

Preface

We agree with James Hume's well-crafted epithet: "The art of communication is the language of leadership." Consequently, this book is about two things: communication and leadership. The fourth edition of *Business and Professional Communication: Principles and Skills for Leadership* is designed to be the primary book for courses focused on business and professional communication. To be effective in the twenty-first-century workplace, you need to be able to communicate and influence others in positive and ethical ways.

As with our previous successful and popular three editions, the purpose of this new revision is to prepare readers for the communication and leadership demands of the modern workplace. Communication and work go hand in hand; it's hard to talk about the workplace without also talking about the communication that makes work happen, from developing relationships with coworkers to building work teams, making presentations, and crafting written messages. Closely linked to any discussion of workplace communication is the art and science of leading others. We do this by presenting key communication principles and skills while emphasizing how to apply them to lead and be successful in business and professional settings.

Plan of the Text

Our comprehensive text focuses on core communication principles and skills, emphasizing leadership for today's global workplace. Beginning in Chapter 1, we introduce students to key leadership approaches and then explicitly discuss how communication principles and skills are integral to being an effective and ethical leader.

A Focus on Leadership

Although some students may aspire to an influential leadership role, such as being CEO at a large company, many others are simply trying to figure out their vocational calling. Yet, regardless of how firm a student's professional goals are (whether they aspire to be the next Jeff Bezos or Oprah Winfrey or simply get a job to pay the bills), students in the contemporary workplace will influence colleagues and coworkers with their communication skills. A person does not need to be anointed "the leader" to be a leader in the workplace. Regardless of how students perceive themselves, they *will* influence others as they communicate with their colleagues, which is the essence of leadership.

Every chapter of the text is infused with discussions about communication principles and skills for leadership. Although most business and professional communication textbooks include a discussion of leadership, we have woven discussion and application of leadership into each chapter, from the chapter-opening scenarios that profile successful leaders to tips and guidelines for how to communicate and lead effectively in boxes and text discussions throughout.

A Focus on Communication Skill Applications

Rather than merely listing and describing communication skills, our approach is designed to help students *apply* communication skills to the workplace. The fourth edition continues to encourage application of communication skills to business and professional settings, from the chapter opening narratives and “Leading Questions,” to practical tips and guidelines, to the learning activities at the end of chapters.

In business and professional contexts there are four primary communication skill sets that lead to success: relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing. We offer specific recommendations on developing these competencies, drawing upon the latest communication research and wisdom from seasoned leaders.

- **Relationship Skills.** Relationship skills are essential in working with others in various business and professional settings. In addition to helping students understand how professional relationships are established and maintained, Chapters 6, 7, and 8 focus on specific relationship skills, such as how to interview others, how to be interviewed, and how to manage interpersonal conflict.
- **Collaboration Skills.** Working in groups and teams, as well as attending and leading meetings, occupies a considerable amount of time in the contemporary workplace. Whether collaborating face-to-face or in electronically mediated situations, today’s workers must understand how to work together effectively and appropriately. How to solve problems and make decisions as a team, as well as learning how to unleash the creative potential of groups during meetings, are key skills emphasized in Chapters 9 and 10.
- **Presentation Skills.** In addition to relating and collaborating, contemporary workers are frequently called on to present their ideas to others. Presentation skills are discussed in Chapters 11, 12, and 13. Whether one-on-one, during meetings, or to a larger audience, effectively presenting information to others as well as persuading others are essential communication and leadership competencies.
- **Writing Skills.** Although our emphasis in this book remains on developing oral skill competence, being able to communicate ideas in writing is important when relating, collaborating, and presenting to others. Chapters 14 and 15 are devoted to the development of good business writing.

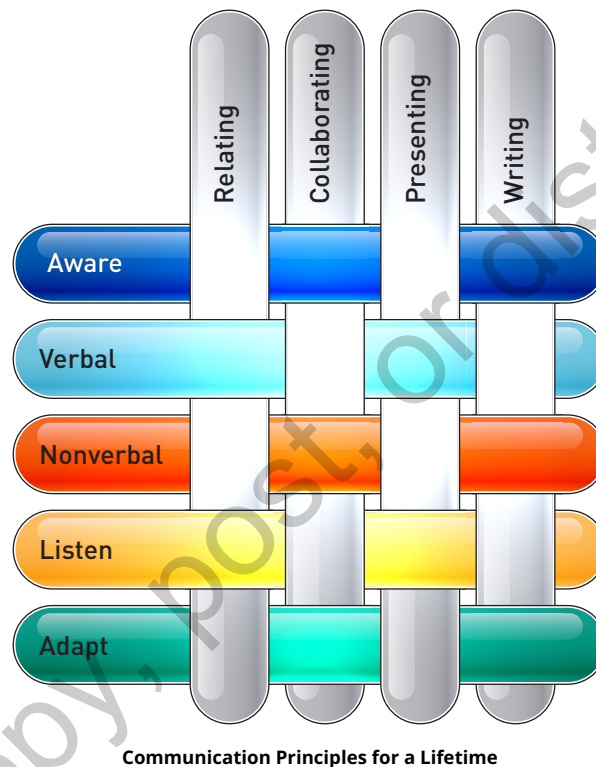
A Focus on Communication Principles

We’ve organized our study of business and professional communication around five fundamental communication principles that can enhance communication skills and leadership abilities. Together, these five principles provide readers with a useful framework for understanding how leaders can become effective communicators. The five principles are as follows:

- Principle One: Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others.
- Principle Two: Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages.
- Principle Three: Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages.

- Principle Four: Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others.
- Principle Five: Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others.

In most business and professional communication texts, communication principles are introduced early in the book and then rarely explicitly mentioned. In our text, these core communication principles (as presented in the figure below from Chapter 1) are integrated into our discussion of business and professional communication skills throughout the book.



Overview of the Text

The book is organized into five parts. Part One covers the five core communication principles linked to communication skills. The second part, *Relating to Others*, presents key relational skills, including strategies to prepare for a career and interviewing skills. *Collaborating with Others*, the focus of the third part, presents practical applications of working with others in groups and teams. The fourth part, *Presenting to Others*, includes chapters designed to enhance your ability to speak to an audience, whether in person or in mediated settings. The final part offers strategies for preparing written materials. A new chapter, *Writing for Digital Media*, offers contemporary advice for writing using various technologies. We've included two appendices that include cutting-edge principles and skills. Appendix A offers strategies for managing time, managing communication, and enhancing productivity. Appendix B provides a digest of principles and skills for crafting and delivering mediated presentations.

Part I: Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership

The opening chapter provides the prelude to studying business and professional communication by explaining fundamental communication models and concepts. We then introduce the five communication principles and show how those principles are linked to the critical skills of relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing.

Chapters 2 through 5 present the five communication principles in more detail. Chapter 2 discusses Principle 1, being aware of how you communicate at work, noting how a person's social style reflects their self-concept as well as how they perceive others. Helping students understand their own approach to leadership and the role of organizational culture also enhances their awareness of themselves and others. Chapter 3 presents the key principles of using and interpreting verbal messages (Principle 2) and nonverbal messages (Principle 3). Chapter 4 describes Principle 4, the process of listening and responding to others. Chapter 5 helps students adapt to others (Principle 5) by understanding how one's personality, culture, and gender influence how we send and interpret messages. The remaining chapters apply the principles of communication to the foremost essential skill sets used in business and professional contexts: relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing.

Part II: Relating to Others at Work

This part applies the five communication principles to the skills of relating to others in the workplace. Chapter 6 describes different types of workplace relationships and emphasizes how to understand and manage conflict at work. Chapters 7 and 8 cover essential information to help students relate to others during interviews and offer strategies for making career choices. Chapter 7 presents ideas for developing a career path and achieving career goals, while Chapter 8 presents key interviewing skills with an emphasis on employment interviews.

Part III: Collaborating With Others

Building upon the skill of relating to others in interpersonal contexts, we turn our attention to collaborating with others in groups and teams. Chapter 9 helps students apply the five principles to various group and team situations and understand how teams work and can work better. Chapter 10 focuses on the ubiquitous business meeting and how to make meetings effective. Skills for enhancing decision making, problem solving, and conducting creative meetings are presented, along with skills for facilitating meeting discussions, avoiding groupthink, and reaching consensus.

Part IV: Presenting to Others

The following three chapters discuss the vital professional skill of presenting messages to others. Chapter 11 explains how to develop a message, including how to find and use interesting and appropriate supporting material and organize a message for maximum clarity and impact, all centered on the importance of considering your audience. Chapter 12 focuses on how to deliver a message and use a wide array of technological tools to add visual and auditory support to a presentation. Chapter 13 offers tips and strategies for informing, persuading, and presenting special kinds of presentations in professional settings. Special emphasis is placed on developing business briefings and reports, as well as on how to use persuasive strategies to sell products and services to others.

