell, "The resume is the most important communication tool in a job hunter's tool box. It is close to impossible to land an assignment of a technical, professional, or managerial type without one" (Powell, 1981, p. 129).

Even though educators may be able to convince students of the importance of the resume, students frequently encounter problems because they like to take a sample resume out of a textbook, change the statistics, and type their names at the top. While textbook models may be good examples, students are not using their creativity in designing a document that is representative of the individual. As Lola Coxford points out, "A resume is a highly personal and individual summary of a person's background, experience, training and skills" (Coxford, 1982, p. 4).

Obviously, a successful resume is one that produces the desired action for the job seeker--an interview. Joyce Lain Kennedy reminds us that two things must always be considered in preparing the resume: "what the employer wants and what you want" (Kennedy, 1984, p. 9).

It is the first of these two wants that prompted this study. We were convinced that personnel directors could tell us what they look for when searching for prospective employees.

METHOD USED FOR THIS STUDY

To obtain information regarding the perceptions and opinions of the practitioners in the field, we constructed a questionnaire. The questionnaire was also designed to provide the respondents with the opportunity to express their opinions and articulate their viewpoints on a number of specific questions dealing with resume characteristics.

The purpose of this study was to determine through systematic evaluation those criteria which are important in characterizing applicants. Additionally, it was the purpose of this study to gather information about the following: What should be included in a resume? Should the resume be arranged in a chronological or functional format? Will a professionally printed resume impress the reader more than an individually prepared one? How long should the resume be? These and other questions were addressed.

> Well-qualified people are frequently not considered for good positions because of poor resumes. . . . Less qualified persons will greatly improve their chance to get interviews and offers by developing good resumes. (Jackson, 1981, p.10)

The questionnaire contained a number of questions which covered specific areas such as personal details, education, experience, references, and general characteristics pertaining to the resume. To simplify the tabulation of the data, a number of questions were designed to be answered with a checkmark. All of the respondents completed the questionnaire, and in many cases additional comments were provided which added an interesting dimension to this study.

The questionnaire was sent to 400 personnel directors of organizations which receive a Kelce School of Business and Economics student placement directory each year. These organizations are located throughout the United States and represent both large and small companies which produce a wide variety of goods and services. Our response was very good--166 of the 400 companies surveyed completed and returned the questionnaire. This was a 41.5 percent response rate. Actually, 180 responses were received; however, 14 of these were not included in

this study because they were received after the requested return date. Because the response to this study was excellent, we believe the information obtained is both relevant and current. We further believe it will be of immense value in educating students and others regarding resumes which accurately represent an individual to a prospective employer.

DISCUSSION

We now discuss certain information categories about the respondents.

Personal Details

This section deals with personal details. Table I shows the response to the questions pertaining to this topic. Both career objectives and major qualifications are an important component of a resume. Many respondents also indicated that career goals and personal details were important. Their importance was not as great as the first two mentioned, and to many respondents the latter two details should not be mentioned within the resume. The personal details which are the most important to those individuals who initially evaluate resumes are career objectives and major qualifications. Both of these details require development and refinement by the individual whose resume is being evaluated to be of value in job hunting.

Table I. Personal Details

Do you recommend using any of the following on resumes:

	YES (percent)	NO (percent)
Career Objective	88.00%	12.00%
Major Qualifications	97.00	3.00
Career Goals	76.00	24.00
Personal Details	72.00	28.00

Table II further expands and clarifies the information provided in Table I. In this table a number of personal factors were evaluated as being essential, helpful, or unimportant by the individuals who will evaluate the resume. The responses clearly indicate that height, a photograph, race, and religion are unimportant. The only personal detail considered essential by a significant number of respondents was citizenship. Those personal details considered helpful were health, age/birthdate, and military service. This result suggests that most personal details are not really essential in a resume.

Table II. Personal Factors

If you recommend including personal details on the resume, classify each of the following categories as either Essential, Helpful, or Unimportant.

	ESSENTIAL (%)	HELPFUL (%)	UNIMPORTANT (%)
Citizenship	39.00	35.00	26.00
Health	23.00	48.00	29.00
Age/birthdate	22.00	46.00	32.00
Military Service	18.00	60.00	22.00
Marital Status	11.00	44.00	45.00
Sex	8.00	27.00	65.00
Number of Children	7.00	27.00	66.00
Weight	5.00	21.00	74.00
Height	4.00	25.00	71.00
Photograph	1.00	22.00	77.00
Race	3.00	20.00	77.00
Religion	0.00	7.00	93.00

In response to what additional information should be listed under personal data, the most frequently mentioned was geographical preference. Apparently this is useful information for the resume evaluator to have and is helpful at later stages in the employment process.

Education

There was a very strong indication that six items regarding the educational background of individuals were significant. These items represented 50 percent of the items mentioned and are found in Table III. It is quite apparent that the college or university attended, dates attended, degrees awarded, major, minor, and overall grade-point average are essential items of information. This information is extremely helpful in providing background information and assists in the screening process. Three information items considered helpful but not essential were professional organizations, leadership positions held, and related courses. Information such as this apparently provides

"insights" into the individual and his or her interests and is useful in determining or projecting future behavior and expectations. The least essential item in the essential category was sororities/fraternities. Membership in these organizations is no longer, possibly, believed to be so important as in prior years.

Table III. Education Details

Evaluate each of the following areas according to whether you believe them be to Essential, Helpful, or Unimportant.

	ESSENTIAL (%)	HELPFUL (%)	UNIMPORTANT (%)
Colleges/Universities	90.00	10.00	0.00
Dates Attended	82.00	16.00	23.00
Degrees Awarded	90.00	8.00	2.00
Major	85.00	23.00	2.00
Minor	58.00	39.00	3.00
Overall Grade Point Average	52.00	42.00	6.00
GPA in Major	49.00	48.00	3.00
Leadership Positions Held	40.00	55.00	5.00
Professional Organizations	28.00	66.00	6.00
Name of High School	26.00	42.00	32.00
Related Courses	25.00	62.00	13.00
Sororities/Fraternities	9.00	53.00	38.00

Experience

In the area of experience five items were considered to be essential for those assessing the resume of a potential employee. As presented in Table IV, the items considered to be essential were dates of employment, place of employment, job responsibilities, full-time employment, and job title. Reasons for leaving a job and part-time employment were considered essential but not to the degree of the others.

All of these items should provide background information about an individual which would be very useful and could easily be verified. In addition, this information would provide some detail concerning the applicant's experience, skills, and qualifications. It is also possible that clues or insights regarding one's personality may also be provided or areas where additional information is needed may be identified.

Table IV. Experience Details

Evaluate each of the following areas according to whether you believe them to be Essential, Helpful, or Unimportant.

	ESSENTIAL (%)	HELPFUL (%)	UNIMPORTANT (%)
Dates of Employment	95.00	5.00	0.00
Place of Employment	93.00	7.00	0.00
Job Responsibilities	88.00	12.00	0.00
Full-Time Employment	77.00	23.00	0.00
Job Title	74.00	25.00	1.00
Reasons for Leaving a Job	59.00	37.00	4.00
Part-Time Employment	55.00	41.00	4.00

It was obvious that the respondents believed very strongly that all work experience be identified. The replies to this specific question were 24 percent, only relevant experience, and 76 percent all experience. In response to how far back one should go in identifying work experience, the responses were 13 percent for 0-4 years, 39 percent for 5-10 years, and 48 percent for all experience. These responses clearly indicate that all previous work experience should be identified and presented in the resume for review and evaluation.

References

The response to preference for references being listed or available upon request was very interesting because the responses were distributed evenly. Of the respondents, 49 percent indicated that references should be listed, whereas 51 percent responded that they should be available upon request. This divided opinion represents uncertainty in this area, and should be the subject for further research.

When asked whether references were requested of all applicants, the response was 65 percent "Yes" and 35 percent "No." This seems to indicate that many firms do not believe that references provide accurate information. Perhaps individuals/organizations are reluctant to provide anything but good "references" for individuals because of the present environment.

When asked how many references are preferred, the number given most frequently was three. This apparently is the magic number which allows for some degree of verification and evaluation. Additional references are not useful since they will not be contacted.

The responses as to whom the respondents recommend as references were mixed. They are as follows: 51 percent, teachers; 86 percent,

former employers; 7 percent, ministers; 60 percent, business people. In evaluating these responses, one can interpret them in many different ways depending upon one's point of view. Regarding other groups used as references, there was not any one specific group identified as the dominant group. Evidently one may indicate whomever he or she desires as a reference.

Most individuals indicated that references were contacted by telephone. In fact, 86 percent used the telephone, and 36 percent used letters to contact references. Apparently many organizations use both methods. The responses as to how frequently references are contacted were again mixed. When responding, 49 percent answered "always," 50 percent answered "sometimes," and 1 percent answered "never." The overwhelming response as to when references are contacted was after the interview (88 percent). Only 12 percent responded that references are contacted before the interview is held. Most individuals evaluating potential employees apparently believe that contacts with references can be more productive after the interview. Specific questions may be asked; also, probing for further information is possible and more meaningful after the interview.

Table V provides information on what should be included in regard to references provided in the resume. The item mentioned most frequently was the telephone number, which correlates with the very frequent telephone contact of references. Providing of organizational titles for references seems to be unclear. It is the least essential of the "essential" category, the most helpful of the "helpful" category, and the most unimportant of the "unimportant" category. Further research will be needed to clarify and interpret this response.

In response to whether any other information regarding references should be included, the following were given: 7 percent "Yes" and 93 percent "No." There was not a definitive identification of what the "Yes" information should be within these responses.

Table V. Reference Details

If references are included on the resume, which of the following do you consider Essential, Helpful, or Unimportant?

	ESSENTIAL (%)	HELPFUL (%)	UNIMPORTANT (%)
Telephone Number	84.00	15.00	1.00
Complete Name of Reference	81.00	18.00	1.00
Company Name	81.00	19.00	0.00
City, State, Zip Code	77.00	22.00	1.00
Street Address	74.00	25.00	1.00
Business Title	56.00	42.00	2.00
Relationship to Applicant	57.00	38.00	5.00
Courtesy Title (Mr. Mrs. Miss)	22.00	46.00	32.00

Chronological versus Functional

The respondents in this study very definitely preferred chronological resumes to functional resumes. This supports the earlier findings of this study in regard to what is essential in terms of career objectives, work experience, and education. The chronological format emphasizes these important areas and provides a perspective and ordering of events that is not provided by the functional approach. In addition, this format allows the heart of the resume work experience to receive the most space and emphasis and provides the appropriate approach for the individual who has held a series of progressively better jobs. This approach also allows direct communication of one's past performance and probable future performance.

Two items were mentioned by the majority of the respondents as to what they especially look for on a resume. These were (1) relevant work experience and (2) neatness and conciseness. Again, these are important aspects which can be easily identified and provide a quick and easy method to evaluate an individual. One can project from the work experience that the skills and qualifications needed for the job are possessed by the applicant. A neat, nice appearing, well-organized resume perhaps says as much about an individual as does its content.

Reasons for Rejection

On the other hand, the reasons suggested for rejecting an application were (1) too long and (2) messy appearance/mistakes. Certainly these support the findings that long, messy resumes will be rejected on that basis rather than on the basis of content. This reaction was further supported by the answer to the question on importance of the resume's appearance.

The answer given was "extremely important," again suggesting that the appearance of a resume is a sensitive indicator and important method for screening an individual out of the employment process.

In response to the question of the effect of typographical errors, misspelled words, incorrect word divisions, smears, or smudges on a resume, the answer given simply stated was "immediate rejection." This again emphasizes the importance of appearance and neatness of the resume in the mind of the evaluator.

Resume Length

The respondents indicated that there was a preferred length of pages (83 percent "Yes" and 17 percent "No"). Most of the respondents desired a resume two pages or less in length. Very few individuals indicated they would evaluate a resume that was longer than two pages. Apparently these individuals believe they do not have the time or inclination to read a lengthy document (over two pages) which provides much more detail than is necessary at this point in the employment procedure. Two pages is the absolute maximum to insure that a resume will be reviewed. Most of the respondents indicated it was their belief that the reduction of long resumes was not acceptable because the reduction

makes a resume too difficult to read. We believe this would only be the case if the resume was difficult to read originally.

Kind of Copy

Table VI presents interesting findings regarding the kind of copy (original, photostatic, or printed) used for resumes. The majority of respondents had no preference. However, this only indicates that if the resume is neat, attractive, well organized, and mistake free, it is acceptable. There was a difference of opinion regarding the color of paper for the resume. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents indicated white bond was preferred, 3 percent indicated pastel bond was preferred, and 59 percent indicated no preference. Again this indicates the color is not so important as the appearance, neatness, and mistake-free form.

Table VI. Resume Copy

Do you prefer resumes that are:

	(%)
Original Documents	26.00
Photostatic Copies	10.00
Professionally Printed	27.00
No Preference	56.00

Desired Salary

Fifty-two percent of the respondents suggested that a desired or current salary should be mentioned on the resume. Twenty-seven percent mentioned that it should not, and 21 percent stated it was unimportant. Current or desired salary amounts may be important because they can provide a reference point to help ascertain whether the applicant is too expensive or underpriced for the market. They also may be the basis for many questions which can be best addressed in the interview session.

CONCLUSION

Our conclusion in this study suggests there are very definite opinions held by those individuals whose function is frequently to review resumes. A short, neat, well-organized outline of work experience and qualifications is a necessity for obtaining interviews. Its purpose is to attract the attention of prospective employers and to interest them in what one can contribute as a potential employee. It is a tool to let one open the door; when it is successful, it allows the

applicant the opportunity to go into detail about background and qualifications. The resume is an identification card; the applicant should make sure this identification is appropriate.

The elimination of extraneous detail regarding personal factors is extremely helpful and will strengthen the possibility of the resume's being evaluated. The resume should be a vehicle of communication addressing the employer's needs, and directed toward that specific objective. A resume which is too lengthy will probably be rejected because of the time constraints.

We hypothesized from this study that an effective resume has a definite career objective and provides information about major qualifications and career goals.

Personal details may be helpful, but no item is considered essential by a majority of respondents.

Essential items concerning education are colleges/universities attended, dates attended, degrees awarded, major and minor fields of study, and grade-point average.

Full-time experience is an essential category. Information should include job title, place of employment, dates of employment, and job responsibilities. All experience should be included.

Employers are evenly divided concerning the listing of references on the resume. If references are included, three should be used; and essential information should include complete name, company name, address, and telephone number.

If a resume is to be considered by personnel directors, it must be neat and attractive, free of errors, and restricted to two pages or even one page.

Job applicants should follow these guidelines to develop a word portrait that is positive and effective.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

EFFECTIVE APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I discuss philosophical questions regarding the purpose of appraisal feedback systems, what factors should be appraised, what method(s) should be used in appraisal, who should be involved in appraisal processes, and what standards should an employee be judged against.

Specific goals of an effective appraisal system are discussed, and a list of relevant goals is presented. Criteria for developing an effective feedback and appraisal system are analyzed. The paper concludes with a summary of suggestions for organizations and managers.

INTRODUCTION

Several years ago I worked in an oil-field production department of Southeast Kansas. I recall hearing the seasoned workers talk about the upcoming appraisal review. It was with negative anticipation to say the least. They did not respect the system and did not "buy into" the process. As one would return from the supervisor's office, he would say such things as, "I had mine chewed and you'll get yours tomorrow." I saw no change in behavior and no lasting effect from the system. In fact, the process was one of "rope jumping." One would jump up and say, "Yes, Mr. Boss," and jump down as he walked out the door with a nervous laugh returning to do the very same things. What's more, the supervisor appeared to give a sigh of relief, not monitor behavior for some time, and be as relieved as his subordinates that it was over for another year. Unfortunately, this system was not unique to that company or that supervisor. It appears that over 80 percent of supervisors using performance-evaluation systems are dissatisfied with them. Yet, almost every manager admits that some form of performance appraisal is important and continues to use them (Donaghy, 1984). Business, industry, government, and education need to assure that all management personnel are trained properly to give effective feedback to employees. Further, the appraisal system needs careful development philosophically and in methods of implementation. The purpose of this paper is to examine the goals of an effective appraisal system, and to make some suggestions as to what would produce an effective appraisal system.

It is obvious that most people want to know two things from the appraisal process: (1) how they are doing in the eyes of their supervisor; and (2) what they must do to improve their chances for promotion, merit pay, etc. For self-motivated achievers this type of information is essential. A quality employee likely will keep a careful account of how to improve and better his/her chances of professional growth. For others this type of information can help produce motivation.

OVERVIEW

The normal appraisal procedure in many organizations involves the following steps: (1) supervisors discuss the need to evaluate employees; (2) supervisors complete written evaluations; (3) the immediate supervisor meets with the employee to discuss the evaluation; and (4) the employee has some opportunity to respond to the comments given. Unfortunately, in too many organizations, there are at least two major flaws in the process. This is an annual event, and there is little involvement of the employee in the criteria development.

Managerial appraisal can be referred to as the Achilles heel of young management development. What philosophic concerns should be addressed in training managers to be effective at appraisal?

BASIC PHILOSOPHIC ISSUES

Marion G. Haynes, an Employee Relations Associate with Shell Oil Company, writes, "For best results, performance appraisal should be done in a systematic, well-thought-out manner, rather than a haphazard, superficial one" (Haynes, 1978). Haynes suggests that careful planning goes into developing an effective appraisal system. Several questions can help us examine our philosophic positions.

Question One: What should be the basic purpose of the appraisal system? One extreme is to evaluate. The other extreme is to give feedback in order to improve employee performance. The first is done for promotion, merit pay, etc. The second polar extreme represents giving feedback on how the employee is doing as a basis of "coaching" or counseling for improvement. Many systems rely only on an annual appraisal that must serve as an evaluating device. This is unfortunate. A more complete system may include a regular evaluative component, but it functions primarialy to improve employee performance. Professional employees need effective feedback more than negative evaluations. Negative evaluations (criticism) promote defensive behaviors such as ego-protecting communications and not listening.

Question Two: Should the evaluation system be an objective system or a subjective system? Rating systems are very common. Forms of multi-variables that must be marked with subjective scores are

examples, such as 5 = Superior, 4 = Excellent, 3 = Acceptable, 2 = Substandard, and 1 = Unacceptable. An alternative to these subjective systems is Management By Objectives (MBO). Setting a target that can be objectively assessed at regular points is the heart of this approach. Goals should be realistic, challenging, subject to the employee's span of control, and obtainable (Odiorne, 1965). Unfortunately, many organizations proclaim that they use MBO and yet fail to involve the subordinates in planning and evaluating those goals. Dorothy Schaeffer supports this contention when she writes, "Another cause for failure is the manager who does not permit the subordinate to have equal voice in determining goals and objectives of his or her future performance" (Schaeffer, 1983). William Donaghy (1984) supported this when he wrote:

> MBO is very good in theory but has some problems in practice. It has been referred to as a "do it yourself hangman's kit." Both superiors and subordinates tend to set unrealistic goals. Another major problem is that the objectives set won't necessarily help the company reach its goals.

While there is much to be said for MBO, now used by about 50 percent of organizations (Donaghy, 1984), it is not as practiced a panacea.

It is unlikely that all behaviors that contribute to or frustrate success in an organization can be measured objectively. A combination of MBO and subjective evaluations can be designed, in conjunction with employee job descriptions, to cover adequately essential variables of employee performance.

Question Three: What items should be judged? Should personality factors be included? Should behavior surrounding the work situation be included? The best answer to these questions appears to be to "go easy" on either of them. In fact it is performance on the job that is most appropriate for evaluation. This is not to say that personality and non-task behaviors are totally unimportant, but rather that performance is not as subjective, as difficult to describe, or as subject to misunderstanding. Obviously, personality, behaviors, and performance are interrelated to a significant degree.

Question Four: Against what do we judge the performance of an employee? Should national or absolute standards be used? Should others who work at similar positions be a basis for comparison? Should your ideal view of the ideal employee be used? This is a difficult dilemma. Many systems have no basis for comparison. One defensible answer for a yardstick is against a carefully written job description and against objective, measurable criteria.

Question Five: Who should appraise? The most obvious answer is the immediate supervisor. Should peers or subordinates be involved? Should the employee evaluate him/herself? There are no easy answers to these questions. If we could afford a field review conducted by an objective superior from a parallel area we might approach an ideal answer. The cost in terms of time and money would be great. I believe a combination of supervisor and self evaluation is an appropriate answer for most situations. I believe the minimum requirement for an effective

evaluation begins with the employee's evaluating himself/herself, the immediate supervisor's separately evaluating the employee, and, together, their developing a file form of the evaluation for a permanent copy. Due-process procedures (right to attach disagreement) should be noted.

Once basic philosophic concerns have been decided, specific goals of the system should be determined.

GOALS OF APPRAISAL SYSTEMS

In order for appraisal feedback systems to be effective, clear goals need to be established. An effective system may have multiple goals from among the following:

1. to give feedback that lets the employee know where he/she stands
2. to praise good work
3. to improve superior/subordinate relations
4. to communicate the need for improvement of performance
5. to give the employee a sense of participation
6. to counsel and provide help
7. to reward specific contributions or ideas
8. to discover what employee is thinking
9. to assess the employee's future in the company
10. to serve as a record for that individual
11. to set objectives for future performance
12. to warn or otherwise reprimand
13. to get things off the chest
14. to persuade the employee to go in a new direction
15. others

Many of these objectives can be accomplished in conjunction with one another.

BASIC APPROACHES

In Norman R.F. Maier's book The Appraisal Interview: Three Basic Approaches published by University Associates in 1976, Maier details the three basic approaches as Tell and Sell, Tell and Listen, and Problem-Solving (Maier, 1976).

Tell-and-Sell Approach

The objectives of the Tell and Sell method are to communicate the employee evaluation as accurately as possible (Maier, 1976). The normal procedure of Tell and Sell approaches involves some pressure for the subordinate to accept the evaluation. Power is perceived. This approach assumes that the subordinate must be told how to improve, that the superior is qualified to evaluate and recommend, and that the subordinate perceives the threat of the supervisor's power. The basic format is (1) to let the subordinate know how the supervisor sees him/her doing, (2) to solicit the subordinate's acceptance of the evaluation, and (3) to get the subordinate to agree with the supervisor's

plan for improvement. Often there is not much emphasis on training and motivation. This approach tends to produce the "rope jumping" mentioned earlier. Perhaps young employees, inexperienced, and others who accept an authority symbol will respond for some time to this type of approach, but it tends to promote conservatism rather than positive, intrinsic change from within. Defensive behavior is likely to develop. Despite all the disagreeable qualities of the approach, it is the most common. Many managers will agree that this option is repugnant. They may be surprised, however, to learn that tapes of their appraisal interviews would show that they do more than nudge the subordinate to their way of thinking. Maier notes:

> The greatest risk, particularly where appraisals included middle and top management, occurs when the subordinate accepts the judgement of the superior and tries to please him rather than give his own best thinking to the job (Maier, 1976).

What is needed is an awareness of this potential to be pulled into trying to "sell" an evaluation of another to them rather than attempting to listen, to learn, and--together--to solve problems that otherwise may limit the usefulness of the employee and the production of the organization.

Tell-and-Listen Approach

The idea of the tell-and-listen interview is to communicate the appraisal to the employee and then wait for a response. This means that the interviewer covers the strong and less-strong points of the job performance during the first part of the interview. Points of discussion are postponed until later (Maier, 1976). To this point, there isn't much difference in content between tell-and-sell and tell-and-listen. However, the attitude of the presenter should be different.

Writers such as Douglas McGregor, Robert Blake and Jane Mouton, Jack Gibb, and Frederick Herzberg, no doubt, would argue that the attitude of the appraiser could make considerable difference in itself (McGregor, 1960; Blake & Mouton, 1946; Gibb, 1961; and Herzberg, 1966). It is very likely that those choosing a tell-and-sell approach will come from a Theory X background, will be low in people skills and high on task-completion needs, will produce defensive communication rather than maintain a supportive climate, and will not know how to produce genuine motivation from recognition of and full appreciation of work done.

At this point in the tell-and-listen method, the interviewer encourages the employee to disagree and express feelings. The objective is to allow the interviewee to release some feelings aroused by the information that she/he did not know. This process meets many of the goals outlined above. Obviously, the skills of effective listening comprehension, empathy, and active perception-checking are needed on the part of the supervisor to maximize the potential for cooperative feedback and future motivation.

This method is likely to produce a more productive relationship between superior and subordinate. The subordinate is likely to leave

with a more positive feeling and a better attitude toward the organization and a clear understanding of what he/she needs to do to be more valuable to the organization.

Problem-Solving Method

A third method for the design of an appraisal interview is the problem-solving approach. Here the supervisor becomes the helper. The situation, not the person, is the subject of the majority of the interview. Improving attitudes, changing job duties, changing the pattern of supervision, etc. can be subjects of the problem-solving approach.

If there is a failing of this approach it would be in the fact that necessary evaluation may not be communicated. Listening and problem-solving skills must be very sharp for this system to produce the desired effect.

Actually, a combination of tell and listen and problem-solving is possible. The problem-solving approach establishes an excellent climate in which to set future appraisal goals and appraisal intervals.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I recommend an approach that combines objective (MBO) approaches and more subjective evaluations. I suggest that the subordinate be asked to evaluate her/himself independently on the same forms that the manager is using. The forms can be laid side-by-side during the evaluation process, and wherever there is a difference of any significance there should be discussion. A third form, the file form, is then prepared during the tell-and-listen portion of the interview. If there is no agreement after discussion, the manager's evaluation will stand and the subordinate will be encouraged to attach her/his written comments and data. This is an open system.

It is important that appraisal be seen as a continuing process. Complimentary interviews should be held on a regular basis (Cangem & Claypool, 1978). Research shows that such items as achievement, recognition, growth, and responsibility are part of what motivates higher productivity.

Effective appraisal feedback should meet several important criteria. I believe these criteria should include the following:

1. Being based upon specifics, not generalities. Too many times general praise is used and a sense of "you say that to everyone" destroys the effectiveness. The same is true with negative criticism.

2. Being based upon performance rather than being about the person. Separating personal annoyances from what are job-related performance objectives produces less-defensive behaviors.

3. Using an 80/20 rule. The manager spends at least 80 percent of the appraisal time on the 20 percent of the items that would help the employee improve the most. It is not possible for most persons to work on more than four or five performance objectives during one period of time.

4. Making the appraisal balanced. Mixing specific suggestions for improvement with specific recognitions of work well done is ideal. Beginning with general praise keys an anticipation of negatives to come.

5. Being "up front" rather than behind the back. Discussions should not stray to other employees, comparisons with others, or any information about another person not present. Subordinates often wish to compare their performance with others. I do not believe allowing this comparison is a professional behavior on the part of the supervisor.

6. Sharing of descriptive information. Negative evaluations produce defensiveness more than listening. "I feel," "I observed," etc. openers may be helpful. "You should," "you ought" openers should be avoided. Remember to ask what you can do to help meet the employee's performance objectives. Provisional language is better than appearing certain.

7. Being immediate, but always well timed. Employees should never be reprimanded in front of their peer or subordinate group. Appraisal should not occur when either party is angry. These cautions override the value of immediate feedback. More often managers err in opting for delayed feedback even months later.

8. Basing the feedback upon something the subordinate can improve. Too often subordinates are expected to improve without attention to the how (means) of improvement. If an employee is working at capacity given the equipment and/or training at their disposal, it is unrealistic to expect significant improvement.

9. Using an effective appraisal feedback system based upon clear job description which stays with "performance-relevant" issues. Employees resent inconsistent criteria being applied in an impersonal manner. The job description, if clear and mutually accepted, should be the focal point of any evaluations.

10. Allowing for feelings to be expressed. Tears are not uncommon and are much better than defensive delayed anger. Provisions for a private place and adequate time to truly listen to the subordinates reactions are crucial to effectiveness. A discovery of personal problems may lead to productive counseling or referral. This is in line with the tell-and-listen approach previously discussed.

It is best to give feedback under positive conditions. Privacy is important. Giving feedback when neither of the parties are upset is necessary for effective communication. Donaghy (1984) suggests:

Since most performance interviews are more effective when they are informal, it is important to have a comfortable setting which helps relax participants and avoids the stress which commonly accompanies such interviews. Most interviewers like to hold performance interviews at the end of the day, so employees can go home and think about the improvement suggestions.

Recognition that "how" feedback is given is at least as important as what the "content" of feedback includes is important to improving appraisal processes. In other words, "the medium often is the message." Effective feedback is not negative criticism. Professional employees will resent information that is "imposed" upon them. They tend to respect information that is shared directly in a systematic and caring way. All these factors will combine to make for a more effective appraisal feedback system.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE PERFORMANCE-APPRAISAL INTERVIEW: AN ALTERNATIVE TO SIMULATION

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ABSTRACT

The paper advances a method for teaching the performance-appraisal interview to advanced undergraduates using a faculty member as the appraiser and students as appraisees. A prior assignment, a career-related informational interview, was used as the basis for evaluating the interviewing behavior of each student in a performance-appraisal interview. The paper explores the legitimacy of faculty conduct of performance appraisals and the rationale for teaching the interview in the college curriculum. It also cites the disadvantages that are encountered with standard case study and roleplaying activities now in vogue, in contrast with the advantages of the reality-based method described in this paper. The assignment offers career relevance, practice in actual appraising for faculty and students, and detailed feedback for the student of his or her communication competence in interviewing. The criteria used in evaluating the students' communication competence for both the informational interview and the performance-appraisal interview are set forth to clarify the grading function.

INTRODUCTION

A professional speech communication consultant to business and industry talked with a curious throng of college faculty at a meeting of the Texas Speech Communication Association at its Houston convention in 1982, answering questions about consulting. When asked whether her firm gave interviewing workshops, she replied: "We don't but there are at least fifty firms in this area that do. I have talked to many a trainer who is struggling to teach managers and employees how to handle those performance appraisals." For the college communication educators an important question arose, "What can colleges and universities do to better prepare their students for appraisal interviews?"

Secondary questions surfaced in my own attempt to resolve the general issue. For instance, how well prepared are speech communication and business faculty to teach performance-appraisal (PA) interviewing? In addition, why should this instruction be the responsibility of the institution of higher education? Furthermore, if the responsibility

for this instruction is assumed, what goals should the instruction aspire to achieve and how are these interviews taught? Finally, I wanted to consider which teaching methodology would prove most effective in developing realistic skills in performance-appraisal interviewing.

GENERAL FACULTY PREPAREDNESS FOR TEACHING THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

Faculty preparedness to teach the performance-appraisal interview can be seen as a variable phenomenon based on each faculty member's experience in oral-skills evaluation. Those who regularly critique student performance in public speaking courses, debate courses, group discussions, and other performance events are especially well-suited for teaching PA interviews and in conducting them. Appraisal, other than in written examinations, is a necessary part of such courses. It can be argued that most teachers are prepared to appraise student performance to some degree.

Teachers and trainers are not strangers to the concepts of judgment and development (Brinkerhoff & Kanter, 1980). Educators for centuries have addressed student weaknesses and prescribed remedial strategies to improve student performance. The stereotype of the stern school marm enforcing correct responses with her ever-active peach tree switch is balanced by her opposite--an understanding motherly figure who encourages her charges with positive challenges and nurturing admonitions. Whereas these critical and helpful behaviors of educators have not been formally labelled "performance appraisal," that is in fact what they are.

The dual functions of performance appraisal--judgment and development--create a puzzling dilemma for the educator. Some faculty perceive judgment as the sole function of the instructor while others work exclusively to motivate and develop students. The goal for effective appraisal is to blend the two components in such a way that the student is aware of weaknesses and strengths but is capably directed toward productive achievement.

Performance appraisal is a common instructional tool. Those teachers in colleges and universities who teach interviewing skills, whether they hail from colleges of business or communication, are reasonably well qualified to train students in the appraisal of performance. This paper examines the reasons for teaching performance-appraisal (PA) interviewing skills to students as well as the goals of such instruction. The next section notes the limitations of case studies and roleplaying strategies and proposes a reality-based approach in teaching the PA.

REASONS FOR TEACHING THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW TO COLLEGE STUDENTS

Students of the 1980s have become more pragmatic in their pursuit of college degrees. Institutions across the nation have experienced increased enrollment in degree programs that promise high-yield financial rewards as well as job availability. With this trend

come students with renewed interest in improving skills that will assist them in achieving their career goals. Offering instruction in performance-appraisal skills as well as selection interviewing contributes to the student's potential for finding the most appropriate job and in maintaining it.

Most students in upper-division communication courses required by business and engineering colleges are career bound. They expect to land a good job after graduation. Many of these learners will experience appraisals of their own performance as their initiation into the post-probationary period in their first year of employment. Pre-employment rehearsal of the interview gives the new employee a step up--if only in striving to create a positive predisposition toward the PA process.

Some of the students in the communication skills courses, particularly those with management credentials, may find themselves as assistant managers actually conducting appraisals of other employees. Whether students will engage in appraisal interviews as subordinates or supervisors, one thing is abundantly clear. Exposure to the PA interview can only prepare them for on-the-job evaluations where the risks are higher than a grade in a course, but may mean continued employment.

Students and faculty can benefit from the recognition that in appraisals of performance effective communication behavior is a key indicator of success on the job. A 1982 critical incident study of managers appraising job performance by Hugo (1982) at the University of Denver supports this assumption. The Hugo study indicated that employee interpersonal communication skills were among the top factors cited as a reason for high ratings in PAs. Conversely, poor interpersonal skills were noted as a significant reason for lower ratings. While most interpersonal communication professors understand the difficulties involved in teaching interpersonal skills, knowing that communication competence is a factor in employment evaluation can be a persuasive incentive for students to examine these skills.

The PA interview may also function in several ways as a symbol for both management and the employee. It may telegraph the personal maturity of the employee (and of the manager). This maturity is tied to the capacity to respond to both encouraging and critical evaluation responsibly in a problem-solving mode. In addition, the PA can reflect the employee's and the manager's ability to recognize performance-related work goals as well as planning for career enrichment. Finally, the PA interview may serve as a vehicle for the employee to assert control over his or her own career by clarifying personal aspirations and desires as well as designing programs to meet those ideals.

From the student's perspective, learning about and experiencing the PA can serve to prepare him or her for relevant, on-the-job experiences; can identify specific skills for the potential worker to improve before employment; and can offer the student an opportunity to participate in his or her own career design.

However, the benefits derived from teaching the PA are not limited to the student. Faculty members studying the PA literature develop a fuller sense of their own managerial roles in the teaching-learning process. When teachers can frame their actions within a business and professional context, as managers, teaching the PA takes on a different tone. The classroom becomes a training ground for the anticipated activity rather than a holding tank of students in a required course. The research necessary for thorough teaching of the PA can also serve a development function for the faculty member as a manager-educator. The PA literature can help to clarify the goals and objectives of the appraisal process and inform the educator of current trends.

GOALS OF PA IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL SETTING

The goals of the PA process have been stated in a variety of ways since Meyer et al. (1965). While the point of emphasis may vary, most could agree with the spirit of the goals set forth by Resnick and Mohrman (1982). In their three-year study of performance appraisal designs they synthesized the following goals of the PA:

- Measure performance
- Motivate employees
- Improve performance
- Plan future work
- Teach employees what they should do
- Distribute pay raises

Virtually all of these goals can be translated into the classroom PA learning experience. Even the last goal of remuneration can be converted into a tangible reward as a grade or a rating. Student conferences have achieved many of these goals for teachers and trainers although in a much less structured way than in the formal appraisal of performance.

Acknowledging that sufficient reasons exist to teach performance appraisal in college classrooms and that the goals of the performance appraisal can be legitimately met within the educational context, it may be instructive to examine the difficulties currently confronted with traditional methods of teaching the PA via case-study and role-playing.

TRADITIONAL CASE-STUDY OR ROLE-PLAYING TEACHING STRATEGIES

Certainly one of the most prevalent approaches to training for the PA is the case study exercise. A number of interviewing texts offer interesting cases and ask students to consider the case, specifically illustrating a typical problem or issue in appraisal. The Sincoff and Goyer (1984, p. 147) text Interviewing provides a typical example of the

approach. The exercise advises the student to

> Prepare a case of approximately three hundred words in which you are the appraisee. The case may be similar in form to the one in Exercise 3. The case should be a brief description of your job duties, the goals of your performance, and your attitudes toward your work. The case may be real . . . or imaginary.
>
> a. Give the case to a classmate who has been assigned as the appraiser. You will be the appraisee.
> b. Conduct the interview in class. When the interview is over, give the case to your instructor for evaluation.

The case study, roleplay method may in fact be the next best thing to being there. However, its weaknesses create problems for students in identifying with the content and the process in PA. First, a credibility gap exists for the roleplay based on a case study. Students are asked to suspend their disbelief, imagining the situation to be an organically real reproduction. If the case is not relevant to the life experience of the roleplayer, then motivation to suspend disbelief is reduced. This is a sophisticated skill and may be hard to achieve. Even if students are able to screen out the noise based on this acting principle of role-taking, a second factor usually intervenes, exacerbating the inherent difficulties.

The event normally occurs in front of an audience. To this end, the roleplay is perceived as a performance for others rather than an authentic action emerging from a legitimate need. This second performance factor can stimulate self-consciousness and frivolity discouraging a professional attitude toward the interview. Another by-product of the performance orientation is, many times, the unsolicited reaction of audience members. Giggles, coughing, squirming and realignment in seats bring the performers back to the realization that the interview is a performed event. Roleplaying skill often depends on the maturity of the participants and the ability of the instructor to teach the techniques quickly and informatively.

This paper does not suggest that case studies and roleplays cannot be helpful tools for students and teachers. For example, the five cases presented in Stewart and Cash's (1982) book, Interviewing: Principles and Practices, provide useful and issue-specific instances which can be used as problem-solving vehicles. The concern here is that they may offer little opportunity to "practice" the mechanics of PA interviewing. An alternative way of teaching the PA follows.

A REALITY-BASED APPROACH TOWARD THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The reality-based approach advocated in this paper must overcome the disadvantages mentioned above. Consequently, it must create a one-on-one correspondence between the appraisal process as it occurs in business and industry and the assignment administered

in class. To produce an assignment that functions as a performance appraisal must function, certain conditions must be met.

- The assignment should serve the student's career goals.[1]
- It should provide a performance or activity to appraise.
- A true supervisor-subordinate position must exist between appraiser and appraisee.
- The tension and concern present in the performance-appraisal situation must exist.
- There must be incentives for skilled problem-solving.
- The event must be treated as a professional business activity.

Description of the Assignments

To present the PA in the most realistic light, the project must incorporate a performance to be appraised. This in turn necessitates the use of a two-part assignment. The first assignment is an informational interview serving as the performance to be appraised. The second assignment is the performance-appraisal interview.

The informational interview is a four-step process. The first step of this four-step process served to set the stage for subsequent activities seeking to generate interest in and provide a rationale for the informational interview. Before students entered the interviewing unit they were asked to read Chapter Five of Bolles' job-hunter's guide What Color Is Your Parachute? The function of the chapter in this assignment was to ask students to clarify their career sights. In this vein, students completed two of the ten career-clarification exercises in this chapter. Exercises ranged from the writing of historical-overview diaries of the student's life experiences to designing the ideal job for the student. All exercises required in-depth re-evaluation of personal goals and functioned as career-values clarification opportunities.

Moving the focus from their relatively clarified career goals, students were asked to identify a specific job they viewed as an interesting job possibility for themselves over the next five years. Once the job had been tagged, they were then responsible for locating someone who held their ideal position, contacting the person, and making an appointment to discuss the nature of the job in an informational

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[1]Students participating in these assignments were 45 upper-division business and engineering students in a required course in Technical Speaking at a major Texas university in the spring and fall semesters of 1983.

interview. Lectures to clarify the interviewing process included organization, questioning strategies, adaptation responses, and presentation of self in the exchange in this second stage.

The third stage involved the development of an appropriate interview schedule that would generate the information the student wanted to know about the position in question. Students were encouraged to clarify the scope of the position, specific duties, challenges in the position, difficulties in the job, prerequisites of the position, and mobility in the position. Although certainly not limited to these questions, a 30-minute time limit was placed on the taped interview. Questions were then evaluated based on effective strategies for constructing questions in Stewart and Cash's text. Students revised questions taking instructor feedback into account.

Finally, students interviewed their prospects. Many of the interviewees were located in the business community, on campus or in the student's hometown. Several students travelled more than 200 miles to interview exactly the person they felt could provide the most personally valuable interview. To encourage commitment to the interview, students were alerted of the evaluation criteria to be used in assessing the quality of the informational interview before they conducted the interviews.

The evaluation criteria for the informational interviews included

- Student skills in establishing tone and clarifying purpose of the interview
- Effectiveness of the questioning strategy
- Ability to provide natural transitions between questions and general conversational tone
- Regulation of interview talk (curtailing tangential responses or soliciting responses of reticent respondents, to name a few)
- Ability to clarify the intent of questions when asked
- Capacity to follow-up on responses of particular interest, generating impromptu questions
- Use of the interview schedule
- Vocal presentation of self
- Concluding strategies
- Preparedness

Each of these elements was rated on a five-point scale making the interview evaluation worth half of the grade on the informational

interview. The exercises from What Color Is Your Parachute? in conjunction with the graded interview schedules comprised the remaining half of the grade. With the informational interviews conducted over a two-week period, students submitted the tapes of their interviews for review and signed up for convenient PA interviews.

The PA interview is complex. To help promote fair evaluation in the PA interview, several precautions were taken. The interviews were standardized as much as possible using evaluation forms and standard formats. During interviews all incoming telephone calls were transferred to the central office, and other faculty were discouraged, by signs on doors, from interrupting the interviews. Students were given copies of the evaluation form prior to the interview, to help them better prepare.

The structure of the interview paralleled the suggestions of King (1984a & 1984b) who asserted that performance appraisals should occur in private, noninterruptive environments; that information gathered for the interview be accurate and fair; that the appraiser safeguard the interview from bias as much as possible; that employees be asked to present a self-appraisal; and that an agenda be followed throughout the interview.

The agenda used for the interviews also followed King's recommendations. First, an opening statement explored the goals of the interview and set an open problem-solving tone for the interview. Second, students were invited to offer their own appraisal of the informational interview providing examples to support their evaluations of strengths and weaknesses. Third, using the critique form which served to evaluate the informational interview, the performance was appraised taking into account those areas where the student recognized his or her strengths and weaknesses in the exchange. Fourth, major problems were examined looking for reasonable solutions that would improve the student's interviewing skills. The student and faculty member established goals and a plan of action for future interviews the student might experience incorporating key aspects of the PA evaluation. Finally the interview was concluded with a general summary and an invitation to the student to evaluate the PA interview. Students were scheduled at 45-minute intervals; usually the interviews lasted 30 minutes, giving the interviewer time to prepare for the next student.

Grading the PA offered the student an incentive much like that of promotion in the business setting. While the appraisal could be an entirely subjective event, many of the evaluation criteria are quantifiable. For example, student preparation for the interview was a crucial criterion. If students had not prepared for their own self-evaluation, they were unable to comment on their strengths and weaknesses effectively and shifted responsibility for the discussion to the appraiser. Poor preparation weakened the interview and reflected negatively on the student's ability to observe the taped interview and to judge the criteria for effective informational interviewing. In general, students who were well prepared diminished the amount of appraiser talk because many of the issues on the critique prepared by the faculty member were clarified earlier by the student.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Assignment

For students advantages in using this method for teaching the PA are numerous. Students in these interviews generated a higher degree of commitment to the project than did previous students in the same course who had played roles in case studies. Many suggested that the assignment was more relevant for them than were many courses in their majors. Some students received employment queries and job offers after their contact with the resource individuals.

