



## IJBC NEWSLETTER

### WHAT IS IJBC?

*International Journal of Business Communication* (IJBC), peer-reviewed and published quarterly, provides rigorous original research that contributes to the knowledge and theory of business communication as a distinct, multifaceted field, approached through the administrative disciplines, the liberal arts, and the social sciences.

### IJBC NEWSLETTER

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Greetings IJBC Community,

Welcome to the IJBC Newsletter for Spring 2022. We begin by announcing some important transitions. First, we thank Dr. Kathryn Rybka for her many years of wonderful service and dedication as the IJBC Book Review Editor. Kathryn has moved on to serve as Interim Executive Director of ABC. We all wish her much success. Fortunately, Dr. Robyn Walker has stepped up to fill this key role in addition to her other editorial duties. So you can look forward to IJBC's continued tradition of first-rate book reviews. Your book review contributions are encouraged, and we hope you contact us with your book review proposals and interests.

We also want to introduce our newest Associate Editor, Dr. Yunxia Zhu, an esteemed professor in our field from the University of Queensland, who most of you recognize as Regional Vice President, Asia and Pacific, for ABC. It is an honor to include her expertise in our editing team. Going further, we are initiating a new IJBC Column, Spotlight on a Thought Leader. Here, we will explore people who have significantly influenced business communication in positive ways.

Our current issue's spotlight features Dr. Ronald Dulek, an ABC Fellow, whose innovations have deeply benefited our scholarship and teaching. More spotlights are in the works for future IJBC issues.

We close by inviting you to explore our current special issue about pandemic communication in organizations. The focus of this issue is on the broader view that the pandemic is an ongoing event in a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) driven context. Obviously, communication is key to managing such a VUCA environment, and the articles in this issue effectively demonstrate how. Check out the abstracts of these articles below.

As always, we thank you for your continued support for and contributions to IJBC.

Warm regards,

Jacqueline and Milton Mayfield, Editors



**Jacqueline and Milton Mayfield**

Our editors happy to be wearing their bright ABC-Blue colors!



## EDITORIAL COORDINATOR

Ana earned two Bachelor's degrees in Business Administration Management and Marketing, from Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas. Her previous professional experiences include interning for Kellogg's and H-E-B. She has recently earned her MBA from The University of Texas in San Antonio.

Ana Beatriz Osuna, MBA

## **BUSINESS COMMUNICATION LESSONS IN AGILITY: INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Jacqueline Mayfield and Milton Mayfield

This introduction explains our vision, inclusion criteria, and mission for a curated issue about business communication and COVID-19. We focus on the big picture of communication agility lessons from a VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) environment. We also present a definition and a typology of agile business communication, largely drawn from the papers in this collection.

These manuscripts investigate COVID-19 organizational communication measures and related strategies plus their outcomes across diverse stakeholders in multiple countries. Drawing from these contributions and other research, we conclude by outlining an agile business communication research agenda. Finally, we inaugurate a new IJBC column, Spotlight on a Thought Leader in Business Communication.

## Creating Order Out of Chaos? Development of a Measure of Perceived Effects of Communication on the Crisis Organizing Process

Ryan Patrick Fuller, Amy Mickel, Andrew Pyle, and Laura Riolli

Organizations are important sources of communication during natural-hazard crises. How members of an organization perceive these communications (e.g., creating confusion, causing disorder, providing clarity, and restoring order) influences response and recovery from such a crisis. Using Chaos Theory as a guiding framework, the authors developed a new instrument measuring the perceived effects of an organization's communication on crisis-organizing processes. Three distinct studies were conducted to assess the reliability and validity of this new instrument: the "Perceived Effects of Communication on the Crisis-organizing Process (PEC-COP)" scale. This one-factor scale can be used by both scholars and practitioners to assess the effects of an organization's communication on how people organize (i.e., react and respond) during a crisis. By gaining greater insight into how an organization's communication is perceived, the organization can better prepare to communicate in ways that promote efficient and effective crisis-organizing processes throughout a natural-hazard crisis. Effective communication can create order out of chaos.

## Fostering Employee Trust via Effective Supervisory Communication during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Through the Lens of Motivating Language Theory

Jie Jin, Linjuan Rita Men, and Yuan Sunny Qin

This study examines how supervisory leadership communication during the COVID-19 pandemic fostered employee trust through the lens of motivating language theory. Drawing insight from self-determination theory, this study also reveals the mediating effects of employees' psychological need satisfaction for competence and relatedness in this process, which help explain how supervisory leadership communication influences employee trust. Through an online survey of 393 full-time employees from various organizations in the U.S., results showed that supervisory use of meaning-making (0.15), empathetic (0.60), and direction-giving language (0.27) during the pandemic all showed significant positive effects on employee trust toward leadership and the organization directly, and indirectly through satisfying employees' psychological need for competence and relatedness. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

## Breaking the Sound of Silence: Explication in the Use of Strategic Silence in Crisis Communication

Sung In Choi, Yan Jin, Phuong D.Le, Augustine Pang,  
Bryan Reber, Youngi Seo, and Hui-Xun Teo

Crises present organizations with the “rhetorical exigency” to enact control. Silence is not an option. This study, as the first empirical examination of Le et al’s (2019) seminal study on silence in crisis communication, examines, first, if silence can be strategically used as a bona fide strategy; second, under what circumstances should silence be broken; and third, when silence is broken, how it affects (a) organizational reputation, (b) societal risk perception, and (c) the publics’ crisis information sharing intention. An online experiment was conducted using a nationally representative sample in the United States. Participants were recruited in 2019 via a Qualtrics panel. The stimuli used in this study consisted of two components: (1) an explanation about a fictitious company; and (2) two types of silence breaking (forced vs. planned) embedded in each stimulus accordingly after the same crisis incident. Four hypotheses were conceptualized. They were all supported. Collectively, they showed that the effect of silence-breaking type on crisis information sharing intention was mediated by societal risk perception, which is conditioned by participants’ level of perceived organizational reputation. Silence, or failure to fill the information vacuum, has not been an option to consider thus far as it suggests the organization is “not in control.” However, this study suggests the types of silence organizations can adopt and the modes the organizational silence can be broken. It provides a new lens for organizations to engage in business communication.