Part V: Writing for Business

The last two chapters offer a primer on writing skills. Chapter 14 presents classic principles and skills for the most common writing tasks in business and professional settings, including letters, reports, and a variety of business documents. Chapter 15, new to this edition, presents a cornucopia of skills and practices that are useful when writing for digital media, including email and a variety of other electronically mediated writing tasks.

Appendix A: Managing Time: Managing Communication

A unique “time management” appendix, not found in other business and professional communication books, offers strategies to help students communicate efficiently by managing their time and improving their work productivity by applying classic time-management and communication-management strategies.

Appendix B: Crafting and Delivering Mediated Presentations

The final appendix offers tips and techniques for presenting mediated presentations. Increasingly, business and professional communicators find themselves participating in video conferences, meetings, and delivering talks and reports virtually. This appendix offers practical strategies for communicating skillfully in mediated settings.

What's New in This Edition

We are grateful to both students and faculty who have provided excellent confirming comments and constructive suggestions to enhance this book. Here's a look at what's new in the fourth edition:

A New Coauthor

Steve and Tim are delighted to have Seth Frei join the author team. Dr. Frei, an award-winning educator, has extensive experience teaching Business and Professional Communication in both communication and business departments. His extensive knowledge and application of technology, as well as his international experience in teaching business communication principles and skills across the world, adds contemporary depth and breadth to this new edition of *Business and Professional Communication: Principles and Skills for Leadership*.

Stronger Emphasis on Career Application

This new edition includes interactive practice opportunities such as writing exercises and features real-world examples that demonstrate the relationship between communication skills and career progression because students are always interested in strategies and suggestions for developing their career trajectory. We've also added a new **Developing Your Career** feature highlighting the connection between successful careers and mastery of communication skills. We've included tips for achieving career advancement by helping others listen more effectively and a discussion of the key difference between simply regurgitating information and effectively communicating. Chapter 7 has been completely revised to include extensive strategies and tips for developing career goals.

Increased Focus on Using Social Media, Technology, and AI at Work

New technological tools have an ongoing, dramatic impact on the global workplace and our communication. In each edition, we have increased our coverage of digital communication and its influence, with a special emphasis in this new edition on applications of using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the workplace. Each chapter includes new tips and strategies for ethically using AI in business contexts.

Our new **Using Social Media, Technology and AI at Work** feature offers practical tips for using the latest communication technology, such as how to best use mobile devices in special presentations, making the most of your LinkedIn profile, how and when to use text messages at work, as well as innovative and creative uses of AI. This edition includes a new Appendix (Appendix B) titled “Crafting and Delivering Mediated Presentations” that offers practical strategies for designing and delivering video presentations.

Expanded Emphasis on Writing Skills

This edition adds a new chapter on writing for digital media. With the increased likelihood that twenty-first-century business and professional writing will occur online or on other digital platforms, we have expanded our coverage of written communication by adding new material emphasizing writing for a digital age. Chapter 15 offers new strategies for improving and managing email and text messages, as well as contemporary applications of using AI-assisted writing at work.

New Examples and Updated Special Feature Boxes in Every Chapter

Each chapter includes new or revised boxed material that highlights the application of key principles and skills:

- **Developing Your Career:** This new material helps students identify strategies and resources to help them focus on their strengths and market their skills in the workplace. We also offer ideas to help students identify ways of finding their path in business and professional contexts.
- **Leading Others at Work:** As we have noted, communication and leadership go hand in hand. We have added new material that emphasizes how communication skills help influence others in practical and ethical ways.
- **Using Social Media, Technology and AI at Work:** Whether working remotely or working in a corporate setting with colleagues, clients, and customers nearby, work is increasingly being accomplished using new technological tools.
- **Assessing Your Skills:** New to this edition are a wealth of assessment tools to help students review their own mastery of the material and identify their communication strengths and areas of development.
- **Applying Communication Ethics at Work:** Effective communicators are ethical communicators. Each chapter highlights how to apply ethical principles in relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing to others.

Updated and Expanded Research Base

This edition builds on the text's comprehensive, contemporary research base in communication studies, business, and related fields, including the latest research we could find related to communication skills and principles, including the role of technology, decision making, and intercultural communication. A review of the extensive endnotes reflects the depth and breadth of research-informed recommendations and observations we make throughout the book.

Interactive Content, Expanded Coverage, New Pedagogical Features

Now more than ever, students must juggle a variety of roles and deal with multiple demands on their time. We are committed to producing a concise yet comprehensive text that maintains the breadth and depth of coverage that readers valued in the previous editions. To that end, several discussions have been streamlined and focused to make the text more accessible and concentrated on the key communication principles used in the workplace today.

Sage's innovative and interactive Vantage learning platform offers many opportunities to interact with the material. A new feature, Assessing Your Skills, further invites interaction with chapter content. Each chapter begins with a feature called **Leading Questions**, questions that invite engagement and application of chapter material. The chapter-end summary, **Chapter Summary in Brief** coupled with boldfaced **Key Terms**, provides a built-in study guide to help readers master the material. A comprehensive glossary is included at the end of the book.

Sage Vantage

This text is available in Sage Vantage—an intuitive learning platform you and your students will actually love.

Nine out of 10 of your colleagues using Sage Vantage would recommend it!

Sage Vantage for *Business and Professional Communication: Principles and Skills for Leadership* integrates all the textbook content with assignable multimedia activities and auto-graded assessments to drive student engagement and ensure accountability. Unparalleled in its ease of use and built for dynamic teaching and learning, Vantage offers customizable LMS integration and best-in-class support.

See why you'll love Sage Vantage at collegepublishing.sagepub.com/vantage.

Faculty and Students Approve

"Student performance after implementing Vantage is incredible. . . .

We know that reading increases performance, but this is a really tangible way to see that."

—Karen Deeming, Instructor, Merced College

"With Vantage, **I set up my course in under 10 minutes.** . . . I love Vantage!"

—Karin Machluf, Instructor, Penn State Scranton

"Interactive, engaging and simple to use."

—Alyssa Salazar, Student, University of North Texas

“It really **helps you wrap your head around what you’re learning** and come to a complete understanding of the course material.”

—Aubrey Akins, Student, St. Bonaventure University

“This is the **smoothest student onboarding process** I have ever experienced.”

—Echo Leaver, Instructor, Salisbury University

Analytic Skill-Building

Assignable video activities and reading activities in Vantage align with learning objectives, reinforcing fundamental concepts in every chapter. With automatic assessment integration into your gradebook, these resources provide an ideal platform for students to hone their critical thinking and application skills by applying chapter concepts to real-world scenarios.

Additional Teaching Resources

Visit **collegepublishing.sagepub.com** and navigate to the Resources tab on your book’s page to find the teaching materials designed to accompany this textbook. On this site you will find an array of materials that will save you time and help you keep students engaged, including the following:

Learning management system cartridges that easily integrate with your course management system so student test results and graded assignments seamlessly flow into your gradebook:

- **Test banks**, aligned to Bloom’s Taxonomy, that provide a diverse range of test items, including multiple choice, true/false, and essay questions.
- **Lecture notes** that provide an outline and the key concepts in each chapter to aid in lecture preparation.
- **PowerPoint® slides** that offer a flexible, accessible, and customizable solution for creating multimedia lectures.
- **Tables and Figures from the book** are available to support lecture preparation and class discussions.

Chapter 1

Communicating and Leading at Work



Storms Media Group / Alamy

Learning Objectives

- 1.1 Explain why communication skills are essential leadership qualities.
- 1.2 Describe and define elements of the communication process.
- 1.3 Describe the relationship between leadership and communication.
- 1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills

Taking a course in Business and Professional Communication can make you rich. Although this claim may seem hyperbolic, some of the wealthiest people in the world support this conclusion. In 2009, when he was Chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway Warren Buffett, one of the richest

persons on the planet, known as the Oracle of Omaha for his investment insights, announced in a commencement address to MBA students at his alma mater, Columbia University, that he would offer \$100,000 to any student in the audience in return for 10 percent of future earnings. He then added his punch line: If the student would take a communication skill development course or public speaking training, he would increase his offer to \$150,000.¹ Buffett once told a reporter that taking a communication class “certainly had the biggest impact in terms of my subsequent success.” Buffet proclaimed that even small communication improvements can reap big rewards. He further advised, “A relatively modest improvement [in your communication skills] can make a major difference in your future earning power, as well as in many other aspects of your life.”² Then he added this metaphor: “If you can’t communicate, it’s like winking at a girl in the dark—nothing happens.”³ Perhaps that’s why Buffet gave this advice: “the best way you can improve yourself is to learn to communicate better. Your results in life will be magnified if you can communicate them better. The only diploma I hang in my office is the communication diploma I got from Dale Carnegie in 1952.”⁴

It’s not just billionaire Warren Buffet who suggests communication skills are essential for success. Bill Gates, Founder of Microsoft, and another billionaire business person who regularly makes the list of wealthiest people in the world, said this about communication:

Communication skills and the ability to work well with different types of people are very important . . . software innovation, like almost every other kind of innovation, requires the ability to collaborate and share ideas with other people, and to sit down and talk with customers and get their feedback and understand their needs.⁵

Yes, you will need technical skills, but, as Bill Gates has discovered, technical skill without the ability to communicate your work to colleagues and customers will be less valuable.