In any desirable project obstacles exist which must be overcome. The most obvious disadvantage in implementing this assignment is the time investment required of both faculty and students. All assignments are carried on outside of class. Faculty must listen to 30-minute tapes of X number of students, evaluating each one. PA conferences double this time commitment, in addition to the time spent grading both interviews. Faculty with graduate assistants might be able to develop a less time-consuming strategy for implementing the assignments. However, the payoff generated by student commitment can encourage faculty to find ways to reduce the barrier of time investment.

CONCLUSION

Few students studying the performance-appraisal process have the opportunity to participate in a real performance-appraisal situation. This paper has presented a reality-based alternative to simulation for speech communication and management professionals teaching PA interviewing. Significant advantages of the approach warrant continued experimentation with the design. In fact, faculty are encouraged to develop meaningful research efforts to compare the long-term effects of simulation training in performance appraisal versus the reality-based approach. In addition, experimentation is recommended to streamline the faculty-time expenditure required in the design presented here. So long as our students are motivated by pragmatic goals it is to our benefit to continue to strive toward academic training that enhances student success in the marketplace. The performance-appraisal interview can serve as a vehicle that narrows the gap between theory and practice, making knowledge useful rather than superfluous.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

CONVEYING THE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL: THE RESEARCH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

This essay reviews the major research literature on performance-appraisal interviewing with respect to the function of appraisal interviewing, frequency of interviews, appraiser characteristics, employee participation, and goal-setting. Conclusions are drawn regarding appropriate practices and the teaching of performance-appraisal interviewing.

INTRODUCTION

The performance-appraisal interview provides an intriguing communication situation for the student of organizational communication. Employees undoubtedly need the feedback of their supervisor to do their best. Yet they are often anxious at the prospect of an appraisal interview. On the other hand, supervisors recognize that employees want to know how they are doing on the job. They also realize that they should communicate with their employees about work performance. Yet, in practice, performance information is frequently not discussed with employees (Burke & Kimball, 1971). And when it is discussed it may be given in a perfunctory manner (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1975). In addition, it has long been recognized that some supervisors avoid performance-appraisal interviews, whereas others experience anxiety and discomfort in doing them (McGregor, 1957). Beyond this, the infrequent and ineffective use of performance-appraisal interviews is well documented (Landy & Trumbo, 1980; McGregor, 1957; Meyer et al., 1965). The irony of this situation is that a performance-appraisal interview is a primary and important context for the supervisor and employee to work together to achieve superior performance. Yet, fear keeps the process from achieving its full potential.

Research on performance-appraisal interviewing provides a promise of help for conducting these interviews, but it is broadly scattered. This essay has a twofold purpose. First, it will draw together what is known from the research literature on performance-appraisal interviewing. This literature will be grouped under the headings of function, frequency, appraiser characteristics, climate, and employee participation. Second, the implications of this research for teachers and scholars will be drawn.

FUNCTIONS OF APPRAISAL INTERVIEWING

A quick survey of the writings of researchers and other authorities on appraisal interviewing shows a myriad of expectations for functions of the employee interview. The appraisal interview might function to provide feedback on performance, to counsel and provide help, to discover what the employee is thinking, to teach the employee to solve problems, to help the employee discover ways to improve, to set performance goals, and/or to discuss compensation. The goals of the appraisal interview seem endless. The problem created by such multiple goals is that an attempt to adopt a set of reasonable goals may become difficult for the interviewer. And without specific goals in mind the interview may lack the necessary focus to achieve anything of consequence.

One way to make this list more manageable and functional is to divide the activities into two categories: employee development needs and organizational needs. Clearly what the employer is trying to do is to help the employee be more productive and satisfied with work as a person to develop the employee, and to achieve the organizations production goals and organizational needs.

Beyond these two generally accepted functions, lies the question of discussing compensation as a function of the performance-appraisal interview. Two studies have specifically addressed the question of whether this ought to be a function of the appraisal interview. The first was conducted by Meyer et al. (1965) in conjunction with the General Electric Work Planning and Performance Review Program. These researchers concluded that trying to achieve both feedback and counselling for improvement and informing of a salary decision was less effective than splitting the roles and holding two separate interviews. They found that the employees' attitudes toward their supervisor and performance improved when these two purposes were separated. Their explanation was that when these purposes were combined in a single interview, the discussion of salary took precedence in the employee's mind over a discussion of improvement. The result was that employees wanted to make a good impression and/or justify a greater salary increase. Huse and Kay (1964) reported that salary discussion contributed significantly to the overall tension of the employees they studied. Both topics--development and compensation--do not seem particularly compatible. The argument that they do not fit is compelling, but there were several confounding factors in these researchers' design. Primarily, the problem was that the interviews when separated differed in other important respects. They were different in that they were more frequent, emphasized joint goal planning, and had no summary ratings.

Cummings (1973) conducted a study which sought to test this relationship in the field. He argued that expectancy theory suggests that salary be a part of an appraisal interview. His field experiment investigated employee reactions to an old and new appraisal system. The data indicated that employees had more positive attitudes to the new system that jointly addressed development and salary than to the old

system that did not. Again the experiment was confounded by factors that do not permit confidence in this conclusion.

FREQUENCY

Miner (1974, 1975) reported frequence data for performance-appraisal interviews from a 1974 Bureau of National Affairs survey of personnel managers of 150 industrial and government organizations. Ninety percent of their managers, office personnel and production workers were appraised yearly. Additionally, performance-appraisal interviews were conducted in about 90 percent of the cases where performance appraisals were made.

However, these data may be misleading. The problem becomes one of discovering what is meant by a performance-appraisal interview. Hall and Lawler (1969) report that the supervisor and subordinates sometimes have different views as to what constitutes an interview. Questioning conducted with both groups revealed that the supervisor thought of a brief, general discussion with a subordinate as a performance-appraisal interview, whereas subordinates did not see it as such.

Other researchers have uncovered practices that place this self-report data in doubt. McCall and DeVries (1976) and Meyer et al. (1965) discovered that supervisors resisted holding performance-appraisal interviews unless the organization took specific measures to insure that they were held. Landy and Trumbo (1980) report that among a number of companies they studied interviews were frequently not held to convey ratings because supervisors believed that doing so was inconvenient logistically or they believed that the ratings served no real purpose.

Recommended frequency has been an issue of concern and discussion among scholars. Three factors have been suggested as determinants of frequency: the nature of the goal of the interview, the kind of position the employee has in the organization, and the characteristics of the employee's performance. Cummings & Schwab (1978) suggest that a maintenance interview is all that is necessary for some employees. These people are those in routine jobs, whose record of performance is satisfactory. This same rule seems reasonable for long-time employees who are adequately performing. These employees have had the opportunity to refine their job skills and show consistent performance; thus they do not require frequent reviews (Kane & Lawler, 1979).

There is evidence, though, that employees ought to be interviewed at least once each year. Landy, Barnes, and Murphy (1978) indicated that personnel who were evaluated at least once each year thought their evaluations were fairer and more accurate than those who were evaluated less frequently. But, when employee development is the function of the interview, when the job is nonroutine, and when goal-setting is part of the interview, more frequent interviews are recommended (McConkie, 1979; Cummings & Schwab, 1978; Meyer et al., 1965).

Finally, Cummings and Schwab suggest frequent reviews for the organization's low performers. They recommend weekly (and, in difficult cases, daily) interviews to monitor and give feedback on employee performance. More, rather than fewer, interviews allow the interviewer to focus more specifically and on fewer negative issues. And if Kay et al. (1965) are correct, the focus on fewer negative issues will improve the climate for improvement.

APPRAISER CHARACTERISTICS

One characteristic of the appraiser that is directly associated with effectiveness is credibility. Credibility in this case relates to the appraiser's knowledge of the employee's job duties and behavior. Ilgen, Fisher, and Taylor (1979) conducted a thorough review of the literature on feedback in organizations. Their conclusion with respect to the appraiser's knowledge of the subordinate's job and behavior is that the subordinate views the feedback as more accurate and therefore is more willing to accept it when the source is knowledgeable. Landy et al. (1978) came to a similar conclusion. They found that the subordinates who believed their supervisors to be highly knowledgeable about these two factors regarded the interview as more fair and accurate than did their counterparts who viewed their supervisors as less knowledgeable.

A second characteristic of the appraiser that seems to be important is consistent style between day-to-day behavior and that behavior demonstrated in the interview (French et al., 1966; Bassett & Meyer, 1968). A supervisor who wishes to engage in problem solving with employees in the appraisal interview, but has taken on the role of judge in day-to-day interaction with employees about their jobs, is being inconsistent. Meyer et al. (1965) urge managers to adopt the role of helper rather than the role of judge both in their day-to-day interaction and in performance review sessions.

A final important characteristic of the appraiser is the ability to engage in active listening. Kikoski and Litterer (1983) contend the ability to paraphrase content back to the speaker and to reflect feelings, the two basic skills of active listening, contribute to the appraiser's effectiveness in appraisal interviews. They base their claim on 150 data-based studies (Ivey & Litterer, 1979) that sought to identify communication skills and assess their effectiveness.

CLIMATE

Climate in the performance-appraisal interview has received considerable attention both in well-reasoned arguments and in empirical research. Concerns have traditionally centered on praise, criticism, and the superior-subordinate relationship.

Surprisingly, Meyer et al. (1965) found that praise did not have much effect on the outcome of the appraisal. They concluded that "praise may be regarded as the sandwich which surrounds the raw meat" (p. 127). That is to say, the average subordinate may believe that the supervisor's motivation for praising is preparation for the "bad news" to follow. Farson (1963) argued persuasively in Harvard Business Review that praise can also have a negative outcome. He suggests that praise might quite reasonably be viewed as threatening (i. e., a statement of superiority and a constraint on the employee's creativity).

An alternative to praise is encouragement (Hanna & Wilson, 1984). Supervisors might ask the employee to review her accomplishments and then affirm those that they believe to be accurate. This affirmation is encouraging to the subordinate--the supervisor has agreed with him in regard to his accomplishments. Encouragement of this type avoids the sense that the employer may be pointing out accomplishments as a prelude to discussing inadequacies.

Criticism is a second factor that affects performance appraisal climate. The supervisor cannot avoid discussing shortcomings in the employee's performance if the appraisal interview is to meet organizational performance objectives. Research suggests that it is excessive criticism per se that is problematic in the interview. Too much criticism appears to trigger the employee's defense mechanism and to destroy the climate for improvement (Bordonaro 1976; Meyer et al., 1965). In fact, Greller (1975) reported that the more the managers he studied criticized their employees, the less improvement was seen in the areas criticized. When similar areas were criticized less, managers were able to see more improvement. In addition, there was a positive correlation between the number of critical comments and the number of defensive reactions noted.

Finally, the supervisor's supportive orientation has been shown to be helpful in building an appropriate climate (Latham & Saari, 1979; Burke et al., 1978; Nemeroff & Wexley, 1977; Burke & Wilcox, 1969; Solem, 1960). Nemeroff and Wexley (1977) conducted a study that shows when managers take an attitude of helper--they treat the employee as an equal, show respect for the employee as a human being--the employee is more satisfied with both the session and manager than when the manager does not. Supportive behavior has also been demonstrated to be related to higher performance goal-setting by the employee (Latham & Saari, 1979).

A quality relationship is also important to supportiveness. Kikoski and Litterer (1983) suggest that development of a quality relationship involves four communication behaviors: (1) acknowledging the employee as a person, (2) indicating that the manager understands the conditions under which the employee has labored, (3) conveying that the employee's behavior is accepted, if not necessarily approved, and (4) letting the employee know that she has been listened to and understood.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

The issue of employee participation has received considerable attention in the performance-appraisal interviewing literature. Employee involvement in the performance-appraisal process is usually divided into two areas: preparation and actual participation in the interview, including goal-setting.

Preparation

One form of preparation is self-rating. Bassett and Meyer (1968) report that most managers expect that their employees produce ratings that are unrealistically favorable. Therefore, they are reluctant to base an appraisal discussion on self-appraisals. But, based on Bassett and Meyer's investigation of actual practice managers find that employee's self-ratings are surprisingly modest. The researchers attribute this modesty to the fact that the self-appraisal is being publicly announced and that immodesty is not valued in our culture.

Burke et al. (1978) discovered that the act of giving a worker a structured work sheet to use in personal preparation was associated with a positive outcome for the interview. The object of the work sheet is to allow the employee time to reflect and prepare to participate. This preparation seemed to reduce the awkwardness of being asked questions that the employee could not answer without reflection. The content of the worksheet used by Burke and his associates asked the employee to suggest principle responsibilities and problems encountered in fulfilling these responsibilities, and then to describe and compare her/his personal performance with the performance of others who hold similar jobs.

Participation in the Interview

Aside from the actual participation itself, the "welcoming of participation" seems to be important itself. Four studies (Burke et al., 1978; Nemeroff & Wexley, 1977; Greller, 1975; Burke & Wilcox, 1969) have shown correlations between such items as "boss asked my opinion" and "opportunity to present ideas and feelings" and a number of positive outcomes. Nemeroff and Wexley concluded from their investigation that there seem to be two difficulties with welcoming performance: the observation that supervisors seem to underestimate the importance of the opportunity for subordinates to participate and the degree to which they, the supervisors, invite participation effectively.

Although results have been mixed, research points to the fact that, in general, the greater the employee's participation in the interview, the more satisfied the person will be both with the interview and the supervisor (Nemeroff and Wexley, 1977; Greller, 1975; Solem, 1960; Maier, 1958). This statement must be tempered by several limitations presented by researchers and scholars. Locke and Schweiger (1979) suggest that the new employee might not have sufficient job knowledge to participate fully. They also point out that some employees have a need for dependence on their supervisor. These employees enjoy

being dependent and, therefore, are unlikely to have their own suggestions for improving their performance. French et al. (1966) indicate that the supervisor's usual style may have an effect on the employee's willingness to participate. If the supervisor does not normally welcome employee participation, then the employee is unlikely to participate in the interview at a high level. Basset and Meyer (1968) reported similar findings with respect to incongruent styles.

Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is a factor that has consistently been associated with positive outcomes in appraisal interviews. Two separate studies (French et al., 1966; & Basset and Meyer, 1968) have demonstrated that setting specific goals for performance improvement yielded twice as much improvement as either setting general goals or criticism without goal setting.

Correlation studies of goal-setting have shown that it is positively related to employee satisfaction with the interview (Burke et al., 1978; Greller, 1975, 1978; Burke & Wilcox, 1969), perceived utility of the appraisal (Greller, 1978) and perceived fairness and accuracy of the evaluation (Landy et al., 1978). Goal-setting in performance appraisal has also been associated with the employee's desire to improve and the later improvement (Burke et al., 1978; Burke & Wilcox, 1969), and with greater mutual understanding and perceived fairness (Burke et al., 1978).

CONCLUSION

What conclusions can be drawn about factors that either contribute to or detract from effective performance-appraisal interviewing? First, it seems reasonable to conclude that most interviews should focus upon employee development needs and organizational needs. The degree to which the interviewer chooses to focus more on one or the other probably depends on whether the person is a new or long-time employee and whether the job is such that goal-setting is appropriate, and on the individual's performance in the particular job. The new employee may need more development than the long-time employee. A routine job may not lend itself to goal-setting. Individuals whose level of performance is high may not need a strong emphasis in either of these areas. The research casts doubt upon the advisability of discussing compensation in the performance appraisal interview. Until further data are collected the argument seems to be in favor of this conclusion.

Recommended frequency for performance-appraisal interviews is best determined by considering the nature of the goal of the interview, the kind of position the employee has in the organization, and the characteristics of the employee's performance. The general rule is that an employee ought to be interviewed at least once each year. When employee development is the function of the interview, the job is nonroutine, and goal-setting is a part of the interview, more frequent

interviews are recommended. Weekly reviews are recommended for the organization's low achievers.

Another conclusion drawn from the research literature is that the supervisor must have specific knowledge of the subordinate's job and duties to have credibility. The outcome of credibility from this source is a perception by the interviewee that the review is more accurate and a greater willingness to accept it. The appraiser's effectiveness is also affected by consistency in style and by active listening skills.

Research on climate centers on praise, criticism, and superior-subordinate relationships. Praise seems to be an ineffective strategy in the appraisal interview. The interviewer should also avoid too much criticism and foster a supportive relationship.

With respect to participation, the employee should be encouraged to prepare by engaging in self-rating and working through a structured worksheet. Beyond this the interviewer should be sure that the interviewee knows that participation is welcome. The employee should also be encouraged to participate in goal-setting, if such an activity is indicated. The act of goal-setting may lead to increased performance, a greater desire to improve, greater satisfaction, greater utility, and greater perceived fairness and accuracy.

This research suggests several classroom training needs for organizational members. First, the strong correlation between supportive behavior and outcome suggests the need to train students in these skills. Second, the employee development aspect of the performance-appraisal interview presents a need for training in problem solving. Third, the positive effect of active listening suggests a need for students to develop this skill. Finally, the strong association of goal-setting with positive outcomes compels teachers of performance appraisal to teach students goal-setting theory.

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ABCA-SE 1984

I don't say we all ought to misbehave, but we ought to look as if we could.

--Orson Welles

Organizational Behavior

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURES AND THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Understanding organizational cultures offers important and useful insights for the professional communicator. This paper discusses the significant role of communication in the organizational culture and outlines the ideal types of behavior and communication existing in the excellent companies.

The various types of organizational cultures are examined from the categories of authoritarian, compromise, and performance and the four specific types analyzed in Deal and Kennedy's Corporate Cultures. Finally, a test is provided to assist the individual in determining the culture currently operating in a particular organization.

INTRODUCTION

The fastest-growing area of interest in the study of modern organizations and their behavior is organizational culture. Peters and Waterman's study, In Search of Excellence: Lessons From America's Best-Run Companies, offers the rationale for this interest. "Without exception, the dominance and coherence of culture proved to be an essential quality of the excellent companies" (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 75). Exactly what comprises excellent cultures will be developed in this paper, but the over-riding quality of all strong cultures lies in the communication patterns. Allan Kennedy, co-author of Corporate Cultures: The Rites and Rituals of Corporate Life, was recently asked what ingredient is needed to build strong corporate cultures.

> The answer, pure and simple, is through effective communication--to employees, customers, shareholders, public officials, and the public at large. The companies and organizations that do the best job thinking through what they are all about, deciding how and to whom these central messages should be communicated and executing the communication plan in a quality way invariably built a strong sense of esprit within their own organization and among the many constituents they serve. (Kennedy, 1983, p. 26)

Interest in these strong cultures comes from a variety of pressures which are partially summarized by Pascale and Anthos in The Art of Japanese Management:

> Our managerial set is being challenged persistently on three fronts. First, we are challenged on the frontier of managerial practice, where even bigger doses of what we already do will yield diminishing returns. Something more is needed to get our organizations to run effectively. Second, we are challenged by shifting values within our society which lead people to expect different things from organizations and to seek different meaning from work itself. And, third, the competition is killing us. (Pascale & Anthos, 1981, p. 25)

From Pascale and Anthos' view, Western organizations have placed a great deal of faith and effort into the three Ss: Strategy, Structure, and Systems. These comprise the "hard" management techniques. These three perspectives lead to a fixation on individual glory and the joys of winning through intimidation. In contrast, the four soft Ss--Staff, Skills, Style, and Superordinate goals--have received a relative lack of emphasis. These last four elements are, in many ways, the essential aspects of a culture, and are the traditional "people" issues which are the cornerstone of what the professional communicator offers to an organization.

Surprisingly, many individuals are uncomfortable with the notion of studying something which cannot be easily quantified. At the same time, no one would deny the need to understand the culture of other countries before traveling abroad or before working with foreign executives. In an effort to keep from being an "Ugly American," major American companies such as IBM, Xerox, and Proctor and Gamble spend a great deal of time in training their employees in the codes of etiquette and local protocol to make their business trips go smoothly. Knowing how to "do as the Romans do when in Rome" is a logical means of preventing any unnecessary "faux pas" or gaffes. This same logic regarding understanding culture for travel abroad also applies to the communicator hoping to adapt effectively to an organization.

This paper will discuss the ideal types of communication behaviors outlined by Peters and Waterman. Based on this initial concept, the paper discusses how communication is used in the three general types of cultures: Authoritarian, Compromise, and Performance. From this broadened perspective, the specific types identified in Deal and Kennedy's (1982) Corporate Cultures are presented. Finally, a test of our own cultural understanding is provided with the goal of enhancing our own ability to prevent inadequate fits between our own needs and the culture we are addressing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXCELLENT COMPANIES

The companies and industries surveyed by Peters and Waterman represent a broad range of organizations including high-technology companies such as Digital Equipment, consumer goods companies such as Proctor & Gamble, general industrial goods companies such as Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing (3 M), service companies such as Delta Air Lines, project management companies such as Bechtel, and resource-based companies such as Atlantic-Richfield (ARCO). The book identifies and discusses the qualities shared by these diverse organizations. In picking their sample of 62 companies, Peters and Waterman chose ones which had excellent financial performance to support the companies' "halo of esteem" in the business world. The organizations covered were measured by six long-term measures of superiority which included growth and wealth creation over a 20-year period. They excluded banks since the traditional heavy regulation of banks prevented Peters and Waterman from applying the 20-year standard. Overall, their "major concern was and is how big companies stay alive, well, and innovative" (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 25).

Throughout their analysis, Peters and Waterman refer to the intensity of interactions between the various members of the successful companies. Using the term "fluidity," they see excellent companies responding well because they shun the traditional organizational structure. This "rich, informal communication" is the name of the game for these organizations.

> The nature and uses of communication in the excellent companies are remarkably different from those of their nonexcellent peers. The excellent companies are a vast network of informal, open communications. The patterns and intensity cultivate the right people's getting into contact with each other, regularly, and the chaotic/anarchic properties of the system are kept well under control simply because of the regularity of contact and its nature (e.g., peer versus peer in quasi-competitive situations). (Peters & Waterman, 1982, pp. 121-122).

Critical to the success of this communication is the use of the small group. "Small groups are, quite simply, the basic organizational building blocks of excellent companies" (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 126). Rather than the strict organizational building blocks made of the accepted structure, these small groups are based on flexibility and often take the form of task forces which have single purposes and, when finished, are disbanded. Rather than formal reports, actions are taken to resolve whatever difficulties were the reasons for the group's being formed in the first place.

Coupled with this overall belief in small groups is the policy of MBWA--Management By Walking Around. In the excellent companies, all of the management team believes in being involved with the activities of the members of the organization. Peters and Waterman conclude:

> The free-wheeling environments in which ad hoc behavior flourishes are only superficially unstructured and chaotic. Underlying the absence of formality lie shared purposes, as well as an internal tension and a competitiveness that makes these cultures tough as nails. (Peters & Waterman, 1982, p. 134)

On eight different characteristics, there are fundamental distinctions between traditional management and the excellent companies. A careful analysis of Table I shows the difference between the two. In general, organizations have allowed structure to become an end in-and-of itself and control to be the management technique most likely to be used. The excellent companies, because of their communication-behavior philosophy, contrast sharply. The excellent companies use communication as a primary tool in their program and perspective toward growth. The consistency between such a broad cross section of business types in their methods for using communication allows us to conclude that communication is a primary aspect accounting for their success.

CORPORATE CULTURES

However, all companies have a culture which is an organization's shared beliefs and values--its distinct identity. The facts which constitute the culture include the various procedures and activities which members regularly or occasionally perform. More than any other term, culture accurately describes the communication practices and behaviors which comprise an organization.

> Culture, as Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines it, is "the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thought, speech, action, and artifacts and depends on man's capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations." Marvin Bower, for years managing director of McKinsey and Company and author of The Will To Manage, offered a more informal definition--he described the informal cultural elements of a business as "the way we do things around here." (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 125)

In order to understand more fully the other types of cultures which also should be considered, we must realize that "what we do" in an organization includes events "where individuals assign symbolic meaning [through] stories, myths, rituals, ceremonies, and nonverbal objects of the organizational cultural inventory" (Putnam, 1982, p. 199). In other words, the various cultures use some distinct means of communication.

There are at least two specific ways to categorize cultures. The first is to divide them into three distinct types which reflect, to some degree, the various management and organizational philosophies traditionally followed in American companies. These three types are Authoritarian/

Table I. Characteristics of the Excellent Companies

Comparison of America's Best-Run with the Traditional View

Best-Run Companies	Traditional Companies
1. A bias for action	1. A propensity to: "analyze it," "complicate it," "debate it"
2. Close to the customer	2. Use of frills, "Statue of Liberty Plays," specials
3. Productivity through people	3. Controlling cost by controlling people
4. Autonomy and entrepreneurship	4. Produce well--it's your job to do so and "be creative"
5. Hands-on, value driven	5. Remote control of activities, stress on structure
6. Stick to the knitting	6. Combining apples and oranges to obtain synergy
7. Simple form, lean staff	7. Layering, matrizing
8. Simultaneous loose-tight properties	8. Commitment to unbridled "actualizing" OR unbending controls

Adapted from Peter & Waterman, 1982.

Bureaucratic, Compromise/Supportive, and Performance/Innovative. As Table II indicates, the three types reflect a distinct attitude toward individual and group behavior within the organization. The three groupings and their behavioral orientations indicate how each organization expects to have things done "around here." In a broad sense, these three groups allow us to look at particular organizations and decide what type of culture appears to be operating. This particular chart also allows the individual to begin to determine which culture might be most amenable to the organization's own needs and desires. To the degree the organization conforms to the cultural dictates of the chart, individuals will find it necessary to adapt effectively their own behavior to the cultural expectations.

A second way to divide the various organizations is to use the categories provided by Kennedy and Deal. They deal with corporations which would exclude some types of businesses and organizations. However, the rationale behind their groupings is extremely useful, and the behavioral manifestations are very enlightening. The four types of corporate cultures are Macho/Tough Guy, Work Hard/Play Hard, Bet Your Company, and Process.

In classifying their various cultures, Kennedy and Deal looked at five specific elements: business environment, values, heroes, rites and rituals, and cultural network. "The business environment is the single greatest influence in shaping a corporate culture" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 13). So, companies which orient themselves to specific customer needs will be very different from ones concerned with long-term growth or research and development. The values "are the basic concepts and beliefs of an organization; as such they form the heart of the corporate culture. Values define 'success' in concrete terms for employees--'if you do this, you too will be a success'--and establish standards of achievement within the organization" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, pp. 13-14). Heroes personify the values of the culture and act as role models for the employees to follow. "These achievers are known to virtually every employee with more than a few months' tenure in the company. And they show every employee 'here's what you have to do to succeed around here'" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 14). The rites and rituals

> . . . are the systematic and programming routines of day-to-day life in the company. In their mundane manifestations--which [are] rituals--they show employees the kind of behavior that is expected of them. In their extravaganzas--which [are] ceremonies--they provide visible and potent examples of what the companies stand for. Strong cultures go to the trouble of spelling out, often in copious detail, the routine behavioral rituals they expect their employees to follow. . . . All of this information and all of these communication activities are bound together by the cultural network. As the primary (but informal) means of communication within an organization, the cultural network is

Table II. Types of Organizational Cultures

Behavioral characteristics of:	Authoritarian/Bureaucratic	Compromise/Supportive	Performance/Innovative
Basis for Decisions	Direct from authority	Discussion, agreement	Directions from within
Forms of control	Rules, laws, rewards, punishments	Interpersonal/group commitments	Actions aligned with self-concept
Sources of Power	Superior	What "we" think and feel	What I think and feel
Desired end	Compliance	Consensus	Self-actualization
To be avoided	Deviation from authorative direction	Failure to reach consensus	Not being "true to oneself"
Time perspective	Future	Near future	Now
Position relative to others	Hierarchial	Peer	Individual
Human Relationships	Structured	Group oriented	Individually oriented
Basis for growth	Following the established order	Peer group membership	Acting on awareness of self

> the "carrier" of the corporate values and heroic mythology. Storytellers, spies, priests, cabals, and whisperers form a hidden hierarchy of power within the company. Working the network effectively is the only way to get things done or to understand what's really going on. (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, pp. 14-15).

These five aspects form the basis for any culture. When they are done well, they provide the cultural base for a successful organization which provides practical meaning to people on and off the job. "A strong culture is a powerful level for guiding behavior; it helps employees do their jobs a little better" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 15). Deal and Kennedy point to two specific advantages of a strong culture: A "strong culture is a system of informal rules that spells out how people are to behave most of the time" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 15). In other words, people know the cultural requirements and are therefore less likely to violate the rules. Second, "a strong culture enables people to feel better about what they do, so they are more likely to work harder" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 16). Deal and Kennedy's conclusions fit clearly with the opening observation regarding the need to understand the territory in which we will be traveling. They conclude that "culture shock may be one of the major reasons why people supposedly 'fail' when they leave one organization for another. Where they fail, however, is not necessarily in doing the job, but in not reading the culture correctly" (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 17). Implicitly and explicitly these are all statements about the communication which occurs in the organization.

> They also refer to communication and social rituals. The unwritten rules of personal communication, (let's call them "howdy" rituals) occupy an amazing amount of company time. But take them away and no one would know how to behave. They let people know where they stand, reinforce an individual's identity within the company, and set the tone for the way in which people relate to one another. (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 64)

To further clarify the four cultures, Table III divides the characteristics by business environment; degree of risk; shared values; use of rituals and rites by the types of behavior expected; heroes; survivors and role models; attitude of employees; feedback on decision's success; and paradigms of corporate types.

One temptation is to combine the two divisions provided concerning cultures and to approach a particular industry with a preconceived notion regarding its cultural expectations. This procedure would be tantamount to arriving in New York City and assuming the rest of the United States was exactly the same since everyone is an American. The value of these classifications is in their "mapping-out" for us some potential issues which will then lead to a greater chance for successful cultural assimilation. Without a doubt, using these classifications is preferable to approaching an organization with an "Alice in Wonderland" perspective. However, Kennedy and Deal warn us:

Table III. Four Types of Corporate Cultures

Business environment	MACHO/TOUGH GUY	WORK HARD/PLAY HARD	BET YOUR COMPANY	PROCESS
Degree of risk	high risk, expensive outlays for risks	small risks	high risks, research and development	low risk
Represented by shared values of	youth, intensive pressure, fast pace, early rewards, "all or nothing"	fun and action, high level of activity which is everything	deliberateness, long-term, careful decision-making	technical perfection how things are done since what cannot be managed
Use of rites and rituals-types of behavior expected	extensive use, often superstitious, bonding meetings	contests, morale boosting conventions, language for sales	titles and formalities, business meetings	drawn-out meetings, memoes and reports that disappear
Heroes, survivors and role models	tough, internally competative, movers	super sales people, "never say die"	individuals persistent with correct decision and risk	employees who protect system and how
Attitude of employees	individualistic	center on customer; fill needs well	be right and be careful	conservative and trivial
Feedback on decision's success	quick	quick--by volume of sales	slow--future of the company	virtually none or negative
Paradigms of corporate types	construction cosmetics management consulting venture capital advertising television movies publishing sports entertainment	sales real estate computer companies automotive distributors any door-to-door sales mass consumer companies office equipment companies retail stores	capital goods mining and smelting large systems business oil companies investment banks architectural firms computer design companies actuarial end of insurance companies	banks insurance financial-service organizations large chunks of government utilities heavily regulated industries pharmaceuticals

Source: Deal & Kennedy, 1982, pp. 107-127.

> No one company fits perfectly into any of these molds, and different parts of the same organization will exhibit each of the four types of cultures. Still, most companies have overall tendencies toward one of the cultures because they are responding to the needs of the market place. (Deal & Kennedy, 1982, p. 125)

They point to three specific companies to underscore the point. Proctor and Gamble, Pepsi-Cola, and Bloomingdale's department store are all companies which would logically be Work Hard/Play Hard cultures but which are Macho/Tough Guy organizations actively pursuing competition both within the company and with competitors.

Knowing the type of culture you will be dealing with can be a great boon to effectively working within an organization. One means for learning about the culture is simply to become a member of the organization. Since getting things done is ultimately the goal of most members of an organization, careful observations will lead to enough information to make some preliminary decisions regarding the type of culture discussed. An individual might also read specific works which closely correlate to the type of organization referred to by Kennedy and Deal--e.g., Work Hard/Play Hard, Tracy Kidder's Soul of a New Machine (1981); Macho/Tough Guy, David Ogilvie, Confessions of an Advertising Man (1963); Bet Your Company, David Loth, Swope of GE (1958); and Process, Patrick Wright, On A Clear Day You Can See GM (1979).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE INDEX

Finally, an organizational cultural index test can identify the type of organization in which we would prefer to work. Actually, the test serves a dual function. It can be used to determine which type of organization we are currently working in, and it can also be used to decide which type of organization we would be most likely to be satisfied with. The first use of the test allows for better cultural assimilation for the individual already in the organization. The second use allows us to make some tentative links between our expectations and our ability to fit in a particular culture. Taking the test requires that what "is" must be the rule, not what "ought to be." The proper fit between the individual and the organization actually can occur through a high degree of cultural flexibility. At the same time, it is always useful to know the territory before we try to cross it. Tables IV and V illustrate the organizational-culture index. After you have totaled your score, you will have a rough indication of the type of corporate or organizational culture you are presently operating in or might be interested in becoming part of in the future. Since the choices include a 0 to 3 rating, you also have an approximation of the variations you see in your own needs. Few of us are strictly authoritarian/bureaucratic, compromise/supportive, or performance/innovative in our own working needs and perspectives. No organizational culture is likely to score a perfect 24 (the highest possible indication) on any one of the three characterizations, since all organizations tend to vary depending on the issue, department, and performance demands.

Table IV. Organizational Culture Index Questionnaire

Instructions: Please circle a score from the scale below which most clearly corresponds with how you see your organization.

0=does not describe my organization
1=describes my organization a little
2=describes my organization a fair amount
3=describes my organization most of the time

(a)	risk taking	0	1	2	3
(b)	collaborative	0	1	2	3
(c)	hierarchical	0	1	2	3
(d)	procedural	0	1	2	3
(e)	relationships-oriented	0	1	2	3
(f)	results-oriented	0	1	2	3
(g)	creative	0	1	2	3
(h)	encouraging	0	1	2	3
(i)	sociable	0	1	2	3
(j)	structered	0	1	2	3
(k)	pressurized	0	1	2	3
(l)	ordered	0	1	2	3
(m)	stimulating	0	1	2	3
(n)	regulated	0	1	2	3
(o)	personal freedom	0	1	2	3
(p)	equitable	0	1	2	3
(q)	safe	0	1	2	3
(r)	challenging	0	1	2	3
(s)	enterprising	0	1	2	3
(t)	established, solid	0	1	2	3
(u)	cautious	0	1	2	3
(v)	trusting	0	1	2	3
(w)	driving	0	1	2	3
(x)	power-driven	0	1	2	3

Table V. Organizational Culture Index Analysis

Authoritarian/
Bureaucratic profile: add scores for: d____
c____
j____
l____
n____
t____
u____
x____

TOTAL: ____

Compromise/
Supportive profile: add scores for: a____
f____
g____
k____
m____
r____
s____
w____

TOTAL: ____

Performance/
Innovative profile: add scores for: b____
e____
h____
i____
o____
p____
q____
v____

TOTAL: ____

ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS

This organizational culture test offers three additional opportunities which involve a greater understanding of what actually comprises organizational culture. First, if you find any of these terms unclear, a more thorough reading of books on organizational behavior would be most beneficial. To return to our travel analogy, one must learn the language before traveling into a new culture. Second, if you found little differentiation between the three categories (e.g. 24 for all three), you are dealing with an organization which lacks a strong culture with clearly defined values or you have taken too broad a view of the part of the organization you are analyzing. A final opportunity would occur if the culture test provided different results depending on which group takes the test. For example, if the supervisory personnel see the organization as predominantly Authoritarian/Bureaucratic and the upper-level management see the organization as Compromise/Supportive, then the source of some conflicts would be readily apparent. The organization lacks a cogent, well-defined culture and individuals at various levels will probably experience difficulty in knowing how "things are done."

Learning about organizational cultures for the professional communicator is easily as logical as learning to make a strong presentation or writing an excellent business letter. To assume that organizational theory can explain the variations within a given culture is to be much too naive concerning the behavioral tendencies of individuals. Once we learn the variations of cultures, however, the predictive capacity for our own actions is quite strong. There are no "quick and easy" means for learning cultures since there are numerous variations within all types of organizations.

CONCLUSION

This paper has presented culture as a fact of organizational communication. From three different perspectives, we can begin to draw some important concepts which can be specifically applied. First, we can see the difference between the excellent companies and the traditional view of organizations. The most striking difference is the open communication pattern within the excellent companies versus the top-down control and directed communication in the others. Second, we can divide the general types of cultures into the more traditional means of discussing organizational structure and decision-making processes. This division is the basis for the test just introduced. Finally, the study by Deal and Kennedy provides excellent insights into the behavioral aspects of the four types of cultures they studied. In their study, they were interested in excellent--as reflected by successful and productive behaviors--cultures. Their four sub-groups provide us with a useful balance regarding "how things are done" in these various organizations.

No one currently investigating organizational cultures assumes the study or understanding is easy in either theory or application. Since organizations are systems of individuals and sub-groups, there is a

richness which is difficult to classify. But, an awareness of the impact of culture on the communication within an organization is a prerequisite to being a successful traveler and not just a tourist.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

WO-MENTORING: CAN IT WORK?

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ABSTRACT

Being a part of a mentor relationship has been identified as a factor vital to managerial success. That this is primarily a male experience is due to subtle communication patterns within organizations which have grown out of male experiences with team sports and which therefore exclude women. Among the various barriers women in organizations must overcome is their powerlessness due to insufficient knowledge of corporate politics and the informal communication system. Women denied access to a mentor experience can turn to one or two other alternatives--among them a women's network--but ultimately the focus returns to the necessity for women to have or to be sponsors in order to achieve success.

INTRODUCTION

According to ancient myth, Ulysses was called to war soon after the birth of his son. Not wishing for Telemachus to grow up without a guide, Ulysses arranged for his friend, Mentor, to serve as a tutor. Ulysses' odyssey lasted nearly 20 years, and Mentor became responsible for most of Telemachus' learning. Mentor was, in fact, the name assumed by Minerva, the goddess of wisdom (Guerber, 1893).

Far from being a concept limited to mythology, the idea of having a mentor has taken on significance with a great segment of the upwardly mobile in recent years. People in business, especially, look to mentor-figures for guidance in negotiating the organizational pathways that have the potential for assuring or blocking success. A mentor helps a newer employee "learn the ropes, protects the charge from being unduly roughed up by the opposition and guides the youth through the corporate maze" (Swain, 1980, p. 84).

The importance for a young employee to have such an interested sponsor is dramatized by Ruth Halcomb: "Individuals seem to need mentors most at crisis periods or turning points in their careers . . . . One's success or failure at such times greatly depends upon whether a mentor is present or not. To have a mentor is to be among the blessed. Not to have one is to be damned to eternal oblivion or at least to mid-level status" (1979, pp. 126-127).

Despite the fact that the Minerva-Telemachus relationship was a female-male experience, and despite the recent efforts to include more women in higher management positions, mentoring has generally been seen as an all-male phenomenon. Halcomb writes: "Men who thrive in large organizations are most likely to have had the support of bosses who took a special interest in their careers. But it may be even more essential for women to be proteges" (1979, p. 126).

If having a mentor is as important to an individual as Halcomb suggests, it is vital then for students of business communication to learn as much as possible about it, before beginning their own organizational management career.

This paper examines the mentor experience: what it is, how it works for men, and how it should and could work for women. Examining the mentoring process requires first a description of certain features of the organizational environment, mainly the fact of corporate politics and the reasons men seem more inherently successful than women in adapting to such "games." This leads naturally to a consideration of mentoring and the question of whether it is a viable route for an upward-bound woman or whether there are other alternatives to promote her success within organizations.

DISCUSSION

During the past ten years, according to Ellyn Mirides and Andre Cote, a variety of social and economic factors has increased the number of women in the work-place. These factors include (1) the women's movement and supporting organizations of similar philosophies and orientations, (2) recent civil-rights legislation prompting aggressive action programs, (3) the changing profile of the American workforce, and (4) the increase in the need for competent managers in business and industry (Mirides & Cote, 1980, p. 25).

Despite all this, most women are still concentrated in low-level positions, away from management action. The 1978 Bureau of Labor Statistics documents that only two percent of all women in business currently hold management positions and only 6.1 percent of persons with weekly earnings of $500 or more were female (Mirides & Cote, 1980, p. 25).

Barriers

There are numerous barriers to be overcome by female managers before they achieve an equal position in management. Among the barriers cited by Mirides and Cote are the following (1980, p. 25):

1. Sex-role stereotypes about women and work.
   - Women work for money alone.
   - Women are not committed to their jobs, regarding them as temporary.
   - Women are not suited emotionally or intellectually for jobs traditionally held by men.
   - Women cannot coordinate careers with family demands.
2. Condescending treatment and withholding of supervisory support for women already in managerial positions.
3. Hiring biases and training program barriers.
   - Requirements designed by males for males.
   - False perceptions regarding "male" or "female" oriented jobs.
   - Greater concern of "appropriate" business and social behaviors.
4. Women's self-perceptions based on societal conditioning.
5. Policies, procedures and systems that define and govern the organization and which are not known or understood by women. (1980, p. 25)

Even women who overcome some of the above barriers have a difficult time mastering the last barrier. In her book Games Mother Never Taught You, Betty Lehan Harragan describes the situation: "The vast majority are oblivious to the fact that they have stumbled onto a playing field where the rules of participation are rigidly enforced and the criteria for success are known to all but them" (1978, p. 23). The differences between what people expect and what they find in an organization is one component of corporate politics. The point is, writes Marilyn Moats Kennedy, "that members have no choice whether to play or not" (1980, p. 36). Office politics is a fact and a process. Non-participation is not an option.

Also writing about power and politics, Halcomb says: "Women who've made some career progress find that the roadblock standing in the way of further advancement is not only sexism but the inherent structure of the system itself . . . . Good game-players understand the structure well, deferring to superiors and knowing which privileges go with each rank" (1979, p. 54).

Organizational System

Most men realize that modern corporate structure is derived from the military. Understanding that the pyramid structure and chain-of-command communication is based on a male-dominated military model could lessen the confusion felt by working women confronted with an organizational hierarchy.

But aside from formal systems, even the informal system of relationships in most organizations "finds both its origins and present function in the male culture and in the male experience" (Hennig & Jardim, 1978, p. 13). Hennig and Jardim declare that "what makes this particularly threatening to the future of women in management . . . grows still more critical with every step upward . . . . Competence as a manager requires understanding and skill at working in and with the informal system of relationships in which management jobs are embedded" (1978, pp. 13-15).

Thus, even men with no military experience adapt readily to the formal and informal structures of organizations. They have their background in team sports, and, if they do have difficulty adjusting to corporate life, "unlike working women, they are clued in very early by male associates and management" (Harragan, 1978, p. 41).

Corporate politics and the informal system affect this relationship: "In the nature of the relationships that men traditionally establish with each other lies the key to both" (Hennig & Jardim, 1978, p. 67). When small boys begin learning about team sports, they learn about being members of a group, about winning and losing, about strategy and specialization, and about relationships and responsibility. Women seem to lack this kind of experience with competition. Elsewhere, Hennig and Jardim go on to say: "After years of practice, men bring these skills with them to management situations where they are critical to job performance . . . . As team members, men have already learned the ground rules for relationships among their mostly male colleagues in management. They have learned how to operate in a subtle network of lateral relationships . . . that depend on friendship, persuasion, favors, promises, and/or connections with people who already have influence" (1977, p. 81).