## To Wear or Not to Wear: A Commentary on Mistrust in Public Comments to CDC Tweets about Mask-Wearing during COVID19

Tatiana Batavia

Trust is an important component of crisis communication, and social media has been shown a promising avenue for building trust. Yet, mixed findings about how effectively government organizations utilize social media during health crises such as pandemics or infectious disease outbreaks require further research to better understand how trust is created and destroyed. This study investigates the factors that reflect mistrust in the public comments to the CDC tweets about mask-wearing during the 3 months after the first reported case of COVID19 in the U.S. The findings show that multiple factors representing mistrust were present in the public comments. What is more, the feeling of anger was growing in the comments as the health crisis progressed, which also could have been trust-damaging.

## Information Adequacy and Strategic Behavioral Change Communication as a Pandemic Management Tool: The Mediating Role of Interaction Resonance

Christine Ayibo, Mellan Basemera, Hassan Bashir, Yunia Musaasizi,  
Florence Nnakajubi, Sudi Nangoli

A strategic approach to behavioral change communication streamlines communication processes of a health institution in a crisis setting like COVID-19 pandemic. In such a setting, it is important to focus communication efforts to reach the different audience groups and ensure common understanding and willingness to act by all the groups in order to achieve the institution's mission of curbing the pandemic. This study contributes to these efforts by examining the mediating effect of interaction resonance in the relationship between information adequacy and strategic behavioral change communication.

The study adopted a cross sectional survey design that involved collecting quantitative data from 223 health organizations of Uganda's health sector in the different regions of the country. In order to test the study hypotheses, the study used Structural Equation Modeling of AMOS and the bootstrapping approach to test the mediating role of interaction resonance. The results revealed that interaction resonance fully mediates in the relationship between information adequacy and strategic behavioral change communication. This implied that having adequate information per say, does not cause behavioral change among the intended message recipients but requires a communication system that enables high quality interactions.

## The Interaction Effect of Crisis Communication and Social Support on The Emotional Exhaustion of University Employees during the COVID-19 Crisis

Peerayuth Charoensukmongkol and Tipnuch Phungsoonthorn

Although formal communication from an organization's management is crucial during a crisis to reduce the uncertainties of employee, less is known about the moderating role of social support that could make employees rely less on formal communication to reduce those uncertainties. Grounded in uncertainty reduction theory, this research examines the role of crisis communication on the perceived uncertainties and emotional exhaustion of employees who work at private international universities that have been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, this research explores the moderating effect of social support in terms of supervisor support and coworker support on the association between crisis communication and perceived uncertainties. Questionnaire data were collected from 300 employees from two private international universities in Thailand. Partial least squares structural equation modeling was used for data analysis.

The analysis shows that perceived uncertainties mediate the negative association between crisis communication and emotional exhaustion. Moreover, the moderating effect analysis shows that the association between crisis communication and perceived uncertainties is significantly moderated by coworker support, but not by supervisor support. Simple slope analysis also clearly shows that the negative association between crisis communication and perceived uncertainties only presents in employees with a low level of coworker support. For employees with high coworker support, crisis communication does not associate negatively with perceived uncertainties. This research implies that the informal communication that employees obtain from social support could play a compensatory role for their need to rely on formal communication to reduce uncertainties during the crisis.

## Spotlight on a Thought Leader in Business Communication: Ronald E. Dulek, Ph.D.

Kim Sydow Campbell

A full summary of Ronald E. Dulek's contribution to the field of business communication would require more words than permitted for this feature article. Briefly, Ron is the John R. Miller Professor of Management in the Culverhouse College of Business at the University of Alabama, where he has been a faculty member since 1977. He has published nine books, including several groundbreaking industry-friendly texts with co-author John S. Fielden. These include three 1984 publications: *What Do You Mean I Can't Write?* (Fielden & Dulek, 1984c), *Bottom-Line Business Writing* (Fielden & Dulek, 1984a), and *The Elements of Business Writing* (Fielden & Dulek, 1984b), which was the #1 seller for The Executive Book Clubs of Houghton-Mifflin, Macmillan, and Prentice-Hall. The pair followed up with *Principles of Business Communication* (Dulek & Fielden, 1990).

Ron has also published more than 50 peer-reviewed journal articles in the areas of business strategy and business communication, 12 of which appeared in this journal. The earliest was in 1981 and the most recent is forthcoming as I write. His research collaborators include heavy hitters among our field's researchers, such as Jim Suchan and Annette Shelby, as well as a bevy of his colleagues from the business school at The University of Alabama.

Ron is a longtime member of the Association of Business Communication, having served in several leadership roles. He is also a recipient of The Kitty O. Locker Outstanding Researcher Award and was chosen as a Fellow of the Association in 2019. Ron loves teaching and has been selected MBA Teacher of the year 21 times and EMBA teacher of the year 18 times in the College of Business. His bio on the ABC website notes that the honor with which he is most pleased was his selection by the University of Alabama's senior class as the inaugural speaker for the University's Last Lecture Program.

# EASY JOURNAL ACCESS FROM THE ABC WEBSITE

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