Another billionaire, Sir Richard Branson, who founded the Virgin Group in 1970, recently posted the following on his Virgin blog extolling the virtues of communication:

Communication makes the world go round. It facilitates human connections, and allows us to learn, grow, and progress. It’s not just about speaking or reading, but understanding what is being said—and in some cases what is not being said. Communication is the most important skill any leader can possess.⁶

These multibillionaires are in agreement that communication skills are among the key factors that help explain their success.

Leading Questions

1. Why do you think the wealthiest people in the world attribute a major reason for their success to the importance of communication skills?
2. Based on your experience, what do you think are the most important business and professional communication skills a person can possess?
3. Although possessing communication skills can result in personal financial benefits, how can improved communication skills enhance your overall quality of life?

Communication and Leadership

This book is about two things: **communication** and **leadership**. Specifically, it's about how you can apply communication principles and skills to lead in the workplace. Communication and work go hand in hand; it's hard to talk about the workplace without also talking about the communication that makes work happen. And closely linked to any discussion of workplace communication is the art and science of leading others. Leaders develop relationships, build teams, make presentations before groups of people, and know how to write clear and persuasive messages applying effective communication principles and skills. One study, in agreement with Warren Buffet, Bill Gates and Richard Branson, found that CEOs rated leadership and communication as the *top job skills* needed in business and professional settings.⁷

Communication and You

Would you be surprised if we told you we know precisely what you will do for a living? Perhaps you've known what your vocational goal was since you were in elementary school. Or you may still be uncertain as to what your specific career track will be. Regardless of whether your career goals are clear or fuzzy, we know what you will *do*. You will communicate. Research has consistently found that you will spend from 80 to 90 percent of your typical day communicating with others.⁸ You will spend most of your day doing four things: writing, reading, speaking, and listening to others.⁹ You will communicate with others while sitting at your computers, interacting with others one-on-one, collaborating in team meetings, while giving presentations, or when sharing your ideas in writing. To live is to communicate. To work is to communicate. You can't help it. You *will* communicate with others—it's what you *do*, both now and in the future.

A number of recent studies underscore the need for and importance of communication skills for the twenty-first-century workplace.¹⁰ If you possess effective communication skills, you are much more likely to be successful. Without communication skills, you are less likely to be successful.

Communication Is the Most Valued Workplace Skill

A survey of recruiters from companies with more than 50,000 employees, found that communication skills were cited as *the single most important factor* in choosing managers.¹¹ The survey, conducted by the University of Pittsburgh's Katz Business School, points out that communication skills (including written and oral presentations), as well as an ability to work with others, are the main factor contributing to job success.¹² Another study found that as much as 75 percent of long-term success on the job is based on such "people skills" as communication and listening.¹³ Communication skills, social skills, and teamwork skills, often called "soft skills"—are the key competencies emphasized in this book.¹⁴

When he was the legendary chairman of General Electric, Jack Welch said the key characteristic he looked for in a leader was their ability to communicate well. Specifically, he wanted "someone who is comfortable talking to *anyone*—*anybody* in the world, in New Delhi, Moscow, Cairo, Beijing—*anywhere*!"¹⁵ When you complete your study of business and professional communication, you will be able to include a set of communication skills on your resume that can enhance your career success. Communication skills are leadership skills. These essential skills will immediately make you competitive in a global marketplace.

Without Effective Communication Skills Your Career May Suffer

People who communicate effectively do well on the job. The opposite is also true: without effective communication skills, employees find that it is more challenging both to get a job and to stay employed.¹⁶ In a national survey of employers, the lack of basic oral/written skills and effective business communication skills appeared to be a major stumbling block for new entrants into the job market.¹⁷ Employers also ranked the leadership skills of four-year college graduates as deficient, noting their inability to collaborate, work in teams or groups, and solve problems.¹⁸ This course is designed to develop “people skills” for a twenty-first century workforce.

A study of one specific career group, information technology (IT) workers, conducted by the research firm Robert Half Technology, reports that they need more than technical abilities—they also need to be well-rounded business professionals. Nearly 45 percent of respondents said their IT staff members must improve their project management skills and could improve verbal and written communication abilities. The report also suggested that IT staff often need to develop stronger organizational and interpersonal skills.¹⁹

Communication Skills Enrich the Quality of Your Life

Although we have touted the benefits of having effective communication to enhance your career, there is an equally if not more important reason why learning communication competences are valuable. Communication skills improve your relationships with others, including your family, friends, and loved ones. It's our relationships that enhance our overall quality of life. *The New York Times* columnist David Brooks observed, “There are mountains of evidence to show that intimate relationships, not career, are at the core of life, and that those intimate relationships will have a downstream effect on everything else you do.”²⁰ At the heart of a good relationship is good communication.²¹ Learning communication principles and skills can enhance your relationships with others.



People socializing in a non-work setting. Communication is central to our lives including the simple joy of interacting with our friends and loved ones.

MBI / Alamy

Having quality relationships with others has important health benefits. When he was U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy proclaimed that loneliness was as deadly as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day.²² In his report documenting the importance of developing quality relationships with others he wrote, “Given the profound consequences of loneliness and isolation, we have an opportunity, and an obligation, to make the same investments in addressing social connection that we have made in addressing tobacco use, obesity, and the addiction crisis.”²³ Yes, this course focuses on skills that can enhance your career goals, but the same skills that enhance your employability also improve the overall quality of your life.

Leadership and You

You may think you're not really interested in being a leader. You don't want to be the boss; you just want to get a job and find meaningful work. In fact, the thought of leading others may be somewhat frightening to you. You simply want to find a satisfying career that provides a good living. You

may wince when thinking about yourself as a leader because you just don't want the stress and headaches you associate with being in charge.

But perhaps you do hope to be a leader in the future. You may aspire to being a corporate chief executive officer at a large company, becoming partner in a law firm, or becoming president of a company or university. Or you want to own your own business. You may need no convincing that seeking a leadership role is an important career goal. Regardless of your professional aspirations, we offer this prediction: *You will influence others using leadership skills through the way you communicate with others.*

Simply stated, *to lead is to influence others.* To be present among a group of people influences them. You can't escape influencing others. Whether you work remotely from home, use artificial intelligence applications working in a cubicled office building, or covet the corner office, you will influence others by simply being a member of an organization or team. Your very presence in an organization, even a virtual presence, regardless of your job description or level within the organization, influences others.

You influence others through your communication. This is why leadership and communication are connected. By enhancing your communication competence, you will also improve your leadership abilities. You don't have to be anointed "the leader" to use leadership skills. *You can't help but use them.* To help you accomplish your professional goals—whether working in a large corporation, a small business, working for yourself, or in a profession such as law, medicine, or education—this book can enhance what you'll spend most of your time doing at your job: communicating and influencing others.

Developing Your Career

Which Way Is North?

From your present location, can you, with 100 percent certainty, point north right now? If you wanted to go north, but didn't know which direction north was, it would be hard to get there. The same could be said for your career goals. You need to know which direction you are headed. Which way is "north" in terms of your career goals?

Some people have known since childhood what their career or professional aspiration is. But for many others, the question of which way is "north" is difficult. There are several well-written books that can help you explore your own interests and backgrounds to help you find your path. Here are three of our favorites:

- Richard N. Bolles, *What Color Is Your Parachute: A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers* (Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2022).
A classic guide to helping you find your strengths and discover your career path.
- Paul Tieger, *Do What You Are: Discover the Perfect Career for You Through the Secrets of Personality Type* (Little, Brown Spark, 2021).

This book helps you better understand yourself and gain insights as to career goals that align with your talents.

- Mike Sun, *Career Development for New College Students: How to find the Right Career Path and Get the Job That Makes You Happy* (InsightBox, 2022).

This book helps you identify a meaningful career path that builds on your strengths, interests, and goals.

Whichever direction you discover as your true "north," one thing is for certain: you will use communication skills to help you get where you want to go.