This subtle support system, commonly called the "old boys' network," is the way men in business cut through resistance and red tape simply by virtue of their informal relationships with each other. More decisions are reached on golf courses, in locker rooms, or over lunch tables, than in conference rooms. Deliberately or not, men leave women (even women they work with) out of their informal information channels. That women do not socialize like or with men results in a powerlessness due to limited lines of information.

Writing about such powerlessness, Rosabeth Moss Kanter points to a related reason: because many women in management do not rise through the usual channels (men often begin in production or sales), they lack information about technical requirements on the job (1979). Any corresponding lack in a male candidate would be filled in by the "old boys' network" or by a sponsorship system through which a young man advances by virtue of being the protege of an older, established person (Hay, 1980, p. 36).

In some companies the system is more formal than informal. The "first assistant philosophy" at Jewel Tea Company means: "The executive responsibility involves assisting the people down the line to be successful. The boss in any department is the first assistant to those who report to him" (Collins & Scott, 1978, p. 90). To accomplish this behavior, each management trainee at Jewel is assigned an officer to act as a sponsor and mentor. This sponsor "helps the trainee plan his career and talks to others about him" (Collins & Scott, 1978, p. 100).

Career Development

Gene W. Dalton and Paul H. Thompson have studied professional careers and have described four stages in career development, differentiated by the relationships to others (1977, p. 23). Stage I is an apprenticeship with the primary activities concerned with helping, learning, and following directions. Describing the relationships in Stage I, Dalton and Thompson write:

> Ideally, in this stage he will work with a mentor who knows how to design a study, structure an audit, or analyze the critical risks involved in a loan. He works closely with the mentor, learning from observation, and from trial and correction, the approaches, the organizational savvy and the judgement that no one has yet been able to incorporate into textbooks . . . . A good mentor often becomes a model the Stage I person can follow whenever he is unsure how to approach a problem . . . . These and other benefits suggest that finding a good mentor should be a key agenda for any professional entering any organization. Providing him with the opportunity to find such a mentor is an equally important responsibility of high-ups in the organization. (1977, pp. 24-25)

Stage II is a time when colleagues and peer relationships take on greater importance. The person becomes an independent contributor to the organization and relies less on the

mentor. "This transition is not easy, involving as it does a change in attitude and behavior on the part of the supervisor as well as the individual himself" (Dalton & Thompson, 1977, p. 27).

Stage III is called the mentor stage, "because of the increased responsibility individuals begin to take for influencing, guiding, directing, and developing other people. It is usually persons in this stage who play the critical role in helping others move through Stage I. . . . Often an individual begins to play the role of informal mentor as an outgrowth of his success in Stage II. He becomes a mentor for the people who assist him" (Dalton & Thompson, 1977, pp. 29-30). One writer, evaluating Dalton and Thompson's work, views Stage III as similar to Erik Erikson's generativity stage of adulthood where individuals become paternal and feel a "voluntary urge to help new generations and younger associates" (Hanson, 1977, p. 44).

While similar in some respects to Stage III, Stage IV focuses on shaping the direction of the organization by exercising power. In Stage IV, called sponsoring, "the focus is on opening up opportunities, assessing, and providing feedback, rather than on teaching and instruction." Dalton and Thompson watch these people, note their strengths and weaknesses, counsel them, and try to guide each one into areas where he or she is "most likely to be effective" (1977, p. 34).

Roles of Mentors

Another article distinguishes between mentor and sponsor and adds a third--coach--in describing roles contributing to the development of effective managers. The group preparing this article defines a coach as a "boss who helps a subordinate meet specific growth needs by setting challenging tasks, counseling subordinates, and appraising performance. Whereas coaches prepare individuals for enhanced placement in other parts of the organization, sponsors on the other hand mention people with potential for special or existing openings and apply subtle pressure to get proteges considered or placed" (Woodlands, 1980, pp. 918-919).

Of the three roles described here, "mentors are more apt to be concerned with the needs of the protege than with the needs of the organization . . . . [T]heir respect . . . for the protégé takes precedence . . . even when it means advising one to leave the organization in order to achieve maximum growth and development" (Woodlands, 1980, p. 920). Except for this difference in focus, the distinction between sponsor and mentor as described by these writers is small.

Types of Mentors

In her book, Marilyn Moats Kennedy describes five kinds of mentors available in organizations, with the last most nearly approaching the caring sponsorship relationship described above.

The first kind is the information mentor, a person who teaches a new employee about the informal organization. The peer mentor provides information from an equal perspective and acts as a sounding board. A third mentor identified by Kennedy is the retiree who offers an oral history of the organization and the manner in which it was shaped, providing insights for an aspiring employee. Then there is the competitive mentor, someone in a similar job at another organization, someone who often can provide valuable insights from a different perspective (Kennedy, 1980).

Finally, the mentor "that received the most publicity, excites the most envy, and is most desired by new workers," is the godfather mentor "who not only can teach, inspire, and orient but also can make things happen for the protege" (Kennedy, 1980, p. 155). This mentor relationship is a symbiotic one, with both parties gaining from it. Kennedy says: "Most people who've played either or both roles think that it has been the greatest competitive boost to their careers. The godfathers themselves talk in terms of enhanced prestige at having discovered . . . someone who added to the organization's talent bank. Proteges listed an improvement in the quality of their efforts, and enhanced prestige as a result of being known as someone's protege" (Kennedy, 1980, p. 159).

Among 1,250 responses to a 1977 survey of executives, nearly two-thirds reported having had a mentor or sponsor (Roche, 1979). According to Roche, the mentor relationship has become more visible during the past 20 years. He says executives who have had a mentor earn more money at a younger age, are better educated, are more likely to follow a career plan, and sponsor more proteges themselves than executives who have not had a mentor (1979). Roche also found that those with mentors were happier with their career progress and derived greater pleasure from their work (1979).

Mentors' Importance to Careers

Clearly sponsors or mentors are important to the careers of managers. Kanter finds three reasons for this importance:

> First, sponsors are often in a position to fight for the person in question, to stand up for him or her in meetings if controversy is raised, to promote that person for promising opportunities. Second, sponsors often provide the occasion for lower-level organization members to bypass the hierarchy: to get inside information, to short-circuit cumbersome procedures, or to cut red tape. Third, sponsors also provide an important signal to other people, a form of "reflected power." Sponsorship indicates to others that the person in question has the backing of an influential person. (1977, pp. 181-182)

Kanter goes on to point out, "If sponsors are important for the success of men in organizations, they seem absolutely essential for women" (1977, p. 183). But, they are also harder to find. Because there are not many successful female role models, "an identifiable person to examine . . . woman to woman . . . for strategic help and advice does not exist in most companies" (Hay, 1980, p. 33). Halcomb states that, "right now, with more women moving onto managerial rungs of the corporate ladder, mentors should ideally be easier to find. But the changes that were supposed to help women can, in some cases, be a hindrance. A number of women who made their career progress before the days of affirmative action believe that the opportunities being held out to women today aren't the real opportunities they themselves had" (1979, p. 131).

Whereas some males have become mentors for younger women, this arrangement often fails for two reasons. Mentors often choose a particular individual to sponsor because of identification, and "this process almost automatically eliminates women" (Kanter, 1977, p. 184). Also, "the intimacy of the mentor-protege relationship may discourage even the highest male risk-taker from being mentor to a woman" (Woodlands, 1980, p. 921). "The 'other sexness' of either partner may create sufficient social pressure to arrest or prevent extensive one-on-one coaching" (Woodlands, 1980, pp. 918-19).

Kram, furthermore, states clearly not only that the mentor or sponsor relationship is important to the careers of managers, but also that the relationship passes through four phases: "an initiation phase, during which time the relationship is started; a cultivation phase, during which time the range of functions provided expands to maximum; a separation phase, during which time the established nature of the relationships . . . changed; and a redefinition phase, during which time the relationship evolves a new form that is significantly different from the past, or the relationship ends entirely" (Kram, 1983, p. 614).

Halcomb perceives a double bind. "Establishing a good mentor relationship with a man can be difficult in a society that's both sexist and sexually charged" (1979, p. 133). At the same time, most mentors are male, partly because more men are able (or willing) to assume the role. Halcomb adds: "And in many of the areas where mentors are necessary, a man has more power and prestige of his own so that he can be more effective in enhancing the prestige of a protege. A man's stamp of approval makes a woman a more acceptable colleague or team member" (1977, pp. 133-34).

Alternatives to Mentors

Are there alternatives for women who want to progress within organizations without getting caught in the Catch-22 of mentor relationships? Several suggestions are clear.

Joining professional organizations may be a way of transferring reliance for advice from a single mentor to various colleagues (Edson, 1980, p. 19). Not only are the contacts important, but also professional or trade organizations usually are organized along some sort of hierarchy, and participation can equate to training in management skills (Harragan, 1978, p. 323). Combining Kennedy's ideas of peer and competitive mentors, outside professional-development activities can be a way of sharing challenges and problems and a "rich oasis of information and interaction" (Burrow, 1980, p. 81).

Specific management training can be another real asset for women denied the informal instruction of the "old boys' network." Women need training in parliamentary procedure (Baron, 1980), in the use of leverage, and in other management skills (Hay, 1980). Many independent seminars and programs have been set up to fill these needs, and companies wishing to enhance the results of affirmative-action plans can establish other programs designed to narrow the training and experience gap between men and women (Mejia-Luis & Balkin, 1980).

A third alternative receiving much attention is networking for women, a "new girl network" designed for information, for advice, for moral support--because only other women can truly understand what working women are up against (Welch, 1980, p. 18). Some networks are formally organized within companies, within cities, or within professions; and others are more individually structured according to the needs and connections of a particular woman. An informal system of relationships within, or outside, an organization can help all women involved identify job opportunities, solve problems, perfect management skills, and even "identify bosses who are particularly supportive of career advancement for women" (Hennig & Jardim, 1977, p. 80).

However, it may be a misconception to assume that a support network can be a consciously developed organization. At least one woman feels that such informal communication channels cannot be artificially structured and argues against trying to establish a "new girl network"; "A more viable approach in an environment where women and men are interdependent and work together to meet organizational goals would be for women to concentrate on gaining support based on need for information, advice, assistance, and resources as opposed to gender" (Warihay, 1980, p. 58).

Network or no, the focus always comes back to sponsorship. Ironically, one of the projects suggested for a formally organized network is to start a mentoring program, "bringing in younger women to profit by the more experienced members' savvy" (Welch, 1980, p. 228). Kanter speaks to that very idea:

> . . . to create a network of supporters out of individual clout requires that a person pass on and share power, that subordinates and peers be empowered by virtue of their connection with that person.

> Traditionally, neither men nor women have seen women as capable of sponsoring others, even though they may be capable of achieving and succeeding on their own. Women have been viewed as recipients of sponsorship rather than as the sponsors themselves. (1979, p. 69)

Kanter goes on to suggest, ". . . as more women prove themselves in organizations and think more self-consciously about bringing young people, this situation may change" (1979, p. 69). Others are thinking along the same lines. "The mentor route is a two-way street, and the sooner women at all levels understand this, the further it can take them" (Mentors for women . . . , 1980, p. 6). Yet another woman offers support for the idea: "Watching the growth of a junior person is an extremely satisfying experience. To see someone bloom and live up to her potential and know you had a part in that is reward in itself" (DeRiemer, 1980, p. 42).

Finally, Christine Hay suggests: "What perhaps may be needed is more encouragement of successful women to take on the role of a model for younger, aspiring women to follow on the job" (1980, p. 35).

CONCLUSION

The fact remains, however, that there just are not enough successful working women. Warihay may be right when she suggests taking support where one can find it. The shortage of women in role model positions alone should discourage relying solely on them for support, connections, and enlightenment as to the mysterious ways of corporate politics. It would not be smart politics to eliminate more than half the potential (successful) resources merely because they are men.

Success for young women in management in the near future will not suddenly be easy. There will be men who do not understand women's problems and other men who unconsciously close out women by virtue of traditional patterns of behavior. Some other men may be afraid to take the social risk of close association with women. Some women will be resentful of another woman's progress or afraid of the competition.

A woman intent on moving up within an organization today needs the best help available, be it a female role model, a pertinent training seminar, a male godfather figure, or a newly emerged wo-mentor--or all four, if she can find them.

And then she needs to make a personal commitment so that, if and when she becomes successful, she, like Minerva ages ago, will pass on her knowledge and experience as a wo-mentor to succeeding generations.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

SEX AND POWER IN THE OFFICE: AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER AND EXECUTIVE POWER PERCEPTIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I present an examination of some of the recent literature concerning differing male and female socializations, especially concerning women executives. The paper provides some implications and suggestions for changing some negative executive attitudes regarding female executive skills.

Many skills natural in normal female socialization are shown to be essential in effective management leadership at the highest levels in business, government, industry, and education.

INTRODUCTION

Herman Kahn, a noted futurist, was asked how long it would be before 25 percent of the chief executives of Fortune 500 companies were women. Kahn is said to have replied, "About two thousand years, but make it 10 percent and I'll say within twenty years" (cited by Robertson, 1978).

Unfortunately, it appears progress has not been more rapid than he predicted. The trends are, however, favorable. More women are now in executive positions that ever before and even more are to be expected. According to Forbes and Piercy in their article entitled "Rising to the Top: Executive Women in 1983 and Beyond," the number of women within management in general and within the upper echelon of the heirarchy in all sizes of industry and service firms is increasing" (Forbes & Piercy, 1983).

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, between 1972 and 1980, the number of female managers and executives at the administration level more than doubled (1,410,000 to 2,852,000) (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1980).

Heidrick and Stuggles, Inc., an executive research firm, reported that females at the officer rank in America's largest firms went up from 325 in 1977 to 497 in 1980, a 53-percent increase (Heidrick & Stuggles, Inc., 1980).

Wakefield found that as many as 2.3 percent of administrators were females, a doubling of numbers happening between 1978 and 1983 (Wakefield, 1983). Recognizing these trends punctuates the need for organizations to consider how best they can prepare to use fully the many talents that female executives represent now and will represent in the near future.

In this paper I intend (1) to examine some of the literature concerning differing male and female socializations and executive women in particular, and (2) to offer some modest suggestions as to general directions executive attitudes ought to move in order to encourage full participation of female talent in the modern corporate office.

THE LITERATURE

As generalizations go, it is easy to find writers perpetuating statements such as "The man is active, articulate, and usually successful in his work, but he is inactive, inarticulate, lethargic and withdrawn at home" (Monell, 1980). Women are pictured, traditionally, as the nurturers, the supporters, and the domestic diplomats--the ones who ensure that emotional needs are being met and that conflicts are kept to a minimum. One speaker at a Women's Week dinner, with apparent irony, presented a list of how to tell a businessman from a businesswoman:

He's aggressive	She's pushy
He's good at details	She's picky
He loses his temper--being involved in his job	She's bitchy
He's depressed	She's "moody" today, it must be her time of the month
He follows through	She doesn't know when to quit
He is a man of the world	She's been "around"
He isn't afraid to say what he thinks	She's mouthy
He exercises authority	She's bossy
He climbed the ladder	She "slept" her way or affirmative action did it for her
He's confident	She's conceited
He drinks because of work pressure	She's a lush
He's enthusiastic	She's emotional

(See Rosenkrantz et al., 1968.)

Women are pictured in a Catch-22. If they get an executive position, they are perceived by some as "tokens." Tokens may feel the pressure to be twice as good as their male counterparts in order to prove themselves. The pressure of constant scrutiny (or imagined scrutiny) creates fear of making mistakes. Women may be afraid of delegating duties under such perceived pressure. This would mean giving up control over any mistakes, and the potential for more blame is present.

Male children are without doubt nurtured differently from females. Self-confidence, independence, assertion, and risk-taking are behaviors nurtured in American male children. Females, allegedly, are prepared for their goals of "getting a husband." So it is small wonder that, given this programming, women might have some difficulty adapting to power in the office. Tersa Donati Marciano in her article "Socialization and Women at Work" published in National Forum wrote:

> . . . the center of gravity in the socialization of boys is the desire for self gratification, while that of girls is the desire to gratify others. This has consequences for every area of later life including areas regarded as "traditionally female." (Marciano, 1981)

She concludes:

> Given this differential socialization by sex and given career structures which already have been shaped by male-oriented values, women start disadvantaged. Their socialization in effect "handicaps" them in terms of competition, assertiveness, and "winning" (Marciano, 1981).

The term "handicap" should not indicate an ultimate value judgment simply because it suggests a relative contemporary disadvantage. Women's programming is, indeed, an ultimate plus, more greatly to be recognized in the future than in the past. Unfortunately, however, it is women who are seeking to incorporate "male" values. Again, Marciano writes:

> The reality of the male-structured workplace is that the values associated with female socialization must be put aside. Yet the paradox is that gentleness, and the deference of civility, and more "humanistic" values for which women's company (outside of work) is valued by men. At the same time, the very ability to anticipate the wishes, needs, and reactions of others ("role taking") is found to promote female subordination in work and in marriage. (Marciano, 1981)

Women, clearly, are placed in an awkward position of having very productive interpersonal skills as a natural part of their socialization, skills valued in interpersonal relations, and, yet, not valued in the professional setting. Little wonder women face added stress in the power/sex roles of the modern business office.

Men, too, are limited by their early training and programming. In short, the literature I have read has indicated that men were taught to (1) be achievers, leaders, creators; (2) play "king on the mountain"; (3) have power in their sex role; (4) be aggressive; (5) be the sexual initiator; (6) die sooner; (7) seek stressful situations; (8) seek satisfaction primarily in their career; (9) not be open and expressive of feelings; (10) not cry; (11) be less touching and less touched; (12) enjoy the "dual standard"; (15) "perform" sex; (16) use others like things; (17) be "protectors" of females; (18) seek females

who are devoted; (19) dominate conversations; (20) interrupt more; (21) show less interest in others; (22) be less nurturing of others; (23) tend to speak intellectually rather than personally; (24) speak for longer periods of time; (25) etc. Sex-role images relatively consistently portray males as independent, aggressive, task-oriented, stoic, objective, self-disciplined, analytical, unsentimental, authoritative, competitive, domineering, blunt, boastful, and prone to violent outbursts. Females are seen more often as dependent, passive, nonaggressive, noncompetitive, interpersonally oriented, empathetic, supportive, indecisive, subjective, sentimental, and emotional.

Inge Boverman and associates asked males and females to describe behaviors typical of each sex. A lenghty list of adjectives was obtained. The following are samples of stereotypes supported by both male and female respondents:

FEMALES	MALES
not at all aggressive	very aggressive
very dependent	very independent
very emotional	not at all emotional
very submissive	very dominant
not at all competitive	very competitive
very illogical	very logical
not at all ambitious	very ambitious
very strong need for security	very little need for security
easily expresses tender feelings	does not express tender feelings easily

(Boverman et al., 1970)

Boverman then asked a group of psychotherapists to identify qualities they associated with the "healthy" male and the "healthy" female. Their lists support the hypothesis that the more closely a person's behavior approximates the sex-appropriate stereotype, the more likely it is that the person will be perceived as an emotionally healthy individual. Additionally, therapists were asked to describe what they considered to be "adult-like" behavior. The adjectives were almost identical with a male in our society. According to this study, then, a healthy adult almost is synonymous with a male in our society. In other words, male is normal. And, if a male is normal, female is not. Stereotypically, women were not seen as "adult like" and, in fact, were described in terms of emotional instability. Linguistically, females are pictured as being more likely than males to use questions, as opposed to assertions, and to use more intensifying adjectives and adverbs than males. Females are found to use more words implying emotion and more references to self--self disclosure (Eakins, 1978).

Sandra Bem, among others, advances the concept of androgyny. In addition to masculine males and feminine females, she posits that there are feminine males, androgynous males, undifferentiated males, masculine females, androgynous females, and undifferentiated females. Her writings suggest that psychological sex (gender) is a better predictor of

behavior than anatomical sex. She finds that only androgynous subjects (those scoring high on both masculine and feminine traits) display a high level of "masculine" independence as well as a high level of "feminine" nurturance (Adler et al., 1980). The androgynous individual may well be less restricted in some behaviors and better able to adapt to situations that require characteristics presumed of one sex or the other. Ruth A. Brandwein added:

> It (androgyny) suggests that both women and men may express the full range of human attitudes and behaviors without being labeled masculine women or effeminate men. That is, women should be freed to be logical, assertive, and direct, and men should be freed to be sensitive, nurturant, and caring. Thus, the implication for macro practice is that both men and women should be taught to be facilitators and enablers as well as advocates and adversaries (Brandwein, 1980).

To the degree that this statement is true, then the antiquated sex-role stereotypes of the business world are in need of considerable rethinking, to say the least.

Nonverbally, sexual power struggles are communicated in the office. Men who operate an informal "good ole boys" club, even unintentionally, freeze many creative female executives out of the decision-making process. The stop at the bar where decisions are made--after dropping off the female member of the team--is a case in point. Being informed the next day how a situation will be handled is no consolation for the female executive. Being denied the handball club access to Mr. Big is another example of subtle sexual power abuses in the modern corporate office.

With abuse of sexual power, additional safeguards are needed. Many organizations have adopted sexual harassment policy statements. Included in the definition of "sexual harassment" are such actions as the following:

> Sex-oriented verbal "kidding" or abuse.
> Subtle pressure for sexual contact.
>
> Physical contact such as patting, pinching, or constant brushing against another's body.
>
> Expressed or insinuated requests or demands for sexual favors, accompanied by implied or overt promises of preferential treatment or threats concerning an individual's employment status.
>
> Verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.
>
> (Central Missouri State University, 1983)

Such unwelcome sexual advances, requests, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature do constitute sexual harassment when

(1) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education.

(2) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the individual.

(3) Such conduct has the purpose of effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or professional performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment.

(Central Missouri State University, 1983)

Such situations may be subject to informal and formal actions. Obviously, these situations are extreme, though not uncommon, and are indicative of sexual power plays in the office. Each organization should have an explicit policy regarding such activity and an educational program to clarify the policy or the organization for all employees. Legal ramifications are significant.

Some of the problems created by stereotypic responses to gender in the office setting are obvious. In most cases women are placed at a distinct disadvantage. Some difficulties may not be so obvious. At any rate, it is important for all of us to realize that the loser in all this is the organization and, indeed, national productivity as a whole. Time drained from any productive activity cannot be reclaimed. As Forbes and Piercy say, "It is clear that, at present, women have relatively little power at the top levels in the U.S. corporations" (Forbes & Piercy, 1983). This is tragic when one compares the review of literature presented by Baird and Bradley regarding valued management skills such as conflict management, persuasion, leadership, foresight, concern for organizational goals, warmth, helpfulness, affiliation, etc., all, on balance, acknowledged to be primarily female skills (Baird & Bradley, 1979).

Specifically, one of their conclusions should be considered seriously by all executives: ". . . female managers may be more effective supervisors than the male managers seen in this investigation" (Baird & Bradley, 1979). Unfortunately, as my former colleague Gay Wakefield concluded in her dissertation, ". . . it is possible that males overestimate their power and females underestimate theirs" (Wakefield, 1983). While it is unlikely that much will change rapidly, it is time for professionals of both sexes to recognize the sheer folly of perpetuation of counterproductive gender stereotypes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CHANGE

As one who has worked under the administration of men and women and directed the activities of both men and women in a professional setting, I call for change in how sexual power is used in business, industry, education, and government. It is time that the interpersonal values of female socialization be recognized for their inherent worth in

all sectors. Women must be rewarded for their humanizing values. No longer can management allow itself to hide behind a wall of ignorance regarding what is happening to productivity in organizations replete with sex/power struggles. Specific suggestions for remedies to problems of inappropriate power perceptions in organizations include:

(1) Training programs with the goal of consciousness raising (awareness) of the problems of power perceptions in the specific organizations.

(2) Employment analysis of firms' hiring, placement, and advancement policies focusing upon comparative worth data for each management and executive position. Recognition of the implications of time in rank, salary, span of control data, etc. may imply problems and solutions for the organization.

(3) Intentional mentoring programs by the organization and networking efforts by male and female manager/executive candidates.

(4) Having intermediate range divisional goals to increase the number of managerial/executive women integrated into the organization and periodic reviews of the target objectives.

(5) Skills training for all manager/executive career development personnel in the organization focusing upon skills shown to relate to effective human relations and conflict management.

Together, the genders can accomplish much in organizations. The gender mix in executive ranks is changing rapidly, and primary socializations of both sexes can and should complement each other. Male and female managers can learn from one another many communication, problem-solving, and perception skills which encourage the "gender partnership."

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

SEX AND "POWER COMMUNICATION" IN MIDDLE- AND TOP-LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the status of and need for research and educational programs regarding organizational communication, sex and power, particularly programs centering on executive men and women. The purpose of this study was to investigate some basic power and organizational communication factors among American male and female administrators in middle- and top-level management, focusing on perceptions of personal power and communication effectiveness in the organization and on some aspects of the "power communication" styles employed by the two sexes. Based upon the results of a nationwide survey conducted to gather data for this research, I offer recommendations deemed important to the development and application of "power communication" and gender theory (communication theorists in this field of study define "gender" as membership in the masculine or feminine class, as does Kellerman, 1977).

INTRODUCTION

The United States' social upheavals of the 1960s and inflationary trends of the 1970s have affected the 1980s in virtually every phase of American society, generating profound changes in this country's organizational institutions. In light of these changes, social, political, educational, and professional attitudes have undergone a great deal of review over the past two decades. Consequently, such concepts as affirmative action and equal opportunity employment for women have become criteria by which the nation's organizations are being judged and reorganized (Burrow, 1980; Pilotta, 1983; Fitzpatrick, 1983; Vaden & Lynn, 1979; Kay, 1983; Siegerdt, 1982). As aptly stated by Pilotta (1983, p. 1):

> The effects of the women's movement, affirmative action programs, equal employment opportunities, and a general change in societal expectations of women and men have led to women being recognized as having a central place in organizational development. Organizations and women have started out on new ventures, without a clearly defined idea of what to expect.

This sentiment has been echoed in dozens of studies dealing with gender communication. It has become clear from the existing literature that neither women nor men have been truly prepared for the organizational climate and communication changes which have emerged--particularly at the administrative levels--as the gender mix has shifted in American companies.

Some forward-thinking college and university communication faculties have addressed this concern in their degree programs. Many others seem to focus on the more general study of male/female communication patterns, and still others have foregone gender studies altogether. Social organization trends suggest that this neglect could continue to produce students of both genders who are not prepared fully for the communication interaction patterns encouraged by the new gender mix and power situations they are likely to face when placed in executive positions (Wakefield & Behnke, 1984).

Existing research reports that the two genders have different communication patterns, creating significant obstacles such as bypassing and other basic miscommunication patterns for male and female administrators striving to work effectively together (Baird & Bradley, 1979; Cox, 1976; Crandall, 1975; Terborg & Ilgen, 1975). There has been clear warning that communication differences between the sexes must be researched and understood in relationship to professional situations before the science of organizational communication can effectiely integrate the two genders (Fitzpatrick, 1983; Pilotta, 1983; Siegerdt, 1979 and 1982). It seems likely that this fact will tend increasingly to cause communication concerns as the proportion of women in positions of executive power continues to grow.

Over the past two decades the number of American working women has risen to 50 percent of the country's workforce (Burrow, 1980; Fitzpatrick, 1983; Vaden & Lynn, 1979), and the number of women in middle- and top-level administrative positions has more than doubled in the last five years (Wakefield, 1983). If the emergence of women in executive roles of power continues to grow at this pace, an executive balance reflective of the total numbers of men and women in the U.S. workplace could be reached around the year 2000, establishing an organizational setting necessitating a full "administrative partnership" of equality and cooperation between male and female executives--rather than detente and conflict--if organizational morale, loyalty, and productivity are to be maximized (Wakefield & Behnke, 1984; Fisher, 1980; Knapp, 1984).

The tendencies for training current and future administrators thus far have been to use androgynous approaches combining characteristics socially attributed to men or women, or separate-but-equal approaches assuming little similarity between the two genders (or no approach at all) leading to the types of organizational and/or gender communication programs prevalent today (Siegerdt, 1982; Vaden & Lynn, 1979; Denhardt & Perkins, 1976; Dubin, 1978; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Rubenstein, 1980). Such approaches often create aspiring females who do not communicate effectively with administrative men, and aspiring males who do not communicate effectively with administrative women. Hence, an atmosphere of competition and conflict rather than cooperation tends to result, along with power plays and lowered productivity and morale levels (Knapp, 1984; Fisher, 1980).

Research since the 1930s has indicated that the organization's everyday life must be understood in terms of informal groupings, beliefs, and norms which necessitate the modification of communication rules to suit different situations (Fitzpatrick, 1983; Blau & Scott, 1962; Thompson, 1967; Licata & Hack, 1980). Therefore, the new gender mix and administrative partnership in middle- and top-level management mean that organizational communication and power theories need to be modified to accomodate the new societal situations organizations are encountering. The overall importance of organizational communication and power studies is capsulized by the Fitzpatrick statement that "influencing people and events is more important in organizations than is understanding them. Indeed, in organizational life, understanding others is only a means to an end. The end is influence" (Fitzpatrick, 1983, p. 84).

There have been gender communication studies dealing with organizational settings, but few have been concerned with administrative positions and the communication of power found therein. Studies which have addressed this particular area have tended to focus upon lower-management positions and have reported findings regarding such communication concerns as stereotyping, sexual discrimination and harrassment, decision-making, language patterns, mentoring, and communication channels (Baird & Bradley, 1979; Burrow, 1980; Pilotta, 1983; Cook, 1979; Radecki & Jennings,1980). However, they have tended also to be very limited in nature and/or lacking the demographic breakdowns needed for thorough analysis of gender power differences applicable to the higher executive levels. This lack of research devoted to executive gender concerns and their implications for organizational communication and power theory has probably contributed to the misconceptions and misinformation of those in positions to make administrative appointments and to determine training programs for appointees (Siegerdt, 1979; Fitzpatrick, 1983; Barnier, 1982).

A profusion of popular books and articles alleging to address and/or resolve these concerns has stepped into the void, usually presenting the authors' ideas and/or management experiences as facts and rules to which administrators should adhere. These sources rarely include research to support their assertions. Instead, the authors often present themselves as "authorities" simply because they have held executive positions. Such authors are overstepping their legitimate bounds when they assert, without first establishing the data base necessary to support such assertions, that their personal experiences and opinions are universally applicable. Fitzpatrick called such "pop" sources "how tos," with sets of easy communication rules which assume--without supporting data--the same basic conditions for all individuals (regardless of gender, race, age, etc.) and would "best be considered as communication science fiction rather than communication science" (Fitzpatrick, 1983, p. 73).

Though communication authorities seem to agree it is likely that the established theories of administrative power and organizational communication are outdated for the new situations created by

the changing gender ratio, there is currently little more than pilot-type research upon which to build new theories and approaches. Though an abundance of literature concerned with the importance of organizational power exists, studies of effective organizational communication styles would fill a void of in-depth research focused on comparisons and relationships between the two variables--"power communication" (meaning patterns of communication which result in the establishment of dominance status through authority and/or power influence relationships). Particularly, there is a need for power communication investigations related to executive gender differneces and similarities.

Rather than continuing to draw broad conclusions and design administrative communication theory from localized power and communication pilot studies employing small samples, non-administrative subjects, one gender only, and limited demographics, current power-communication data based upon more extensive, representative, nationwide research of men and women holding administrative positions in various types of organizations are required. Communication professors and consultants cannot ethically continue to conduct academic and training programs in this area without the current generalizable data base needed in order to create legitimate theory for such programs.

One specific need is for research studies identifying the characteristic power communication styles of male and female administrators. Some of the information which should prove beneficial might include potential differences and similarities between male and female executives--particularly in middle- and top-level management--in such career related areas as verbal and nonverbal power communication patterns, perceptions of power, mentoring/sponsoring experiences, and communication channels.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to investigate some basic power communication factors among American male and female executives in middle- and top-level management. Variables of primary interest were perceptions of personal power and communication effectiveness within the organization, and some power-communication techniques employed by the two genders to establish images of authority and/or influence in professional settings.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions were applied for the purpose of the study undertaken and the reporting of research findings:

The administrative partnership is an ideal relationship of equality between male and female executives--supportive of one another's roles and abilities, cooperative, noncompetitive based on gender (Wakefield & Behnke, 1984).

Authority is the right (potential or exercised) to cause directly another to behave in such a way that one gains dominance--legitimately gained, formal, structured in exercise, subject to normative constraints, existent within the role or office--a basic element of power (Starr, 1980).

Influence is the ability (potential or exercised) to indirectly cause another to behave in such a way that one gains dominance--informal, unstructured, based on personal characteristics, existent within the person-to-person relationship--an aspect of power (Starr, 1980).

Power is the "symbolical and generalizable capacity to condition, regulate, and motivate certain choices on the part of others," and reflects relationships of authority and influence and resulting dominance patterns used or exercised only through communication or action (Pilotta, 1983, p. 6; Starr, 1980).

METHOD

Top- and middle-management executives living in the United States were sampled for this study. The list of executives was developed by Ed Burnett Consultants, Inc., of New York City, a company with 25 years of direct mail experience in stratified and randomized list compilation. Burnett's nationwide lists, updated regularly, are composed from telephone directories, trade directories, organization rosters, and special listings, resulting in one of the most complete mailing list sources available in this country.

Middle- and top-level executives whose home addresses were known by Burnett (n=approximately 65,000) were included in the sampling procedure, with a final total of 500 individuals chosen at random. Data were collected from this group by mailed questionnaire. There were 210 responses, 72 surveys returned by the United States Postal Service as undeliverable, and 113 executives reported to be retired, deceased, or otherwise ineligible. The resulting return rate, accounting for those subjects designated as ineligible or unreachable, was 70 percent.

The survey instrument was developed from relevant literature, similar studies, and existing instruments, validated by a panel of experts (Dr. Larry L. Barker, Auburn University; Dr. Michele T. Myers, Trinity University; Dr. Judy C. Pearson, The Ohio State University; Dr. Gail A. Siegerdt, University of Houston), and tested for reliability (external reliability stability coefficient=.993, $p < .005$; internal reliability coefficient alpha=.893, $p < .005$). Starr's study of the communication of administrative authority, influence, and powerlessness via specific verbal and nonverbal communications with others formed the basis for the power communication items on the instrument.

Analysis of variance procedures were applied for interpretation of questionnaire data. Significant differences between male and female administrators ($p < .0001$) were found for perception of personal power in the organization and for the power communication aspect of terminology used to refer to subordinates ($p < .01$). No significant differences were revealed between male and female administrators' perceptions of personal communication effectiveness in the organization, or for the power communication aspects of office decor, method of setting office behavior codes, approach to business agreements, preferred operating style, preferred communication approach, communication with business contacts, seated kinesic communication style, preferred eye communication style, and normal attire for work.

CONCLUSIONS

This nationwide study reveals that both male and female executives in middle- and top-level administrative positions feel they are "usually effective" in their organizational communication styles. However, perceptions of personal power within the organization differ significantly between the gender groups, with the women reporting low-to-moderate power and the men reporting moderate-to-high power.

Since perception of personal power within the organization has been closely related to perception of personal communication effectiveness within the organization ($r = .1746$; $p = .005$) (Wakefield, 1983, pp. 82-83), the findings of this study suggest support for previous research indicating that male administrators tend to overestimate their own worth to the organization whereas female administrators tend to underestimate theirs (Deaux, 1983; "Management . . .," 1979). Another logical explanation for the discrepency is the fact that women tend to be younger, hold lower administrative positions, and have less tenure than do men (Wakefield, 1983).

Though the men perceive themselves to have more power than the women perceive themselves to have, male and female administrators do not report use of differing "power communication" styles regarding the established power indicators employed in this study. This finding contradicts previous research results of significant differences in the communication styles of men and women in business, which have frequently been assumed also to be differences between men and women in administration. There are several possible explanations: (1) societal changes over the past few years may have spurred adapted power communication styles for the two genders; (2) previous research tended to focus on nonadministrative women and lower-level female managers, often comparing them to middle- and top-level male managers; (3) earlier studies tended to employ small localized populations which could not be considered representative of American executives as a whole; (4) larger studies often failed to provide the demographic data necessary to discern whether participants were in administrative or line positions, so <u>all</u> men and women in organizations were compared on an equal basis, regardless of position held.

Administrative women and men indicate a strong preference for a power-communication style employing personal influence with occasional touches of authority (with determination of authority, influence, and powerlessness in item responses based upon Starr's 1980 study, from which the items were directly designed). The only significant difference in their styles concerns terminology used when referring to their subordinates. Female administrators prefer (in order of preference) the terms "the crew" and "my team" (blend of powerlessness and influence) and male administrators clearly prefer the term "my team" (influence).

Both genders report decorating their offices with items of personal significance and a few awards and certificates (blend of authority and influence), setting office codes of behavior by use of a printed employee's manual and by personal example (blend of authority and influence), preferring to work on the basis of a handshake in business agreements (influence), operating in an informal and personalized style using person-to-person communication with co-workers and business contacts (influence), employing a seated kinesic communication style of leaning forward in business discussions (influence), establishing direct eye contact with others (influence), and wearing fashionable attire which is suited to the work situation--usually solid-colored, dark, conservative clothing (blend of authority and influence).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that male and female administrators perceive differing level of organizational power, but employ very similar power communication styles, and report no significant difference in perceptions of personal communication effectiveness in the organizational settings. Reported differences in power need further attention and analysis to determine whether they are real or imagined. Reasons need to be identified if the organizational power differences are real, and perceptions need to be corrected if they are imagined.

The administrative partnership approach is supported since the gender groups in this study revealed very similar power communication styles, providing a strong starting point for encouraging cooperation (rather than competitive) attitudes between men and women in administration. Since there is no perceptible difference in educational backgrounds for male and female executives in this country, the two differences which did surface between gender groups in this investigation may be due to varying socialization patterns for which compensation has not been made in the formal educational process. This would lend credence to the Wakefield and Behnke (1984) recommendation for specialized training "incorporating such elements as . . . a-discussion and analysis of relevant gender studies, (b) joint communication training of male and female administrators, (c) experiential exercises such as role playing and role reversal, (d) consciousness-raising regarding the need for attitudes conducive to the administrative partnership.

Periodic follow-up studies similar to this one would be helpful. Similarities and differences may continue to shift as the gender mix continues to normalize, and as women and men gain more experience working with one another in administrative functions. Naturally, related organizational communication thoery will need to be adapted according to whatever changes may develop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations, based upon the results of this study, are offered as important to the further development of organizational communication theory:

1. Encouragement of attitudes conducive to the "administrative partnership," with emphasis on shared gender traits such as nonverbal power communication style (rather than emphasis on points of departure which encourage conflict).

2. Joint education of the genders provided for current and aspiring administrators through training and academic programs incorporating power communication data.

3. Discouragement of focuses on ungeneralizable data in academic and training programs, using such information only with inclusion of proper disclaimers and thorough explanations of the limitations of such studies.

4. Further research concerned with administrative gender similarities and differences, focusing on techniques for helping executive men and women work effectively together. Such efforts are essential to ethical training and instructional practices regarding organizational gender communication theory.

5. Future study of possible reasons for perceived power differences between the two genders, especially in relationship to the fact that there are no perceived differences in nonverbal power-communication styles or organizational communication effectiveness revealed in this study.

6. Further development of power-communication theory based on extensive, generalizable research studies.

7. Consideration of more power-communication variables in future administrative gender research, particularly in view of this study's showing significant difference only for the power-communication item related to verbal communication. Since verbal communication is a highly trainable skill area, such research could supply a strong basis for academic and organizational training programs concerning verbal skills.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

MANAGE YOUR WORDS

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ABSTRACT

Words, like any other information resource, must be managed in order to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. When we speak of managing communication, we are talking about planning, organizing, leading, and controlling as they apply to managing words.

INTRODUCTION

Words, like any other information resource, must be managed in order to contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. The functional approach to management is often only accidentally and peripherally applied to management of an organization's communications. Applications of the fundamental principles of management is basic to using the organizational communication network effectively and efficiently.

The functional approach to management identifies four primary managerial functions which differentiate managers from nonmanagers. Managers plan, organize, lead, and control. So, when we speak of managing communication, we are talking about planning, organizing, leading, and controlling as they apply to managing words. Figure 1 illustrates these relationships.

PLANNING

Planning answers the questions "What do I want to accomplish?" and "How can it best be accomplished?" Planning aids in providing direction for the message, increases the chances that the purpose of the message will be accomplished, and makes the communication, whether written or oral, easier. Let's look at each of the planning questions and apply each to a situation. "What do I want to accomplish?" I want to communicate to the vice president that I have an idea that will increase sales, and I want her to know that the idea is mine. I also want to get a reaction from her. That's the WHAT. How shall I communicate this idea? Shall I do it by memo, by letter, by telephone, by making an appointment and through

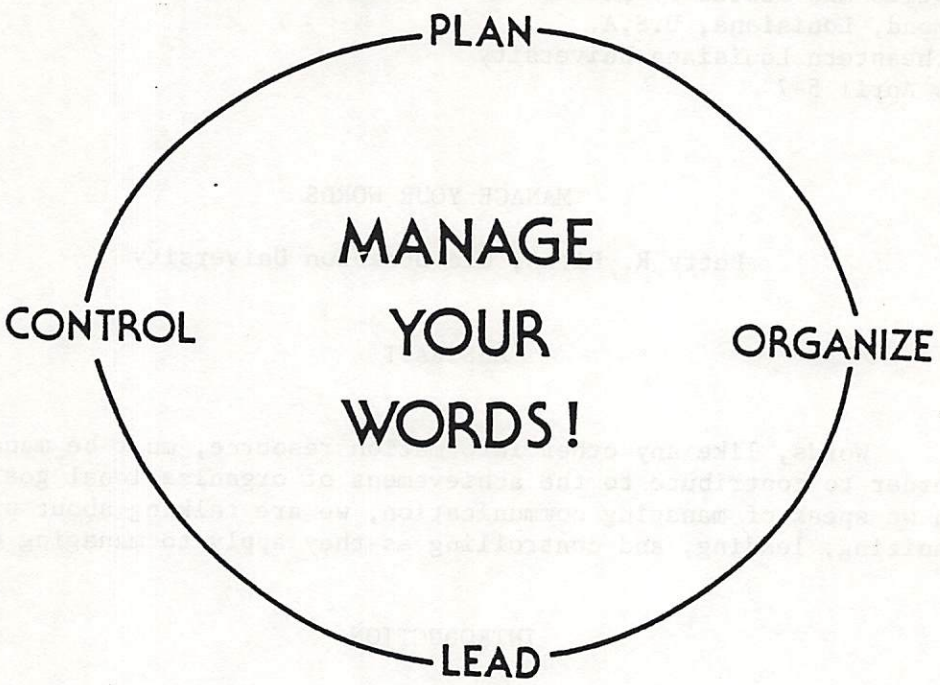

Figure 1. Managing Your Words

face-to-face conversation? How is the best method for communicating the information so that my objectives will most likely be achieved?

Or, I want to communicate to the people who work for me that I am not pleased about the latest productivity report, and I want to ask them for their input in identifying the reason for the productivity lag. That's the WHAT. HOW can I communicate this information to the workers and achieve the second part of the WHAT--to get their input? Shall I write a memo, call a meeting of all workers, identify certain leaders within the group and talk with them individually? HOW can I communicate the message and achieve results?

In a previous position I held, I asked our secretary via a scribbled note to mail certificates of completion to students who had just finished a six-week course. I wanted these certificates to reach the students in a condition suitable for framing. My note said, "Melody, fold these certificates as little as possible." She did. She folded them so they fit nicely into an envelope--one of the small personal-size envelopes. Of course, what I meant was, please don't fold these more than absolutely necessary, but what Melody read was to make these as little as possible. Obviously I should have chosen another vehicle for transmitting my message. Had I chosen face-to-face communication, I could have gotten feedback and verification that Melody understood my intent regarding the certificates.

It is important that as a part of the planning function we give consideration to WHAT and HOW and that we not assume that we are just "doing what comes naturally."

ORGANIZING

Once we have identified the WHAT and HOW, we need to put these plans into action. That's what the organizing function does--it puts plans into action. How often have we sat down, grabbed a pen and a legal pad, and started to write without a clear idea of what we want to write? How many times do we pick up the telephone and begin the conversation without a clear idea of what we are going to say in order to accomplish our objectives in making the telephone call? Perhaps that kind of organizing is acceptable for routine, easy messages, but it is not a good approach for nonroutine or complicated messages. Routine messages should be composed quickly, relying on good writing/speaking skills to produce effective messages the first time. Nonroutine messages are the ones which you don't feel completely comfortable with and expect to spend some time on, and which are too important or too difficult to compose in five minutes on a first draft. No one should expect to write nonroutine messages both <u>quickly</u> and effectively. The question is how to spend the extra time on a message most effectively.

The first thing you must do before you can prepare to communicate any message is your homework. If there has been previous correspondence or previous conversation, find out what the correspondence or the conversation conveyed. Annotate, make notes, or outline your response, depending on the complexity of the message.

Decide the way in which you will transmit your written message. Will you dictate the letter? To a secretary? To a machine? Write it on a legal pad? Dictate to a word-processing center? Send the message electronically? What is the most efficient way to transmit the written message?

LEADING

A manager performs the leading function. This function is one in which the manager creates an environment that encourages people to act in a desired way to achieve the goals of the organization. When we manage our words, we need to speak or write in a way that will get the people to respond in the way we want them to respond.

In order to accomplish this goal, we should be aware of factors in the environment that affect the way in which someone responds. Reception is affected by our timing, by being alert to the emotional state of the receiver, by using images that

invoke a positive response, and by being clear about what we wish to communicate so that the receiver is clear about our message intent.

Poor timing often results in an unfavorable reaction. If we pick a time that is inappropriate to make a request, we may get what we consider to be an inappropriate response. For example, my department chairman is working on the teaching schedule for next fall that is due in half an hour, has just finished the first draft, and is in the middle of trying to coordinate available rooms, faculty, and required courses. I choose this time to discuss changing the text for a course I teach. I knock, stick my head in the door. What do you think his response will be? How was my timing? I somehow doubt that his response is going to be positive.

We should be alert to the emotional state of the receiver. If, a half hour ago, you had a major disagreement with your secretary, and now you need a rush top priority report completed even if it means working late, do you think she's going to be in responsive emotional state? The way you approach this request is going to determine her response.

Images that invoke positive responses should be used. The picture we paint with the words we choose will affect the response we receive. Try to avoid negatively charged words and expressions where possible. Expressions like gives directions or provides instructions are perceived differently from ones like issues orders--one more positive and one more negative image, but the intent is the same. Depersonalize by saying "the problem" rather than "your problem" or by saying "a difficulty" instead of "the difficulty you are having." This behavior tends to make the message less personal and less emotionally charged. The response you receive then tends to be less defensive.

We also need to be sure that we are clear about what we wish to communicate and that the recipient is clear about what we have communicated. There is a saying, "I know you believe you understand what you think I have said but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant." The example I used earlier about asking my secretary to fold the certificates "as little as possible" illustrates what can result from lack of clarity.

Employee productivity can be improved by having open lines of communication that remove roadblocks causing frustration and causing inefficiency. Open communication techniques used in an atmosphere in which employees interact with superiors and subordinates are conducive to improved performance. When workers do not understand how to perform a task and yet feel free to ask for assistance, their performance improves.

CONTROLLING

And, finally, a manager performs the controlling function. Controlling is comparing what was planned with what actually occurred and taking corrective action when necessary. The information on which we base our actions is provided by feedback. Without feedback we have no way of knowing with any kind of certainty that our message was received and correctly interpreted. On the basis of feedback we receive, we take the appropriate action. If the feedback reinforces our illusion that the message was received and understood, no additional action is necessary. If the feedback does not reinforce, then we may need to provide the receiver with additional message reinforcement.

CONCLUSION

I believe that in our daily routine of communicating with others, we do try to approach the task in an efficient manner. However, I am not sure that we consciously complete the tasks through the functional approach to management by managing our words in the same conscious, deliberate, and purposeful way that the functional approach suggests. Do we <u>really</u> start the communication process by mentally identifying what it is we wish to accomplish, or do we just start? Do we consciously think about the alternative ways of transmitting messages, or do we just grab a pen and start to write without considering that a telephone call might be a more effective way? If we follow the functional approach to managing words, then we <u>plan</u> the WHAT and HOW.

After identifying what we want to accomplish and ascertaining the best way, do we have a clear idea of how to put those plans into action? Using the functional approach, we do, as we organize our plans and put them into action.

Do we create an environment, through use of words, to get people to take desired action in order to accomplish an objective? If we use the functional approach, we do, as we are aware of factors in the environment that affect the way in which people respond.

And finally, do we use feedback to compare what was planned with what actually occurred and to give us a basis for corrective action? If we use the functional approach, we do. Let's try it. Let's try to apply the plan, organize, lead, and control functions to managing our words. Perhaps the recipients of the message won't be yelling "WHERE'S THE MESSAGE?"

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATION TO PRODUCTIVITY: QUALITY CIRCLES AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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ABSTRACT

Communication is prevalent in business. But is effective communication related to productivity? This question is investigated with a popular productivity improvement strategy, quality circles, as a mediating variable. Quality circles are essentially small group communication. Evidence indicates a relationship between effective small group communication and productivity.

INTRODUCTION

Extensive information is available which indicates that communication is a prevalent activity in business, that business people find effective communication skills important for career advancement, and that managerial communication is related to job satisfaction. However, the relationships between effective communication and organizational productivity have received limited attention. The purpose of this paper is to indicate how effective communication results in improved productivity when quality circles are a mediating variable.

QUALITY CIRCLES: A PRODUCTIVITY IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY

Quality circles, small groups of employees working voluntarily toward performance improvement efforts, have become a popular business strategy within the last decade. When effective, the quality circle may be linked directly to the increased productivity of the work group. Thompson, in his descriptive and prescriptive book Quality Circles, analyzes the structure and the process of this strategy. The structure is the group's composition which is circle members--peers within the work setting--and their leader, usually their work supervisor. Structural aspects of the circle also include an advisor (Thompson, 1982).

The quality-circle process may be divided into four components: identification and study of the problems, presentation of solutions to management, implementation of the solution, and evaluation of the

solution as implemented (Thompson, 1982). Ideally, the structure and the processes of the quality circle complement each other to increase productivity. As Thompson writes: "Once installed, quality circles produce dramatic results for an organization. They improve morale, increase a sense of loyalty to the organization, and foster a sense of teamwork among employees who participate. They improve productivity of the organization" (Thompson, 1982, p. 11). Case studies citing benefits of quality circles are numerous. One case reported by officials of Toyota Auto Body cite these results: decline in defect rates from .95 defects per car completed in 1968 to .60 defects per car completed in 1973; reduction in man-hours per car from ten in 1968 to eight in 1973 (Thompson, 1982, p. 20). These typical qualitative and quantitative increases help demonstrate the potential that quality circles have to raise the group norm for productivity--a potential uncovered by Mayo more than 50 years ago in his famous studies conducted at the Hawthorne works (Etzioni, 1964). The Hawthorne Studies revealed the salience of the informal work group as a source of worker motivation. Specifically, these informal groups established production standards and enforced their norms through pressure for uniformity (Bradley and Baird, 1983). In addition, quality circles provide the opportunity for employee participation in task decisions. Lewin's classic research ascertained that workers were more productive (considering both quantity and quality), more independent (in terms of carrying out the job in the absence of supervision), and more satisfied with their work activities (Lewin, Lippitt and White, 1939). When the structure and processes of a quality circle increase worker participation in decision making, the quality circle is operating effectively; thus, the effective quality circle has the potential to increase the group norm for productivity both quantitatively and qualitatively. In other words, quality circles operate on a sound theoretical and empirical basis.

QUALITY CIRCLES ARE RELATED TO SMALL GROUP COMMUNICATION

The factor which needs to be isolated, then, is that which causes the quality circle to promote effectiveness or to increase productivity. Quality circles may be viewed as the managerial application of small group communication research. Smeltzer identifies seven key organizational elements which differentiate between those organizations ready to move with quality circles and those which require that remedial steps be taken first (Smeltzer, 1983). Whereas many of the elements relate to the communication climate initiated by management, one in particular focuses on communication clarity in information processing. He states that quality circles create a unique situation in that messages are originated at lower levels of an organization and sent upward. Quality circle proposals sent upward must receive timely responses from top management so the upper level must be ready to respond (Smeltzer, 1983). Thus, two-way communication variables such as management's timely feedback or accurate responsiveness to the quality circles message are seen to be imperative

in the readiness of an organization to instigate the quality-circle system.

However, the process of communication within the group itself may determine the effectiveness of the two-way communication between management and the circle as well as to the organization as a whole. In linear terms, the "message" originates within the small group of quality-circle members. The product of small group discussion, a possible solution to an organizational problem is the result of the information processing and human interaction of the individual members who make up the quality circle. Therefore, communication is crucial within the circle as it prepares for upward communication.

For purposes of this discussion, then, the unit of analysis is the small group. This unit is justified by the definition, structure, and process of a quality circle. The dynamics of quality circles are analyzed in terms of small group communication and research to illustrate the components of group effectiveness for quality circles.

Mabry defines a small group as "a network of people who have intentionally invested part of their personal decision-making power in the authority of a larger social unit . . . in pursuit of mutually desired but separately unobtainable goals" (Mabry and Barnes, 1980, p. 6). The quality circle is a small group of decision-makers operating within larger organizational structures. Moreover, effective quality circles depend on several communication variables. Gouran explains, "Successful group functioning is dependent not only on procedural varibles but on a host of other contextual, personal, and interpersonal factors as well" (Gouran, 1974, p. 6). Communication factors such as group interaction skills and information processing capabilities determine the successful dynamics of the quality circle--whose productivity is based on the continuous exchange of human behaviors.

QUALITY CIRCLE EFFECTIVENESS IS DETERMINED BY COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS

Small group communication research indicates that "group productivity rests on (1) goal specification, (2) coworker resources, and (3) task demands" (Mabry and Barnes, 1980, p. 223). If the quality circle is to be productive, attention should be given to the process of group interaction, the crucial elements of which are communication behaviors. For the quality circle, the critical component of goal specification occurs early in the identification and study of problems. In this stage, research indicates that participation of each member is important in formulating goals. As group members communicate with each other about group and individual goals, they become psychologically committed to those goals. This commitment, in general, can be translated into production and satisfaction (Mabry and Barnes, 1980). However, for goal specification or for any other potential input, group membership may not guarantee participation. Communication variables affecting participation include the following:

> the type of leadership style used, spatial or other environmental factors, a person's place in an existing group network, how likeable or attractive others perceive an individual to be, the person's known status in other groups (that is pertinent or relevant to members in that particular groups) . . . , and so on. (Mabry and Barnes, 1980, p. 235)

In Bjork's study of a cooperative research project in a Swedish industry, results showed that workers were reticent to participate fully during various stages of work reorganization planning for fear of losing income, misunderstanding the consequences of human aspects related to group work, and not being motivated to maintain psychological involvement necessary for the experiment (Bjork, 1975). The quality circle is, in effect, a group which plans and reorganizes work--and "participation reticence" could occur in group members for many of the same reasons as Bjork discovered. The advantages reaped from participatory decision making are unlikely to surface if circle members are unskilled in information processing and human interaction, or are not confident of the purpose and motives of the group. Goal specification should stimulate participation, promote an open communication climate, and provide clarity for the small group's function.

Group and communication variables come into play particularly in analyzing co-worker resources. One powerful co-worker resource is associated with communication effectiveness skill. Attending to both the content and the process of the group interaction, a circle member works most productively with a "participant-observer-orientation." Effective participation as a group member depends on the ability to be involved simultaneously in participatory task responsibilities and engage in observation and analysis of the behavioral elements in a group's communication system (Mabry and Barnes, 1980). As an observer, the quality-circle member should process socio-emotional feedback information both verbally and nonverbally about the group function. A member's sensitivity to feedback can reveal the division of power and status within the group; moreover, it reveals a sense of group identity which may also reveal levels of cohesiveness in the group. A conceptual understanding of group cohesiveness is significant for the circle member who relates the group's identity to productive goals and tasks. If a coworker in a quality circle is talented, motivated and skilled in group communication, he or she can exert a positive modeling influence which raises the group norm for productivity.

In addition to the communication variables associated with goal specification and co-worker resources are those variables related to task demands. According to Steiner's research on small group problem-solving, solutions to a particular problem identified by the quality circle can be viewed as disjunctive, confunctive, additive, or discretionary (Steiner, 1972). These terms refer to the multiplicity of possible solutions to a problem and are also related directly to coworker resources. A disjunctive, or one-right-answer task, is dependent on the quality circle's most capable participant. When a task is disjunctive a group's potential productivity is determined by

the resources of its most competent member. Communication problems which may prevent the optimum or maximum input of the most competent quality-circle member include implications for both sender and receiver: the member's failure to express the correct answer, the member's failure to persuade acceptance of the correct answer, and the group's failure to accept the expressed contribution of the most competent member.

Conjunctive tasks also depend on one group member--the one who is least competent. Since conjunctive tasks are those defined by each participant's fulfilling an individual effort for group productivity, as in an assembly-line division of tasks, the member who does not understand the task or is not motivated will "pull down" the efforts of the whole group. Similar to the disjunctive task, the success or failure of the quality circle to meet its objectives for the conjunctive task is dependent on the processing of information.

In either disjunctive or conjunctive tasks, a group may fail to reach its potential productivity because of inadequate processing of information. Communication skills must be adequate to process the information. Members must be able to listen objectively to all contributions on their own merit without influence from group pressures. They must be sensitive to the verbal contributions of all, regardless of the skill with which they are contributed. They must be able to resist the temptation to reject ideas contributed by low status members without giving them a full hearing, and able to individually present ideas as convincingly and effectively as possible so that their ideas may receive a fair hearing.

Skillful processing of information is particularly important to the additive task, "a group norm that encourages equal contribution" (Mabry and Barnes, 1980). Since one member's input is directly tied to another's, group maintenance functions increase as coordination of input increases. The potential for conflict in the additive type of quality circle task is high unless a great deal of group energy is expended on socio-emotional variables. Lacking effective communication skills in listening or in creating a supportive climate, group members' task achievement, or productivity, is diminished to the extent that group maintenance functions decline.

Steiner defines the small group's discretionary task as one in which participants may select their most resourceful person to ascertain the answer to a problem, or they may choose any other combination of members they deem appropriate (Steiner, 1972). In other words, the discretionary task completion by the quality-circle members complete freedom in the way they process information. For effective discretionary task completion by the quality-circle, participants should be well aware of communication barriers in information processing which become "noise" during feedback. One person's solution or a sub-group decision may not have the emotional or intellectual backing of the whole circle even though the circle authorized the legitimate decision-making power initially. Again, the need for group energy toward socio-emotional factors

is evident, and a participant-observer-orientation toward interaction skills would increase the potential for success.

Goal specification, coworker resources, and task demands all are derived from group synergy, the total energy input of the members. However, without skilled communicators as quality-circle members, much of the total energy of the group may be misallocated, drained by ineffective information processing, the hostilities of unresolved conflict, and reticent participation. Because of interpersonal communication demands, energy must be expended to overcome barriers in group interaction. The extent to which members are skilled in small group communication processes enhances the extent to which they will expend energy efficiently for group maintenance. Hence, effective synergy is the group energy remaining after group maintenance synergy is subtracted (Mabry and Barnes, 1980).

CONCLUSION

As Mabry elaborates, "The rigid nature of occupational roles that groups and individuals occupy is the greatest constraint to productivity" (Mabry and Barnes, 1980, p. 92). Quality circles provide business and industry a means of breaking out of its rigidity through a flexible structure and process. However, by increasing the possibility of employee participation in information input and decision making, management does not necessarily increase productivity--even with an open upward channel between the circle members and their supervisors. The vital link between the effectiveness of the quality circle and increased productivity is communication skill within the small group itself, the origin of the new information inputs. Thompson explains that "these inputs are usually relevant information, new proposals, or demands or requests that reflect the interests of the subgroup" (Thompson, 1982, p. 179). The quality and the quantity of these inputs are determined by the circle members' capacity for efficient, effective group interaction. "Productivity relies upon the ways information is processed at all levels in the organization: individual, group, multi-group unit, and in the organization as a whole" (Weick, 1979, p. 88). Thus, the productivity of the quality circle as it originates messages within the organization is determined largely by communication variables.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

IMPROVING MEETING PRODUCTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Modern technology is affecting the way we meet to conduct business. Communication is replacing transportation. However, there is still a great need to pay attention to good meeting practices. Meetings are used best when they secure commitment or when information is exchanged interactively. They should be kept small and short, and involve only those who can contribute effectively.

INTRODUCTION

In their recent book entitled Corporate Cultures, Terrence E. Deal and Allan A. Kennedy (1982) characterize meetings as organizational rituals, performed in the hope that desired effects will be brought about. These rituals are performed largely because managers are unsure about how to perform their duties and have meetings hoping that something positive will happen.

They relate one story in which a colleague of theirs, Tom Peters, one of the authors of In Search of Excellence (Peters & Waterman, 1982), was consulting with a high-tech firm interested in reducing overhead costs. His initial recommendation was to reduce the number of meetings that the firm held. The senior vice president balked at this recommendation, stating that Peters did not understand the culture of the organization. He invited Peters actually to live with him for a week to understand why the organization behaved the way it did. Peters moved in with the executive's family and shadowed him for a week at home and at work.

Peters found that 97 percent of all working hours were spent in meetings which were attended by an average of 35 people drawn from three or four different staff levels. The ostensible purpose of these meetings was to make decisions, but few decisions were actually made because of time pressures and a failure adequately to outline alternatives. The meetings were composed of lengthy and complex slide presentations full of facts and figures. Peters concluded that the meeting ritual, although reflecting the culture of the organization adequately, failed in that it prevented the organization from accomplishing its goals and only added to company overhead.

This case points to a number of problems with the modern business meeting. This paper will examine the meeting in today's organizational setting and point out ways in which it might be improved. The problems associated with group meetings will be discussed in terms of purpose, size, composition, interaction, length, and decision-making aids.

PURPOSE

The first problem encountered by Peters had to do with the purpose of the meeting. In the organization described, the meeting served primarily a ritualistic purpose, although the stated purpose was to make decisions. There was, in effect, mainly one-way communication with flashy, highly-prepared presentations. These presentations are probably useful, but should be the result of decision-making meetings, and rarely input for one. In my experience in consulting with large organizations, there is a great temptation to conduct regular meetings of this type to "stay in touch" and to "keep people informed." These one-way, information-giving meetings can seldom be justified as either efficient or effective. Written memos would likely do a better job at a lower cost. Thus, an important consideration about a meeting is whether to have one at all.

Meetings in organizations should be reserved for what they do best--exchanging information and opinion and obtaining commitments for action. According to O'Neill (1982), these purposes will be reflected in the following:

1. To review status, identify problems, set priorities, and to allocate resources.
2. To ascertain the cause of the problem.
3. To make a decision, usually from among several alternatives.
4. To generate ideas, possible solutions, or possible courses of action.
5. To produce a plan, a schedule of activities and an allocation of resources.
6. To identify possible hazards, difficulties, or delays.
7. To identify possible opportunities.

In each case, the purpose is to exchange information or gain commitment. However, each of these specific purposes may call for a different pattern of attendance, preparation, length of meeting, and strategy. A manager planning an effective meeting will analyze

carefully the purpose since it so directly affects many other aspects of the meeting.

SIZE

Peters related a second problem with the organization--the size of the meetings. A meeting with 35 members in attendance is no longer a small group. Different procedures must be devised for controlling the flow of interaction. Members are no longer able to see each other and can no longer speak at will without being recognized. My experience in working with groups is that when a group reaches 11 or 12 members, it cannot function in the same way that a group of 7 or 8 members can function. An important part of groupness is lost. Beyond 11 members, it is difficult to maintain a single conversation. Usually several conversations will emerge simultaneously, and the group deteriorates into several smaller groups.

COMPOSITION

Often, the tendency in calling a meeting is to get together anyone and everyone who might just possibly be able to contribute or who might need to be consulted because he or she is peripherally affected by the project. This practice leads to meetings which are too large and in which participation is uneven. Participants are bored, the group is difficult to control by the leader, the meeting will be too long, and extraneous topics are frequently brought up.

An effective leader will consider whether 6 ten-minute one-on-one meetings with individuals would be more effective than bringing them all together for a single meeting. He or she will be conscious of the costs of a meeting. I have seen meetings in academe involving budgetary decisions in which the amount of funds being allocated in the meeting was exceeded by the total cost of the hourly rates of the individuals making the decision. So much for productivity in academia.

INTERACTION

Most of the literature on meetings urges the leader to structure the meeting in advance, providing a complete agenda to participants. There is even a procedure, often called the Standard Agenda or Vigilant Decision-Making (Janis & Mann, 1977), which involves the following steps:

1. Defining and limiting the problem.

2. Analyzing the causes of the problem.

3. Stating the criteria for acceptable solutions.

4. Outlining the available solutions.

5. Gathering of additional data on proposed solutions.

6. Selecting the best solution.

7. Planning the implementation of the chosen solution.

8. Evaluating of the process of making a decision.

Although I believe agenda to be important, I have seen the agenda used prematurely when a group was not ready to begin using that agenda. The group had not had time to reduce primary tensions and was being forced to undertake tasks before adjusting to each other socially. The group rebelled at being tied to the agenda and wasted a great deal of time. Bormann (1969) discovered in his study of meetings of leaderless groups that most groups do not proceed in a rational, orderly, step-by-step fashion. This behavior is particularly the case when the group is investigating the problem or is in what Bormann calls the context of discovery. At this point in a discussion, a group may work in an intuitive, emotional, haphazard way.

Only later when the group is attempting to see how the idea will fly with outside groups and agencies is a rational model like the standard agenda useful or to be expected. This is what Bormann (1969) calls the context of justification. It occurs when a group attempts to systematize and organize its reasons and evidence in support of a solution. At this point in a meeting a group may find structuring techniques helpful. Before this, a technique like brainstorming, which is really structured unstructuredness, will be helpful.

LENGTH

Surveys of business executives reveal that too much time is spent in meetings. Meetings function under a type of Parkinson's Law in which the length of time it takes to reach a decision expands to the amount of time available. Meetings also are affected by Parkinson's Law of Triviality which states that the amount of time taken to reach a decision varies inversely with the importance of that decision.

The Chairperson of my Department has a rule that no meeting she participates in will last longer than one hour. Decisions that formerly were deliberated for several hours now take just minutes, and I don't feel that the quality of those decisions is diminished. The point is that groups can and ought to impose rules on themselves to limit useless discussion. Seldom does a meeting need to exceed an hour in length. If it does, then perhaps several shorter meetings should be considered.

DECISION-MAKING AIDS

I believe that the personal computer and other advances in telecommunication technology will revolutionize the way in which business is conducted in meetings. According to Patrick Portway (1983), a leading authority in video conferencing and President of Applied Business Communications, nearly half of the largest American corporations plan to install advanced teleconferencing systems in the near future. Frost and Sullivan, a New York market research firm, predicts that, by 1992, teleconferencing will be a $1.6 billion business. The expense of teleconferencing, while less expensive than transporting people, will force businesses to evaluate the benefits of meetings and look for ways to accomplish the same results for less money.

Personal computers are already having an impact on the way business meetings are conducted. Word-processing allows last minute changes to be incorporated before the printing of the agenda. Spreadsheets greatly simplify budget making by providing answers to "what if" questions while the meeting is in progress. Project management software allows managers to stay current with progress on implementation of decisions made in groups. Presentations are facilitated by preprogramming visuals which are stored on disk until they need to be called up during a presentation. Alternatively, slides and transparencies can be made from the computer-generated visuals. Bulletin boards and electronic mail eliminate the need for meetings in which the main purpose is to stay "in touch with the troops" or disseminate information in a one-way fashion.

One particularly fascinating emergent technology affecting group meetings is that of group decision support systems (GDSS) (Huber, 1983). These systems, although still in the experimental stage, promise to make sweeping changes in the way groups function. Essentially a GDSS is a local area network of computers or terminals which are tied together. Each member of a group has a terminal through which he or she can enter data or react to questions. These data can be summarized by the computer and fed back anonymously with means, ranges, and standard deviations. This procedure allows for an instant Delphi Technique to be carried out.

Spreadsheets can be used interactively by groups as well as individuals to answer "what if" questions. According to Huber, this capability reduces the frequency with which differences of opinion about assumptions or data lead either to premature adjournments of meetings or to unconvinced participants.

Another intriguing possibility is that of a group's being able to do interactive, real-time word-processing of text materials. Frequently, groups are involved in creating a text. This usually involves meeting, then one of the members writing up the consensus and sharing hard copies with the other members for subsequent editing. This time-consuming process can be shortened and member input improved with on-line text-editing.

CONCLUSION

This paper has taken a look at the modern business meeting and made suggestions for avoiding many of the pitfalls inherent in it. The following suggestions will serve any modern manager well as he or she plans group meetings:

1. Avoid meeting for the sake of ritual. One-way giving of information can be accomplished better and less expensively with written memos or electronic mail. Meetings should do what they do best--to gain commitment or exchange information interactively.

2. Keep the meeting small--preferably 5 to 7 members, but never more than 11.

3. Invite only those individuals who really need to be at the meeting.

4. Try to think of more economical ways to accomplish the same result as having a meeting. Time is money.

5. Realize that there is a time for structure and a time for looseness, a time for rationality and a time for counterrationality, a time to discover and a time to justify.

6. Keep meetings under one hour in length if at all possible.

7. Start and end meetings on time.

8. Investigate the decision-making aids available in the new technologies.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE LABOR-MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION PROCESS: CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR-MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes strategic developments in labor-management cooperation with special emphasis on the tactical labor-management communication process. Policy recommendations for management, labor, and the government are delineated.

INTRODUCTION

The general subject of current developments in labor-management cooperation, and the specific one of current developments in labor-management communication, are timely and important. My assignment is not to discuss the broad field of the responsibilities which management and union leaders have to society; my scope is merely the responsibilities which they have to enhance the social well-being of employees. That necessitates conformity with the present emphasis of organizational behavior specialists on what they call quality of work life, which requires giving employees a voice in management's decision-making process. The final consideration is that an employee must feel that he has respect and dignity accorded him both by management and by the social community in which he resides.

One thing in particular is necessary for achieving that goal. Management and labor must eliminate their traditional adversarial stance and work cooperatively to create a better economic and working climate. That adversarial stance is partly the fault of federal labor law, but it is also the fault of selfish management and misguided labor leaders. The time has come for management and labor to realize that their best interests lie in active cooperation in navigating toward what is actually their common goal--a prosperous economy. Furthermore, it is evident that they must either row together or sink together, and there are signs that they are beginning to realize that sobering fact.

Two major developments have occurred in recent years in the area of labor-management relations, both of them based on the principle of cooperation, in contrast with the traditional adversarial stance of the two parties. The first is cooperation between management and its counterpart in the labor movement, union leadership; and the

second is cooperation between management and, with the approval of union leadership, employees considered as individuals or members of small work groups.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOR-MANAGEMENT COOPERATION

Secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan has stated that the traditional adversarial stance between management and labor must be eliminated, adding: ". . . government can set a tone and a direction, but it is you--workers and managers--who, through your interaction, will offer America and each other the greatest potential for growth" (U.S.-Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, 1982b).

Historically, the concept of labor-management cooperation began with concern only for efficiency and productivity, with job satisfaction and the quality of work life being stressed only recently. Furthermore, whereas a limited number of companies have long involved individual employees in company committees modeled after the McCormick company's "participative management," the major practice has been committees consisting of top-level executives and union officials. In 1968 the Railroad Labor-Management Committee was formed, consisting of eleven railroad presidents, the industry association, and six unions. In the steel industry, an extensive cooperative productivity program began in 1971 with an agreement between the Steelworkers and 10 basic steel companies, providing for a committee in each plant. And, in 1973 the concept of job enrichment emerged in the automotive industry in the form of the General Motors - United Auto Workers Committee to Improve the Quality of Work Life. In 1974 the Joint Labor-Management Committee of the Retail Food Industry was formed, but its objectives did not include job enrichment. The Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service has long encouraged the formation of joint labor-management committees, but from the limited viewpoint of preventive mediation. At the level of an industrial community, a notable development, was the establishment in 1972 of the Jamestown Area Labor-Management Committee. The idea was suggested to the mayor of the city by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and involved thirty companies and four unions. And finally, at the top of the heap, there is the National Center for Productivity and the Quality of Working Life, an independent agency composed of labor, business, government, and public leaders. An encouraging sign is that, in recent years, more than 300 labor-management committees have been formed annually with the assistance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, although their structure and goals differ widely (U.S. Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration and Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1982).

If a single word is to serve as the slogan of labor-management cooperation, it well could be the word communication. Examples are numerous. At Portage, Indiana, a plant of Midwest Steel needed more business to keep the city prosperous, and a labor-management team found the answer: an advertising campaign urging local people to buy soft

drinks in tin cans instead of aluminum ones. Another example is the dissatisfaction of Copperweld with the steel wire produced by Bethlehem's plant at Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Workers' participation teams at both plants visited each other, and the Bethlehem workers were able to improve the quality of their wire. Last fall in Philadelphia, the A&P supermarket needed wage concessions in order to remain in that city. In return, the employees won the right to make operating decisions. They changed store hours, changed advertising from direct mail to newspapers, and sent slow-moving items back to suppliers. The basic concept in these examples, as in all labor-management cooperation, was expressed by Peter Pestillo, Ford's vice president of labor relations: "The distinction we draw is that major policy questions have to be addressed by management, but how we go about doing it ought to be in consultation. We operate smarter by drawing more people into the decision-making" (U.S. Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, 1982a).

At Buick's Factory 81, the entire plant was designed to give maximum operating authority to self-managing workers' teams, each one controlling its own production, quality, materials, and equipment maintenance; and, as is therefore required, they are the primary recipients of the plant's performance data. Workers are paid for their knowledge rather than for their job classifications. Every worker is expected to learn all the jobs in this team, and to be not only a student but also a teacher. There are no time clocks, no shop rules, and no privileged parking. The atmosphere is one in which each worker knows that his contribution is vital to the success of his team (U.S. Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, 1982c).

The Lansing (Michigan) Area Joint Labor-Management Committee published statements by David Easlick, president of Michigan Bell Telephone, and Glen Watts, president of the Communications Workers. Easlick said that the quality of work life is one of the hottest topics of the day. He declared that employees' frustrations stem from the way they are treated as people, and that, increasingly, they feel the effect of not having a voice in management decisions. Watts, as a labor leader, said that there must be more democracy in industry, but always with collective bargaining as its foundation (U.S.Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, 1982c).

The steel industry's Labor-Management Participation Teams Experimental Agreement of 1980 is notable for emphasis on its experimental nature. Management and the Steelworkers are wisely feeling their way toward cooperation with caution, but at the same time with hope. The Agreement begins with this statement: "The strength and effectiveness of an industrial enterprise in a democratic society requires a cooperative effort between labor and management at several levels of interaction. The parties must pursue their joint objectives with renewed dedication, initiative, and cooperation." The Agreement provides for participation teams each of which will have a management co-chairman and a labor co-chairman, the latter selected by the workers in each team's department or unit. A team discusses and decides on improvement of its department or unit's performance, employee morale

and dignity, and conditions of the work site, but has no jurisdiction over grievances. Above all the teams is a Participation Team Review Committee consisting of a management representative and one from the union (U.S. Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, Division of Cooperative Labor-Management Programs, 1983b).

Labor-management cooperation is increasingly on the agenda of the country's largest corporations and unions. Another example is General Motors and the Auto Workers. The unions took the initiative of recommending a National Committee on Quality of Work Life, the word "National" meaning the entire corporation. The company rejected this proposal as a usurpation of management's right, but later accepted it. On the theory that, if the idea would work in one of GM's worst plants, it would work anywhere, the Tarrytown plant was selected for the first experiment. Tarrytown was 17th in quality, had the highest grievance record in the corporation, had more strikes and strike threats than most plants, and suffered poor relations between the union and management. One department at Tarrytown was selected for the first experiment. Grievances dropped from twenty per week to three per month, the former excessive disciplining of workers by supervision was stopped, absenteeism fell from fourteen percent in that particular department to less than three percent, and morale was at an all-time high. The plant rose in the corporation from 17th in quality to first place. It was selected as one of only three General Motors plants to make the Chevrolet Citation model, which meant more work, more overtime, and more job security for the employees (U.S. Department of Labor, Labor-Management Services Administration, Division of Cooperative Labor-Management Programs, 1983a).

INTEGRATIVE ANALYSIS

A new age is undoubtedly dawning in the area of labor-management relations. Like any new idea, the concept of an employee participation in making work life more meaningful and the company more prosperous will necessarily involve a long evolutionary period in business and industry. There will be considerable experimentation, with initially some successes and probably many failures. The fact that workers' participation has continued and developed in economically lean years shows that it is not just a passing vogue. A continuous move toward more extensive forms of worker participation has in general been emerging.

Management is probably more skeptical than labor leaders. Labor leaders wonder what impact participative management will have on their personal status as well as on the attractiveness of union membership, but management has reason to be even more cautious. A glance at the history of labor-management relations will explain why. At the beginning of those relations, management had all the power and all the rights. Then, during the course of the last hundred years, the collective bargaining table served as an instrument for gradually transferring power and rights from management to labor.

Consequently, management cannot be expected to react enthusiastically to proposals for the participation of employees in the decision-making process; management must first be convinced by moderate experimental programs that its now limited power and rights will not be further reduced.

One of the features which union leaders and employees will insist on is that, when a participation project results in reducing or obsoleting jobs, the reduction in a work force will be accomplished solely by normal attrition, not by lay-offs. Another problem is that various practices which are prescribed in present labor agreements must be amended or eliminated before changes recommended by participative work teams and labor-management committees can be implemented.

In this integrative analysis, I have purposely emphasized some of the negative aspects and problems of this new era in labor-management relations. My purpose is not to discourage its proponents but rather to provide a balance with the success stories, and to emphasize the need for a high degree of professionalism in paving the way for job enrichment and labor-management cooperative programs.

On balance, the pessimistic features and the optimistic features of this very complex subject are weighted very definitely toward the optimistic side. There is no obstacle which is insurmountable. There is no person or group who must necessarily suffer. The great virtue of all the programs is that they are voluntary, and all people concerned can drop out if they find a project not to their liking.

CONCLUSION

At the level of everyday practicality, probably the most vital aspect of cooperative programs is intensive preliminary training, in advance of the installation of a program. This preliminary training schould involve the proper techniques of cooperation and communication for the benefit of every person in a corporation from the president on down. There are various sources of information: the experience of other companies, labor relations textbooks and journals, labor relations consultants, and specialists in the U.S. Department of Labor who are deemed useful and even desirable in tailoring programs to the needs of specific companies, but with the caution that they should step out of the situation as soon as possible so that management and labor will not lean too heavily on them.

Finally, it should be assumed that generally a full-fledged cooperative program can be established in a company only over a protracted duration of time. The job should be done slowly and cautiously, in as much as the changing of human attitudes is involved. Moreover, every company has its own unique internal situation, and so a program which has been successful in one company may

fail in another if installed without modification. Consequently, the sensible approach is to begin experimentally either with a single quality of work life team or with as few teams as possible.

In the future, the needs of the nation--including the social and economic well-being of both blue-collar and white-collar employees--must be based not upon principles of expediency, but upon sound principles of cooperation and of organizational and interpersonal communication.

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ABCA-SE 1984

There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.

--Anonymous

Quantitative Studies

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORAL COMMUNICATION TO THE MANAGERIAL FUNCTION: THE MEASURE OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND RATER PERCEPTIONS IN ASSESSMENT CENTERS

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ABSTRACT

Communication apprehension was measured in a field setting. A total of 187 candidates and 24 raters in six companies' assessment centers participated in the study. Two of the hypotheses were supported, pointing to the importance of the measure of oral communication in assessment centers for subsequent managerial effectiveness. Suggestions for adopting measuring instruments were made.

INTRODUCTION

The strength of assessment centers[1] for making personnel decisions has been shown through extensive research of the technique (Bray & Grant, 1966; Hardesty & Jones, 1968; Kraut & Scott, 1972) and continued use of the method by work organizations (Rice, 1978) since its inception during World War II (The OSS Assessment Staff, 1948; Vernon & Parry, 1949). Assessment center results have been used for making single time personnel decisions (e.g., selection, promotion), study of the phenomenon (e.g., Howard, 1974), as well as longitudinal studies following up on managerial predictions (Bray, Campbell, & Grant, 1974; Hinrichs, 1978).

Much of the assessment center research relies on test scores of managers and tests of employees for management-level positions. Since managers report the majority of their work day being spent in communication activities, and greater than half of that in oral communication (Klemmer & Snyder, 1972; Stewart, 1967), rigorous oral communication measures should be examined for their utility in assessment centers. However, the measure of oral communication seems to receive only perfunctory attention in assessment centers. Current measures of both oral and written communication emanate from exercises (e.g., decision

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[1]The assessment center is operationally defined as ". . . multiple assessment procedures to identify, select, and develop managerial personnel" (Huck, 1973).

game, case study) and appear as one of many dimensions. Communication is neither given special attention nor rigorously measured separately.

Research has focused on candidates' composite test scores with only a handful of studies examining rater decision making (e.g., Sackett & Wilson, 1982; Sawyer, 1966). With the strength of assessment centers being the measure of skills on simulated job functions, it may be anticipated that raters perceive certain job skills, and therefore exercises, more importantly than others for candidate (and subsequently, employee) success. These perceptions may influence raters' attention to and ratings of candidates during particular exercises. This study, in addition to studying candidates' exercise scores with attention to one communication measure (communication apprehension),[2] analyzes raters' perceptions of the importance of the types of exercises administered in assessment centers as used for predictions of successful job performance.

Four hypotheses are advanced. The first examines the predictive ability for hired/qualified candidates.[3] It was predicted that candidates' scores on interactive exercises (those requiring oral communication, such as leaderless group discussion) would be a more important predictor than scores on noninteractive exercises (those not requiring oral communication, e.g., in-basket). Second, a separate measure of communication--communication apprehension--was introduced into assessment centers to determine its effectiveness as an exercise. It was expected that communication apprehension scores would negatively correlate with interactive exercise scores. Third, it was predicted that communication apprehension would be a significant negative predictor of hired/qualified candidates (low communication apprehension scores are desirable since high scores denote high apprehension or anxiety toward communicating orally).[4] This hypothesis was based on the assumption that highly verbal candidates would receive higher scores on exercises requiring oral communication (e.g., decision game) than would subjects with high communication apprehension scores, who are, by definition, more reticent in their interactions. Finally, raters were asked to rank the importance of the exercises' impact on the hire/qualify decision. This was to test whether raters perceived interactive or noninteractive exercises as more important to the hire/qualify decision.

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[2]Communication apprehension "is defined as an individual's level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78).

[3]Two organizations' assessment centers were conducted for the purpose of selection, hence the use of the "hire" term; one organization's purpose was for establishing a pool of candidates for future selection, and the term qualify was used; two organizations used the assessment center for promotion review; one organization used it for self-development of personnel.

[4]According the Scott, McCroskey, & Sheahan (1978), scores of more than 62 call for concern. Scores higher than 72 indicate a severe problem.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY

The previous section overviewed the need and purpose of this study. This section will present the method and results.

Method

The sample consisted of managerial-level personnel and law enforcement officials, whose communication requirements are similar to white collar workers and executives (Cheatham & Erickson, 1974). Assessment center exercise scores of 187 subjects were collected from six organizations.[5] Each organization independently conducted its assessment center; thus they differed slightly from one another in procedure, tests, duration, and rater selection and function. The exercise scores were recorded by respective organizational personnel and given to this researcher. As a final exercise in each assessment center, candidates completed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension--Organization Form (PRCA--OF) (Scott, McCroskey, & Sheahan, 1978). Raters (N = 24), after completing their required rating obligations, were asked to list the exercises as they perceived their order of importance for the hire/qualify decision.

Results

No significant correlation betweeen interactive and noninteractive exercise scores was found (r = .21, NS) for a sample of 36 (see Table I). Thus interactive and noninteractive exercise scores, being unrelated, could be examined independently.

Table I.

Correlation of Interactive and Noninteractive Exercise Scores and Communication Apprehension Scores and Interactive Exercise Scores

Variables	N	r	r^2
Interactive and Noninteractive Exercise Scores	36	.21	.04
Communication Apprehension and Interactive Exercise Scores	61	-.33*	.11

*p<.005, one-tailed

[5]The six organizations included: county government, city government, manufacturing, bus service, airline, utility.

Discriminant analysis was used to test the predictive ability for hired/qualified candidates based on their interactive exercise scores. Support was not found. Interactive exercise scores were far less strong predictors of the hire/qualify decision than were noninteractive exercise scores. Even with the noninteractive exercise scores the relationship was not statistically significant (Wilks' λ = .82, $F(1, 15) = 3.29$, $p < .09$). However, a trend may be discerned particularly noting the small sample size due to attrition for candidates with all scores (interactive, noninteractive, and communication apprehension) and either the hire or the qualify decision. Retesting with a larger sample size may demonstrate the utility of the use of the most desired skills (interactive, noninteractive, or specific skills such as leadership, for example) necessary for future job success.

As hypothesized, communication apprehension scores were inversely correlated with interactive exercise scores ($r = -.33$, $p < .005$) (see Table I) for a sample of 61. This low to moderate correlation in the predicted direction suggests the use of an independent measure of communication as an exercise in assessment centers.

Communication apprehension was not a significant negative predictor of hired/qualified candidates ($F,(1, 15) = 1.34$, NS). The discriminant analysis statistic was applied again. As in hypothesis 1, the sample used in the analysis was greatly reduced; only nine subjects of the 187 had scores denoting high communication apprehension scores.

Finally, interactive exercises were ranked more important by raters than were noninteractive exercises for the hire/qualify decision ($\chi^2 = 11.59$, $p < .001$; $\lambda = .19$) (see Table II).

Table II.

Chi-square Table for Interactive and Non-interactive Exercise Rater Rankings

	Interactive Exercises	Noninteractive Exercises	Total
Importance			
High (ranks 1, 2, 3)	36	12	48
Low (rank 4 or greater)	27	32	59
Total	63	44	107

CONCLUSIONS

Although the present study does not find significance for all the hypotheses, it does introduce the importance of the measure of communication apprehension as a potential exercise in assessment centers. In addition, the finding that raters ranked interactive exercises as significantly more important than noninteractive exercises for the hire/qualify decision points to the necessity of communication abilities for assessment center candidate success, and subsequently success as employees on the job.

It must be pointed out that for the hypotheses using discriminate analysis, only 17 cases were eligible for these analyses (those with all scores and either the hire or qualify decision present). There were more noninteractive than interactive tests used in the six assessment centers. Two of the organizations (city government and bus service) used noninteractive exercises as screening tests. In these organizations, those candidates scoring below the criterion score on noninteractive exercises were eliminated from the remainder of the assessment center which ultimately included interactive as well as additional noninteractive exercises. This screening method partially explains the low number of subjects used in the analyses of these hypotheses. Three assessment centers did not result in either the hire or qualify decision.