Communication: Making Sense and Sharing Sense

In 2007, JetBlue Airlines, a low-cost airline from New York, apologized to its customers after customers were required to remain on a JetBlue aircraft for eleven hours during an ice storm. JetBlue managers used the company's website as well as YouTube to offer their apology to the traveling public.²⁴ (That wouldn't happen today. Federal regulations now prohibit passengers from being held up at the gate for more than three hours.) However, many of the customers never saw the apology. What JetBlue learned was that just placing a message on a website doesn't mean that communication has occurred. Although that eleven-hour quarantine happened two decades ago, many of those passengers still won't fly on JetBlue. Bad customer service is remembered longer than good customer service. Communication happens not when a message is crafted and sent but when the message has helped create meaning for someone. The key lesson JetBlue learned is that *information is not communication*. Simply pronouncing and posting words on a website doesn't result in communication. What makes a message *communication*? Read on.

The Nature of Communication

Reduced to its essence, communication is the process of acting on information.²⁵ Someone does something or says something, and there is a response from someone else in the form of an action, a word, or a thought. As JetBlue Airlines learned, presenting information to others does not mean that there is communication. Would-be communicators often express exasperation when their efforts fail. "I put it in the email. Why didn't you do what I asked?" "It's in the company policy statement on the website!" "I explicitly told everyone what to do in our team meeting!" What these exasperated communicators falsely assumed was if they send a message, someone will receive it. Communication does not work that way. What you send (or think you send) is rarely what others understand.

Human communication is more sophisticated than simply sending and receiving messages. **Human communication** is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages.²⁶ Understanding the key elements in this definition can help you diagnose what when wrong when your communication is not achieved and figure out what to improve to make it better.

Communication Is About Making Sense

We make sense out of what we experience when we interpret what we see, hear, touch, smell, and taste. To make sense out of a message, we look for patterns or structure. We relate what happens to us at any given moment to something we've experienced in the past. An effective communicator attempts to learn as much as possible about their listeners in order to craft messages that make sense to them. Sometimes a message is misunderstood because it just didn't make sense to the listener or reader.

Communication Is About Sharing Sense

We use words as well as nonverbal cues (such as gestures, facial expressions, clothing, music) to express our thoughts and feelings to others. It's through the process of sharing our understanding of our experiences that we connect to other humans. We make sense based not only on words and nonverbal messages we perceive but also our past experiences, including our culture, gender, and a host of other variables.

Communication Is About Creating Meaning

Communication can “go off the rails” if the communicator doesn’t clearly express their intended meaning. Succinctly stated, *meanings are in people, not in words*. Both senders and receivers of messages *create* meaning in our hearts and minds based on our experiences, background, and culture. When, for example, you hear a rumor that there may be companywide layoffs you may think, “My job is safe; I’m a hard worker.” Someone else who has had different experience may hear the rumor and create a different meaning for the same rumor, thinking, “Yikes, I may get fired!”

When we communicate with another person who is physically present, the communication is **transactional**, meaning that messages are sent and received simultaneously. As you talk to someone and create meaning, you respond to that person’s verbal and nonverbal messages even as you speak.²⁷ Whether in a brief visit in someone’s office, or during a lengthy Zoom meeting, even if you remain silent or embarrassingly nod off to sleep, your nonverbal behavior provides information to others about your emotions and interest, or lack of interest. The transactive nature of communication suggests that you cannot *not* communicate. People interpret your communication even when you are not intentionally expressing an idea or feeling. Here’s another way to summarize this idea: *ultimately, people judge you by your behavior, not by your intent*. And because you are always behaving in some way (even when you are asleep), there is always the potential for someone to make sense out of your behavior.

Communication Occurs Through Verbal and Nonverbal Messages

Words and nonverbal behaviors are symbols you use to create meaning that makes sense to you. A **symbol** is something that represents a thought, concept, object, or experience. These words are symbols. Some symbols are nonverbal, such as your use of gestures, posture, tone of voice, clothing, and jewellery. Although the meaning you derive makes sense to you, for most of us, nonverbal messages primarily communicate emotions—our feelings of joy or sadness, likes and dislikes, or our interest or lack of interest in others.

Our definition of human communication suggests that the message we express is not always the message that is interpreted as we intended it. Making sense and sharing sense with others is a fragile process. Without question, messages are not always interpreted as intended. Osmo Wiio, a Scandinavian communication scholar, summarizes the challenges of communicating with others, especially in organizations, with these maxims:

1. If communication can fail, it will.
2. If a message can be understood in different ways, it will be understood in just the way that does the most harm.
3. There is always somebody who knows better than you what you meant by your message.



Nonverbal Communication

iStock/FreshSplash

4. The more communication there is, the more difficult it is for communication to succeed.²⁸

Although we are not as pessimistic as Professor Wiio, you undoubtedly have experienced frustration when your message was not expressed clearly or accurately understood.

Effective and Appropriate Communication Achieves Three Goals

To be a competent communicator is to ensure that the expression of your communication message achieves three outcomes:²⁹

- *The message should be understood as the communicator intended it to be understood.* Although it's true that meaning is not "sent" but "caught" based on the understanding of the receiver, the goal of communication is for the receiver to understand the message as the source intended.
- *The message should achieve the communicator's intended effect.* Most messages are expressed to accomplish something. The goal could simply be to share information, or it could be to get someone to buy something or vote for someone. Thus, a second criteria of effective and appropriate communication is whether the message receiver responded according to what the source had in mind.
- *The message should be ethical.* Ethical communication is based on principles of what is perceived as good, fair, honest and true. An ethical message does not force or coerce a receiver to respond in a certain way; ethical messages give the receiver a choice as to how to respond.

Philosophers have debated for centuries whether there is such a thing as a universal moral and ethical code.³⁰ British author and scholar C. S. Lewis argued that the teachings of cultures throughout the world and through time support the existence of a shared ethical code that serves as the basis for interpreting the "goodness" or "badness" of human behavior.³¹ In their book *Communication Ethics and Universal Values*, communication scholars Clifford Christians and Michael Traber suggest that "Every culture depends for its existence on norms that order human relationships and social institutions."³² They offer three universal cultural norms: (1) the value of truth, (2) respect for another person's dignity, and (3) the expectation that innocent people should not suffer harm.³³

A final observation about defining communication is that the word *communication* is often misunderstood and misused. When defining communication some people confuse the word *communication* with the word *communications*—they add an "s." Adding an "s" narrows the meaning. *Communications* (with the "s") emphasizes the channel or method of distributing messages. Your mobile phone, cable, streaming service, or Internet provider are communications companies. Communication (no "s") focuses on the *process* of communicating rather than the *method* of sending messages. When you study *communication*, you study the process of communicating messages rather than just focusing on how messages are dispersed.³⁴

The Components of Communication

The most basic components of communication include the source, message, channel, receiver, noise, feedback, and context. Understanding these elements can help you analyze your own communication with others. Let's explore these elements in greater detail.

Source

The **source** of the message is the originator of the ideas and feelings expressed. The source puts a message into a code that can be understood by a receiver. Putting ideas, feelings, and thoughts into a code is called **encoding**. Just the opposite of encoding is the process of **decoding**; this occurs when the receiver interprets the words or nonverbal cues. When what is intentionally encoded is not accurately decoded, then communication has not achieved the key purpose of being understood.

Message

The **message** is the information being communicated by the source. As you transactively communicate with others, it's important to understand that every human communication message has two key dimensions: the content and relational dimensions.

The **content** of a communication message is the new information, ideas, or suggested actions the speaker wishes to express. Another name for the content dimension that may be more appropriate for the workplace is **task dimension**. Leaders, including managers, supervisors, or those who take charge of a particular project, communicate content messages with others to accomplish certain tasks, to get work completed.

The **relational dimension** of a communication message is usually more implied; it offers cues about the emotions, attitudes, and amount of power and control the speaker feels toward others.³⁵ The relational dimension focuses more on nonverbal messages that convey cues about relationships among sender and receivers. Another way to distinguish between the content and relational dimensions of communication is to consider that the content of a message refers to *what* is said. The relational cues are provided in *how* the message was communicated. Although your supervisor may say “great job” about a project you’ve been working on, their lack of eye contact, monotone vocal inflection, and lackluster enthusiasm may actually suggest they are not all that pleased with your work.

Receiver

The **receiver** of the message is the person or persons who interpret the message. When communicating with others, it's the receiver who will ultimately determine if your message was successful—whether it was understood and was appropriate. Effective communicators are receiver oriented; they understand that the listener is the one who ultimately makes sense of the message you express. If you're selling a product, for example, your prime focus should be on whether the customer understood your message.

Channel

The **channel** is the means by which the message is expressed to the receiver. If you're typical, you receive messages from a variety of channels. Increasingly, in business and professional settings (as well as in all communication situations), you are receiving messages via a mediated channel such as text messages, email, phone, video, or a Facebook, Instagram, or BlueSky post.

Noise

Noise is anything that interferes with the message being interpreted as it was intended. As we've emphasized, what we express isn't always interpreted as we intend. Noise happens. If there were no noise, then all of our messages would be interpreted accurately. But noise is always present. It can be literal—such as beeps coming from your smartphone or computer that tell you that

you have incoming email—or it can be psychological, such as competing thoughts, worries, and feelings that capture your attention.

Feedback

Another element integral to communication is feedback. **Feedback** is the response to a message. Without feedback, communication is less likely to be effective. When your boss says, “Would you please give me a copy of the Williamson proposal?” you may say, “Is that the James Williamson proposal or the Kyra Williamson proposal?” Your quest for clarification in response to the request is feedback. Feedback can seek additional information, or simply confirm the message has been interpreted: “Okay, I’ll have the Williamson proposal on your desk by this afternoon.”

Context

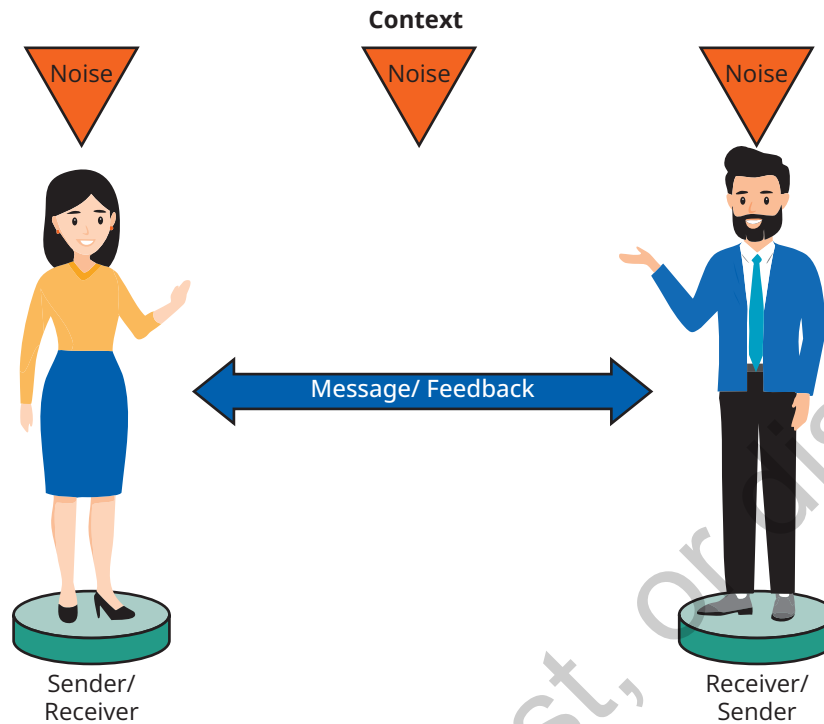
As the cliché goes, “Everyone has to be somewhere.” All communication takes place in some context, which can include the following elements of the communication environment:

- *Physical context* is the place where the communication occurs. In business settings the physical location can be your own home while you are on a video call if you work remotely or in a panelled corporate boardroom.
- *Historical context* is the influence of the past on present and future communication. You have known some of your colleagues for years; they know your strengths and weaknesses and you know theirs. And there are some people you may have just met on Zoom. Your history with others influences the formality, tone, and even your use of humor.
- *Psychological context* is the influence of one’s mental and emotional state on communication. An early morning meeting before you’ve had your necessary cup of coffee may put you in a different mood than having a meeting a couple of hours before you leave on your three-week vacation. The psychological context includes your personality, your mood, and the personality and mood of others.
- *Cultural context* includes our identification with groups and society, as well as our level of perceived power and position. Culture, which we will discuss in Chapter 6, permeates all you think and do. Power, influence, and perceived social standing are cultural elements that affect who we communicate with and what is perceived as appropriate or inappropriate communication based on cultural expectations and norms.

The cultural context of communication has fostered the development of a critical lens through which we can examine all human communication. A critical cultural communication approach reflects part of the cultural communication context and focuses on messages about power, resistance, suppression, oppression, and culture.³⁶ This approach encourages questions and invites challenges to traditional power structures and positions of influence. Considering all aspects of the cultural context of communication includes how historically marginalized, oppressed, or privileged individuals and groups are influenced by intersecting factors such as culture, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, disability, and social class.³⁷

Figure 1.1 shows the transactional nature of communication. We send messages at the same time we receive them. Even as we talk, we are also interpreting our partner’s nonverbal and verbal responses. We also monitor the degree to which the other person understands our message, since noise can interfere with the quality and accuracy of the meaning of messages.

Figure 1.1 ■ Communication as Transaction



Leadership: Influencing Others Through Communication

In 1910, J. C. Hall hopped on a train to Kansas City with a couple of boxes of imported postcards under his arm and a vision for making money. He started a mail-order postcard business from his Kansas City YMCA room. After some initial success, however, he found that people weren't buying postcards like they used to. He needed to change the focus of his business. His brother Rollie joined him in 1915, and together they started making their own greeting cards. Things were going well until a fire destroyed their entire greeting card stock. Having listened to his customers' needs, J. C. decided to hire an illustrator to make Christmas cards. It was a good move: business boomed.

J. C.'s other brother, William, joined the business, and under J. C.'s leadership, and the brothers continued their success. In 1928 they started printing the word "Hallmark" on the backs of the cards. When J. C. died in 1982, he left \$100 million to charity. Today, Hallmark Cards has an annual revenue of over 3.5 billion dollars.³⁸

J. C. was successful for two reasons. First, he was a master communicator. He knew what his customers wanted; he listened to them. He used his communication skills to adapt to a changing marketplace. He crafted messages that connected to people. Second, he knew how to lead others. Whether it was working with his brothers to build the family business or being an innovative leader in establishing the greeting card industry, J. C. successfully influenced others. Can you learn the same principles and skills of leading others that J. C. Hall used to establish a multibillion-dollar company? We believe the answer is an unequivocal yes.

Whether it's who comes out on top on the latest reality show, who becomes the team leader, or who is elected the next president of the United States, we're often fascinated with who emerges as number one. More specifically, we're interested in who becomes a leader, what a leader does, and how a leader maintains their leadership position.³⁹ Typically, it's the leader who both sets the tone and establishes the work agenda of an organization or a team.

Leading and Communicating

As we have noted, whether it's your career aspiration or not, you will lead others because you influence others. It's not a question of whether you will be a leader but rather how effective of a leader will you be. A key question we explore in this book is this: what are the underlying communication principles that enhance leadership? Here's a complete definition of leadership: leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Whatever job you hold, you will use verbal and nonverbal messages to influence others. Researchers have emphasized several different perspectives on leadership.

Leaders Help Make Something Happen

James MacGregor Burns, in his classic book *Leadership*, described leadership this way: "Leadership is leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers."⁴⁰

Leaders Create the Extraordinary

According to Alan Keith, "Leadership is ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen."⁴¹ Leaders help people become their best selves.



An effective leader influences others through both verbal and nonverbal communication and with strong presentation skills.

iStock/monkeybusinessimages

Leaders make something extraordinary happen by influencing others through either ethical or unethical means. An ethical leader doesn't try to coerce others through brute force or knowingly

using inaccurate or inappropriate appeals to fear. As noted earlier, being ethical is one of the criteria for effective and appropriate communication.

We believe that what these perspectives have in common is that *leadership occurs through communication*, both verbal messages (what a leader says) and nonverbal messages (what a leader does). So, if you are alive and interact with others, you will influence others. You will lead others.

We emphasize that leadership is not something only one person does. In most teams, groups, and organizations, there are many people who influence others. In fact, each team member undoubtedly influences what the group does or does not achieve.⁴² So it's likely that you will provide leadership even though you may not be formally designated as “*the* leader.” In an effectively led team, team members feel greater satisfaction, are more productive, and are less likely to be absent.⁴³ The quality of leadership influences virtually every aspect of what it feels like to be in any organization. In this first chapter, we introduce you to the concept of leadership and describe five communication principles that can positively affect how you lead others. Although leadership is essentially a process of influencing others through your communication with them, we note how leading others is different from merely managing others.

Leading Others at Work

The Leadership-Communication Link

Because of the relationship between communication and leadership principles, in each chapter, we feature leadership advice from chief executive officers or other experienced leaders from a variety of organizations. Although you may wonder whether the advice offered by leaders at the upper echelon of power applies to you, we assure you that it does. Communication and leadership principles have universal application, regardless of level of responsibility.

When asked about his key principles of leadership when he was chief executive officer of the Container Store, Kip Tendell, offered specific communication strategies for developing a positive, productive work climate:

The way we create a place where people do want to come to work is primarily through two key points. One of our foundation principles is that leadership and communication are the same thing. Communication is leadership. So we believe in just relentlessly trying to communicate everything to every single employee at all times, and we're very open. We share everything. We believe in complete transparency. There's never a reason, we believe, to keep the information from an employee, except for individual salaries.⁴⁴

For Tendell, leadership and communication are inextricably linked, and both help to explain and predict what it feels like to work in an organization. His key message is that it's important to study both communication and leadership principles.