In addition, only nine subjects (4.8% of the sample) had scores more than 62 on the PRCA--OF. Both hypotheses using discriminate analysis--one examining interactive exercise scores and the other analyzing communication apprehension scores--call for further testing with larger samples. Where noninteractive exercise scores showed a trend ($p < .09$) in the predictive ability for hired/qualified candidates, this may point to the usefulness of the most desired exercises being used as predictor variables (Kerlinger & Pedhazur, 1973) in assessment centers. The importance of noninteractive exercises must not be overshadowed by either interactive exercises or communication apprehension measures because of noninteractive exercises' contribution to the measurement of necessary job skills.

Two findings of the study point to the importance of communication apprehension scores and interactive exercise scores in making personnel decisions. The significant inverse correlation between communication apprehension scores and interactive exercise scores is consistent with the research showing the tendency for negative perceptions of peers of high communication apprehensives (McCroskey & Richmond, 1976). In this hypothesis where interactive exercise scores increased and communication apprehension scores decreased, consistent with McCroskey and Richmond, perceptions of high communication apprehensive candidates were negative, thereby resulting in low interactive exercise scores. The obverse would hold for low communication apprehensive candidates.

The significant correlation found for this hypothesis suggests the cautious use of communication apprehension measures as an exercise

in assessment centers. Until further research is conducted, it would be wise to utilize measures of communication apprehension along with interactive exercises to act as a measure independent of it while granting more information about oral communication behavior of candidates. However, some drawbacks in the communication apprehension measures themselves must be examined.

The most common method for measuring communication apprehension, both in general settings and in organizations, is a self-report survey (McCroskey, 1970; Scott et al., 1978). The assessment center setting, where candidates strive for the presentation of positive self-images, may result in more than average falsification on self-report questionnaires. Arguments against the use of other techniques, such as observation or physiological measures--for example, galvanic skin response--have been advanced (McCroskey, 1970), but not in assessment center settings. It is here where candidates are aware of being rated (observation by raters). Physiological measures would not be any more obtrusive in this setting, nor should their expense be a prohibiting consideration given the high expenditures inherent in conducting assessment centers (Jaffee, Bender, & Calvert, 1970).

The finding that interactive exercises were ranked more important by raters than were noninteractive exercises, for the hire/qualify decision is strong. The raters, being employees themselves, must be cognizant of the vital role played by oral communication in their daily work lives, albeit subliminally at worse; thus the raters recognize the importance of interactive exercises to successful job performance.

Even with the exceeding importance of oral communication to organizations, hiring/qualifying high communication apprehensives could be beneficial to both the organization and the candidate. The success rate for treatment of communication apprehension is high (McCroskey, 1972; McCroskey, Ralph, & Barrick, 1970; McCroskey & Richmond, 1980). It would be a far more costly investment for organizations to hire/qualify low communication apprehensive candidates who concurrently did not score well on other exercises. Skills necessary for the job are more difficult and expensive to teach a candidate than is providing treatment for communication apprehension. In other words, high communication apprehensives should not be excluded from employment. Rather, communication apprehension scores should aid in job placement for the individual. High communication apprehensive individuals would, in this case, be best placed in low communication-demanding positions.

Ideally, and in a pragmatic sense, organizations would do best to hire/qualify candidates with high interactive and noninteractive exercise scores and low communication apprehension scores. Where this is not possible, communication apprehension scores may be used to suggest treatment for those candidates who score as high communication apprehensives and who are otherwise skilled for the positions offered by the organizations (high interactive and noninteractive scores).

In sum, this study has focused on a separate measure of communication (communication apprehension) to determine its

effectiveness as an exercise in assessment centers. The measure of communication is called for, as explained by this study's results, because of the high reliance on oral communication skills for managerial-level positions (Klemmer & Snyder, 1972; Stewart, 1967). The reliability and various types of validity of the PRCA--OF (Scott et al., 1978) introduce this instrument as one viable measure for immediate use. With oral communication being so vital to the managerial function, more than perfunctory measure of it must be used in assessment centers. At this stage of the research the self report PRCA--OF may be one solution.

Finally, measures of rater decision making, while found to supply necessary information for this study, should be examined further for better understanding of the assessment center rating process. Raters' rating behaviors must be clearly understood to further the objectivity of the assessment center process.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

STOCKHOLDER REACTIONS TO CORPORATE ANNUAL REPORTS

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ABSTRACT

Stockholders are considered to be the most important recipients of corporate annual reports. But what are their reactions to these reports? This study answered that question. Findings led to the conclusion that stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports are generally favorable.

INTRODUCTION

Research by Neilson and Lind led to the conclusion that corporate executives believe stockholders are a most important element in the financial security of a corporation (Neilson and Lind, 1977, p. 34). Executives also consider stockholders to be the most important recipients of the corporate annual report ("Management Looks at Financial Reports," 1973, p. 92).

Also, researchers have concluded that a major portion of the solution to better relations between the stockholder and the corporation is improved communication. The corporate annual report, in the researchers' opinion, is one medium through which communication can be improved (Neilson & Lind, 1977, p. 10).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports and to ascertain the extent to which selected objectives of these reports were met. The study was designed also to indicate (1) the extent to which stockholders consider annual reports to be informative, (2) the extent to which stockholders consider reports to be useful, (3) the extent to which stockholders actually read annual reports, (4) the extent to which stockholders consider corporate annual reports to be impressive, and (5) the extent to which stockholders are motivated by the annual report to invest further in corporations in which they already own stock.

PROCEDURE FOR OBTAINING STOCKHOLDER REACTIONS

Stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports were obtained by the following three-step procedure:

1. Identify corporations that would participate in the study;
2. Design a questionnaire to measure stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports;
3. Mail questionnaires to stockholders.

Identifying Participating Corporations

The study was delimited to Fortune 500 corporations of 1977. These corporations were selected on the assumption that the size of a corporation and its attempts to achieve effective communication with stockholders are directly related. Smith and Smith (1971, p. 555) as well as Pashalian and Crissy (1950, p. 245) made similar assumptions in their research studies.

The basis on which invitations to participate in the study were issued was the "1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors" (the percentage derived by dividing the dividends paid in 1977 plus the price appreciation of a share in 1977 by the cost of that share at the beginning of 1977). If a corporation had a 10 percent or greater increase in its "1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors," it was invited to participate in the study. One hundred eighteen members of the Fortune 500 for 1977 had a 10 percent or greater increase in their "1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors" and were invited to participate in the study. Six of these corporations agreed to participate in the study.

If a corporation had a 10 percent or greater decrease in its "1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors," it too was invited to participate in the study. One hundred thirty-five members of the 1977 Fortune 500 had a 10 percent or greater decrease in their "1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors." Eight of these corporations accepted the invitation to participate in the study.

Of the 14 corporations which did participate, three ranked in the first 100 of the Fortune 500; one, in the second 100; four, in the third 100; five, in the fourth 100; and one, in the fifth 100. Each participating corporation was requested to select 80 stockholders for participation in the proposed study. Questionnaires were sent to a total of 1,120 stockholders--549 returned a usable questionnaire. Some corporations sent the questionaire with their own cover letters. Other corporations sent their 80 stockholders the questionnaires themselves but used the researcher's cover letter. Still other corporations sent a list of the names and addresses of their 80 stockholders to the

researcher who mailed the questionnaires and cover letters to the stockholders.

Developing the Questionnaire

The study was designed in part to identify the two chief corporate objectives of the annual reports prepared by participating corporations. Executives were therefore asked to identify the objectives of their respective annual reports and to send the researcher a list of these objectives.

The two objectives of corporate annual reports named most frequently by executives of participating corporations were

1. to reveal the basic financial condition of their corporations and

2. to attract new or additional investment in their corporations.

After these objectives had been identified, the questionnaire was developed.

The inquiry technique used in the questionnaire is the semantic differential. This technique was selected because of its ability to measure attitudes. The three central concepts around which the questionnaire was developed are

1. stockholder reactions to the corporate annual report in general,

2. stockholder reactions to the financial section of the report, and

3. indication of the probability of additional investment motivated by the annual report.

The pairs of polar adjectives which were possible descriptors of annual reports were selected for inclusion on the questionnaire by means of a word-by-word analysis of The Word Book, which contains 40,000 words. Adjectives which could be meaningful descriptors of corporate annual reports were identified in the analysis and placed on a list. The adjectives selected were arranged in polar pairs for use in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was then arranged in two major sections. The first section of the questionnaire was designed to gather general data about the stockholder (e.g., age, sex, formal education, etc.), the time spent by the stockholder in reading or skimming the annual report, and the stockholder's intensity or recall of the content of the annual report.

The second section of the questionnaire was divided into three subsections. The first subsection was designed to measure stockholder reactions to the annual report in general. The second subsection requested stockholder reactions to the financial section of the specific annual report. The last subsection, entitled "Other Reaction," was

designed to measure the report's ability to attract additional investment from present stockholders.

In its initial form, the questionnaire was reviewed by members of the researcher's advisory committee and by the executives of 12 of the participating corporations. Committee members and executives were asked to evaluate the questionnaire. Several changes in the questionnaire resulted from these evaluations.

The questionnaire was then pilot tested. In the pilot test, 40 questionnaires were sent to stockholders of five different corporations. Seventeen of the questionnaires were returned. The main purpose of the pilot study was to identify problems respondents might have in understanding and reacting to the items on the questionnaire. One change in the questionnaire--a clarification of language--was made as a result of the pilot study.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

On February 1, 1979, packages containing the questionnaires and stamped, self-addressed envelopes were sent to corporations which provided their own cover letters and which had agreed to mail the questionnaire themselves. On the same day, similar packages were sent to corporations for which the researcher provided the cover letter. Both of these groups were instructed to mail the questionnaire to stockholders on February 15 or 16.

Individual cover letters were prepared for stockholders for whom names and addresses had been provided. On February 16, 1979, the cover letter, a questionnaire, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were sent to each of these stockholders.

On March 8, 1979, a follow-up letter and a questionnaire were mailed to all stockholders whose questionnaires were sent to them by the participating corporations. The stockholders were asked to complete and return the questionnaire if they had not already done so. Also on March 8, 1979, those stockholders that had not responded to the initial cover letters and questionnaires mailed by the researcher were sent follow-up letters and questionnaires.

All of the corporations that mailed their annual reports after February 28, 1979, elected to mail the questionnaire themselves but used the researcher's cover letter. On February 1, 1979, packages containing the cover letters, the questionnaires, and the stamped, self-addressed envelopes were sent to these corporations. They were asked to mail the initial questionnaires to their selected stockholders on April 2, 1979. Follow-up letters and questionnaires were mailed on April 20, 1979.

DATA ANALYSIS

It is conceivable that attitudes toward corporate annual reports may be influenced by the financial performance of the corporations.

Therefore, the reactions of stockholders to corporate annual reports could be the result of a corporation's performance rather than the impact of the report itself. To determine whether the data obtained in the questionnaires were contaminated by the financial performance of a participating corporation, financial performance was evaluated six ways: (a) 1978 Percentage of Total Return to Investors, (b) 1968-78 Percentage of Total Return to Investors, (c) 1977 Percentage of Total Return to Investors, (d) 1967-77 Percentage of Total Return to Investors, (e) 1968-78 Growth Rate of Earnings per Share, and (f) 1967-77 Growth Rate of Earnings per Share. In each of these ways, the financial performance of each participating corporation was classified as strong, weak, or neither.

The basic criterion used to determine these classifications was the average inflation rate for the time period expressed in the title of the method of evaluation. For example, for "way e," 1968-78 Growth Rate of Earnings per Share, the criterion used for classification of the corporations was the average inflation rate for the period 1968-78.

For a corporation to be classified as strong, its percentage of total return to investors or its growth rate of earnings per share had to exceed the average inflation rate of its designated time period. For a corporation to be classified as weak, its percentage of return to investors or its growth rate of earnings per share had to be zero or negative. For a corporation to be classified as neither, its percentage of total return to investors or its growth rate of earnings per share had to be above zero and not exceed the average inflation rate of its designated time period. These corporations were excluded in the analysis of data in order to achieve proper contrast between strong and weak corporations.

The statistical procedure known as the median test was employed to determine whether significant differences existed between stockholder reactions of strong corporations and stockholder reactions of weak corporations.[1] This test provides information about the likelihood that two independent groups have been drawn from populations with the same median.

Eight pairs of polar adjectives were used as the bases for these median tests. In each test, the reactions of the stockholders of strong corporations were compared with the reactions of the stockholders of weak corporations.

In a check for questionnaire reliability, the reactions of stockholders on the initial questionnaire were compared with the reactions of stockholders on the follow-up questionnaire. This comparison was made in order to check the reliability of the questionnaire. Median tests were used to identify whether significant differences existed

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[1]For any difference or relationship to be considered significant in this study, at least the 0.05 level of significance was required.

between stockholder reactions to the initial questionnaire and stockholder reactions to the follow-up questionnaire.

The annual reports used in this study were either the 1977 or 1978 annual reports of participating corporations. The dates on which these annual reports were mailed were divided into three categories: (a) prior to August 1, 1978; (b) between August 1, 1978, and February 28, 1979; and (c) after February 28, 1979. As another check on questionnaire reliability, a comparison was made of stockholder reactions to the reports mailed during the three different time periods. Median tests were calculated to determine whether significant difference existed between stockholder reactions to the annual reports mailed during these time periods.

Percentages and median responses were used to identify characteristics of stockholders who participated in the study. Median responses were used as the measure of central tendency in this study because of the nature of the distribution of stockholder responses.

Median tests were calculated to determine whether significant differences existed between the reactions of male stockholders to annual reports and the reactions of female stockholders to annual reports. If statistically significant differences were revealed by the median tests, the raw-score responses of the two groups were compared to ascertain to what extent the differences were meaningful.

FINDINGS

The major findings of this study are summarized in the following categories: (1) stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports, (2) the extent to which selected corporate objectives of annual reports are achieved, (3) characteristics of stockholders, (4) checks for contamination of data and for reliability of the questionnaire, and (5) analyses of stockholder reactions by sex, by age grouping, and by level of education.

Stockholder Reactions to Corporate Annual Reports

Stockholder reactions to corporate annual reports were identified by using the median response to the pairs of polar adjectives on the questionnaire. The average number of responses to all pairs of polar adjectives was 322.

The reactions of the stockholders to corporate annual reports were generally favorable. Stockholders indicated that they felt corporate annual reports were "quite thorough," "quite honest," and "quite successful." They felt that annual reports were effective and justified. Stockholders also described annual reports as interesting, attractive, and readable. They indicated that annual reports were "quite welcomed."

The extent to which annual reports were considered useful or valuable was measured by asking stockholders to react to the pair of polar adjectives "useful/useless." Their responses indicated that they regard the reports as "quite useful." Stockholders were asked to respond to the pair of polar adjectives "informative/meaningless" to indicate how informative they considered annual reports to be. Stockholder responses indicated that annual reports were considered "quite informative."

The pair of polar adjectives "impressive/worthless" was used to describe the extent to which stockholders were favorably impressed, in a general way, by the annual reports. Responses indicated that stockholders were "somewhat impressed" by the annual reports which they received. Three other stockholder reactions which suggested less stockholder satisfaction with corporate annual reports indicated that stockholders regarded annual reports as only "somewhat simple," "somewhat panoramic," and "somewhat realistic."

The response which displayed the most negative stockholder reaction was the reaction to the pair of polar adjectives "brief/long." Stockholders indicated that they regarded annual reports as "somewhat long."

The Extent to Which Selected Objectives of Annual Reports Are Achieved

The two objectives of corporate annual reports expressed most often by executives of participating corporations were (1) to inform the reader of the corporation's financial condition and (2) to attract new or additional investment in the corporation.

Stockholders were asked to react to six pairs of polar adjectives on the questionnaire to ascertain the extent to which they believed they were informed by the annual report about the financial condition of their respective corporations. Stockholders reacted favorably to the financial sections of the annual reports. They described the financial sections as "quite factual," "quite good," and "quite informative." They indicated that the financial sections were "quite needed" and "quite complete." Stockholders indicated, however, that the financial sections of annual reports were only "somewhat simple."

To measure the extent to which stockholders were motivated by the annual reports to make additional investments in their respective corporations, stockholders were asked to react to the pair of polar adjectives "encouraged/discouraged." The median response of stockholders was favorable. Stockholders indicated that they were "quite encouraged" by the annual report to invest additional funds in their respective corporations.

Characteristics of Stockholders

Information about the characteristics of stockholders was derived from stockholder responses to the questions on the initial part of the questionnaire.

To ascertain the degree to which corporate annual reports are actually read, stockholders were asked (a) how thoroughly they read the annual reports and (b) how much time--if any--they spend reading or skimming the annual report.

Approximately 46 percent of the stockholders indicated that they had read or skimmed all or part of the annual report. Approximately 15 percent indicated that they had read all the report. About 15 percent of the stockholders spent over 30 minutes reading or skimming the annual report. Over 45 percent of the stockholders indicated that they spent over 15 minutes reading or skimming the annual report. Just under 10 percent indicated that they had not read or skimmed any of the annual report.

Other findings on the characteristics of stockholders were as follows:

1. Stockholders, regardless of the number of corporations in which they own stock, generally spend 6 to 15 minutes reading or skimming an annual report.

2. Just over 73 percent of the stockholders had attended college, had graduated from college, or had earned a graduate degree.

3. Slightly over 61 percent of the stockholders were 56 years of age or older; just over 34 percent of the stockholders were over 65 years of age.

4. Male stockholders who responded to the questionnaire outnumbered female respondents almost 3 to 1.

Check for Contamination of Data and for Reliability of the Questionnaire

In the check for data contamination, 48 median tests were calculated to compare stockholder reactions to annual reports of strong corporations and stockholder reactions to annual reports of weak corporations. Ten of these tests revealed significant differences between the two groups. However, median raw-score responses for both groups in nine of these tests were either identical or very similar. Thus, the analysis of data disclosed little evidence of meaningful contamination.

In the two checks on the reliability of the questionnaire, only one of 36 median tests indicated a significant difference between the two groups compared. The median raw-score responses of the two groups, however, were very similar. These two checks indicated that the questionnaire was reliable in collecting the data of the study.

Analyses of Stockholder Reactions by Sex, by Age Grouping, and by Level of Education

Thirty-three median tests were calculated to compare the reactions of male stockholders to annual reports with the reactions of female stockholders to annual reports. The results of these tests indicated no meaningful differences between reactions of male stockholders and those of female stockholders.

Analysis of variance was used to compare stockholders reactions to annual reports by age groupings. Of the nine analyses which revealed significant differences, only one appeared to be meaningful. A significant difference existed between the age groups in the amount of time spent reading or skimming the annual report. A direct relationship existed between the amount of time a stockholder spent reading or skimming the annual report and the age of the stockholder--the older the stockholder, the more time the stockholder spent reading or skimming the annual report.

Analysis of variance was used to identify significant differences between the reactions of stockholders by the level of their education. Of the 32 analyses made, 8 revealed statistically significant differences. An examination of these differences disclosed that in no instance was a difference meaningful.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. For the populations with which this study is concerned, stockholders are generally pleased with the annual reports of their respective corporations.

2. Annual reports are regarded by stockholders as generally informative, effective, and successful. They are also viewed as interesting, readable, attractive, and thorough.

3. Stockholders believe annual reports are honest and open, and they welcome them to their homes or offices.

4. For the most part, stockholders consider annual reports to be both impressive and useful; however, they also regard them as somewhat complex.

5. The characteristic of annual reports to which stockholders expressed the strongest negative feeling was the length of annual reports. Stockholders consider annual reports to be "somewhat long."

6. Stockholders believe that corporate annual reports perform reasonably well in their efforts to inform the reader of the financial condition of the corporation. However, they consider the financial section of the annual report to be overly complex.

7. Corporate annual reports apparently serve to stimulate stockholders to invest in those corporations in which stockholders already own stock.

8. Nine out of ten stockholders spend at least some time examining the annual report. About 45 percent of the stockholders spend over 15 minutes reading or skimming the reports which they receive. A small group of stockholders--just under 10 percent--do not spend any time reviewing their annual reports; however, about one in six stockholders reads the complete annual report.

9. About three of every four stockholders have attended college, have graduated from college, or have received a graduate degree.

10. One in every three stockholders is over the age 65; six of every ten are over 56 years of age.

11. Stockholders react similarly to corporate annual reports regardless of their sex, age, or level of education. However, the time spent reading an annual report increases as the age of the stockholder increases.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the result of the findings and conclusions resulting from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since stockholders react favorably to corporate annual reports, regard these as interesting and informative, and are influenced to make additional investments in their respective corporations, the use of corporate annual reports should be continued.

2. Corporations which distribute annual reports should give special attention to the length and complexity of their reports. Although these aspects of the annual report were not severely criticized by stockholders, stockholders indicated that improvement is needed.

3. Additional research is needed to measure specifically what causes stockholders to regard complexity as one of the least favorable aspects of annual reports.

4. Research should be conducted to identify what specific changes stockholders would like to see made in corporate annual reports.

5. Research is needed to ascertain the kinds of corporate communications--i.e., annual reports, quarterly reports, newsletters, progress summaries, special announcements, etc.--that stockholders would like to receive from corporations in which they own stock.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

A SURVEY OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES USED BY ACCOUNTANTS AND BANKERS

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ABSTRACT

Accountants and bankers nationwide agree that communication tasks performed in their regular course of work are varied and complex. Institutions of higher learning try, often without success, to teach the multifaceted skills for effective communication in a business communication course. Thus, it becomes necessary for the business communication educator to keep abreast of the specific competencies needed for frequent application on the job.

This survey ascertained what communication tasks are performed frequently in accounting and banking and what competencies are needed for success in performing these tasks. Based on the findings of this study, we concluded that the business communication teachers should place high priority on report writing, letter and memo writing, and oral reporting. Additionally, the teachers should also emphasize style, format, and English mechanics.

INTRODUCTION

Success in any profession depends on many factors, including the ability to communicate effectively. Because effective communication is a necessity for all business professionals and because successful communication must constantly reflect change, educators and trainers need to be aware of what is being used and what is needed. One of the best ways to do this is through asking what they are doing and what, if anything, should be added to what is now currently being taught in business communication. This descriptive study gives an idea of the communication tasks performed by accountants and bankers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research has two major parts. First, it attempts to ascertain the nature of written and oral communication for accountants and

bankers. Second, it attempts to measure the frequency with which these tasks are performed and the emphasis the practitioners believe should be given the various topics in a formal business communication course.

PURPOSE

This study was to ascertain whether the present training in business communication courses is providing for the needs of bankers and accountants. The findings will provide direction for change of communication curricula and change in business communication course content. The findings will also provide accountants and bankers with a clearer picture of their written communication and will enable them to determine the type and extent of training that will be most beneficial.

PROCEDURES

This section begins with a description of the types of data and the participants in the study. Then it describes the procedures for collecting and recording the data and the statistical measures applied in analyzing the data.

Nature and Source of Data

Three main types of data were used in this research: (1) demographic data on age, number of years on the job, education, and formal versus informal training in business communication; (2) data on the nature and frequency of the communication tasks performed by accountants and bankers; and (3) data on topics that should be included in a business communication course, and the emphasis given these topics.

The participants in this study were accountants and bankers from the private business sector in North Carolina and Wisconsin. As can be seen in Table I, 169 accountants and 146 bankers responded from the two states.

Table I. Participants in the Study

	Bankers	Accountants
Wisconsin	86	77
North Carolina	60	92
Totals	146	169

Collection and Recording of Data

Dillman's (1978) Total Design Method (TDM) of research was the basic framework used in the collection of data. The questions were set up according to the rules prescribed by TDM, except for minor changes such as university logo and other minor constraints.

Questionnaires were mailed to practicing accountants and bankers. The items on the questionnaire were the single checklist type with no open ended questions. Data were recorded as the questionnaires were returned.

Analysis of Data

Responses to all questions on the survey were recorded, using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) program at the University of Wisconsin - Whitewater Computer Center. Frequencies expressed as percentages provide the major statistics in this study.

FINDINGS

To ascertain the business communication tasks performed and the frequency with which they were performed by accountants and bankers, we divided the questionnaire results into three parts. Part I dealt with the demographics of the population, Part II dealt with the data on the nature and frequency of the communication tasks performed by accountants and bankers, and Part III dealt with the data on topics that should be included in a business communication course and the amount of emphasis given these topics.

Demographics

The age of the respondents ranged from 21 to 60, with the median being in the 31-40 category. The number of years of work experience of the respondents was 5 to 9. The majority held the bachelor's degree, whereas less than 20 percent held the master's and J.D. degrees.

A total of 29.5 percent of the respondents had studied business communication as a non-credit course, whereas 56.5 percent had studied business communication as a college credit course. When asked whether the business communication course should be required for college credit, 72.4 percent indicated that it should be, whereas 21.6 percent indicated that it should be an elective course.

It can be seen that the majority of the respondents in this study were college graduates who had from 5 to 9 years' work experience and who had had exposure to a business communication course, whether for college credit or not. It is also evident that the majority of the respondents believed that a business communication course should be required of all students before entering the work force.

Frequency of Performance of Business Communication Tasks

Respondents were given 10 business communication tasks and asked to rate them according to the frequency with which they were performed. Responses ranged from very frequently (almost daily) to never. Table II shows that a total of 61.9 percent of the respondents write or dictate reports from almost daily to almost weekly, whereas a total of 88.0 percent of the same respondents write or dictate business letters from almost daily to almost weekly. Memos were written or dictated from almost daily to almost weekly by 81.3 percent of the respondents.

Table II. Tasks Performed: From Almost Daily to Almost Weekly

Tasks	Total	
	Number	Percent
Write or Dictate Reports	195	61.9%
Write or Dictate Business Letters	277	88.0
Write or Dictate Memos	256	81.3

Table III shows the types of reports written by the respondents. As shown, 38.4 percent of the respondents write the long, formal reports whereas 60.3 percent of the respondents write the letter report. Slightly more than 64 percent write memo reports whereas 34.2 percent write short form reports.

Table III. Types of Reports Written

	Number	Percent
Long Report	121	38.4%
Letter Report	190	60.3
Memo Report	202	64.1
Short Form Reports	108	34.2

The extent to which the respondents are required to make oral presentations, write reports for intercompany and external use, and use word processing and microcomputers is shown in Table III. As is indicated in Table IV, a total of 30.8 percent of the respondents make oral presentations from almost daily to almost weekly. The frequency with which these same respondents write reports for use within the company is 62.8 percent, whereas they write reports that go outside the company 36.2 percent of the time from almost daily to almost weekly. Word processing and microcomputers were used from almost daily to almost weekly by the respondents 48.3 percent and 33.0 percent respectively.

The communication tasks covered in this part of the study were completed from almost daily to almost weekly by 45 percent or more of the respondents.

Table IV. Tasks Performed: From Almost Daily To Almost Weekly

Tasks	Total	
	Number	%
Make Oral Presentations	97	30.8
Write Reports Within Company	198	62.8
Write Reports Outside Company	114	36.2
Use Word Processing	152	48.3
Use Microcomputers	84	33.0

Treatment That Should Be Given Various Communication Tasks

A series of 12 questions constituted this part of the survey, and were answered by respondents who were given the option of checking a scale of one to five, with one being comprehensive treatment and five being little or no treatment.

Table V shows the level of treatment the respondents believe should be given letters and memos in a business communication class. Letter style, letter format, types of letters, and memos were covered in Table V and show above-average to comprehensive treatment as the option checked by the respondents. A total of 90.2 percent of the respondents indicated that letter style should be given the same

treatment whereas 87.9 percent felt that letter format should be given above-average to comprehensive treatment. A total of 86.4 percent of the respondents believed that types of letters should be given above average to comprehensive treatment, whereas 82.2 percent believe memos should be given the same treatment.

Table V. Degree of Emphasis That Should Be Given to Topics in Letter and Memo Writing

Topics	Level of Treatment	Total Number	Total %
Letter Style	Comprehensive	147	46.7
	Above Average	137	43.5
Letter Format	Comprehensive	133	42.2
	Above Average	144	45.7
Types of Letters	Comprehensive	86	27.3
	Above Average	186	59.1
Memos	Comprehensive	84	26.7
	Above Average	175	55.5

The importance given to reports in a business communication course is shown in Table VI, and can be interpreted as were the data in Table III. A total of 84.8 percent of the respondents believed that report definitions should receive above-average to comprehensive treatment, whereas 88.8 percent believed the role of reports in the communication process should be given the same treatment. A total of 82.9 percent of the respondents indicated that reports for special audiences should be given above average to comprehensive treatment in the business communication course.

Table VI. Degree of Emphasis That Should Be Given to Selected Topics Related to Importance of Reports in Industry

Topics	Level of Treatment	Total Number	Total %
Definition of Reports	Comprehensive	114	36.2
	Above Average	153	48.6
Role of Reports	Comprehensive	116	36.8
	Above Average	164	52.0
Qualification of Report Writers	Comprehensive	70	22.2
	Above Average	191	60.7
Reports for Special Audiences	Comprehensive	82	26.0
	Above Average	186	59.0

Respondents were asked to indicate the level of treatment they believed should be given to teaching techniques of collecting data. A majority of the respondents, 92.7 percent or 292, believed above-average to comprehensive treatment should be given to primary sources whereas 70.2 percent or 221 believed secondary sources should be given the same treatment.

Table VII shows the ranking of the planning and organization of reports and includes only those rankings of above average to comprehensive. The three methods of presenting report information--direct, indirect, and chronological--all received approximately the same rating with the indirect method being only slightly higher ranked than the other two methods. Types of outlines, outline form, and titles and headings also received no more than 50 percent rate of response in the above-average to comprehensive ranking.

Table VII. Degree of Emphasis That Should Be Placed on Planning and Organizing Reports

Topics	Level of Treatment	Total Number	%
Direct	Comprehensive	105	33.3
	Above Average	173	54.9
Indirect	Comprehensive	142	45.1
	Above Average	147	46.7
Chronological	Comprehensive	97	30.8
	Above Average	183	58.1
Types of Outlines	Comprehensive	86	27.3
	Above Average	194	61.6
Outline Form	Comprehensive	86	27.3
	Above Average	197	62.5
Titles and Headings	Comprehensive	78	24.8
	Above Average	189	60.0

The importance of writing style and mechanics is shown in Table VIII. The rating of above-average to comprehensive treatment was given to each of the topics in the table by more than 50 percent of the respondents. Thus, the importance to the respondents of style and mechanics can be readily seen.

Table VIII. Degree of Emphasis Which Should Be Placed on Writing Style and Mechanics

Style Components	Level of Treatment	Total Number	%
Simple Language	Comprehensive	197	62.5
	Above Average	102	32.4
Jargon	Comprehensive	39	12.4
	Above Average	152	48.2
Objectivity	Comprehensive	154	48.9
	Above Average	142	45.1
Conciseness	Comprehensive	207	65.7
	Above Average	94	29.8
Adaptation	Comprehensive	168	53.3
	Above Average	127	40.3
Readability	Comprehensive	218	69.2
	Above Average	86	27.3
Sentence Structure	Comprehensive	160	50.8
	Above Average	139	44.2
Clarity	Comprehensive	224	71.1
	Above Average	80	25.4
Concreteness	Comprehensive	183	58.1
	Above Average	111	35.3
Grammar	Comprehensive	223	70.8
	Above Average	79	25.1
Punctuation	Comprehensive	179	56.8
	Above Average	118	37.4
Spelling	Comprehensive	203	64.4
	Above Average	90	28.6
Use of Numbers	Comprehensive	108	34.3
	Above Average	171	54.2
Abbreviations	Comprehensive	67	21.3
	Above Average	178	56.5
Capitalization	Comprehensive	103	32.7
	Above Average	165	52.4

The importance of reports in the communication process is indicated by the fact that respondents indicated above average to comprehensive treatment as follows:

Letter reports	68.6 percent
Memo reports	63.8
Long formal reports	63.2

The ratings between the emphasis that should be placed on letter and memo reports (68.6 percent and 63.8 percent respectively) and the percentages of respondents (60.3 percent and 64.1 percent respectively) who indicated that they write these same reports were similar. (See Table III.)

Report functions should also be taught as indicated in the data presented below:

Analytical reports	77.1 percent
Progress reports	61.6
Examination reports	60.7
Process reports	60.3
Feasibility reports	60.0
Informational reports	56.5
Justification reports	42.4
Writing for publication	33.0

As can be seen in the data presented above, writing for publication is indicated as being less important than the other report functions since only 33 percent of the respondents rated it as above average to comprehensive.

More than 60 percent of the respondents checked techniques of presentation as well as the use of graphic aids for the oral report as needing above-average to comprehensive treatment.

Respondents (61.6 percent) also indicated that microcomputer awareness should be given above-average to comprehensive treatment in a business communication course, whereas 51.5 percent believed that microcomputer usage should be given above average to comprehensive treatment in the business communication course.

The responses were similar for word-processing awareness. However, less than 50 percent of the respondents indicated above-average to comprehensive treatment should be given to word-processing usage.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Many conclusions and implications can be drawn from these findings, and several have a direct relevance to business communication course content. In addition, implications for the classroom teacher are evident. Findings indicated that reports, business letters, and memos are written or dictated

with enough frequency that they should be given high priority in the business communication course. Educators need to keep abreast of the use of reports in industry and to adjust curriculum accordingly.

A closely related problem involves oral presentations. It is obvious from the findings in this study that orally presenting the report is a frequent requirement in industry. As a result, the implication for educators is that this is another important aspect of business communication and should be reflected in the course.

The various aspects of letters such as style, format, and type are important. The implication is that educators should stress these aspects of letter writing in the business communication course.

Style components and mechanics are essential to effective communication, as shown by the respondents in this survey. Consequently, educators can take a cue from the findings in this study and give appropriate priority to this aspect of the business communication course.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE MANIPULATION OF INFORMATION BY COMPANIES INTENDING TO "GO PUBLIC": THE EXTENT TO WHICH THIS AFFECTS THE OFFERING PRICE TO INVESTORS

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ABSTRACT

Before going public, companies "shop around" different underwriting firms for the best deal. One-on-one interviews with some of Canada's top underwriters suggest that companies, in anticipation of going public, can manipulate information and thereby substantially influence the offering price.

INTRODUCTION

Private companies in Canada go public for a variety of reasons (see, e.g., McQuillan, 1971). Underwriters are those professionals who act as "middle-men" between private company owners and potential investors of the to-be public company.

The underwriter is faced with a problem when suggesting an offering price. Because of the need to satisfy clients in order to build a profitable underwriting business, the underwriter wants them to get the highest price possible. On the other hand, it is the other clients, the investing public, who will be the ultimate buyer of the securities; and their business is equally valuable. The underwriter will therefore want to price low for them.

The Corporations Act[1] distinguished between a private company and a public company as follows:

> . . . "private company" means a company in which (by its special Act, letters patent or supplementary letters patent)
>
> (i) the right to transfer its shares is restricted,
>
> (ii) the number of its shareholders, exclusive of persons who

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[1]The Business Corporations Act, which superseded the Corporations Act in 1983, draws a distinction between corporations which are offering securities to the public and those which are not.

the number of its shareholders, exclusive of persons who are in the employment of the company, is limited to fifty, two or more persons holding one or more shares jointly being counted as a single shareholder, and

(iii) any invitation to the public to subscribe for its shares or securities is prohibited;

"public company" means a company that is not a private company.

FACTORS AFFECTING OFFERING PRICE

Seventeen (17) variables were selected (on the basis of my in-progress research) which may have impact on the price which underwriters would place upon the common shares of private companies going public.

The extent (and the speed) to which existing shareholders are able to alter the variables will determine what, if any, influence existing owners have over the pricing decisions of underwriters. At the one extreme if owners are, for the most, unable to influence variables affecting the offering price, then the price determinations of underwriters are theoretically "fair." On the other hand, if owners may plan the size of variables, underwriters are in reality acting only for present shareholders of the private company who are indirectly manipulating the offering price (by adjusting the variables dominating offering-price decisions).

My research indicates that Johnson (1961) is the only author who has looked at the relative importance of the many variables which might be considered in the setting of an offering price. His work, although non-statistical and inconclusive, does at least touch on the basic research question of my study.

Johnson's empirical findings may be summarized into the following categories: price-earnings ratio comparison; earnings prospects; industry, dividend yields, and financial position; book values; sizes of companies and issues; and current market conditions.

Price-Earnings Ratio Comparison

Comparisons were made, for most of the offerings studies, between the price-earnings ratios computed on the offering prices and median price-earnings ratios of a sample of firms in the same industry. In the majority of cases, price-earnings ratios computed on the offering prices corresponded fairly closely with the median ratios used for comparison.

Earnings Prospects

Three measures of past performance were selected as possible guides in estimating earnings prospects. These were trends of earning growth,

recent changes in earnings, and rates of return on common stockholders' equity. Growth trends do not appear to have a material effect upon offering prices. Recent changes in earnings appeared to be at least a minor factor in offering-price determination. Rates of return on common stockholders' equity did not appear to influence offering prices.

Industry, Divident Yields, and Financial Position

The effect of the industry of the issuing company on offering prices is reflected in comparisons with price-earnings ratios of similar companies. Dividend yields affect offering prices. High dividend yields tend to be associated with low price-earnings ratios and low yields with high price-earnings ratios. Neither leverage nor current position appear to materially affect offering prices.

Book Values

Although offering prices generally did not closely correspond with book values, there is some evidence that considerations of book values were given more weight than was justified. Book values were used either in some cases as a factor in increasing offering prices or in other cases as a factor in decreasing offering prices. Another observation concerning the use of book values is that common stock is rarely offered below book value.

Sizes of Companies and Issues

Some evidence was presented to indicate that there was a slight tendency for offerings from small companies to be priced higher than offerings from larger companies.

Current Market Conditions

There can be little doubt that current market conditions are important in setting offering prices. This factor is automatically considered when comparisons are made with price-earnings ratios existing in the market near the time of the offering.

METHODOLOGY

A senior underwriter from each of 12 major Canadian underwriting firms was selected to interview. A card-ranking exercise was administered and the 17 variables listed in Table I were ranked by each participant in terms of relative importance in the determination of the offering price.

The analysis used a multidimensional scaling technique with a capability of producing relatively "sophisticated" results (scaled at the interval level) from rather "primitive" data (normally rank-ordered)

Conjoint Analysis.[2] The technique made possible the measurement of the relative importance of different variables in the determination of offering price.

RESULTS

Table I shows the relative importance of variables (expressed as percentages); Table II indicates that FUTURE EARNINGS PROSPECTS and MANAGEMENT are most often the dominant variables, that FUTURE PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRY and POSITION OF THE COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY are most often the third most dominant variables, and that SIZE, PRESENCE OF A RESTRICTIVE AGREEMENT, LIQUIDITY, HISTORICAL DIVIDENDS, and BOOK VALUE OF NET ASSETS most often have no (zero) influence on offering price.

An attempt was made to code the variables into groups depending upon the ease with which companies may influence them. Code A variables may not be affected at all by the company. These variables deal with the industry and the general economy. Code B variables may be influenced by the company, but any impact will be felt over a relatively long period of time. Code C variables could, for example, be altered by the current year's performance of the company. Additions of fixed assets, a change in dividend policy, and a switch in accounting policy and a decision to expand are examples of actions which will influence book value, dividends, earnings, and size respectively. Code D variables may be altered in the few days prior to going public. By borrowing more debt, by holding back on the payment of accounts payable, by replacing management, or by entering into restrictive agreements, the company is able to have an influence at the "last minute" before going public.

Table III details the relative importance of variable categories (expressed as percentages). Variables which owners are able to affect over an extended time period were considered by 11 participating underwriters to be the most important in the determination of an offering price (the 12th participant felt that variables which owners are unable to affect at any time were dominant). The mean column shows that more than 36 percent of the variables influencing the offering price may be affected by owners' actions immediately prior to the public offering or within a short time-span of the offering. Furthermore, the mean column shows that more than 81 percent of the variables affecting the offering price may at some time before "going public" be affected/influenced by existing owners.

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[2]The bridging matrix and the details of the statistical package will supplement this paper in a future article.

Table I.

Relative Importance of Variables (Expressed as Percentages)
(The numbers in parentheses represent the rank orders.)

VARIABLE \ UNDERWRITER	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	MEAN
BOOK VALUE OF NET ASSETS	Ø (11)	6.61 (8)	Ø (7)	3.75 (9)	Ø (6)	8.63 (4)	8.98 (6)	11.72 (3)	9.20 (7)	9.55 (4)	7.82 (4)	7.00 (5)	6.10 (6)
COMPANY BACKGROUND	0.31 (10)	6.60 (9)	1.55 (5)	3.40 (10)	Ø (6)	8.19 (6)	10.80 (2)	2.53 (12)	11.80 (5)	10.10 (3)	2.62 (8)	7.00 (5)	5.41 (7)
FAIR MARKET VALUE OF NET ASSETS	7.72 (5)	5.53 (10)	0.76 (6)	3.40 (10)	Ø (6)	3.59 (8)	0.90 (8)	3.43 (11)	1.19 (8)	4.02 (11)	22.30 (1)	0.30 (12)	4.43 (11)
FUTURE DIVIDENDS PROSPECTS	7.41 (6)	0.84 (12)	0.76 (6)	0.70 (11)	Ø (6)	3.16 (9)	0.30 (10)	4.30 (9)	0.30 (9)	0.75 (12)	0.28 (10)	6.80 (6)	2.13 (15)
FUTURE EARNINGS PROSPECTS	8.64 (3)	24.50 (1)	45.80 (1)	5.15 (5)	26.00 (1)	9.48 (2)	9.88 (4)	12.92 (1)	13.32 (2)	6.78 (5)	7.84 (3)	7.80 (2)	14.84 (1)
FUTURE PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRY	0.92 (8)	8.28 (3)	Ø (7)	6.55 (4)	1.00 (5)	9.05 (3)	28.40 (1)	12.32 (2)	12.50 (4)	10.60 (2)	7.84 (3)	7.40 (4)	8.74 (4)
GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	7.11 (7)	1.68 (11)	0.76 (6)	23.00 (1)	3.00 (4)	2.74 (10)	0.90 (8)	5.17 (7)	Ø (10)	5.28 (8)	6.69 (6)	6.60 (7)	5.24 (8)
HISTORICAL DIVIDENDS	Ø (11)	7.45 (6)	Ø (7)	4.08 (8)	Ø (6)	8.19 (6)	9.28 (5)	2.53 (12)	9.20 (7)	10.60 (2)	2.04 (9)	8.58 (1)	5.16 (9)
HISTORICAL EARNINGS	7.72 (5)	Ø (13)	2.32 (4)	21.58 (2)	1.00 (5)	4.02 (7)	0.30 (10)	3.43 (11)	1.19 (8)	5.28 (8)	8.39 (2)	5.78 (9)	5.08 (10)
INDUSTRY BACKGROUND	Ø (11)	10.20 (2)	0.76 (6)	13.38 (3)	Ø (6)	3.59 (8)	0.30 (10)	7.59 (5)	0.30 (9)	4.52 (9)	7.26 (5)	0.70 (11)	4.05 (12)
LEVERAGE	0.60 (9)	5.53 (10)	0.76 (6)	3.40 (10)	Ø (6)	3.59 (8)	0.30 (10)	7.01 (6)	0.30 (9)	4.26 (10)	7.26 (5)	7.60 (3)	3.38 (13)
LIQUIDITY	9.86 (2)	Ø (13)	2.32 (4)	Ø (12)	Ø (6)	3.16 (9)	0.30 (10)	4.88 (8)	0.30 (9)	0.25 (13)	0.28 (10)	6.38 (8)	2.32 (14)
MANAGEMENT	17.60 (1)	7.88 (4)	3.09 (3)	4.11 (6)	24.00 (2)	9.91 (1)	10.50 (3)	8.19 (4)	15.40 (1)	14.80 (1)	8.39 (2)	7.00 (5)	10.91 (2)
POSITION OF THE COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY	8.64 (3)	7.03 (7)	41.12 (2)	3.40 (10)	22.00 (3)	8.62 (5)	8.68 (7)	3.43 (11)	12.80 (3)	6.03 (7)	7.26 (5)	1.30 (10)	10.87 (3)
PRESENCE OF A RESTRICTIVE AGREEMENT	7.72 (5)	Ø (13)	Ø (7)	Ø (12)	1.00 (5)	3.16 (9)	0.60 (9)	4.01 (10)	0.30 (9)	0.25 (13)	0.28 (10)	6.38 (8)	1.98 (16)
PRESENCE OF GOODWILL (INTANGIBLE VALUE)	8.03 (4)	7.87 (5)	Ø (7)	4.10 (7)	22.00 (3)	8.19 (6)	8.98 (6)	2.53 (12)	11.60 (6)	6.68 (6)	3.17 (7)	7.00 (5)	7.51 (5)
SIZE	7.72 (5)	Ø (13)	Ø (7)	Ø (12)	Ø (6)	2.73 (11)	0.60 (9)	4.01 (10)	0.30 (9)	0.25 (13)	0.28 (10)	6.38 (8)	1.86 (17)

Table II.