- Because of the communication-leadership connection, regardless of your level of leadership aspirations, when you study communication, you're also learning how to lead others.
- It's through communication that you influence an organization's work climate. Positive communication messages result in a supportive work climate where workers are more productive and feel comfortable sharing their concerns and ideas.
- Possessing good communication skills can help you make authentic connections to others—to be transparent, honest, and real.

So regardless of the group, team, or organization in which you participate, communicating well and being open to creating transparency are leadership behaviors that will serve you well.

Leading Versus Managing

There are differences between being a leader and being a manager. A **manager** is someone who has been appointed to coordinate and facilitate, whereas a leader influences others even if they have not been designated to assume a specific leadership role. Metaphorically speaking, a manager's job is to keep the trains running on time; the leader's job is to design the trains. Managers keep things organized and emphasize accomplishing specific tasks. Leaders are focused not just on short-term accomplishments but also on how the team, group, or organization will accomplish its goals over the long term.

Can a manager also be a leader? Yes, a good manager can also become a leader when influencing others. The typical function of a manager is to influence the more routine, mundane, and repetitive elements of the work. A manager becomes a leader when they take on more innovative tasks and influence the group or organization in new and creative ways. The same person can both lead and manage.

Leading Versus Following

The relationship between leaders and followers is linked: a leader can't lead unless there are those who follow her or him; you can't have one without the other. If the key role of a leader is to influence others through communication, the prime task of a follower is to respond ethically and appropriately to the influence of a leader.

The word *follower* sometimes connotes a person who may wait to be told what to do rather than move forward on their own initiative. Without effective followers, however, little would get accomplished. So followers have more power and influence in organizations than they may perceive they have.

An effective follower does more than respond to a micromanaging leader; good followers use their own ideas and strategies to achieve their work goals. Precisely what do effective followers do? One researcher found that skilled followers engage in two activities: (1) They are independent and critical thinkers rather than passive and noncritical thinkers, and (2) they actively engage in the work, rather than waiting to be told what to do.⁴⁵ In most situations, the best followers are those who rate highly on both of these important attributes.

Leading and Technology

Another aspect of leadership involves the increased use of technology to do our work. We live in a digital age. Ubiquitous phone, text, and email messages are increasingly how we complete work tasks. Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming every job at every level of an organization. As journalist and technology specialist Marc Benioff noted, "We are now entering a new era of autonomous AI agents that take action on their own and augment the work of humans."⁴⁶

Technology and relationship scholar Sherry Turkle points out that even though we may be linked to others through technological tools, we are nonetheless often literally alone, separated from others, while communicating electronically using AI and other technological tools. The pandemic ushered in a work-from-home era that has continued. As Turkle notes, "Our networked life allows us to hide from each other, even as we are tethered to each other."⁴⁷ So much of your

leadership influence happens via technology. Whether you work in an office, an office cube, or work remotely, you will increasingly accomplish what you do using technology.

Technology Is Part of Your Life

To be online rather than communicate face-to-face is to use electronically mediated communication (EMC). Using mediated communication messages in the workplace is not new. People have used letters, another form of mediated messages, to conduct business for hundreds of years. In the 1800s, the introduction of telegraphs and telephones increased the pace of communication. Today, a plethora of electronic tools has resulted in an accelerated communication work environment. These tools, with AI being among the most powerful and pervasive, have dramatic implications for leadership and workplace communication. Among the most important is that others can influence us almost 24/7 making work an ever-present part of our lives. Sherry Turkle suggests the implications are even deeper, “Those little devices in our pockets don’t only change what we do, they change who we are.”

We Seemlessly Toggle Between Mediated and Nonmediated Communication

Communication in business and professional settings, as well as in our personal relationships, increasingly involves mediated communication with a heavy reliance on social media. You almost imperceptibly move between virtual and nonvirtual communication situations. One source reported that employees spend almost eleven hours per week writing or responding to work-related email messages.⁴⁸ Another study found that almost 90 percent of employees waste time using social media.⁴⁹ What are the most popular social media platforms that we use to establish and maintain relationships? If you are like most people, you spend a lot of time on social media, according to the following statistics:

- Ninety-five percent of Americans have access to the Internet.⁵⁰
- Worldwide, 5.35 billion people use some type of social media.⁵¹
- Seven and one-half million blog posts are published each day.⁵²
- Ninety-eight percent of people prefer to use Facebook on their phone at least some of the time.⁵³
- Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) and Generation X (born between 1965 and 1979) are YouTube’s fastest-growing users.⁵⁴
- If you live in the United States, it is estimated that you will spend an average of six years and eight months on social media during your lifetime.⁵⁵
- People watch over one billion hours of YouTube daily which is about 8.4 minutes for each person on earth per day.⁵⁶
- Every sixty seconds, people create 400 new accounts on Facebook, post more than a half million comments, and upload 136,000 photos.⁵⁷

Here’s the percentage of people who used a platform at least once a day in 2024:⁵⁸

- YouTube 83 percent

- Facebook 68 percent
- Instagram 47 percent
- Pinterest 35 percent
- TikTok 33 percent

Chances are you will spend considerable time working in virtual groups and teams connected to team members via Zoom, or using software programs such as Microsoft Teams to conduct your business. Webinars, seminars that are held via the Internet, are saving companies money because people can work collaboratively without traveling to another city, state, or country. But it takes knowledge and skill to use technology effectively.

Given the prominence of technology in the workplace, your communication effectiveness will be evaluated not only by your face-to-face, live-and-in-person communication but also your technology savvy including the growing importance of AI. Throughout this book, we will highlight this influential link between leadership, communication, and technology with a special feature called Using Social Media, Technology and AI at Work.

Using Social Media, Technology and AI at Work

AI Is Not About to Change Your Life and Work—*It's Already Doing That!*

How are your AI skills? One survey found that in 2024 66 percent of employers expect their new hires to have some AI skill; evidence suggests that that percentage will grow as AI becomes even more pervasive in the workplace.⁵⁹ The AI global market is anticipated to grow at an annual rate of 40 percent from 2023 to 2030 and contribute almost 16 trillion dollars to the global economy by 2030. A principle called Jevons Paradox predicts that as the efficiency of technology increases, so will its use.⁶⁰ So as AI becomes easier and more efficient to use it will likely touch your life in abundance.

Predictive AI is a term that describes how AI technology uses existing data to analyze the past and predict the future. Generative AI goes one step further by learning from existing data to create new text, images, software, or other valued work products.⁶¹ AI futurist Ray Kurzweil anticipates that AI will shift from chatbots, a predictive AI function, to acting autonomously to initiate and complete tasks.⁶²

AI affects all aspects of the way you work and communicate with others.⁶³ How is AI influencing our work?

- *We will work faster:* An MIT study found that ChatGPT improved the speed of producing business documents by almost 60 percent.⁶⁴ A needed report can be produced in moments. Repetitive tasks performed by humans will be performed by AI.
- *We will work more efficiently:* Microsoft's AI software Copilot, for example, can dramatically improve workplace productivity.⁶⁵ What used to take days for someone to read massive amounts of data and reports can now be summarized and key points extracted in seconds.
- *We will collaborate with AI technology.* Because of the ability of AI to write and develop images, including video, we will collaborate not only with people but also with technology.⁶⁶ Customers and clients will increasingly first encounter an AI customer service "agent" to respond to questions and needs. Words, images, and video will be created using AI.⁶⁷

- *We will have messages customized just for us.* Marketing for products and services will use AI to customize sales to individuals.
- *We will collaborate better together:* A Forbes report concluded: “AI-empowered collaborative tools can enhance the quality of the virtual meeting experience, improvise work workflows and automate some tasks on the behalf of geographically distributed teams.”⁶⁸

Match Your Media to Your Message

When do you need to share news face-to-face and when is it better to communicate virtually? Although some research has found that mediated communication can be as satisfying as face-to-face conversation, some observers express concerns about an overreliance on mediated communication.⁶⁹ One practical theory, called media richness theory, suggests that you can use the *richness* of different communication methods to help you evaluate when it is best to communicate in person rather than participate in mediated communication. A method or channel of communication is said to be rich if it has these characteristics:⁷⁰

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

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

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

Use media-rich methods if

- Your message is likely to be misunderstood because it's highly detailed and complex
- Your message is important to people (such as about their compensation)
- There is a high potential for interpersonal conflict
- You want to know immediately how people will respond to your message

Use media-lean methods if

- The information is routine and noncontroversial, such as announcing the time and place of a meeting
- You will follow up the presentation of detailed information with a face-to-face meeting later
- You want to communicate a simple message to many people quickly, such as the closing of a street or a parking garage for repairs

- You already have a good interpersonal relationship with your intended audience because you have spent time in face-to-face collaboration on other projects

Leading Others: Applying Communication Principles at Work

As you begin your study of business and professional communication, the number of terms, ideas, and skills to learn about leadership and communication may seem overwhelming. To help you make sense out of the many ideas and the information that we present, we frame our study of business and professional communication around five fundamental principles that can enhance your communication skills and leadership abilities.⁷¹ Together, these five principles provide you with a framework for understanding how communication works at work:

Principle One: Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others.