Frequencies Dealing with the Extent of Influence of Variables

CODE	VARIABLE \ EXTENT OF INFLUENCE	MOST	SECOND MOST	THIRD MOST	NO (ZERO) INFLUENCE
C	BOOK VALUE OF NET ASSETS	-	-	1	3
B	COMPANY BACKGROUND	-	1	1	1
B	FAIR MARKET VALUE OF NET ASSETS	1	-	-	1
B	FUTURE DIVIDENDS PROSPECTS	-	-	-	1
B	FUTURE EARNINGS PROSPECTS	4	3	2	-
A	FUTURE PROSPECTS OF INDUSTRY	1	2	3	1
A	GENERAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	1	-	-	1
C	HISTORICAL DIVIDENDS	1	1	-	3
C	HISTORICAL EARNINGS	-	2	-	1
A	INDUSTRY BACKGROUND	-	1	1	2
D	LEVERAGE	-	-	1	1
D	LIQUIDITY	-	1	-	3
D	MANAGEMENT	4	2	2	-
B	POSITION OF THE COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY	-	1	3	-
D	PRESENCE OF A RESTRICTIVE AGREEMENT	-	-	-	3
B	PRESENCE OF GOODWILL (INTANGIBLE VALUE)	-	-	1	1
C	SIZE	-	-	-	4

Table III.

Relative Importance of Variable Categories (Expressed as a Percentage)
(the numbers in brackets represent the rank orders)

UNDERWRITER / VARIABLE CATEGORY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	MEAN
Variables which owners, are unable to affect at any time (exhibit 1)	8.03 (4)	20.16 (2)	1.52 (4)	42.93 (1)	4.00 (3)	15.38 (4)	29.60 (2)	25.08 (2)	12.80 (4)	20.40 (3)	21.79 (2)	14.70 (4)	18.03 (4)
Variables which owners, are able to affect over an extended time period (exhibit 2)	40.75 (1)	52.37 (1)	89.99 (1)	20.15 (3)	70.00 (1)	41.23 (1)	39.54 (1)	29.14 (1)	51.01 (1)	34.36 (1)	43.47 (1)	30.20 (1)	45.19 (1)
Variables which owners, are able to affect over the short term (exhibit 3)	15.44 (3)	14.06 (3)	2.32 (3)	29.41 (2)	1.00 (4)	23.57 (2)	19.16 (3)	21.69 (4)	19.89 (2)	25.68 (2)	18.53 (3)	27.74 (2)	18.20 (3)
Variables which owners, are able to affect at the last minute (exhibit 4)	35.78 (2)	13.41 (4)	6.17 (2)	7.51 (4)	25.00 (2)	19.82 (3)	11.70 (4)	24.09 (3)	16.30 (3)	19.56 (4)	16.21 (4)	27.36 (3)	18.58 (2)
	91.97	79.84	98.48	57.07	96.00	84.62	70.40	74.92	87.20	79.60	78.21	85.30	81.97

CONCLUSION

The underwriters[3] agreed that most (57 percent to 98 percent) of the influence on the offering price is determined by variables which owners of private companies can affect some time before the date of "going public." Companies are therefore able, by pre-planning, to manipulate information over the long term, over the short term, or immediately before "going public" in order to affect the offering price to investors.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION: A FIELD STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Because many managers do not possess adequate communication skills, their behavior frequently results in the creation of barriers. Many of these barriers identified by communication experts have appeared in the growing body of literature dealing with the notion of "communication-satisfaction." A number of studies have developed a strong relationship between various measures of communication effectiveness and job satisfaction. The present study attempts to test this connection in a real-world setting. After detecting indications of serious employee job dissatisfaction in a large metropolitan hospital, the authors administered an inventory to measure the organization's chain-of-command communication effectiveness. A strong relationship between job dissatisfaction and the absence of effective communication was implied by the data, thus lending support to the existence and detectability of communication satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

In his treatment of the relationship between managerial behavior and ineffective communication Athanassiades offered the following observation: "Obviously, managers . . . buffeted by mounting pressures from various clients and publics tend to freeze their attitudes and to resolve perceived problems either by direct confrontation or, more often than not, by resorting to increased secrecy, tighter controls and--in some cases--to outright manipulation of information. Understandable as such executive behavior may seem, its effects are often dire for the organization" (Athanassiades, 1973, p. 43).

One of the dire effects is that such behavior frequently results in the development of communication barriers which distort the flow of information needed by organizational members to solve problems and plan for the future. Huseman, Lahiff, and Wells (1977) have carefully drawn an analogy between natural systems and contrived organizational systems to demonstrate problems of stratification and ineffective communication caused by blockages or "thermoclines."

A thermocline is described as a "middle layer" of water in a lake or pond which prevents the upper and lower levels from circulating and bringing vital oxygen to fish and plant life at the bottom.

> When a thermocline develops in the organizational setting, it is communication rather than oxygen that is cut off from lower members in the organization. Extending the analogy, we find that while the bottom of lakes is usually rich in organic deposits, the lower levels of organizations are frequently rich with deposits such as young energetic employees with fresh ideas and different approaches to old problems. Correspondingly, a lack of communication to lower levels in the organization can also be lethal, eventually resulting in turnover and other serious problems. (Huseman, Lahiff, & Wells, 1977, p. 210)

It would be absurd to declare that the existence of thermoclines would preclude any communication whatever. Communication will continue to occur, but its relevance and timeliness may be questionable. Fisher makes this point clearly. "Barriers do not shut off communication within an organization. There is always communication, but the difference for organizational effectiveness is communication quality . . . , the kind necessary for effective performance, satisfaction, and development" (Fisher, 1981, p. 41).

COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION

Interestingly, many of the barriers identified by Athanassiades, Huseman, Fisher, and others (e.g., task specialization, inflexible authority structure, lack of feedback, distrust, status incongruence, information sharing tendencies, role ambiguity) have appeared in the growing body of literature dealing with the connection between communication and satisfaction. For example, Sussman was able to demonstrate a clear relationship between message distortion and job satisfaction. He stated that his findings support what he believes to be the "major tenet of organizational communication: Information is the basic raw material of any organization and organizational members may be viewed as primarily information processors. The manner in which organizational members engage in information processing is thus ultimately related to their perceptions of the organizational environment and their role in it" (Sussman, 1974, p. 28).

In the communication classic Communication and Communication Systems, Thayer increased the credibility of, and interest in, the relationship between communication and satisfaction by addressing the concept of "communication-satisfaction" (Thayer, 1968). Although Thayer had a fairly limited definition of the concept, its meaning is still evolving. Redding provided some needed focus with his review of the use of the concept. A composite list of dimensions or aspects of communication-satisfaction found in the literature by Redding (1972) included the following:

explanation of policies in answer to employee questions

understanding what is expected of one in performing his job

advance notice of changes through official sources

freedom to make suggestions to supervisors

adequacy of information on those company matters regarded by the receiver as relevant to him

extent to which important information is obtained from sources or media preferred by the receiver

freedom to make complaints, to "sound off"

accessibility or approachability of supervisors

degree to which supervisors make an effort to understand feelings and problems of subordinates

degree to which supervisors express appreciation of good performance by subordinates

degree to which higher officers or managements are open and willing to initiate communication

Following the work of Redding, Downs and Hazen reported their findings on the multi-dimensionality of communication-satisfaction. After a two-stage factor analysis, they identified eight primary factors (Downs & Hazen, 1977):

Personal feedback

Relations with supervisor

Communication climate

Organizational perspective

Organizational integration

Horizontal-informal

Media quality

Relations with subordinates

They correlated each factor with a measure of job satisfaction and concluded, "these factors seem to reflect most of the major components of organizational functioning in terms of role relationships, types of information, and the climate of the organization" (Downs & Hazen, 1977, p. 66).

In their work on the communication-satisfaction relationship Baird and Bradley identified a number of communication correlates of employee morale. More specifically they measured employee perceptions of communication content and style against a global measure of job satisfaction. Communication behaviors which correlated significantly with job satisfaction included the following (Baird & Bradley, 1978):

Solicits inputs from employees

Gives information

Stresses company goals

Emphasizes teamwork

Encourages effort

Reinforces good performance

Shows concern

Is attentive to others

Listens carefully to others

Summarizing the relevant literature, Baird and Bradley observed: "Taken together, these findings lend credence to Hatch's speculation that improved superior-subordinate communication will lead to improved job satisfaction" (Baird & Bradley, 1978, p. 48). After describing and discussing their own findings, the authors concluded that, "communication content and communication style seem to have a distinct impact upon employee morale" (Baird & Bradley, 1978, p. 54).

THE CURRENT STUDY

During a recent Organizational Development intervention for a large for-profit medical complex located in a major city in the Southeast, researchers were provided a unique opportunity to explore further and to test the relationship between communication and satisfaction in a field setting.

Initial contact with employees uncovered a set of classic Organizational Behavior "textbook" symptoms: lack of management support, lack of direction, a sense of isolation, threatening environment, no communication. During subsequent contact upper- and lower-level managers were asked to characterize their perceptions of the organization. The following is a summary of their responses.

Upper-level managers:

had a false sense of security regarding their jobs/ performance

did not seem to be aware of many existing problems

were insensitive to lower-level behavior

were very high on task orientation

conveyed a sense of isolation

Lower-level managers:

felt isolated from top management

felt a lack of support from the top

felt alienated, powerless and helpless to change things

had no sense of identity with respect to the organization and its goals

experienced pressure to the point of feeling threatened

lacked sufficient information from the top with which to perform daily duties

frequently received conflicting messages (e.g., go to training, but do not leave job unattended)

Many of these responses (one quite obviously) appeared to be related to individual managers' feelings that they did not receive the needed information to get their work done, and they did not have the kind of day-to-day contact that was necessary.

Based on the fairly consistent results from the communication-satisfaction literature, we felt that there might be a connection between the feelings of dissatisfaction and confusion expressed by interviewees and the quality of communication within the organization. More specifically, the belief was that existing conditions and perceptions were at least partially the result of communication blockages between levels and consequent lack of communication. Therefore, we hypothesized that there would be significant differences in the opinions and perceptions of various levels of management regarding health and functioning of the organization. To test this hypothesis a blockage questionnaire developed by Woodcock and Francis (Woodcock & Francis, 1976) was administered to four different levels of management: administrators (n=7), directors (n=38), managers (n=43), and supervisors (n=89).

Respondents were asked to report their perceptions on 12 dimensions of organizational functioning (Woodcock & Francis, 1976, p. 13):

Inadequate control

Poor training

Low motivation

Low creativity

Poor teamwork

Inappropriate management philosophy

Lack of succession planning and management development

Unclear aims

Unfair rewards

Personal stagnation

For each of the 12 dimensions a difference score was computed between each pair of respondent groups and subjected to a test of proportions using a critical Z ratio (Mason, 1967). Serious discrepancies (.05 level of signifigance) between levels of management were interpreted as definite indicators of ineffective sharing of information. The results are shown in Table I.

FINDINGS

The six pairings over 12 dimensions yielded 72 measures. Thirty-six (50%) were found to be significant at the .05 level. The most notable and obvious differences occur between the administrators (top management) and the supervisors (first-line management). It might be expected that there would be some difference of opinion and perception between these two groups as to the functioning of the organization, but the magnitude appears quite serious. Most important, perhaps, are the discrepancies indicate a lack of sharing at the two intermediate levels.

The three pairings which constitute the chain-of-command are the Administrators-Directors, Directors-Managers, and Managers-Supervisors. The number of serious discrepancies for each of these three pairings is as follows:

Administrators-Directors	6
Directors-Managers	1
Managers-Supervisors	6

Table I.

Z-Values for Respondent-Group Pairings by Dimension

Block-age	Super-visor Manager	Super-visor Director	Super-visor Admini-strator	Manager Director	Manager Admini-strator	Director Admini-strator
1	1.72138	5.56893*	5.26634*	3.2231*	3.85466*	1.68173
2	1.94864	0.44028	1.37005	-1.2297	0.40401	1.08469
3	2.28421*	1.61649	3.14961*	-0.4897	1.82189*	2.09491*
4	2.12833*	2.28009*	0.95258	0.2000	-0.06395	-0.17098
5	3.16380*	3.68659*	6.14781	0.5437	3.89704*	3.47639*
6	0.71959	2.47329*	5.59957*	1.5158	4.65771*	3.47666*
7	0.49055	0.77007	2.48049*	0.2602	2.13464*	1.96248*
8	2.42964*	1.89810	1.40127	-0.3639	0.18340	0.38367
9	1.59173	-0.25103	4.43501*	-1.5351	3.25804*	4.23487*
10	2.38858*	2.07036*	2.50124*	-0.1878	1.14572	1.24439
11	3.45590*	3.14791*	6.79886*	-0.1429	4.17045*	4.19929*
12	0.74138	1.96313*	2.65659*	1.0684	2.12221*	1.44550

*Significant at .05

The directors seem to be sharing information effectively with the managers. Perceptions as measured by the instrument are widely shared between these two groups across all but one of the 12 dimensions. Problems appear to exist, however, between the administrators and directors, and between the managers and supervisors. Between the two pairings there is disagreement over nine of the 12 dimensions measured.

It is noteworthy that all pairings except the Managers-Directors show disagreement on the perceived level of motivation and the fairness of rewards. Whereas not much can be said of the absolute measures within the various groups, the extent of the disagreement between groups supports the employee feelings uncovered by the researchers.

DISCUSSION

The existence of significant differences of opinion between various levels of management regarding the status of organizational functioning strongly suggests weaknesses in the firm's communication system. This at least opens the way for speculation that organizational members do not have the information Sussman feels they need to function effectively. And if they do not have the quality of information with which to function effectively, the communication-satisfaction literature suggests they may be dissatisfied.

Certainly many of symptoms and responses uncovered initially by the researchers are indicative of a great deal of dissatisfaction. Perhaps we can invoke the conclusions of Baird and Bradley which suggest that the feelings of the employees are tied to a lack of superior-subordinate communication. In Sussman's scenario, the respondents are functioning (negatively) in accordance with their perceptions (negative) of their role in the organization.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings of the current study lend further support for the connection between communication and satisfaction. Conversely, from an Organizational Development perspective, the literature offers a suggestion of causation for the current findings. It remains, of course, to test such causation by manipulating the communication system and measuring the impact on employee feelings and perceptions of organizational functioning.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

RESEARCH ON CONTENT OF THE BASIC BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSE (AND RELATED ISSUES)

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ABSTRACT

Two-thirds of the 622 schools responding to a fall 1983 business communication survey of post-secondary schools required a business communication course. Less than one-third of these schools required business English. Business communication was offered most frequently at the sophomore level. Respondents indicated that in a first course in business communication the most emphasis should be given to communication fundamentals, letters and memos, and report writing. The respondents believed the least emphasis should be given to communication theory, organizational communication, oral communication, communication technology, and related topics (ethics, non-verbal communication, and intercultural communication).

INTRODUCTION

During fall 1983 a business communication survey of 4,658 post-secondary schools was conducted. The purposes of this survey were as follows:

1. To determine the status of business communication.

2. To seek the opinions of business communication faculty members on content emphasis and supplementary materials for a first course in business communication.

South-Western Publishing Company facilitated the survey by printing the questionnaires and mailing them to the post-secondary schools on its mailing list.

A copy of the survey instrument is shown in the Appendix.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

There were 622 respondents to the census survey. As shown in Table I, the four major categories of post-secondary schools were represented.

Table I. Business Communication Survey Responses

Type of School	Number of Questionnaires Mailed	Number of Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Community/Junior Colleges	1009	206	33.1%
Four-Year Colleges/ Universities	1342	203	32.6%
Post-Secondary Vocational Schools	606	59	9.5%
Private Business Colleges/ Schools	1701	103	16.6%
Other	0	51	8.2%
Total	4658	622	100.0%

The survey results presented in this report are based on the 622 responses represented in Table I. Inferences from these data may have some unintentional bias due to the non-random nature of the sample in this census survey; however, the size and proportional representation of the response received provides informative data. A summary analysis of the detailed data secured appears in this report.

FINDINGS

The findings of the survey reveal for the respondent schools the status of business communication instruction and related information.

Types of Schools

Approximately one-third of the respondents represented Community/ Junior Colleges, one third represented Four-Year Colleges/Universities, and one-third represented Post-Secondary Vocational Schools, Private Business Colleges/Schools, and an "Other" category.

Enrollments

One half (53.2 percent) of the respondent schools had enrollments of less than 2,000 students. The other half of the schools' enrollment was distributed from 2,000 to 15,000 or more students. Over 20 percent of the schools had enrollments of 5,000 or more students.

Business Communication Requirement

About two-thirds (64.1 percent) of the schools required a business communication course. Another 13.2 percent offered business communication on an elective basis. While the percentages of schools requiring a business communication course ranged from 59.6 percent for Four-Year Colleges/Universities to 72.9 percent for Post-Secondary Vocational Schools, there appeared to be no significant differences among the types of schools as to the percentage requiring a course.

Business Communication Enrollments

Average annual enrollments in the business communication courses ranged from less than 50 students to over 3,000 students. More than half of the schools (53.7 percent) had average annual enrollments of less than 50, two-thirds (68.5 percent) had less than 100, one-fourth (26.5 percent) between 200 and 750, and five percent had enrollments over 750.

Business Communication Textbooks Used

Some 121 different business communication textbooks were used by the schools responding to the survey. Those textbooks with more than 2.5 percent of the total adoptions were as follows:

Robertson and Perkins, Effective Correspondence for Colleges
Himstreet and Baty, Business Communications
Lesikar, Basic Business Communication
Wolf, Keyser, and Aurner, Effective Communication in Business
Stewart and Zimmer, College English and Communication
Murphy and Peck, Effective Business Communication
Sigband and Bateman, Communicating Through Letters
Wilkinson, Clarke, and Wilkinson, Communicating Through Letters and Reports
Poe and Fruehling, Business Communication: A Problem Solving Approach
Treece, Communication for Business and the Professions

The listed textbooks account for about one-half (48.3 percent) of the total adoptions.

Business English Requirement

Less than one-third (29.7 percent) of the respondent schools required a business English course. Another 5.1 percent of the schools offered business English on an elective basis.

Four-Year Colleges/Universities (5.9 percent) were the least likely to require business English, whereas Post-Secondary Vocational Schools (57.6 percent) and Private Business Colleges/Schools (67.0 percent) were most likely to require such a course. About one-fourth of the Community/Junior Colleges (27.7 percent) required business English.

Business English Enrollments

In the schools that offered business English courses, the enrollments were relatively low. Over three-fourths of the schools offering business English had average annual enrollments of less than 50 students. Almost all the schools had annual enrollments less than 500.

Business English Textbooks Used

Some 77 different business English textbooks were used by the respondent schools. Of these 77, only four textbooks were each adopted by more than 2.5 percent of the schools which responded. These four textbooks, which account for a total of 39.6 percent of all adoptions, are the following:

Barry, Business English for the 80's
Burtness, Effective English for Colleges
Stewart and Zimmer, College English and Communication
Sabin, Gregg Reference Manuals and Worksheets

Two-thirds of the respondents to the survey (66.2 percent) did not indicate a business English textbook, the reason being that many schools do not offer business English as a separate course.

Grade Level for Basic Business Communication Course

The grade level at which the basic business communication course was most frequently offered by the respondent schools is as follows:

Grade Level	Percent Offering	Type of Institution
Freshman	47.6%	Private Business College/School
Freshman	45.8%	Post-Secondary Vocational School
Sophomore	55.8%	Community/Junior College
Junior	40.4%	Four-Year College/University

Overall, approximately one-third of the schools (30.9 percent) offered basic business communication most frequently at the sophomore level.

Availability of Microcomputers

At the time of the survey, about three-fourths of the schools (72.2 percent) had microcomputers available to the department in which business communication was taught. There were no significant differences among the types of schools as to which ones had microcomputers and which ones did not.

For the Four-Year Colleges/Universities and Community/Junior Colleges, the order of most frequent availability was Apple II, IBM Personal, and Radio Shack TRS-80 Model III. For the Post-Secondary Vocational Schools and Private Business Colleges/Schools, the order was Apple II, Radio Shack, and IBM Personal.

Overall, over half of the schools (55.3 percent) had one or more Apple II, 43.7 percent one or more Radio Shack, 41.2 percent one or more IBM Personal Computer, and 33.8 percent one or more Commodore Pet.

Current Use of Microcomputers in Business Communication Instruction

Over one-third of the schools (35.4 percent) indicated that although microcomputers were available for business communication instruction they were not used for that purpose.

Those using microcomputers used them as follows: 10.8 percent used them for computer assisted instruction, 28.8 percent for word processing/text editing, and 3.7 percent for other purposes. There were no significant differences among the types of schools in the way microcomputers were used in business communication instruction.

Potential Use of Microcomputers in Business Communication Instruction

Over half of the school responses indicated that microcomputers could be used effectively in business communication instruction if appropriate software were available. The use most often selected (60.9 percent) was word processing/text editing. Also, using microcomputers for computer assisted instruction was selected by 51.3 percent. Other uses were indicated by 8.8 percent such as checking spelling, sentence construction, etc. There were no significant differences among the responses of the various types of schools as to how microcomputers could be used in business communication instruction.

Content Emphasis in a First Course in Business Communication

Overall, respondents indicated that in a first course in business communication the most emphasis should be given to communication fundamentals, letters and memos, and report writing. Least emphasis was indicated by the most respondents for communication theory, organizational communication, oral communication, communication technology, and related topics (ethics, nonverbal communication, and intercultural communication).

The Post-Secondary Vocational Schools and Private Business Colleges/Schools placed heaviest emphasis on business English while Community/Junior Colleges and Four-Year Colleges/Universities tended to rate business English lower.

Importance of Instructional Aids

All schools tended to rank the Teacher's Manual as the most important instructional aid.

Over three-fourths of the schools (79.1 percent) ranked the Teacher's Manual as an important or very important instructional aid. The Student Workbook was ranked important or very important by 53.7 percent, Audio-Visual Aids by 59.1 percent, and Microcomputer Software by 42.4 percent.

Four-year Colleges/Schools ranked the importance of Student Workbooks low (only 27.1 percent thought them important or very important), whereas over two-thirds of the other types of schools thought Student Workbooks were important or very important.

Other than the Private Business Schools/Colleges at 43.7 percent, over half of all the other types of schools thought Audio-Visual Aids important or very important. (The range was from 55.9 percent to 69.0 percent).

Post-Secondary Vocational Schools were most interested in Microcomputer Software as an instructional aid. Over half of them (59.3 percent) thought Microcomputer Software was important or very important. About 40 percent of the other types of schools ranked Microcomputer Software as important or very important.

CONCLUSION

Business communication instruction is an extensive offering in post-secondary schools. Whereas there is considerable agreement on the appropriate content emphasis in a first course in business communication, wide variation in instructional materials is evidenced by the more than 100 textbooks used. Microcomputers will play an increasing role in business communication in the future.

SOUTH-WESTERN PUBLISHING CO.

5101 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH 45227
Telephone: 513-271-8811

October, 1983

WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL
DOING IN BUSINESS
COMMUNICATION?

Your advice is needed! The development of new, high-quality learning materials in business communication is one of our top priorities at this time. By sharing information about your school's business communication offerings, you can help determine the direction of our texts in years to come.

You are the only person in your school who has received the enclosed questionnaire. If you need information from other teachers for responses to some of the questions, please consult with them as necessary. If you are not currently teaching business communication and someone else at your school is in a better position to complete the questionnaire, please encourage that person to respond.

To receive a copy of the results of this survey, just include your name and address on the last page of the survey form. Please return the form in the enclosed postage-paid envelope as soon as possible. Information about your school's courses will be counted in the results if we receive your information by December 1.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely

Linda A. Sullivan
College/University Department

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

(1) Please circle the number which represents the title that best describes your school or college.

1 Community/Junior College
2 Four-Year College/University
3 Post-Secondary Vocational School
4 Private Business College/School
5 Other_____

(2) Please circle the number which represents the undergraduate student enrollment at your school or college.

1 Fewer than 2,000
2 2,000 - 4,999
3 5,000 - 9,999
4 10,000 - 14,999
5 15,000 or more

For Questions 3 through 6, please provide information for each communication course that business students at your school/college are required to take or may elect to take:.

(3) Business Communication

/__/ Required /__/ Elective	Text(s) Used: (Title and author[s])	Main reasons text(s) selected:
Average Annual Enrollment Last Three Years _____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____

(4) Business English

/__/ Required /__/ Elective	Text(s) Used: (Title and author[s])	Main reasons text(s) selected:
Average Annual Enrollment Last Three Years _____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____

(5) Other Communication Course (Course Name)_____

/__/ Required /__/ Elective	Text(s) Used: (Title and author[s])	Main reasons text(s) selected:
Average Annual Enrollment Last Three Years _____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____

(6) Other Communication Course (Course Name)_____

/__/ Required /__/ Elective	Text(s) Used: (Title and author[s])	Main reasons text(s) selected:
Average Annual Enrollment Last Three Years _____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____	[1]_____ [2]_____ [3]_____

(7) Please indicate the grade level at which your school's/college's Basic Business Communication course is most often taken.

1 Freshman
2 Sophomore
3 Junior
4 Senior
5 Not offered as a separate course

For Questions 8 through 12, please indicate the number of microcomputers of each brand which is available to your department.

	Brand	None	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	Over 20
(8)	Apple II	1	2	3	4	5
(9)	Commodore 64	1	2	3	4	5
(10)	IBM Personal	1	2	3	4	5
(11)	Radio Shack TRS-80, Model III	1	2	3	4	5
(12)	Other_____	1	2	3	4	5

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(13) If microcomputers are available to your department, please indicate how they are currently being used in business communication instruction. (Please check all that apply.)

/__/ Available, but not used
/__/ Not available
/__/ Used for computer assisted instruction
/__/ Used as word processors/text editors
/__/ Other uses: _____

_____

(14) Please indicate how you think microcomputers could be used effectively in business communication instruction if appropriate software programs were available.

/__/ Could not be used effectively
/__/ Used for computer assisted instruction
/__/ Used as word processors/text editors
/__/ Other uses: _____

_____

For Questions 15 through 24, indicate the percentage of content emphasis that each topic listed should have in a first course in business communication instruction.

	Content Topics	Percent Emphasis
(15)	Communication Theory (information theory, communication process models, behavioral concepts, etc.)	_____
(16)	Organizational Communication (organizational characteristics, communication flow in organizations, leadership and power, etc.)	_____
(17)	Communication Fundamentals (writing guides, you-viewpoint, barriers, etc.)	_____
(18)	Business Letter and Memorandum Writing (good news/bad news letters and memos, employment letters and resumes, etc.)	_____
(19)	Business Report Writing (research methodology, organization of reports, graphic aids, etc.)	_____
(20)	Oral Communication (presentation principles, conducting and participating in meetings, dictation, etc.)	_____
(21)	Business English (grammar, punctuation, mechanics, etc.)	_____
(22)	Communication Technology (word processing, electronic communication, teleconferencing and videoconferencing, etc.)	_____
(23)	Related Content Topics (communication ethics, nonverbal communication, intercultural communication, etc.)	_____
(24)	Other_____	_____
		100%

PLEASE BE SURE YOUR PERCENTAGES TOTAL 100%

For Questions 25 through 29, please circle the number which represents the importance of each of the following instructional aids:

	Instructional Aids	IMPORTANCE: Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
(25)	Teacher's Manual (suggested teaching procedures, answers to text questions, test questions, etc.)	1	2	3	4
(26)	Student Workbook (review questions, application exercises, blank stationery, etc.)	1	2	3	4
(27)	Audio-Visual Aids (transparencies, slides, flip charts, etc.)	1	2	3	4
(28)	Microcomputer Software (computer assisted instruction, test questions, application exercises, etc.)	1	2	3	4
(29)	Other_____	1	2	3	4

(30) Comments: _____

_____

_____

If you would like to receive a copy of the results of this survey, please complete this section.

Name	Title	Telephone	
College/School			
Address	City	State	Zip Code

NOTE: Please return the completed questionnaire to Mrs. Linda Sullivan, Marketing Manager, College/University Department, South-Western Publishing Company, 5101 Madison Road, Cincinnati, OH 45227. (A postage-paid envelope is enclosed.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louiaiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES IN LOUISIANA

Lillian W. Clarke, Southern University at New Orleans

ABSTRACT

Most business communication courses are neither so comprehensive nor so basic as they should be. These courses neither give students the adequate foundation in grammar they should have received prior to entering college nor expand the student's knowledge to include new communication theory.

The results of this study indicated that the business communication content in existing textbooks is inadequate to meet the needs of developing transformations in business communication.

A major implication of the study is that business communication content is dynamic and is evolving along with changes in business and government.

INTRODUCTION

Business communication is the process essential for the completion of all organizational and personal transactions. As organizations change and become more complex, as the technological revolution evolves and becomes more pervasive, and as governmental regulations become more intricate and factious, the need for new and more effective processes and skills of communication in the rapidly changing environment intensifies. Currently, debate regarding recognition of these changes is reflected in the perceived shortcomings and inadequacies of business communication courses as they are taught in schools, colleges, and universities in the United States.

PROBLEM

This study was undertaken to ascertain trends in business communication subject matter that would possibly lead to improved methods of teaching business communication while simultaneously providing greater relevance to today's business world. The problem seems to be that most communication courses are neither so comprehensive nor so basic as they should be. These courses neither give students the adequate foundation

in grammar they should have received prior to entering college, nor do they expand the student's knowledge to include new communication theories.

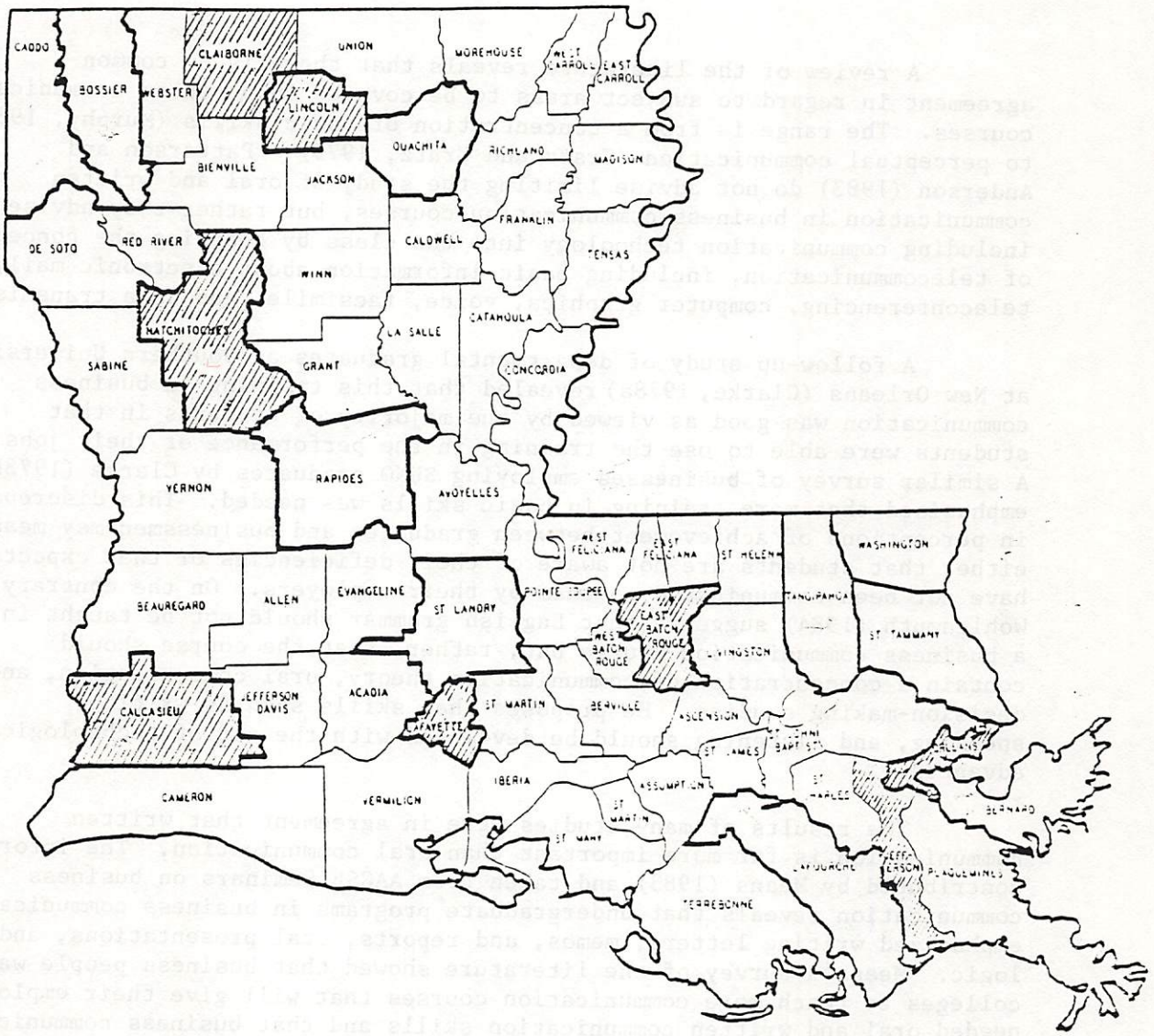
Presently, business communication is a required course in the core of almost every collegiate school of business in the United States (Hewing, 1980). The diversity of material suggested by writers in the field and by the multiplicity of textbooks leads to the question of what topics should be considered in a course that is required for all business majors. After outlining the methodology and presenting a review of the literature, the study will then be directed toward accomplishing these purposes:

1. To determine what topics should be included in the contents,
2. To determine what topics are currently being covered,
3. To report the preferred order of presentation of topics,
4. To reveal which topics should receive the greatest degree of importance in grading, and
5. To determine whether the material studied at Southern University at New Orleans (SUNO) is in agreement with generally accepted practices.

METHODOLOGY

A limited-choice response scale was administered to business communication teachers attending the 1983 Louisiana Association of Business Educators Conference held in Baton Rouge at a round-table discussion which I conducted. A 30-item questionnaire organized under a three-category structure was designed for spontaneous responses. The number of items was limited in order to minimize the amount of time consumed by respondents. Although only 10 teachers completed the questionnaires, they represented the entire state in terms of geographic area. A map showing the areas covered by the study appears as Figure 1.

The affiliations of respondents were divided equally among both post-secondary and secondary institutions. Telephone interviews were conducted with five teachers in Orleans Parish and five teachers in Jefferson Parish as part of the 20 total number of respondents. All the teachers surveyed teach or have taught courses in business communication. Since all categories of respondents were small, responses were combined for reporting purposes. Consequently, the data will not reflect the differences in responses and cannot, therefore, be generalized to the larger population, but the data do have valid implications for Louisiana and may be viewed as a microcosm of the status of business communication courses in the nation.



Note: The shaded areas on this map of Louisiana represent the parishes containing the institutions surveyed in this study of business communication course contents.

Figure 1. Louisiana Parishes Containing Surveyed Institutions

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature reveals that there is no common agreement in regard to subject areas to be covered in business communication courses. The range is from a concentration of basic skills (Murphy, 1982) to perceptual communication (Gratz and Gratz, 1979). Patterson and Anderson (1983) do not advise limiting the study of oral and written communication in business communication courses, but rather they advise including communication technology into the class by teaching the concept of telecommunication, including basic information about electronic mail, teleconferencing, computer graphics, voice, facsimile, and data transmission.

A follow-up study of departmental graduates at Southern University at New Orleans (Clarke, 1978a) revealed that this training in business communication was good as viewed by the majority of students in that students were able to use the training in the performance of their jobs. A similar survey of businesses employing SUNO graduates by Clarke (1978b) emphasized that more training in basic skills was needed. This discrepancy in perceptions of achievement between graduates and businessmen may mean either that students are not aware of their deficiencies or that expectations have not been communicated to them by their employers. On the contrary, Wohlgamuth (1984) suggests that English grammar should not be taught in a business communication course but, rather, that the course should contain a concentration of communication theory, oral communication, and decision-making studies. He proposes that skills such as writing, speaking, and listening should be developed with the aid of technological advances.

The results of many studies were in agreement that written communication is far more important than oral communication. The information contributed by Means (1983) and taken from AACSB Seminars on business communication reveals that undergraduate programs in business communication emphasized writing letters, memos, and reports, oral presentations, and logic. Means's survey of the literature showed that business people want colleges to teach more communication courses that will give their employees needed oral and written communication skills and that business communication educators are increasingly concerned with meeting these needs. These conclusions closely match those of an American Business Communication Association *ad hoc* committee to which Means refers.

The earlier findings of Glassman and Farley (1979) conform to Means's study in that respondents consistently ranked topics relating to written communication higher than those in the oral communication area. In 1983, Johnson surveyed faculty members at an AACSB accredited school and found that they wanted students to take two courses in business communication. He pointed out that the AACSB curriculum standard (1982) specifies that business programs shall consist of a study of . . . . interpersonal communications. The faculty of East Texas State University also placed written communication above oral communication in order of importance in a business communication course. They recommended that the basics of letter writing and report writing, nonverbal communications, listening techniques, and preparing for the job interview must continue

to be integral parts of the first course in communication, and that a second-semester course must be made available to the business students to study advanced communication concepts such as decision-making, working with small and large groups, and conducting meetings and conferences, and other such topics.

Talbert (1982) gives even more attention than other writers to specifics of written communication than to oral communication. In developing a competency-based line of vocational training in business and office education, Talbert devised programs which included topics for Business English such as the following: grammar; punctuation; abbreviation; capitalization; developing paragraphs; using reference materials; composing business letters, short memos, correspondence, and reports; developing bibliographies; demonstrating oral conversation skills; using positive body language; developing listening skills; and solving communication problems.

A survey by Stine and Sharzewski (1979) of business executives and Iowa State faculty members showed that teachers generally agreed with business executives with only few exceptions. The results of their survey seemed to affirm that, although many of the business communication educators were generally teaching and emphasizing the writing material, those who concentrate only on short forms and who neglect reports are not fully preparing their students for the business world. Business executives seemed to agree on two important points: (1) clarity, conciseness, organization, grammar, and spelling are the most important basic skills; and (2) letters, memos, and reports are the most important business forms.

The survey also demonstrated a strong support from business executives and educators for classroom emphasis on mechanical correctness. Many professors responding to the survey saw a need for advanced writing courses merely to repeat or rehash freshman composition courses. The authors noted that this is a disturbing attitude, but it is one which a considerable number of business executives seem to share. Why worry about teaching such material as letter formats, you-attitude, and communication theory to students who cannot spell or write a coherent sentence? Business executives also recommended tough grading standards for grammar and spelling.

Dorrell and Johnson (1982) examined 20 textbooks to try to provide a rationale for textbook evaluation. Areas to be examined were the major and minor topics in 20 selected college-level business communication textbooks. The emphasis given to each topic was derived from the percentage of total space in which the author developed the topic. The reading level was presented for each text. Finally, an attempt was made to classify texts by potential target area. The table of contents in the textbooks was examined, and all topics covered were listed. From the list, the following broad categories emerged: letter writing; report writing, principles of writing; and mechanics and theory. In an analysis of the minor topics treated in the communication texts analyzed, these subjects emerged frequently: listening, dictation, nonverbal communication, and electronic communication. Other minor topics which occurred in fewer than half the books analyzed included international communication, nonsexist language, ability to cope with change, proposal writing, and legal aspects of communication. The researchers then classified the textbooks according to academic level.

Although there seems to be no consistent agreement about topics of business communication courses, there does tend to be more concurrence in the view that written communication should be given a thorough study and that business communication students should master basic grammar techniques before proceeding to a study of other communications tools.

FINDINGS

This section contains findings relevant to the topics which should be included in a business communication course, topics currently being covered, preferred order of presentation of topics, topics which should receive the greatest degree of emphasis in grading, and findings which coincide with the courses taught at SUNO.

1. Ninety percent of the teachers surveyed indicated that greater emphasis should be placed on editing written documents. Eighty percent thought that more concentration should be placed on training students in listening skills. Table I shows the percentage of respondents who listed topics which should be emphasized in a business communication course but which are not presently being studied. (Respondents to the survey used various textbooks.)

Table I. Topics Not Included in Business Communication Courses

Topics	Percent Not Included
Recycling of letters	90%
Listening skills	80
Reports on careers	40
Library skills	20
Human relations	20
Personality and attitudes	20
Non-verbal communication	20

2. Twenty percent of the respondents surveyed indicated that library skills, human relations skills, personality and attitude traits, and nonverbal communication should be studied. Forty percent indicated that more reports on careers were needed. The survey also showed that these topics are currently being handled through library assignments and oral and written reports.

3. Table II reveals topics which are currently being covered in business communication courses which are taught by the respondents. Grammar receives emphasis in all courses. Paragraph writing, letter writing, report writing, job application letters, and oral presentation are covered in 90 percent of courses. Memos, formal reports, and wearing apparel are treated in 80 percent of the courses, whereas telephone techniques are studied in 70 percent of the courses. The high percentages of yes answers indicate that there is similarity in the content of business communication courses for all respondents.

Table II. Current Business Communication Topics

Topics	Yes	No	N/A[a]
Grammar	100%	0	0
Paragraph writing	90%	10%	0
Letter writing	90%	10%	0
Short report writing	90%	0	10%
Job-application series	90%	10%	0
Oral presentation	90%	0	10%
Memorandum writing	80%	20%	0
Formal reports	80%	10%	10%
Wearing apparel[b]	80%	10%	10%
Telephone techniques	70%	20%	10%

Note. n = 20.
[a]Percent of respondents not responding to this query.
[b]Indicates study of accepted professional attire needed for business purposes.

4. Respondents reported that grammar and paragraph writing should be presented first. Equal responses indicated that these topics should be studied before going on to other areas. Table III displays the preferred order in which the topics may be presented and their rankings according to respondents.

5. Many of the respondents thought that grammar, letter writing, and oral presentation should receive the greatest emphasis in grading. Paragraph writing, telephone techniques, and job-application materials received the next highest rankings. Table IV gives the rankings showing the areas which received the greatest emphasis in grading.

6. A comparison of the contents of the course at SUNO with percentages in Table II reveals that "Telephone techniques" are a part of 70 percent of the courses taught by respondents, but it is not a topic included in the courses at SUNO. The textbook currently being used in the business communication courses at SUNO is Communicating in Business: Key to Success by Bonner (1983). Communication theory and dictation are investigated at SUNO, whereas these areas are not explored in other courses not using this textbook. All other topics previously discussed in this paper are covered in courses taught by respondents and in the business communication courses at SUNO.