Principle Two: Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages.

Principle Three: Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages.

Principle Four: Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others.

Principle Five: Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others.

You may be taking a course in business and professional communication with the hope of just getting a good job and keeping it. Or you may already have a job and you have visions of someday climbing a bit higher on the corporate ladder. We've encouraged you to consider your professional career not only as just getting and keeping a job but also recognizing your potential to influence others using your leadership skills. These five principles can serve as a useful framework for assessing your communication and leadership skills regardless of your specific career objective.

Principle One: Be Aware of Your Communication With Yourself and Others

The first principle is to be aware of your interactions with others while at work. Effective communicators who skilfully lead others are conscious or “present” when communicating. Ineffective communicators mindlessly or thoughtlessly say and do things they may later regret. Being aware of your own (and others') communication involves two important processes:

- First, it's important to be aware of what motivates or drives a person to communicate. Being aware of relationship dynamics is important. For example, if you know that one of your colleagues is getting a divorce, you may want to cut your coworker some slack when that person seems a bit edgy or tense during a staff meeting. Becoming aware of what motivates you and others to communicate will help you adapt your communication to make it more effective, which is the focus of our fifth communication principle.
- Second, it's important to be aware of how people perceive or see situations differently. No two people perceive a situation similarly. You may see a situation one way and a person who works for you may see it differently. For example, if you have no children but a colleague does have a child, you may not be interested at all in the new childcare

facility that will be opened near your work, but your coworker is ecstatic not to have to pick up their daughter across town. Often, perceptual differences result in a number of communication problems at work simply because of differences; people can view the same situation with different interpretations. To be an effective leader or follower, regardless of the type of work involved, it's important to be aware of your own thoughts, assumptions, and communication behavior and the behavior of others as well.

Applying Communication Ethics at Work

What's Your Ethics Credo?

A credo is simply a statement of what you believe. In the workplace it's especially important to be aware and mindful of what you believe to be your personal and professional code of ethics. **Ethics**, as we discussed previously, are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right or wrong. An ethical communicator is one who considers the thoughts, feelings, and considerations of the people with whom a communicator is interacting. Ethics are essential because of the trust others place in you, especially when you manage their money or have access to their private information such as medical or financial records. The National Communication Association's Credo for Communication Ethics reemphasizes the importance of being an ethical communicator:

Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others.⁷²

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

Principle Two: Effectively Use and Interpret Verbal Messages

The second principle is to effectively use and interpret verbal messages. We communicate through a language, which consists of symbols and a system of rules that make it possible for people to understand one another. As we noted earlier, symbols are words, sounds, visual images, or even gestures that represent thoughts, concepts, objects, or experiences. These words are symbols you use to derive meaning that makes sense to you. The effective communicator both encodes and decodes messages accurately; they select appropriate verbal symbols, or words, to form a message and interprets carefully the messages of others. Because a number of today's organizations are global, with offices located throughout the world, it's becoming more important for employees to communicate verbally—to speak, read, and write—in at least two languages.

As a leader you will have ample opportunity to instruct others in how to complete a particular task. It's essential that your followers understand your verbal messages and that you understand their verbal messages. Mastering the principle of effectively using and interpreting verbal messages will enhance your role as a VIP—a *verbally* important person who understands the power of words to influence others.

Principle Three: Effectively Use and Interpret Nonverbal Messages

Nonverbal communication is communication other than written or spoken language that creates meaning for someone. Unspoken messages can communicate powerful ideas with greater impact than mere words alone. Our emotions are communicated primarily through our use of nonverbal messages. A leader patting an employee on the back or an employee slamming shut an office door not only conveys a message but also communicates emotions. If you have ever said, “It’s not what he said that bothered me; it’s the way he said it,” then you already understand the power of nonverbal communication. A potential customer might tell you in their verbal message that they will call you next week. However, you know they will not call you because their nonverbal message was lacking sincerity. Again, it’s not *what* they said (“I will call you next week”) but how they said it (insincere voice, lack of eye contact, or fidgeting) that created and conveyed the meaning to you.

Understanding and interpreting nonverbal messages are especially important skills to have in the workplace. In one survey of more than 550 managers from fifty businesses and organizations, 92 percent of the respondents agreed that nonverbal communication was either “important” or “very important” in a variety of business situations.⁷³ This text provides you with skills to help you put into practice this vital communication principle for leadership.

Principle Four: Listen and Respond Thoughtfully to Others

Although effective leadership requires people to develop and send messages to others that are meaningful, it is equally if not more important for leaders to listen and receive messages from others. Are you a good listener? Sometimes we may not know how our listening skills are perceived by others unless we ask. People who are perceived to be better listeners enjoy greater success in their jobs than those who are perceived as poor listeners. Listening is the quintessential skill of an effective leader. In addition, research has documented that health professionals, bankers, and salespeople who are good listeners are perceived to be more competent and skilled.

Listening involves being **other-oriented**, which occurs when we consider the needs, motives, desires, and goals of others. A crucial part of leadership is being able to meet the needs of the people you lead. There is evidence that the skill of being other-oriented, or empathic, is decreasing. One study found that college students in the early part of the twenty-first century are 40 percent *less* empathic than college students in the 1980s and 1990s—empathy skills seemed to drop off after about 2000.⁷⁴ Listening to others is essential to being empathically other-oriented. The only way you know what people need is to listen to them. What are they telling you? What are they not telling you? Listening is so important to leadership that Stephen Covey, a well-known leadership expert, featured listening as one of his seven habits of highly effective people. Covey noted, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”⁷⁵

Listening is a process. It involves receiving messages as well as responding thoughtfully to what others are saying. Responsive messages involve asking questions related to what the person is talking about, restating in your own words what you hear the other person saying, and being nonverbally responsive by leaning forward, making eye contact, and nodding your head. Responsive messages are affirming. They communicate to other people that they have been listened to and that you understand them.

Principle Five: Appropriately Adapt Messages to Others

A one-size-fits-all approach to communication doesn't work in the second quarter of the twenty-first century. For messages to have an impact, they must be tailored to the people receiving them. AI and computer algorithms including the messages that appear on your social media page are increasingly adapted just to you. Today, people expect a message to be customized for them. Your ability to lead and influence others effectively depends on your ability to adapt messages appropriately to others.⁷⁶ When you adapt a message to others, you make choices about how best to develop a message to achieve your communication goal.

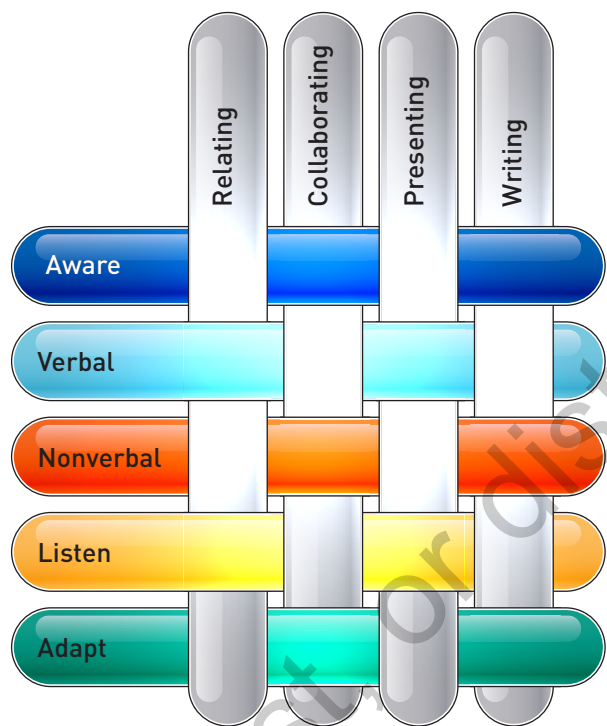
The workplace is full of diversity; chances are you will be working with people from all over the planet. People don't always understand each other because of communication differences due to factors such as gender, economic and social backgrounds, and cultural experiences. Another way to tailor your communication is to adapt to another person's personality. Some people are talkative; others are quiet. Some people enjoy a good argument; others find arguing upsetting. Your ability to adapt and adjust your communication makes others more comfortable and enhances understanding.