7. Of the topics listed in Table I, only recycling of letters is included in the courses at SUNO. Written work is returned to students at least once, and students may also have their work checked in the Writing Center before submitting it for grading. The preferred order of emphasis and the preferred order of grading at SUNO are in agreement with the rankings shown in Tables III and IV.

Table III. Preferred Order of Presentation

Topics	Rankings 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Row totals
Grammar	6										6
Paragraph writing	6										6
Oral presentation		1	2							2	5
Memorandum writing			3	1				1			5
Telephone techniques				2	1				1		4
Short report				2	1	1					4
Letter writing					5						5
Job-application series						4		1			5
Wearing apparel							3	2			5
Interviewing							3	2			5
Report writing									4		4
Library skills										4	4

Note. The total number of responses for each topic is shown in the row totals column.

Table IV. Preferred Order of Emphasis

Topics	Rankings 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Row totals
Grammar	4										4
Letter writing	2		1		1						4
Oral presentation	2	2	1								5
Paragraph writing		2	1	1							4
Telephone techniques			1	2	1						4
Job-application series				3		1					4
Wearing apparel						3	1				4
Memorandum writing							1	2			3
Report writing								1	1		2
Library skills										3	3
Human relations										3	3

Note. The total number of responses for each topic is shown in the row totals column.

CONCLUSION

Results of the survey and a review of the literature showed that there is disagreement about the content needed in business communication courses. Although the study showed agreement among respondents that grammar and paragraph writing are important, there was no general consensus about the order in which other topics should be presented after an initial review of grammar and paragraph writing. Neither was there agreement about the topics which should be covered. Most did agree that grades should depend heavily on techniques of English grammar.

The lack of agreement and the limited number of responses given to the problems of order of presentation of topics and the grading procedures indicated perhaps that teachers do not have firm opinions about these categories. The problems of sequencing the subject matter and grading need further study.

There was agreement that teaching materials should be supplemented by library references, but that a comprehensive textbook geared to the level of the student is the best tool. The results of the survey suggest that textbooks currently being used need improving and refining if they are to meet the expectations of the teachers using them.

Since most courses emphasize written communication, this stress may exclude the study of many important communication techniques--techniques such as large and small group communication, technological communication, conflict resolution, and decision-making. The question of whether or not one course can adequately address developing changes in communication needs to be examined. There is a need to replicate this study to determine whether these findings are similar in other parts of the country.

Finally, a major implication of the study is that business communication content is not static, but is evolving along with changes in business and government. As a result of this finding, I believe that new content will continually be reviewed and assimilated. Possibly, this will lead teachers to examine the course, to conduct research, and to improve the training being given to students who need these important communication tools in the business world.

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ABCA-SE 1984

To err is human; to really foul things up requires a computer.

--Bill Vaughan

High Technology

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey·
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

THE RETAIL LEASE VERSUS PURCHASE DECISION: A HIGH TECHNOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Marketing managers have a significant opportunity cost decision to consider with respect to the kind of sophisticated, ever-changing equipment that can help them remain competitive. Physical distribution, market research, promotion management, customer service, inventory, and billing are just a few of the myriad of necessary applications which require attention in today's marketplace. The decision requires an investigation of available technology, its limitations and its potential. In addition, marketers must consider whether their organizations can afford or can afford not to generate necessary funds to obtain this equipment. These issues have become manager specific and must be considered strategic marketing decisions. They can no longer simply be reduced to financial analysis without first making certain that all salient acquisition variables have been enumerated.

INTRODUCTION

Early records of lease transactions occurred as far back in history as 2000 B.C. Agriculture, maritime, and land agreements were most prominent through the 1400 B.C. period (Clark, 1978). Leasing developed into an industry during the post World War Two period. Among variables which made leasing attractive were a lack of liquidity and a need for additional means of production. Through the 1950s, the principal lessors were American Telephone and Telegraph Company and International Business Machines Corporation (Pritchard & Hindelang, 1980).

Exponentially increasing demands for gathering, managing, analyzing, receiving, and sending information require today's retailer to select and efficiently to use high technology business solutions if he or she wants to remain competitive. The decisions require a more complete investigation than return-on-investment calculations.

Whereas both leasing and purchasing have strengths and weaknesses, the decision maker must consider a "best fit" solution of the matrix of possible contributing factors before his or her evaluation can be considered adequate. Should an organization choose a financial lease, operating lease, leveraged lease, or purchase configuration?

The objective of this paper is to assemble essential characteristics relevant to the lease versus purchase choice in the high technology and supersession/obsolescence environment of today's retail decision maker. Further, by integrating qualitative and quantitative aspects, the paper assembles important variables to be considered by each evaluator before he or she chooses an appropriate application for the specific organization.

The need to discuss an eclectic approach is demonstrated by the fact that a retailer can be active in each of four areas simultaneously: operating lease, financial lease, leveraged lease, and purchase. With leases accumulating to $150 billion nationwide and the ability to purchase technology that was previously prohibitive, one must consider more than whether the decision is division or corporate oriented, balance-sheet or income-statement motivated, or whether it is a numerical hurdle-rate calculation. There are characteristics which are unique to each decision and also areas which are common to all. Some depend on another's occurrence and others do not.

LEASE CONFIGURATIONS

Leases fall primarily into three main categories: operating lease, financial lease, and leveraged lease. An operating lease provides that the lessor retains title, rights, and benefits to the equipment as well as assumes the responsibilities associated with ownership. A financial lease provides that the lessor may transfer all rights and responsibilities to the lessee for a period less than the economic life of the asset and provides for purchase options. The leveraged lease is an operating/financial lease hybrid which provides for several parties' participation (Pritchard & Hindelang, 1980). Enumeration of lease configurations appears in Figure 1, Lease-Purchase Decision Tree.

Among proposed advantages of leasing high-technology equipment are (1) financing alternatives and capital formation, (2) lower payments by "pass-through" provisions of investment credits and cost recovery deductions, (3) pre-tax lease payments, (4) 100-percent financing including installation and "bringing up" the system, (5) off-balance-sheet financing, (6) hedging inflation, and (7) circumventing loan covenants. However, each of these areas has a specific meaning only when placed in the financial context of the individual firm and in conjunction with the implications of the Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 13, the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981, and the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982.

SFAS Number 13

The effect of the SFAS No. 13 provisions which require disclosure of lease agreements in financial statements is an important one. Prior to 1973, off-balance sheet accounting was considered to be a strong defense for lease decisions. Although disclosure is required only in footnote form, it has brought the "pre-tax" lease payments into a "post-tax" serial debt reality.

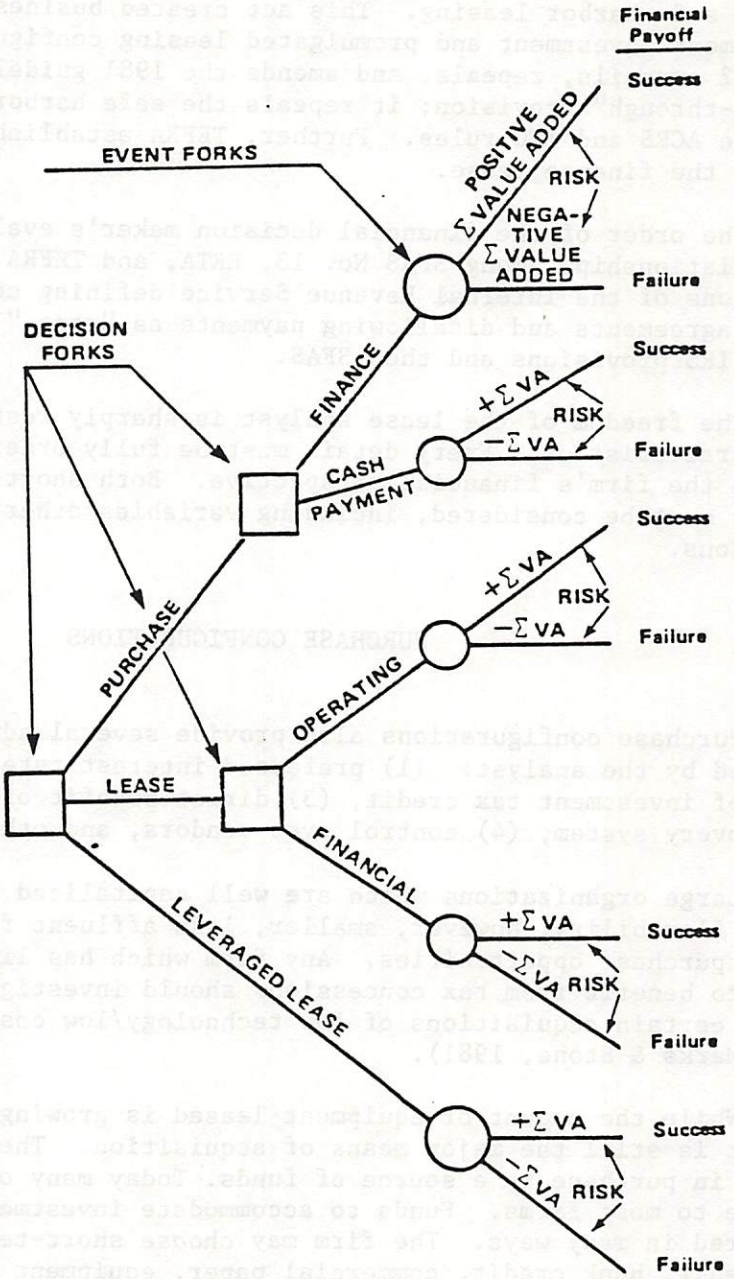

Figure 1. Lease/Purchase Decision Tree

ERTA and TEFRA

Tax provisions of the ERTA 1981 established the Accelerated Cost Recovery System (ACRS), the investment tax credit (ITC), and rules governing safe harbor leasing. This act created business incentives for equipment investment and promulgated leasing configurations. The TEFRA 1982 curtails, repeals, and amends the 1981 guidelines. It curtails the "pass-through" provision; it repeals the safe harbor rules; and it amends the ACRS and ITC rules. Further, TEFRA establishes a new lease category, the finance lease.

The order of the financial decision maker's evaluation is changed by the relationships among SFAS No. 13, ERTA, and TEFRA. Based on the implications of the Internal Revenue Service defining certain leases as purchase agreements and disallowing payments as "rent," one must first consider IRS provisions and then SFAS.

The freedom of the lease analyst is sharply restricted by each of these characteristics. Every detail must be fully ordered, evaluated, and placed in the firm's financial perspective. Both short-run and long-run scenarios must be considered, including variables other than "sharp pencil" calculations.

PURCHASE CONFIGURATIONS

Purchase configurations also provide several advantages to be considered by the analyst: (1) preferred interest rates, (2) direct benefit of investment tax credit, (3) direct benefit of the accelerated cost recovery system, (4) control over vendors, and others.

Large organizations which are well capitalized have greater purchase flexibility; however, smaller, less affluent firms should also consider purchase opportunities. Any firm which has liquidity and the ability to benefit from tax concessions should investigate buying. Further, certain acquisitions of low technology/low cost should not be leased (Marks & Stone, 1981).

While the amount of equipment leased is growing, purchase of equipment is still the major means of acquisition. The principal obstacle in purchase is a source of funds. Today many options are available to most firms. Funds to accommodate investment proposals may be procured in many ways. The firm may choose short-term options of trade credit, bank credit, commercial paper, equipment financing, conditional sales contract, chattel mortgage, bank float, receivables factor, or ordinary term loans, revolving credit, insurance company loans, small business administration loans, equipment financing, or conditional sales contract.

Choosing a high-technology equipment system, whether communication, voice/data, computer, or other is a major decision in any organization. Each available option must be evaluated. The difficulty stems from the fact that included in some vendors' costs are important services that may never appear in a hardware (sale) proposal. To assume that these services

are unimportant or automatically provided by all vendors equally is both dangerous and fallacious. The task of the competent analyst is to enumerate these services and apply a cost or value to each of them. This is an arduous task. Placing a dollar value on services and risk is clearly a stochastic process as well as a practical one. Acquisition decisions should be based on price, value, and cost.

DECISION VARIABLES

The following are variables which must be quantified and expressly evaluated in the common factor lease versus purchase decision in order to determine a true value-added comparison: (1) rate stabilization; (2) installation, moves, and changes; (3) product mix and "growing"; (4) consulting/studies; (5) maintenance; (6) inflation; (7) casualty losses; (8) end-to-end responsibility; (9) longevity; (10) training; (11) financing. Figure 2 illustrates the more global factors to be examined in the lease-purchase choice.

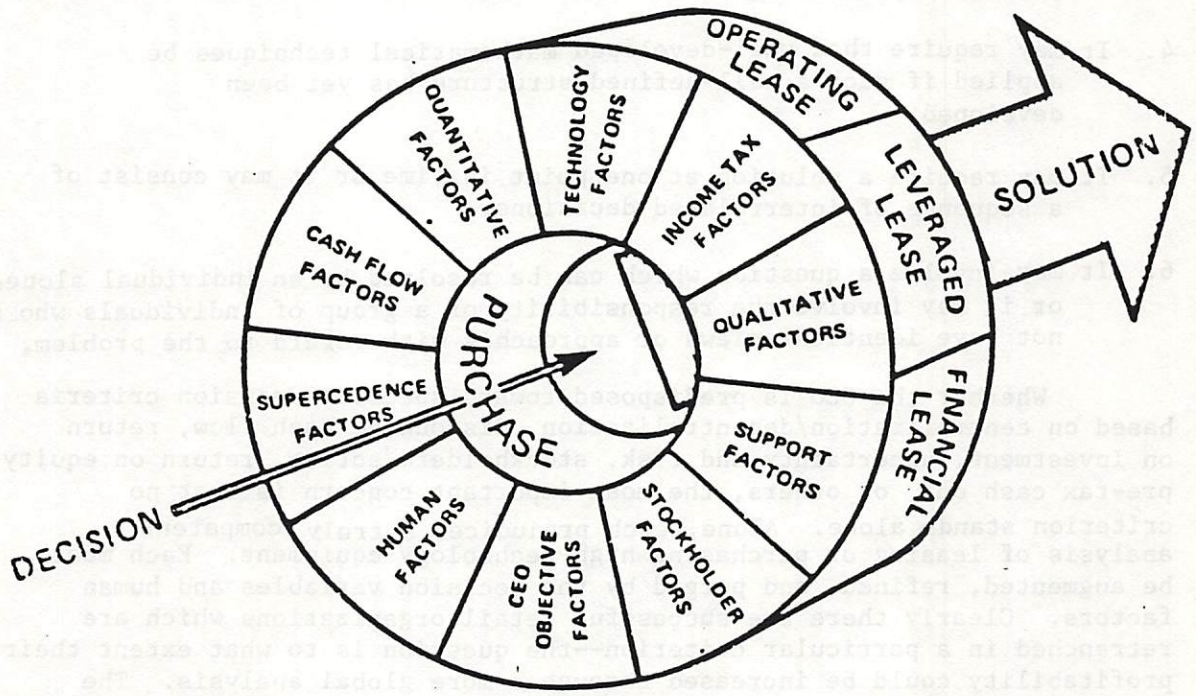

Figure 2. Circular Complement Matrix

When either leasing or purchasing is suspected of having an economic advantage, an evaluation should be made to measure the advantage. When one or the other is chosen regardless of the economics (for example, convenience or other human factors), an analysis is still useful because it measures the effect on the company of selecting a more costly alternative (Vancil, 1970).

Chief Executive Officer's Objective Criteria

Chief Executive Officer's objective criteria also have substantial effects on decision-making environments within the firm. Capital investment policies and philosophy of CEOs generally fall into the following categories:

1. The CEO's position may be routine, well understood, and documented in all of its aspects; or it may require human involvement and judgment at one or more stages in the process.

2. It may involve well-defined quantitative parameters, or it may refer to matters for which numerical values of outcomes are difficult to define.

3. It may be undertaken against a background of certainty in terms of the outcome of any course of action chosen or in the face of uncertainty with regard to future events or the actions of others.

4. It may require that well-developed mathematical techniques be applied if such a well-defined structure has yet been developed.

5. It may require a solution at one point in time or it may consist of a sequence of interrelated decisions.

6. It may involve a question which can be resolved by an individual alone, or it may involve the responsibility of a group of individuals who may not have identical views or approaches with regard to the problem.

Whether the CEO is predisposed toward specific decision criteria based on centralization/decentralization, discounted cash flow, return on investment, uncertainty and risk, stockholders/entity, return on equity, pre-tax cash out, or others, the most important concern is that no criterion stands alone. Alone, each prejudices a truly competent analysis of leasing or purchasing high-technology equipment. Each must be augmented, refined, and purged by the decision variables and human factors. Clearly there are successful retail organizations which are retrenched in a particular criterion--the question is to what extent their profitability could be increased through a more global analysis. The synergy is evidenced not by a change in philosophy but by incorporating heretofore unrealized or ignored characteristics in the evaluation process.

IMPLICATIONS

The retail lease versus purchase decision cast on the high technology milieu of the 1980s--when further complicated by the Financial Accounting Standards Board SFAS No. 13, Economic Recovery Tax Act (1981), and the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982--is a catalyst for a complicated matrix decision. The matrix must be further expanded to include qualitative value-added variables and the chief executive officer's objective criteria.

When the implications of federal tax changes are objectively considered, the monetary outcome (price) between leasing or purchasing is very similar. The greatest difference in cost will be based on the organization's ability to utilize tax advantages and its accurate (and inclusive) quantification of "soft" dollar value-added benefits provided for in the agreements among buyers, sellers, lessees, and lessors.

The popular internal debates of centralized, decentralized, corporate, division, and off-balance-sheet accounting are non-issues in a tax environment which may disallow their outcome at fiscal year end. A proposal that erroneously provides short-run evidence of least cost is not competent. It must (1) provide for, and quantify, all necessary support requirements to the acquisition, and (2) provide evidence of long-run fiscal savings in terms of both tax and efficiency. See Figure 3, Trade-Off Dimensions. These criteria must be evaluated by accomplishing the following:

1. Determine the net federal tax (year-end) impact that the acquisition will have on the firm, not treating off-balance-sheet financing as rental payments only to have them ruled long-term serial debt under tax provisions.

2. Clearly evaluate "pass-through" contract provisions. Are the benefits substantially reflected in lower payments in a lease arrangement? Some retailers have established standard financial procedures which prohibit consideration of a lease that does not fully forward the entire benefit.

3. Identify all necessary "hard" and "soft" support costs. These characteristics <u>will</u> be required and are rarely mentioned and almost never quantified by vendors. It is insufficient for vendors, lease or sale, to give "blanket" confidence such as, "We provide for . . . and if you are going to bet on the future, bet on us." Ask them to quantify their value added in terms of cost, benefit, and revenue.

4. Enumerate all sources of possible capital and their actual as well as opportunity costs. What typically appears to be a favorable cost of capital may well turn out to be hidden in higher acquisition costs or absence of required services, software, etc.

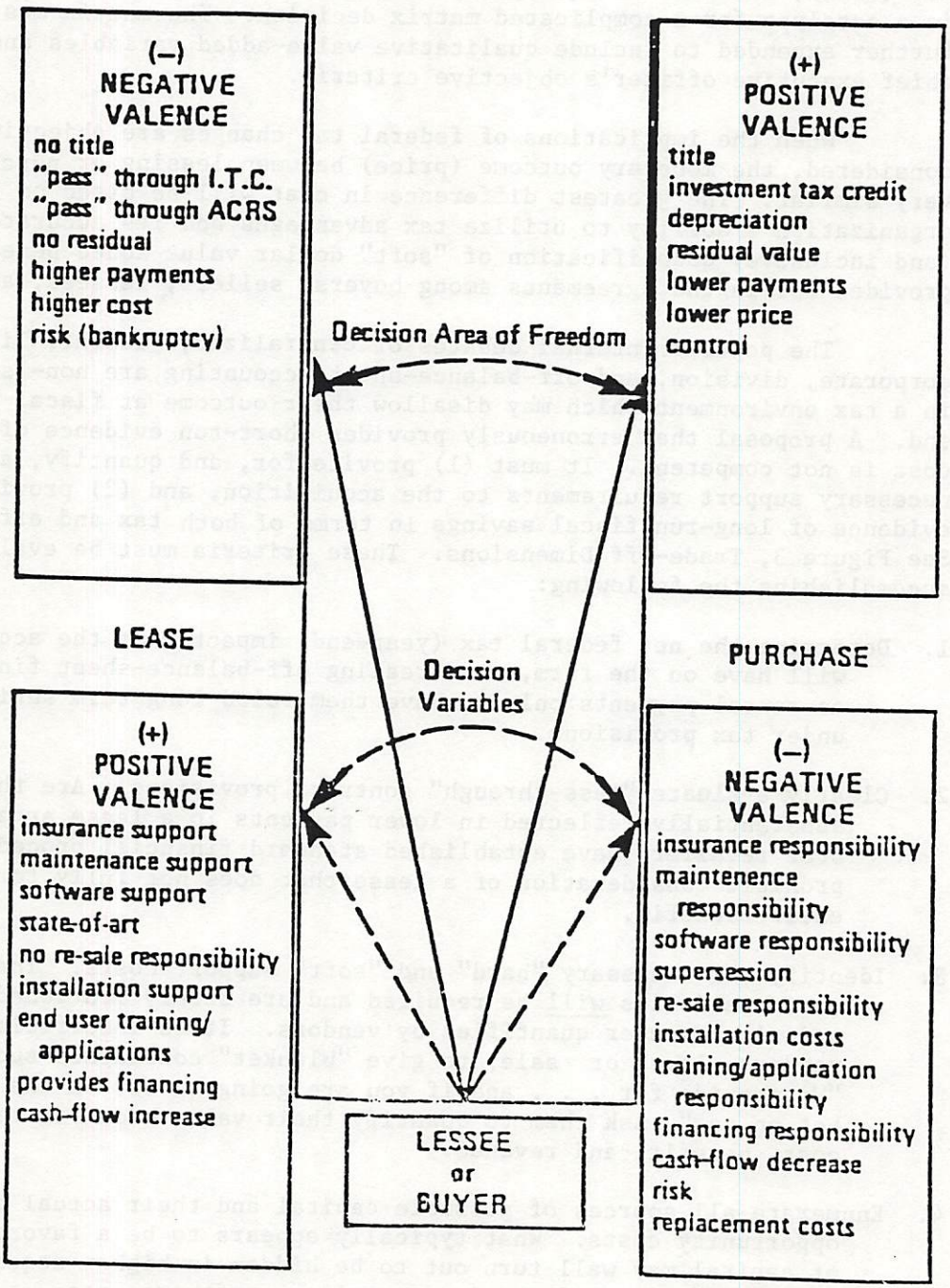

Figure 3. Trade-Off Dimensions

5. Identify the chief executive officer's philosophy. Treat it as a synergy to the myraid of other decision variables, not as a prejudice. The CEO objective criteria are based on many years of valuable experience.

6. Be certain to evaluate the difference between obsolescence and supercedence in the high-technology decision. Lack of technological understanding is not sufficient reason to purchase equipment or to be manipulated by a vendor.

Areas one and two are extremely important given recent tax changes; however, given these changes, item three, when clearly delineated will provide the current competent financial difference between lease and purchase configurations.

CONCLUSION

Market managers should not be expected to develop the financial analysis associated with high-technology acquisition. Neither should they ignore the characteristics which must be considered in the analysis process. Technology and its application are elements of effective strategic market management. Therefore, an efficient firm must consider the use of up-to-date equipment that can ensure cost reduction without the loss of quality standards. Remaining competitive in this high-technology environment is complicated by both design and capability improvements which render state-of-the-art equipment obsolete.

The responsibility of the prudent marketing manager should not be to attempt to provide an optimal financial equation or decision hurdle, but rather to make certain that all appropriate variables are examined in order to establish an unbiased basis for the lease/buy decision. The responsibility of the marketing manager, then, is to assemble the implications of the broad issues which should complement the competent financial analysis.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

CLARIFYING TECHNOLOGY: ITS LANGUAGE AND USE

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ABSTRACT

The subject of technology is widely used today, but often misunderstood. Technology has been with us for the life of humankind but is becoming very complicated today in providing tools and options to society. Various dimensions and characteristics of technology are explained as they bear on the ways that human capabilities are extended by use of technology. Technology is viewed as neither good nor bad, but subject to the ways in which one uses technology, along with the consequences of that use.

INTRODUCTION

To paraphrase some classic poetry, "technology is too much about us, soon and late . . . ." Technology is variously viewed as a saviour, threat, boon, or curse to mankind. High technology is presented as the ultimate of technology in what is offered to humans to deal with the problems of today and tomorrow.

This paper deals with the language of technology and the related concepts that touch on people living their lives in organizations which attempt to cope with the technological environment. The operating premise is that to deal effectively with technology, one must understand the concept and language of technology. With this understanding one can communicate in ways that will manage technology, rather than have technology manage people.

This material will be presented in sections that address three key questions:

1. What is technology?

2. What is high technology?

3. Can technology be managed?

WHAT IS TECHNOLOGY?

Table I presents an array of definitions of technology. The authors include philosophers, social scientists, engineers, and economists. The common thread is the means by which mankind finds ways to modify the environment to achieve something useful.

Table I. Definitions of Technology

- The organization and application of knowledge for the achievement of practical purposes. It includes physical manifestations such as tools and machines, but also intellectual techniques and processes used in solving problems and obtaining desired outcomes. Kast & Rosenzweig (1979)
- The science of applying information and knowledge to problem-solving situations. Boone & Kurtz (1981)
- The means by which an organization transforms inputs into outputs. Bedeian (1980)
- Knowhow. Drucker (1970)
- Any set of standardized repeatable operations that regularly yield predetermined results. Freeman (1974)
- The totality of methods rationally arrived at and having absolute efficiency in every field of human activity. Ellul (1964)
- That set of processes, tools, methods, procedures, and equipment which are used to produce goods or services. Schroeder (1981)
- The means of transforming raw materials, people, information, and physical materials into desirable goods and services. Perrow (1970)
- The systematic application of scientific or other organized knowledge to practical tasks. Galbraith (1967)
- The process of applying science and knowledge to the affairs of man, especially in transformations, processes, and products used to solve problems. Luchsinger (1983)

Technology comes from the Greek technika which means tool. When one looks at technology, one looks at the history of human development--mankind and tools. Technology provides the options to make better decisions and the tools to improve processes and products.

From the earliest of times, humans have been working to improve their world. The wheel became the "new" technology of the Stone Age; the printing press, the image of the future for the Middle Ages. The present society is called high-tech society, but if one looks at other ages, would they also have considered themselves "high-tech"--meaning those "newfangled gadgets that are changing our lives"?

Technology is not good or bad--it is neutral. Its use by people determines its positive or negative nature. Fire, paper, electricity and buttons are all technologies that have improved life. The clock has been cited as a major device to help bring order, promptness, and some forms of urgency. The clock helps one to be on time but also shows how late one may be in completing a task. Fire warms, yet it burns. Buttons bind clothing together but also break. Bulbs bring light, then burn out. Paper holds the written word but can be smeared. The basic product's use and interpretation are controlled by people.

Perhaps part of the reluctance of accepting technology is that the pace of technology has quickened over time. This acceleration has seriously affected the ability to communicate in interpersonal and organizational settings. This pace can be dramatically portrayed by comparing the 240,000 years of mankind's existence on earth to one hour of time. Fifty-five minutes of that hour are spent in Paleolithic (Old Stone Age) culture. Then:

> Five minutes ago [the Stone Age man] embarked upon the neolithic culture in the cultivation of plants, the domestication of animals, the making of pottery, weaving, and the use of the bow and arrow; 3.5 minutes ago he began the working of copper; 2.5 minutes ago he began to mold bronze; 2 minutes ago he learned to smelt iron; 1/4 minute ago he learned printing; 5 seconds ago the Industrial Revolution began; 3.3 seconds ago he learned to apply electricity; and the time he has had the automobile is less than the interval between the ticks of a watch, i.e., less than one second. (Wallis, 1962, p. 10)

Many myths and misunderstandings have arisen from the rapid pace and increasing impact of technology on people's lives. Freeman (1974) has characterized some of these impacts as

1. Vast power to alter society and affect the environment (as with television, nuclear power and the automobile).

2. Diminishing lead times between initial technological innovation and application, leaving less time for adjustment.

3. Technology having impact on a human population of increasing size, diversity, and differentiation.

4. Increasing concern for decisions to be made with some participation by those affected.

All the preceding concerns highlight the increasing demands placed upon the communication process for influencing innovation, making decisions, and dealing with the effects of these decisions. Further elaboration of the nature of technology for purposes of articulating implications for communication follows.

The definitions in Table I carry implication of process and/or product concern. This discussion will attempt to honor both. For instance, technology could be separated into material and nonmaterial sectors.

1. Material Technology consists of tangible implements, tools, devices, and equipment that extend human ability to deal with the physical environment. This technology is usually derived from scientific or engineering applications. Examples are computers, television, telephones, and digital watches.

2. Nonmaterial Technology consists of the knowledge, processes, and methods that help humans perform better. This technology derives from practice, experience, insight, and the research on improvements and practices. This includes speedreading, double-entry bookkeeping, writing courses, and communication audits.

All things considered, technology extends capability by providing tools and knowhow to help mankind enjoy more options or improved ability to perform. Technology is found in administration, organization, engineering, agriculture, and communication. Interestingly, while technology has vastly improved the capability to communicate, the complex and pervasive impact of technology in the environment keeps threatening the net effectiveness of man's communication.

WHAT IS HIGH TECHNOLOGY?

In addition to the material versus nonmaterial nature of technology, another dimension leaps from the realities of life today. "High-tech" is a label attached to many products and processes of our environment that have an aura of science, exotic and complicated natures, and vague mystery. High technology is characterized by

a. Significant science or engineering content.
b. Technical rigor.
c. Usually a high unit cost.
d. Less human involvement.
e. General material, tangible nature.

Low technologies are characterized by

a. More established or procedural basis.
b. Orientation to operations.
c. Lesser unit cost.
d. More human involvement.
e. Application and derivation; often nonmaterial.

High technology includes integrated circuits, solar panels, fiber-optics, cellular telephones, television, computers and word processors. As a frame of reference, high-tech is usually clustered in the following fields: computers, electronics, medicine (drugs, bio-engineering, etc.), communication, and aerospace.

Low technology includes aluminum bats, plastic chairs, ball-point and fibre-tipped pens, velcro clothes fasteners (replacing buttons), file systems, MBO, ROI, and tubeless tires. In other words, these areas that would not fit into the high-tech category are considered low technology.

Consider the mix of technologies that assist communication: video-cassette recorders, electronic typewriters, electronic filing, micro-computers, electronic calendars, offset printing, correcting ribbons, word processors, copying machines, modems, micro-lead pencils, and electronic paging systems.

These make a formidable array of high and low technologies to assist the communication function. Since the availability of paper, printing, and television, the communication field has been a major benefactor of technology.

CAN TECHNOLOGY BE MANAGED?

Does technology lead or serve society? Much of the concern over technology resides in this issue. Yes, technology can and must be managed. Alvin Toffler (1970) and Peter Drucker (1968), both eminent analysts and writers on the future of society and organizations, have suggested that advanced technology can be harnessed to deal with new and old problems of society.

The challenge of managing technology takes into account the characteristics of interdependence, complexity, and change involved in that challenge. The type of management must be appropriate to the situation. Cleland and King (1983) suggest a form of technology-base for management which deals with relating management to the effective use of technology and technological innovation.

The "relevant technology" may be knowledge-based in an administrative setting, and science or machine based in the R&D or production setting. This technological understanding infers process

as well as subject awareness. In fact, technological awareness and understanding constitute an area where communication plays a vital role.

Peter Drucker has made some telling observations about the relationship of technology and business/management (1981, p. 37):

> Modern business is, to a very considerable extent, the creature of technology.
>
> Business managers have to learn that technology is managerial opportunity and managerial responsibility.
>
> Technology is no more mysterious or unpredictable than developments in the economy or society.

One other view of managing technology deals with issues of organization and the accompanying communication links. According to Perrow (1970), the management task involves organizational technology in

1. The degree of the complexity of the technology.

2. The dimension of dynamism of the technology.

At the same time, Hickson, Pugh, and Pheysey (1969) present an organization technology typology which relates to the technology of work flow and the attendant communication requirement entailed:

1. Operations technology--the equipping and sequencing of the work flow.

2. Materials technology--characteristics of materials used.

3. Knowledge technology--characteristics of knowledge used in the work flow.

The elaboration of factors in the management of technology is directly linked to the communication activity requiring linkage, coordination, and information for the organization.

All technology continues to improve itself; therefore, the name by which it is known also will change. Television and films are being changed by video-cassette recorders; music is no longer only audio but visual as well. In other words, technology has a growth cycle, and this cycle follows the human rhythms of life. In its infancy, the new tool is given much attention. In its adolescence, its presence cannot be ignored; people have a hard time coping with it. There is encroachment into their lives. In its adult stage, the tool is taken for granted and its absence felt more than its presence. And as with the human cycle, each technological tool will have a death cycle and take on a new form--a newer, more elaborate, more high-tech object will take its place.

To deal and cope with the encroachment of high-tech, perhaps along with demystifying its presence and language, one must develop a personal philosophy on how to deal with it. One may decide to take a systems design approach--that is, to believe that technology will make the world better so that its imposition can be accepted. Or one can take a cybernetics approach to see how technology has positioned itself as a control gauge. Or lastly, one can look at technology in a synergistic manner, coalescing and fusing technology into the human value system--seeing it as a new way to live.

In any event, the important issue is to make consciously a decision on how to view technology, to recognize its existence (it has been here all along), and to assimilate it with the value structure. Remembering the human element, one can accept technology as a challenge.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to discuss technology in the context of a communication understanding of the variables of technology. Rather than to permit technology to remain a misunderstood phenomenon, we have tried to collect sources which would explain the nature, uses, and implications of technology to facilitate its communication, understanding, and use.

After all, communication is a technology itself.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS IN PROFESSIONAL WRITING: SYSTEMS THAT ANALYZE AND DESCRIBE NATURAL LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

There are now available two varieties of user-friendly computer systems which can be of considerable help in dealing with natural language (the language we write and speak). Bell Labs and IBM have developed "The Writer's Workbench" and EPISTLE respectively. Both of these are collections of programs which provide at-the-monitor stylistic and grammatic correction of keyed-in writing. The second variety of computer-aided language analysis is typified in programs developed at Oxford University (OCP) and the University of Birmingham (CLOC). These programs can sort, select, and generate statistical data for any written or spoken document.

INTRODUCTION

Nothing written of here requires learning a programming language. Indeed, I recommend against it, unless one is readying to change careers. Find a programmer when a computer software system needs to be tailored to a special need. Fortunately, there are some programs coming available which are highly user-friendly and adaptable and which can be of considerable help in teaching professional writing and in analyzing large quantities of writing. In this last instance, the mass of writing can be the work of a student, a class of students, or a collection of memos, letters, or reports generated by a business firm or industry.

There are two varieties of software systems which can aid in natural language analysis. One is a computer-assisted stylistic and grammatical editor. "The Writer's Workbench" (Bell Laboratories) and EPISTLE (IBM Yorktown Heights Laboratory) are examples of these. The others are called Content Analysis programs, and these describe any written or spoken language by means of versatile sorting functions that select key words or patterns of words in any order. They subsequently can generate statistical data on the word or pattern lists produced.

The Workbench system can work on any computer, large or small, that can handle AT&T's UNIX operating system. Workbench is operating at Colorado State University's School of Business, and the IBM collection

of programs is being tried experimentally at Carnegie-Mellon. At this time, EPISTLE works only on an IBM mainframe. The programs in Content Analysis are available from their English university computer centers and run only on mainframes, but they are not tied to a particular manufacturer. The OCP and CLOC programs require the study of a user's manual, and this takes about 20 hours of study and experimentation. They are used in over 350 colleges and universities around the world. It is the intention of the designers to have the programs eventually suited to the micro computer. This comes nearer to reality as the memory capacity of micros enlarges.

EDITOR PROGRAMS

Over 20 years ago, IBM was devising computer systems to translate Russian. Within this desire to translate language is the presumption that a language can have its functions systematized to the point where they could be put into a computer language. If this can be done, then a natural language text (such as this paper) could be monitored, corrected, and improved as necessary. Like Bell Labs before them, IBM has been working on such programs since 1980. Since EPISTLE has a few additional features over the Workbench programs, it will receive major emphasis here, but the software systems are similar and easy to use.

The long-term objectives of IBM's EPISTLE project are to provide middle-level managers and others, with a variety of applications packages to help with natural language texts. The project is focused on providing critiques and stylistic suggestions for the written communications office workers generate. EPISTLE was initially designed with business letters in mind, and its language-use standards were built, in part, by working with approximately 400 samples of business correspondence. However, EPISTLE now works with many kinds of non-literary prose.

Eventually it is hoped that the program will help authors write drafts and final copy based on a short statement that has been put into the computer. Another part of the EPISTLE application will deal with incoming texts, synopsizing letter contents, highlighting interesting portions, and automatically generating index terms based on conceptual or thematic characteristics in the writing, rather than on key words which are added later.

Ultimately, EPISTLE is to show users how to write or how they have written, and to help digest and cross-reference what they have read. When it reaches this capacity, it will be a marvel of artificial intelligence.

Currently, the IBM system can handle tasks of spelling, grammar, and style checking. (It has a 130,000-item dictionary.) It monitors subject-verb agreement, preposition usage, correctness of prefixes and suffixes, contractions, infinitive use, parallelism, and much more. The EPISTLE grammar covers all the topics traditionally treated in writing books: there are over 300 rules of grammar and syntax in the programs. They have been taken from grammars and style books and from instances of

use in the business correspondence mentioned earlier. EPISTLE designers claim a 90 percent or better success rate in finding questionable grammar and syntax.

In its style-checking facility, EPISTLE notices nonce words or jargon (e.g., "business-ese"); it shows a preferred spelling of words which have vague or poor connotative values ("he hated his job"). It can also critique phrases which are clumsy or over-qualified ("this is a very, very good idea"). At the sentence and paragraph level, EPISTLE comments on sentences which are too long, too short, or fragments, or which are overly compound or complex in construction. It can generate a readability score as measured by some standard readability index.

When there is an error or awkwardness, it is highlighted on the screen and a change is suggested; with a key punch, the user can discover the rule behind the suggestion. (Bell Labs' Workbench screen publishes a line-by-line inventory after the text is finished.)

In essence, what the program does is to translate natural language into a language which the computer can match with the sense of language logic built into the program, and then it indicates in natural language what is incorrect or preferable. One does not have to tell EPISTLE what is a noun or verb, subject, object, or predicate in a sentence. It knows this as soon as the material is entered.

Bell Labs' Workbench was started in 1978, and it has been available to non-AT&T facilities since November 1983. It is like EPISTLE in many ways, but it does not have the ability to parse sentences, and so it cannot indicate that the subject and verb are too far apart, for example. All the same, Workbench comes very close to doing what the IBM programs do. What remains to be seen is whether or not Bell intends the long-term goals of initiating reports and indexing incoming texts that IBM has promised. Colorado State University feels that the system is a valuable addition to its business writing program. Business and industrial users of Workbench consider it an excellent control on style and grammar in a variety of documents, whether they be manuals or memos, and there are no indications of the program's creating monolithic or bland writing styles.

CONTENT ANALYSIS PROGRAMS

The projects of Bell and IBM are concerned with encouraging a more readable natural language, but the analysis goes on inside the programs. There are several programs which can be used to analyze language externally. Here again, the interest in being able to describe the words or values imbedded in someone's written work has a long history, but the advent of computers has made the ease of detailed and lengthy analysis of detailed and lengthy documents a reality.

Content Analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of any communication. It is a standard research skill in the social sciences, linguistics, and litera-

ture. It can be used to study oral statements, but our concern is with the written word. Analysis programs, unlike the IBM and Bell projects, can deal with creative language; they can also deal with any form of written language, be it TV commercials, lyric poems, suicide notes, presidential campaign speeches, newspaper reports, or propaganda pamphlets. The IBM and Bell projects can work on short documents, even a few sentences, but for Content Analysis to work one needs a bulk of material in order to justify the typicality of the norms generated. The IBM and Bell work have the norms built in. For most analysis programs the user designs what is to be tested. In Content Analysis the user is not (necessarily) looking for errors, so much as behaviors.

The CLOC program was developed by Alan Reed at the Birmingham University Computer Centre in collaboration with the Department of English Language and Literature. The CLOC name is an acronym from "collocation," the tendency of a word either to be with another word, or to encourage a word of phrase pattern. The Oxford Concordance Project (OCP) was designed by Susan Hockey of the Oxford University Computer Centre. It is used by all faculties at the University.

Here are some program capacities of CLOC and OCP:

- print a concordance of all or some of the words used and their locations; in any order, in ascending or descending frequency; it is easy to specify words not to be included in any list ("and," "but," "or," for example).

- print a key word in context list (KWIC) to see the several words before and after certain words; again with locations or in any order.

- count the number of words, the length of words, phrases, or sentences, or any combination of these; if needed, the programs will also give the average lengths; word length is one criterion for vocabulary level and readability.

- select words or sentences beginning with a designated letter or letters; it can also select words or sentences with a designated letter or word pattern (any six letter word with "-ing," or any sentences with "just man," for example).

- select words, patterns, phrases or sentences used in a set frequency (any word used 100 to 500 times, for example).

When all of these functions are combined, one gets quite close to a natural language text.

Learning how the combinations work and what they will give is the difficult part, and here it is determined how clearly the user knows what

to look for. Most analysts first generate a concordance to see what kinds of words are used before they go after seeing how words are used. Unlike the IBM and Bell projects, users determine a usage which is important. For example, the concordance will show where all the verbs are, but they have to be selected to another listing to begin testing for active or passive voice, should that be a concern. The concordance will show whether "-ly" words are used; it is then up to the analyst to design patterns of how they are employed in context. What is handy about the programs is that once a text is entered (by any typist), only a few key strokes will create lists and statistics, and all lists can be stored for later manipulation. Each list becomes a file and can be played against other files.

There is no dictionary with these programs, but dictionaries can be built, based on the concordance generated, and these can be saved and matched to any group of documents studied.

There are other programs with built-in dictionaries, notably the Harvard-MIT "General Inquirer," which test for the semantic values of texts; while this can be approximated with CLOC and OCP, the tendency built into the programs is to describe word-use by means of sorts, concordance, KWIC, and frequencies. The General Inquirer and the other semantically orientated programs involve describing parts of speech as text is entered, and this is heavy work.

CONCLUSION

Computers may be used for a great deal more than simple word-processing systems, though this is not ill use by any means. The editor programs can correct spelling, grammar, and syntax mistakes or awkwardness and so remove a major drudgery from teachers and writers who would rather deal with the problems of style and concept handling. The Content Analysis programs can describe large bodies of text and so help the users discover where the weaknesses are in language behavior. In the analysis programs, the teacher or consultant can see repetitive behaviors and other language mannerisms which need correcting.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

INTEGRATING COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES: BUSINESS REPORTS AND LETTERS

Edgar Ray Smith, The University of Tennessee

ABSTRACT

This paper concerns the experience of integrating microcomputers into the business communication courses at The University of Tennessee. Results from the experience have been highly satisfactory.

INTRODUCTION

During the past three years, I have been involved with integrating computer technology into our business report writing and letter writing courses at The University of Tennessee. My remarks are directed toward the major considerations in this undertaking. Because of the time constraint, I will use the Business Report Writing course as the basis for explanation--similar comments could also be made about Business Letter Writing.

In our new curriculum at The University of Tennessee, a course, entitled Business Communications: Reports, is required. Therefore, we wanted to be able to handle the number of students coming into the course and still to maintain quality writing experiences. In addition, we felt that use of the desk-top computer was a valuable experience which students (as future business people) could profit from if integrated into the communication courses. That was, and still is, the basic objective of this effort.

In this paper, I want to summarize the course description, course structure, and grading scheme, and end with some general comments about this effort.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Business Communications: Reports is an 11-week course (quarter system) required for all undergraduate students in the College of Business Administration. The course has been designed to be taken in the latter part of the sophomore year or early junior year--basic principles of management and introduction to computer courses are prerequisites.

The course content is structured from a simple to complex writing concept. Early course content emphasizes foundations of report writing; then the writing of sample informing reports in memo format is begun; after these simpler reports, a more complex report involving decision from alternatives is applied--resulting in a recommendation. The last half of the course emphasizes the writing of an analytical report in formal style involving tables, graphic figures, and interpretations. The analytical report is usually an original project in which students participate in data collection as well as in writing the report.

For example, during the Winter 1984 quarter, the analytical report project involved surveying hotels and motels in the Knoxville area to ascertain the availability of facilities for professional groups to have regular monthly meetings and seminars. The project involved the planning of the project, writing of a questionnaire, collection of data from hotels/motels, analysis of the data, and preparation of a written report. The students reacted very favorably to this type of project. During the Spring 1984 quarter we collected information about individual retirement accounts (IRA) from the various businesses offering this type of retirement plan. Our objective will be to find the best place to invest in an IRA.

Other appropriate cases are used during the quarter in building a simple-to-complex understanding of writing a report.

CLASS STRUCTURE

The Business Communications: Reports course consists of two basic parts--the lecture and the lab.

Lecture Sessions

Students--about 90 of them--meet as a large "lecture" group on Mondays and Wednesdays for a regular class period under my direction. In these sessions, various activities are included such as distribution and explanation of course syllabus, explanation of the relationship of the activities of the lecture and lab sessions, assignment of text and periodical readings, tests, announcements about any schedule changes, presentation of the report-writing concepts being studied, individual- and group-writing exercises, oral reporting, and presentations by guest speakers. Model reports, paragraphs, and other writing aids are distributed and discussed in these "lecture" sessions. Assigned homework exercises are compared with "model" answers with the aid of an overhead projector; this method of immediate feedback has been very beneficial to the students. The major focus of the "lecture" part of the course is to prepare the students for the actual writing of report cases during the lab sessions.

Lab Sessions

Each student is assigned to a 2-hour laboratory each week under the direction of a graduate teaching assistant, with about 15 students

per lab. Business-related cases are used for these lab sessions--approximately 8-10 cases are completed during the quarter depending on the complexity of these cases. Several sessions are devoted to the writing of the quarter project. Students prepare a planning sheet as the basis for composing their reports at the CRT terminals.

The lab consists of 17 stand-alone Xerox 820-II microcomputers, two quality printers, and two dot-matrix printers. Most students enter the course without any experience in operating a desk-top computer. Therefore, the first lab session concentrates on making the students comfortable with the desk-top computer. A simplistic approach has been developed whereby students learn only the basic tasks for hardware and software operation: turning on the hardware; loading the software; following the menu options; naming a file; inputting a message; editing and making copy changes; storing the completed message on a floppy disk; and printing the message. After this initial introduction, students are given a handout that gives a step-by-step reference for future use. This approach has been very effective for the students.

After the first lab session, students are given a set of cases; they are to read and plan the case before going to the lab. From this plan sheet, students compose their messages at the computer terminal. A graduate teaching assistant gives preliminary instructions and then checks with students during the lab session to give immediate feedback as to the quality of the writing. After a student turns in his/her report(s), the graduate teaching assistant evaluates the quality of each--any case with less than a C quality must be revised later in order to receive credit; if not revised, then that case receives a zero. This procedure has also worked very well.

GRADING STRUCTURE

During these three years, I have experimented with several different ways of arriving at a final grade. The following is the current structure:

Lecture Session Quizzes/Exercises	30 percent
Lab Cases	20 percent
Lab Tests (3)	30 percent
Final Exam (Multiple-choice; Comprehensive)	20 percent

CONCLUSION

Students have reacted positively to this approach of integrating computer technology into the business communication courses at UT-Knoxville. Even students who do not type by touch enjoy this approach to the business communication courses.

The software used in the course involves text processing, spreadsheet, and graphics. After completing the course, students return to our open labs and use the desk-top computer terminals for other papers--a sign that they have found a valuable tool in addition to learning to write better.

Two research studies have been conducted at UT-Knoxville involving the integration of computer technology in the business report writing and business letter writing courses. One study was completed by Sandra Price and the other by Mary Noblitt. The materials developed by these two individuals for use in the lab sessions are now being considered for publication by a major publisher.

Most of the effort has been positive. There have only been a few minor negative aspects of this project. For example, we found that some students completing a writing case would give the floppy disk to another student (very rare, I might add), thereby giving the second student a false sense of accomplishment. The lab assistants watch very carefully for this kind of activity. It is now very difficult for such plagiarism to occur.

The efforts to integrate computer technology into a business communication course are well worth the time and energy--comments back from students now in the business world make me glad I undertook the project!

ABCA-SE 1984

And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

--*Geoffrey Chaucer, Canterbury Tales*
[*description of Clerk of Oxenford*]

Concepts in Instructing and Consulting

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

BRAIN-FLOW WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Most people at one time or another have trouble with actually getting down to the task of writing. Additionally, they often have problems with achieving a sense of flow in their writing. In this paper you will find the steps that will help to get writing started and give it a good sense of flow through effective use of the brain.

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever sat down to write something and found that no matter how hard you tried you could not get the words to flow on to the paper? Or have you ever puzzled for a long time over the problem of how to approach a given writing task? If you have been involved with writing of any kind, almost inevitably you will answer "yes" to these questions.

Writer's block has been with us as a problem for a long time, and many solutions have been offered over the years to cope with it effectively. The brain-flow writing technique, which might also be called the "fast-flow" technique, offers a particularly useful means of overcoming writer's block. It also offers some bonuses in the form of enhanced creativity, improved thought-flow, and much faster writing output.

We are well aware that our brains are remarkable structures. More and more information about how remarkable the human brain really is emerges every day. Ironically, many of the discoveries in the past ten years about the properties of the human brain emerged from the field of artificial intelligence. Computer designers have traditionally made much use of the brain as a model for their activities in producing new computers. And one question they have always had lurking in the backs of their minds has been "How far is it possible for an electronic computer to duplicate the powers of the human brain?" An intriguing and somewhat frightening corollary to this question, of course, is "Will an electronic computer some day equal or surpass the capabilities of the human brain?" The answers to both of these questions are still to be found.

One concept that has emerged in the studies of the human brain is that it is not simply a machine or a biological computer. It has capabilities that are unique and that we can all learn to use better. Interestingly, one key to learning how to use our brains more effectively is to learn to trust our own brains to a greater degree than most of us are used to. As Morton Hunt says, ". . . our minds are more to be trusted than we had thought" (Hunt, 1982, p. 283).

Have you ever thought about how far you have been taught in this life not to trust your own thinking? Most of us from the time we were small children have been filled with all sorts of injunctions about all manner of events in this world. Most of these injunctions were well-intentioned: but among the many that were useful were a few that were quite corrosive. Hints of self-doubt, limits on personal achievement, unchangeable life situations, and so forth were carved into our young and pliable minds. These injunctions came not only from parents and other adults, but percolated through also from our peers. The effects on our thinking were as insidious as they were profound.

Joseph Chilton Pearce used a term that I think fits these built-in injunctions very well. He calls them "roof-brain chatter" (Pearce, 1976, p. 121). This is a delightful term because it captures the effect so well. Think of when you have planned to do something a bit daring or different. Do little voices start up in your mind telling you why it will not work, or why you are foolish even to consider it? Those voices are your roof-brain chatter. Of course roof-brain chatter is not always wrong. If you are considering walking off the edge of a tall cliff or challenging an alligator to a boxing match, your roof-brain chatter may be quite correct in telling you not do to it! But in other, much less drastic situations, your roof-brain chatter could be quite wrong.

Our brains can help us do remarkable and productive things. But we have to cooperate in allowing our brains to work effectively. And one of the most useful means of helping ourselves to cooperate with our own brains is to give open and positive recognition to the importance of our nonconscious thinking. As Desy Safan-Gerard said a few years ago, "The high value we place on conscious effort can block creativity by trying to force work before we are ready for it" (Safan-Gerard, 1978, p. 81).

In his thought-provoking book, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, Julian Jaynes points out, ". . . the actual process of thinking, so usually thought to be the very life of consciousness, is not conscious at all . . . . only its preparation, its materials, and its end result are consciously perceived" (Jaynes, 1978, p. 41).

In a sense we are all biological robots a good deal of the time. We drive cars, ride bicycles, go shopping, and write, to a remarkable degree, without using truly conscious thinking. We seem to have programs in our brains to deal with many of life's events. So when one of those events occurs, we simply turn on our program for that event and let it go. Of course this behavior can occasionally have embarrassing results, such

as walking right past a friend on the street without giving any visible sign of recognition.

To distinguish here between nonconscious and subconscious is important. The subconscious is essentially a Freudian concept, and may or may not have good application to the way the brain actually functions. The nonconscious is that sphere of brain activity that occurs automatically without our giving it any deliberately focussed attention. Even when we are wide awake, we operate in a nonconscious mode most of the time. In fact, some authorities estimate that most of us are really only fully conscious for a total of 15 to 20 minutes a day. Consciousness seems to occur in spurts of a few seconds here and there throughout a typical day.

Now what does all of this have to do with writing? Quite a lot. As we think, so we write. So improvements in our thinking will lead to improvements in our writing. The points I have made about the brain's functioning can be applied practically to writing. It all boils down to a question of programming your brain properly and then allowing it to write in a straightforward, natural, and flowing way.

THE BRAIN-FLOW STEPS

Here are the steps that will help you to let your brain work most effectively for you when writing:

1. Gather your facts;
2. Prepare your brain;
3. Review your facts;
4. Wander off;
5. Flow write;
6. Review.

GATHERING YOUR FACTS

During this first stage I suggest that you try using what I call a "thinking tree." All you need to do this is a blank piece of paper. Write your topic at the top of this sheet of paper. Next, do a little bit of brainstorming with yourself. Write on the paper any points that you plan to deal with in your writing. Make sure that you put these points all over the sheet of paper at different angles to each other. And do not be critical of yourself while doing this.

As you continue with the thinking-tree process, you will find that some points automatically start to grow out of other points. Write these sub-points in as "branches" of the main points

they relate to. You may also find that some points come together naturally under a new heading. This, too, is something to "allow" to happen.

The thinking tree allows you to set out your facts or points in a relatively painless way. It is almost a "sure fire" way of getting yourself to write something, and of overcoming "blank-page syndrome."

Once you have set out all the points that seem to apply, you can then put them into some order of priority. Colored felt tip pens may be useful to help with this. If you wish, this somewhat unorthodox story board can be translated into a good writing outline.

For longer or more technical writing the thinking-tree process can be adapted for use as a research plan. Then you simply have to find the facts to support or flesh out the important points you wish to deal with. In the case of longer pieces of writing, by the way, you will find it useful to use larger sheets of paper for your thinking tree. And, of course, you may find that you must go through several sheets of paper to achieve satisfactory research and planning results.

Suppose you wish to produce a report about the feasibility of growing onions on the moon. Figure 1 is what a thinking tree on this topic might look like.

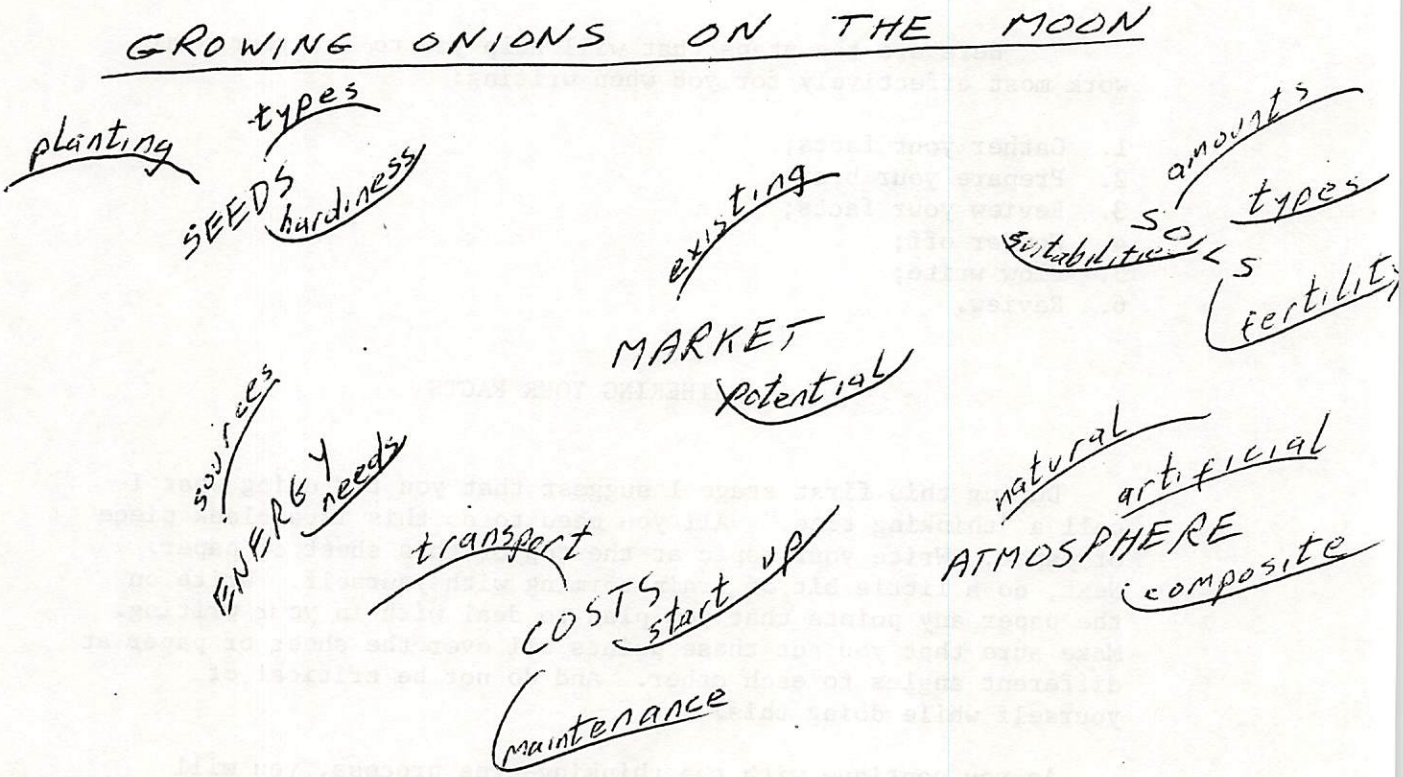

Figure 1. Sample Thinking Tree

Far from being a chore, you can see that this little technique can be fun. And fun is an important aspect of effective brain functioning. Having fun with something helps you to be much more creative with it.

PREPARING YOUR BRAIN

The next stage in the brain-flow procedure is to prepare your brain. What you basically want to do here is to relax and to help your mind dwell on positive images. One good way of doing this is to put yourself through a relaxation process. Here are some steps you may find helpful for doing this:

1. Loosen any restrictive clothing you may be wearing.

2. Relax and make yourself as comfortable as you can. Really let yourself sink into your chair, or lie flat on your back on the floor.

3. Gently close your eyes.

4. Allow all your muscles to relax. Try starting at one part of your body and letting all your muscles relax in an outward flow from that part. Let a wave of relaxation gently move through you.

5. Breathe in slowly through your nose and out slowly through your mouth. Repeat this breathing sequence about ten times, being sure to take good deep breaths.

6. Feel totally relaxed.

7. As the sense of total relaxation comes over you, start to see and experience a beautiful scene, one that gives you a great deal of inner joy. Really examine this scene carefully. Become a part of everything that is going on in it. See the sky, the trees, the water, the people, the flowers, and whatever else there is to see. Hear all the wonderful sounds within your scene. Smell the refreshing fragrances that linger in the air, and be sure to feel the touch of things--perhaps a lovely breeze brushing against your cheek. Really enjoy this scene. It is your own special world.

8. You can feel all the tension that was in you slowly but surely drain away.

9. Allow yourself to relax within your scene for a good, soothing period of time.

10. When you feel ready, gradually let yourself withdraw from this lovely scene. Remember, it is always waiting for you whenever you may wish to return.

11. Let yourself slowly return to the outer world.

12. Slowly stand up, stretch, and gently shake your body awake.

This procedure not only helps to prepare your brain, but also gives you a bonus in helping you to relax as well, and that is all to the good for getting rid of "roof-brain chatter."

REVIEWING YOUR FACTS

Now you can go on to the third stage, which is to review your facts. Simply go back to your thinking tree, and read over all the points you have written there. As you do this, you should decide clearly what you want your writing to achieve. Ideally you should think of this as something tangible that you want your readers actually to do within a specified period of time. It may help you at this stage to conjure up an image of your reader or readers in your mind's eye. Imagine your reader actually doing what you want him or her to do. Of course you should find this process of imaging easier and easier to do as you become more and more comfortable with using a relaxation technique.

WANDERING OFF

The fourth stage is a very easy one. You simply involve yourself in doing something else, anything at all. You can go for a walk somewhere, engage in some other form of physical activity, read an interesting magazine article, attend a meeting, do some other work, and so on.

A lot of the reason for this fourth stage has to do with left-brain/right-brain properties. This particular brain phenomenon has come to be quite well known in the business and academic worlds in recent years. The right cerebral hemisphere in our brains (in a few of us it is the left hemisphere) provides us with strength in the areas of intuition (hunches), insight, images, natural creativity, reveries, and nonrational thinking. It is essentially unprogrammed. The left cerebral hemisphere (in some of us it is the right) tends to use existing brain programs for the different types of activities in which we may engage. For this reason it tends towards more rigidity than the right hemisphere. The left hemisphere excels in linear, logical, judgmental, analytical thinking. It also tends to specialize in arithmetic calculations and the use of verbal language.

The left cerebral hemisphere is referred to as our dominant hemisphere. In other words, it tends to push aside the right hemisphere during most of our waking hours. The right hemisphere gets its chance to take charge when we are asleep. It can then parade many intriguing thoughts before us in the form of dreams. A similar thing can occur when we daydream. In effect, only if the left hemisphere is somehow damped down can we tune into our right hemispheres effectively.

By using the thinking tree, engaging in a relaxation procedure, or simply wandering off, we employ different means of allowing our right hemispheres to help our thinking. Of course we do not want to leave our left hemispheres unused. The idea is to use both hemispheres as productively as we can--in effect to engage in whole brain or holistic thinking.

FLOW WRITING

Once you have wandered off, you are ready for the next stage. This involves flow writing. The idea here, just as the term suggests, is to allow yourself to write with no holds barred. It is vital at this stage to avoid premature criticism of your written work. Avoid thinking about how to put your thoughts well into good grammatical sentences. Instead, just concentrate on allowing yourself to write as fast as you can.

As Adam Smith said, "Concentation is effortless effort, is not trying" (Smith, 1975, p. 48). You have to allow yourself to produce--doubts or self-critical thoughts must be avoided. By pushing for speed in your writing, you avoid giving negative thoughts a chance to gather and wreak their destructive work on your writing. You can always come back to criticize your writing at a later time.

Alan Blackburn points out, "Your brain thinks fast. Use it to help you write fast" (Blackburn, 1981, p. 26). Have you ever considered how fast you can actually write? Fast handwriting might occur at a rate of 35 words per minute. If you can type, particularly on a personal computer, you might clock in at 100 or so words per minute. If you use electronic dictation, you might talk at the rate of 140 or more words per minute. But at what speed do your thoughts occur? We can only guess at this point. Since it may well be possible for a person to read at a rate of 1000 or more words per minute with comprehension, we must state that our thinking has to occur at a speed of at least 1000 words per minute.

If we can think that fast or faster, then it follows that writing at a fast rate should be quite straightforward for us. But we have to trust ourselves to do it, and consequently we must put

aside all self doubts. As Pearce says, "Trust is impossible to the conditioned mind" (Pearce, 1976, p. 58). In order fully to trust your own brain ability, you have to overcome a lot of the conditioning your mind has been subjected to over the years.

If you have never tried producing a fast flow of writing before, you are likely to be surprised at how effectively it works. In order to find this out for yourself, of course, you have actually to try it. But you should go through the stages I have set out here when you do so. That way, you will have tuned up your brain for its best performance.

REVIEWING

Once you have produced your writing with the fast-flow process, you are ready for the sixth or final stage. Review your writing to correct the grammar, check the punctuation, confirm the spelling, and assess the style. You may be quite pleased to find that it needs relatively little polishing up. You should also find that your writing has a good sense of reading flow to it.

CONCLUSION

Our language is a tool of the brain. Grammar, in its turn, is also an aspect of brain function. Our thoughts tend to occur in sequences of words or phrases. The faster we try to put things into words, the faster we tend to fit these sequences together in smooth fashion. When you learn a new language, you tend to work with it slowly and clumsily at first. As you become more and more familiar with it, however, you speed up your sequencing of thoughts in that language. Continued practice makes you smoother in your delivery. And the process is much the same whether you are using the language to speak or to write. Grammar comes into play as a natural outgrowth of our effective use of language.

If you give yourself a reasonable chance to write using the fast-flow or brain-flow technique, you will find that your brain will automatically look after most of your grammatical needs. So your editing or review stage will gradually become faster and faster.

Fast-flow writing is not a new phenomenon. Great writers of the past appear to have used it, although they might not have realized that their being "seized by the muse" related so directly to modern brain research.

Peter Drucker states that in writing a report it makes more sense to do the whole thing in one sitting, rather than to try to complete it in dribs and drabs over a longer period of time (Drucker, 1967, p. 29). The technique of fast-flow writing fits in very well with this concept. It

should also be noted that Drucker believes that managers in this electronic age should be able to use a system of "organized abandonment" (Drucker, 1980, p. 45). This term is remarkably similar to Pearce's term, "controlled abandon" (Pearce, 1976, p. 86). Both terms relate well to the fast-flow or brain-flow process.

Using the technique of brain-flow writing then is not necessarily as strange or out of step with the times as some people might think. In fact, given the importance and continuing acceleration of all forms of communication today, it may well be an indispensible tool for anyone seriously interested in writing.

The brain-flow technique does work. But if you have not used it or something similar before, you may find it a bit awkward at first. But do not, whatever you do, allow yourself to become discouraged. Use this technique and keep using it, and you will find that one day your writing really does flow much better on to the page. At that point you will have succeeded in using the brain-flow technique effectively. From then on you will find the task of writing easier and much more pleasant.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Buxiness Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

ISSUES OF AUDIENCE IN LEGAL WRITING

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ABSTRACT

Lawyers write for a variety of audiences. They write for other lawyers, for the courts, for the general public, and for their lay clients. Despite the differences in background, education, and interest of these audiences, lawyers seldom change their writing style to suit each audience. Their failure to adapt their writing style is attributable in part to haste, in part to tradition. In addition, many lawyers do not vary their writing style because they have received conflicting messages regarding audience expectations. In response to these conflicting messages, lawyers settle for an all-purpose prose which satisfies neither writer nor reader.

INTRODUCTION

Lawyers frequently treat legal writing as a monolithic enterprise. When writing a contract, a memorandum, an appellate brief or a client letter, they seldom vary their writing style or rhetorical approach. They seem to assume that one style suits all audiences and purposes. Because of their apparent indifference to matters of audience and style, lawyers are generally regarded as unclear writers. The following analysis identifies the causes of some audience problems commonly associated with legal writing and suggests how they can be remedied.

LAWYERS AND THEIR AUDIENCES

Lawyers, perhaps more than any other professional writers, are notorious for the poor quality of their writing. Their arcane vocabularies and convoluted sentences confuse and irritate both laymen and other lawyers. Legal writing at its worst can be seen in the following passages taken from an insurance contract and from a state penal code. The putative audience for both passages is the general public:

Example:

Insurance Policy

> With respect to the interest of the mortgagee named in the declarations, its successors and assigns hereinafter called the lien-holder, in its capacity as conditional vendor or mortgagee or otherwise, in the property insured under this policy, this Company hereby agrees as follows.

Because of its special vocabulary ("declarations," "assigns," "lien-holder," "conditional vendor") this passage is impenetrable to most laymen and to many lawyers.

Example:

Recidivist Statute

> If it can be shown on the trial of any felony offense that the defendant has previously been finally convicted of two felony offenses, and the second previous felony conviction is for an offense that occurred subsequent to the time the first previous conviction has become final, and the three felony offenses have occurred within 10 years of the trial for the third felony offense, on conviction he shall be punished by confinement in the penitentiary for life, without the possibility of parole.

The gist of this sentence, of course, is that three-time losers will be imprisoned for the rest of their lives. However, because of the distance between the subject and the predicate, because of the length and convolutions of the sentence, and because of the great number of qualifying phrases it contains, this sentence is also difficult to follow. Although the putative audience for these passages is the general public, the actual audiences are lawyers and insurance agents.

Laymen have always suspected that much of what lawyers write is intentionally opaque and essentially meaningless mumbo jumbo; they also suspect that it disguises ignorance and ineptitude. Oddly enough, these suspicions are not confined to lay audiences; lawyers themselves frequently make the same complaints. However, despite this widespread and longstanding dissatisfaction with legal writing, very little has been done to correct the problem.

True, several states have recently passed "Plain English" regulations requiring that all new laws and most common legal documents (sales agreements, leases, insurance contracts) be written in language that can be understood by laymen. Similar guidelines have also been issued at the federal level. But the lawyers who write these laws and the lawyers who try to conform to them usually backslide once the current public outcry subsides because old habits die hard and writing in plain English is hard work. Moreover, even if

there are changes in the legal writing directed toward the general public, much of the writing lawyers do is for other, more limited audiences--for the courts, for other lawyers, and for their clients. For a variety of reasons, legal writing for these audiences remains relatively unchanged.

Like many writers, lawyers unconsciously, and sometimes uncritically, imitate the writing they read. Unfortunately, since much of what they read resembles the strange and vaguely archaic passages just quoted, they imitate a writing style more familiar to 19th- than 20th-century readers. Because of their uncritical acceptance and use of bad writing models, lawyers themselves must assume much of the blame for the resulting writer/reader problems. But lawyers are not entirely to blame. Part of the blame also lies with clients who expect their lawyers to "sound like lawyers"--that is, to use the vocabulary and writing style just referred to. And part of the blame also lies with law firms that frequently have this same "sound like a lawyer" expectation. These firms require new associates to model their prose after that found in the firm's time- and court-tested "form files." And, finally, part of the blame lies within the training that lawyers receive in law schools.

In most law schools, courses on legal writing (if there are any) focus almost exclusively on teaching research skills, the rudiments of "legal reasoning," and the basic format conventions of common legal documents. Little attention is given to writing style and almost none to the issues of audience. Consequently, law students receive almost no formal instruction on the necessity of adapting their writing style to suit the purpose of the document and the needs and expectations of their audiences.

Basically, then, lawyers have three different audiences: the courts, other lawyers, and clients. Each of these audiences is, theoretically, distinguishable from the others and should be addressed differently. Courts must be addressed formally and in formulaic ways; other lawyers are usually addressed less formally, but still in highly conventionalized ways; and clients are addressed according to the personal relationship which exists between the lawyer and the client. However, since most beginning lawyers, and many experienced ones, have only a limited understanding of the writer/reader relationship, they fail to make any significant changes in their style to suit these different audiences.

One way of overcoming this problem is to design a legal writing course which focuses as much on the writing as on the substance of what is written. When instructors build audience-awareness exercises into the traditional kinds of writing assignments, students become accustomed to modifying their style to suit the purpose and audience of the document. In addition, routine analysis of the rhetorical and organizational constraints at work in various kinds of legal writing enables students to distinguish between essential and non-essential elements in any piece of writing.

In doing this analysis, they discover, for example, not only that lawyers write within conventional rhetorical and organizational constraints, but also that they often write within inflexible format constraints. In fact, much of the writing done for the courts is not "writing" at all; instead, it is form-work ("boilerplate") in which the lawyer simply inserts names and facts in a few highly stylized, court-required forms. The following two passages illustrate this point:

Example:

Answer To A Complaint

> Come now the defendants in the above entitled proceedings and answering the complaint on file therein, jointly and severally admit, deny and allege as follows: _____.

Example:

Assault and Battery by Agent of Employer

> At all times herein mentioned, defendant _____ (name) was the agent and employee of defendant _____ (name) and in doing the things hereinafter alleged was acting within the scope and course of such agency. Plaintiff is informed and believes and thereon alleges that defendant _____ (name) (either ratified or authorized) the acts of the defendant by _____ _____.

Although "boilerplate" writing of this sort expedites the court's work, it also makes nearly impossible the tailoring of the "writing" to suit a particular audience.

These last two passages also exemplify the sort of double-bind in which legal writers often find themselves--format requirements limit their rhetorical choices. Added to this is the fact that the "audience" for this kind of writing is "the court," rather than a particular person. Consequently, lawyers choose the most conservative rhetorical mode and resort to a sort of colorless, universal prose which is suitable for many audiences, but interesting to none of them.

The double-bind operates even in the composition of briefs (arguments to the court) which seems to offer lawyers, theoretically at least, opportunities to modify arguments and writing style to suit an identifiable audience (Judge A, Tribunal B). When writing to appellate courts, lawyers must try to organize their arguments and to select their facts to persuade the reader to accept their interpretation of the law. But working against this audience-oriented process is the standardized, required format of the brief itself, which discourages them from taking stylistic risks. Rather than risk disappointing their readers' expectations, they heighten the diction level,

use predictable, quasi-formulaic words and phrases (the government contends, the petitioner asserts, reliance is misplaced, a case narrows or expands a rule, and courts correctly hold) but still produce prose that is essentially neutral and descriptive, instead of assertive and persuasive.

In adopting this neutral style, lawyers are responding to conflicting messages regarding audience expectations. Briefs must be persuasive, they are told, but they must also conform to restrictive formats which do not allow writers much organizational or stylistic latitude. Even though the audience for briefs can usually be identified with some certainty, lawyers, confronted with a restrictive format, tend to use a kind of all-purpose prose which is directed toward no particular audience. Thus, brief-writing conventions have established writer roles and reader expectations which produce prose that satisfies neither writer nor reader.

Good writers, of course, always find ways to use even the most unpromising materials, and exceptions can always be found to any generalizations about writing. But, exceptions notwithstanding, many lawyers write unexceptional briefs at least partly because they have not discovered ways to conform to the format of the brief and still maintain a clear sense of audience.

In memo-writing a different set of expectations and purposes affects the writer/reader relationship. Typically, lawyers use in-house memoranda to inform their peers or senior partners about the law and to predict how a case might be decided. These memoranda are usually less formal in style and less restrictive in format than briefs. Memo format varies widely from firm to firm but is regularized in that most begin with a statement of the legal issue(s) and a short narrative description of the legally significant facts followed by a lengthy analysis and short conclusion summarizing the analysis and predicting the outcome of the case.

The main challenge memo-writers face is to reduce countless pages of research into a usable form for their readers. Memo readers expect a clear, concise summary of the writer's findings. Very often, however, they receive a lengthy, unfocused compilation which represents a great deal of hard work, but very little editing. Memo writers, like other researchers, must remember that most readers are more interested in the results of the research than in the procedures by which those results were achieved. They must also have a clear sense of how much their reader knows, or wants to know, about the subject.

Inexperienced writers, and those who have an unsure sense of audience, include more than is needed, sometimes because they want to impress readers with their industry, sometimes because they are unwilling to delete material that took them hours to write, and sometimes because they themselves do not have a firm grasp of their material. Work produced under these circumstances often resembles a preliminary draft instead of a completed memo; it usually satisfies neither writer nor reader.

For a number of reasons, opinion letters written by lawyers to lay audiences are the source of more writer/audience problems than any other form of legal writing. When explaining legal concepts to a non-specialist, lawyers must remember that most clients are generally not interested in the law except as it applies to them. Consequently, theoretical or abstract legal concepts, which might be included in a brief or memorandum, are inappropriate in a client letter. The technical vocabulary ("terms of art") and conceptual shorthand that lawyers use with one another are also inappropriate. Because lawyers are constantly immersed in a linguistic environment different from their clients', their task is doubly difficult. They cannot rely on familiar forms and formulaic phrases. Deprived of their habitual modes of discourse, they must actually tailor their writing for a particular audience or risk having to explain their letter, line by line, to a client with a low tolerance for "gobbledegook." To tell a client, for example, that his neighbor has "breached his covenant of quiet enjoyment" is to invite a telephone call asking for a translation.

Added to these problems is the necessity of choosing, and using, a tone which suits the occasion and the relationship between lawyer and client. And, finally, lawyers must decide how much explanation is necessary or expected. Balancing all these considerations and producing a letter that thoroughly, accurately, and clearly explains a complex legal issue without oversimplifying it is extremely difficult.

CONCLUSION

In concluding, I want to point out that although I have discussed special problems connected with specific kinds of legal writing, lawyers encounter all these problems (format constraints, editing decisions, tone, technical vocabulary) in every kind of legal writing. They are not confined to a single form.

I also want to emphasize that this paper has touched on only a few of the audience problems lawyers encounter in legal writing. Any survey is incomplete which omits analysis of how argument and style vary according to the level of the court or of the various rhetorical modes present in every brief or memorandum. However, by identifying some of the most common problems, demonstrating that lawyers must be as aware of audience as other professional writers are, and suggesting how this awareness can be heightened, I hope to encourage further study of a kind of writing that, obliquely and directly, affects us all.

In *Professional Communication in the Modern World:*
Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association
31st Southeast Convention 1984
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

DEVELOPING AN IN-HOUSE WRITING COURSE FOR TECHNICAL AND BUSINESS PERSONNEL

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ABSTRACT

When making a proposal to offer an in-house writing course, the independent consultant has an advantage over the institutes and universities who offer prepackaged courses. This advantage is the ability to design the course specifically to meet the needs of the client. First, identify those needs; then tailor the proposal to show how the course will meet them.

INTRODUCTION

In developing an in-house writing course for a business or technical firm, outside consultants must address specific aspects of the company in their proposals to make hiring a consultant more attractive than using one of the many standard programs offered by institutes and universities. To tailor a course to the specific needs of a company, the consultant should ask the following:

- What kinds of documents does the company generate?
- What are management's priorities?
- Who will attend the course?
- How much time will be allocated?

KINDS OF DOCUMENTS

Ask for samples from the company and focus on these types of documents. For example, if a company does not produce manuals, do not discuss them in the proposal. Also, review company documents for common problems. Often there is a company style that needs to be addressed, such as consistent use of the passive voice. Look for unique features of the documents such as oversized drawings or tables that could be handled more effectively and suggest specific changes.

MANAGEMENT'S PRIORITIES

Often a manager will be receptive to sponsoring a writing course if he or she can readily see the results of such a course. Rather than speaking in generalities, discuss how this course will specifically improve the quality of the documents the company generates. Discuss such topics as readability and easily understood format. Since a company is more likely to invest in a proven course of action, use relevant examples from industry. If the manager shows a particular concern for one area, such as business development, focus on that area and suggest that the proposal writing team be brought in for a course directed specifically to them. A successful session could lead to subsequent sessions on other documents or to a general effective writing course.

PARTICIPANTS

Management, of course, will select the participants. Find out the general levels of these groups and their usual tasks to ensure relevance. If the course is specific to a certain type of document, then the participants, such as a proposal writing team, will already have a common interest in the subject matter.

However, for a general course composed of individuals from different areas of the company, choose topics that will be relevant to all the participants. Look for these commonalities among the company documents and build the session around them. Otherwise, interest will quickly diminish.

As much as possible, divide individuals into peer groups. Doing so will eliminate the pressures of performing for one's supervisors and ensure a more homogeneous group with which to work.

TIME

Before you write the proposal, determine what time frame will be acceptable to management or suggest alternative courses of different lengths. If cutting into the work day does not appeal to management, propose that the sessions be held after work or during the lunch hour. The company would pay for the sessions while the employees use their free time to improve writing skills that are necessary for career advancement.

COURSE CONTENT

Devote a major portion of the proposal to the specific content of the course. Suggest topics and the order in which they will be discussed. Decide on how grades will be determined and how certificates will be issued.

Show how the course will be immediately applicable to the individuals taking the course with examples of handouts they can take back to their work stations. Where possible make these handouts from examples within the company to make the material as relevant as possible to the individual's work experience. From the review of kinds of documents the company produces, select examples to be used for this purpose. A before-and-after comparison is particularly useful if the example is a page of text or a table from a company document that has been reformatted. Ensure the author's anonymity and ask permission to use the example to avoid possible embarrassment before presenting it to a group.

In addition, offer a specific text to anchor the course, such as Rathbone's Communicating Technical Information (1972). If offering a text is not feasible because of the expense or because the course is so short that a large text would be inappropriate, prepare a bibliography to support suggestions and give them credibility.

CONCLUSION

Before preparing a proposal, study the prospective client's documents and determine company priorities. Ensure that the proposal addresses the unique needs of the company and discuss specific aspects of the proposed course to show how it will elevate the quality of the company's documents.

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In *Professional Communication in the Modern World: Proceedings of the American Business Communication Association 31st Southeast Convention 1984*
Compiled and edited by Richard David Ramsey
Hammond, Louisiana, U.S.A.
Southeastern Louisiana University
1984 April 5-7

PERFORMING COMMUNICATION CONSULTING: AN ESSAY ON THE WHY AND THE HOW

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ABSTRACT

For years now, industry has been telling academia that employees (including managers) need improved communication skills. One logical way to assist in meeting this need is through academic consulting. However, few academic personnel are involved in this exciting and worthwhile endeavor. This paper is written to persuade academicians to get involved in communication consulting.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to share the combined consulting experiences of the authors in order to assist the reader in understanding better the mechanics and the motives involved in this often-misunderstood activity. This essay will examine consulting from the perspective of the consultant, institution, and client. This will be followed by discussing methods to promote consulting.

Before we delve into these areas, let's say a few words regarding consulting in the area of "communication." Although we will not discuss "communication" consulting per se in this paper, keep in mind that the consulting tips presented are somewhat universal (i.e., they relate to academic counsulting in general). However, we assure you that there is a very high need (thus demand) for academic consulting in communication skills (both oral and written). So, if the demand is out there and we possess the skills, why aren't we more involved. Perhaps it is because we haven't considered the Why and How. Let's begin now by examining the Why.

BENEFITS TO THE CONSULTANT: THE WHY

This section identifies some of the major benefits that may be derived from "academic" consulting. The purpose is to help sell you, your client, and your university on the merits of academic consulting.

Relevance to Teaching Material

All too often, we hear students question the relevance of course material. This question never happens when one is able to supplement the material with experiences from consulting relationships.

Action Research

We have found that the consulting relationship provides an opportunity to do research in actual (action) settings. All too often research is either conducted in classroom settings or involves a mail survey instrument. Both approaches are rather artificial or detached from the "real" world. Action research (White, Cochran, & Latham, 1979) provides an opportunity to publish and present research that has practical application. In an action research situation the researchers/consultants assist the organization in solving a "real" problem and at the same time collect data to test theory. Admittedly, this action research approach is not easy, since adequate research controls are frequently not allowed by the client. However, many qualitative research projects can result in published cases.

Income

Research on consulting fees is not current. The most recent was reported in 1979 (Gore & Wright, 1979, p. 49). Gore and Wright report the daily range to be $75 to $1,000, with a mean of $368. Based on our experience, we believe that the figures today would be $100 to $1,500 daily, with a mean of $500.

Continuous Process of Personal Growth

We have found our experience from consulting to be as rewarding as, if not more rewarding than, other research. To take a client from the point of experiencing a great deal of pain to a point of self reliance is as rewarding as a physician helping a patient experience relief. Consulting experiences help build confidence in skills as a teacher and researcher.

BENEFITS TO THE INSTITUTION: THE WHY

The would-be consultant should learn and augment the benefits that the institution receives from the consulting activity. We present the benefits to the consultant primarily to motivate the individual to consider the activity. We indicate the benefits to the institution to illustrate how one potential consultant can motivate the institution to permit such activity. One should never try to convince the institution by presenting the benefits to the consultant.

Some of the benefits that we have been able to develop for our institution are (1) internships for students and faculty, (2) jobs for students, (3) visibility in the industry, (4) research, (5) grants, (6) contract research, and (7) recruiting of students. All of these can result from your consulting contacts.

BENEFITS TO THE CLIENT: THE WHY

Knowledge of these benefits helps sell services to the prospective client.

Cost/Overhead

The university-based consultant can provide quality service for less cost, and this inexpensiveness should be a major selling point. Certainly, it is less expensive to hire a consultant for one project than to have an inside change-agent on the payroll. In addition, an independent consultant can provide services with very little overhead as compared to a major consulting firm.

Research from Qualified People

University-based consultants have been trained in the methods of research. In addition, the active university consultant may have been exposed to other situations which provide knowledge and skills that others have been unable to acquire.

There is possibly a greater storehouse of knowledge at the university than could be available from a non-university connected consultant. If knowledge and abilities are needed in an area outside the expertise of the consultant, one consultant can call on another at the university. For example, if either of us were to be confronted with a production problem, we would not handle it. We would refer it to our colleague who is an expert in this area.

Training and Teaching

Very often, consulting relationships lead to training of employees. The university consultant's primary role is teaching; therefore, he/she is suited for this task where other consultants may not be.

PROMOTING YOURSELF: THE HOW

So far, we have presented evidence to motivate you, your institution, and the prospective client to enter the academic/consultant relationship. Now, it is time to present some of the "how to" functions of consulting, or how to promote yourself. The following ideas represent some of the methods that we have used. Certainly, there are others. Once you have established yourself as a consultant, new contacts develop from a satisfied client's recommending your services, or from a colleague who is aware of your skills area and expertise.

If one is involved with training, there is a built-in source for consulting. Training often uncovers problem areas that need to be researched further.

For those not so experienced, we suggest that you develop high visibility through involvement in trade associations, and in the "roast beef and mashed potato circuit." Many consulting engagements have been started through a company representative's hearing a speech given by a dynamic faculty member. Incidentally, many of these speeches are "freebees" (at least in the short run). It takes time to develop contacts, but things worthwhile generally do take time.

McManus (1979, p. 46) has presented several methods of developing initial contacts, and these are presented in Table I.

The best method, if available, is to develop a partnership with someone in the consulting business. Here, one can develop sources and have a mentor to help cultivate skills.

CONTRACTING: THE HOW

The consultant should develop the habit of contracting with the client very early in his/her consulting career. If the client does not feel comfortable in contracting initially, ask that he/she will contract at your next meeting. This exercise of patience sets the stage for the contract. Spell out all conditions in the contract. Some of the conditions you will want to consider are (1) fees, (2) procedure by which the contract can be terminated,

Table I. Methods of Developing Initial Contacts

Initial Contacts Result from	Number of Professors Mentioning Item: (N = 18)
Referral by colleague professor	10
Referral by other/past clients	9
Publications	9
Speeches and lectures (professor typically approached after lecture by new client)	8
Former students	3
Friends, personal "contacts"	3
Direct solicitation (professor sends out proposal, letter of "interest" to potential client)	3
Listing name and professional association for speaking engagements--e.g., AIB, NICB	3

(3) duration of assignment, (4) resources available, and (5) permission to publish the results.

CONCLUSION: THE CHALLENGE

Our challenge to you is to get involved in academic consulting. Why? It is to benefit you, your institution, and the many potential clients that are needing your skills. Organizations are in desperate need of your communication skills. We trust you will find academic consulting as rewarding as we have.

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