In the workplace, you communicate—make sense and share sense with others—to achieve specific work objectives. You achieve those objectives through four sets of communication skills:

- *Relating to others.* Communication in the interpersonal context helps develop and manage workplace relationships.
- *Collaborating with others.* Communication in the team context allows people to collaborate, or work cooperatively, with others.
- *Presenting messages to others.* Communication in the public context takes place through effective business and professional presentations, such as presenting a progress report to a higher management team.
- *Crafting written messages.* Given the prominence of email and text messages, your work effectiveness is likely to be evaluated based on how well you express yourself in writing.

Although each context is different, the communication principles remain the same. As you see in Figure 1.2, you use the same five principles to develop and manage relationships as you do to make effective sales presentations to potential customers. What's different is how the communication principles are applied. You will see how the five communication principles are woven throughout the four contexts (relating, collaborating, presenting, and writing) and how the context determines how the principles are applied to achieve your communication goals as you assume leadership roles.

Figure 1.2 ■ Communication Principles for a Lifetime



Recap

Communication Principles for Leadership

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

Assessing Your Skills

Are You AI Ready?

Increasingly employers expect their employees to understand and use AI on the job. With AI applications growing exponentially in business and professional organizations, it's important to evaluate your AI knowledge and skill. Use a 10-point scale to evaluate how AI ready you are.

1 = no experience; 10 = great experience.

1. I have confidently and skilfully used AI software applications at school.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. I have confidently and skilfully used AI software applications at work.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. I have confidently and skilfully used AI software applications to evaluate my writing.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. I have confidently and skilfully used AI software applications to evaluate my speaking.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. I have had instruction in using AI software applications including writing prompts that get the results I seek.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. I can provide evidence to a prospective employer that I can confidently and skilfully use AI software applications.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. I can honestly list my AI skill, training, expertise, and experience on my resume.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. I know someone who can favorably serve as a reference for my AI skill.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. I know how to use AI applications ethically (such as avoiding plagiarism and checking sources).
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. I can assess the accuracy of information gathered when using AI applications and can spot AI inaccurate "hallucinations."
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

A score of 80–100: Impressive! You have strong skills using AI. And 60–80:

Nice! You have stronger AI skills than many others, with room to learn. Using your own data in evaluating your experience and knowledge of using AI, what can you do to develop your AI skills? Perhaps asking how to improve your AI skills is good prompt to use in an AI app such as ChatGPT, Microsoft's Copilot, Claude, Google's Gemini, or other app.

Chapter Summary in Brief

Learning Objective 1.1 Explain why communication skills are essential leadership qualities.

- Surveys and testimonials from some of the leading business professionals document why communication is among the most valued workplace skills to possess.
- Communication skills can enhance your career.
- Communication skills can enhance your quality of life.
- Communication principles and skills are beneficial to any professional or career but especially to any career that involves leading others. To be effective in the workplace, you need to be able to communicate effectively and appropriately to influence others in positive and ethical ways.

Learning Objective 1.2 Describe and define elements of the communication process.

- Human communication is the process of making sense out of the world and sharing that sense with others by creating meaning through the use of verbal and nonverbal messages. People who communicate effectively do well on the job.
- The elements of communication include source, message, receiver channel noise, feedback, and context

Learning Objective 1.3 Describe the relationship between leadership and communication.

- Leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve goals through verbal and nonverbal messages. Leading is different from managing.
- A manager coordinates and facilitates to keep things organized and to accomplish a task. Leadership involves more opportunities and expectations to influence the behavior of others.

Learning Objective 1.4 Describe the five fundamental principles to effectively increase communication and leadership skills.

Five communication principles are fundamental to enhancing leadership and business and professional communication skills. We refer to these principles throughout the book as a way of organizing the skills and applications of human communication.

- Leaders are aware of their communication with themselves and others. Being mindful of your communication is important to help you improve your communication.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret verbal messages. Words are powerful and influence our thoughts, our actions, and our relationships with others.
- Leaders effectively use and interpret nonverbal messages. Unspoken cues provide important information about our emotions, feelings, and attitudes.
- Leaders listen and respond thoughtfully to others. Being able to interpret accurately the messages of others enhances comprehension and relational empathy.
- Leaders appropriately adapt messages to others. It is important to adapt messages to others to enhance both understanding and empathy.

Key Terms

Channel

Communication

Content

Decoding

Encoding

Ethics

Feedback

Human communication

Leadership

Manager

Message

Noise

Nonverbal communication

Other-oriented

Receiver

Relational dimension

Source

Symbol

Task dimension

Transactional

Do not copy, post, or distribute

Chapter 2

Being Aware of Communication at Work



GEOFFROY VAN DER HASSELT/ Getty

Learning Objectives

- 2.1 Identify and describe five approaches to organizational leadership.
- 2.2 Describe the various factors of organizational culture.
- 2.3 Differentiate the five types of power, and explain how they inform your understanding of sexual harassment.
- 2.4 Explain how you see AI influencing change in today's organizations.
- 2.5 Identify and apply strategies for managing the ethical challenges of deceit, responsibility, and consistency.

Pharrell Williams has a pulse on what's going on in music, fashion, and film and this pulse is influencing how he leads. In 2023, he was appointed as the men's creative director for Louis Vuitton Men's Collection in Paris. His work, and more importantly, his leadership is being recognized by leaders throughout the arts described as bringing collaborative energy—creative, business-shaping, and talent-unleashing energy to the fashion industry.¹ Williams's effectiveness is, in part, based on his being mindful of how he leads, the organizational culture he stepped into, and his approach to managing change in men's fashion at Louis Vuitton.

In a recent interview with *Vogue* Paris, Pharrell noted, "My life is a collaboration. And my gift is to collaborate."² This statement reflects his humility but also his approach to leading others. He understands the importance of working with others and values the contributions of every person involved in his projects.

Some describe Williams as building community that provides a place where people can feel safe and connected with others but also still express their own individuality. Williams empowers his team members by modelling self-awareness and giving them the freedom to express themselves creatively. He also creates a sense of community by bringing together people from different backgrounds and perspectives.

Williams talks about his appointment at Louis Vuitton as "being swept up from one place, landing in fertile soil in other places and being treated, watered, and sunned as all souls should be. I can say there is an impact in that way, which is changing. It's not enough, but it's happening. I'm very honored to be a part of that."³

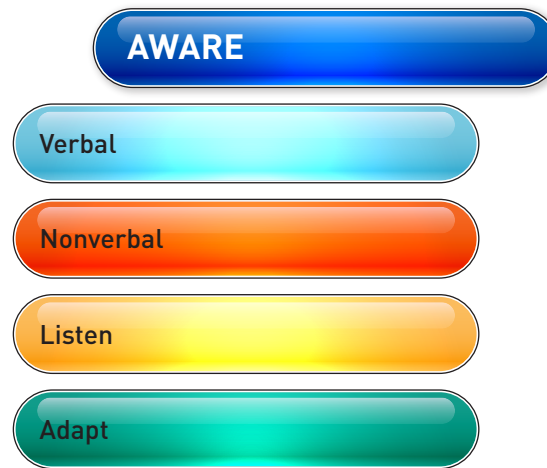
Leading Questions

1. Williams attributes much of his success to his self-awareness of who he is as a person and as a leader and how that awareness helps him collaborate with others. How do you see his self-awareness as influencing his ability to collaborate with others?
2. How similar or different is Williams's leadership from the leaders you observe or work with today?
3. Williams is often described as bringing the energy to his projects. What do you think people mean when they say this type of statement?

The first principle that guides communication and leadership skills in the workplace is to *become aware of your communication with yourself and others*. There are a number of factors that influence how you communicate at work including your approach to leading and motivating others, the culture of the organization where you work, your understanding of how power works in your organization, the ways that organizations are constantly changing and evolving, and finally organizational ethics. Your understanding these organizational dynamics is the first step in your becoming aware of how you communicate with others and how others communicate with you. Figure 2.1 illustrates where Principle One fits into our model of Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership.

To be aware is to be mindful. **Mindfulness** is an accurate awareness of your own and others' thoughts, actions, and motivations.⁴ It is your ability to get out of your own head and into others' heads. Being mindful is the process of actively paying attention not only to how you communicate and relate to your customers, employees, colleagues, or superiors, but also to how they communicate with you. If the saying "open mouth, insert foot" immediately comes to mind

Figure 2.1 ■ Communication Principles and Skills for Leadership



after you said something you wish you hadn't, then you already understand the importance of being mindful in your communication with others and how difficult mindfulness is to achieve.

In this chapter, we will discuss the importance of being mindful or aware of how you interact with others. Specifically, we discuss how communication influences several approaches to leadership, elements of organizational culture, power messages and how you are influenced by and influence others, the role of communication in influencing organizational change, and ethical challenges you may face.

Being Aware of Organizational Leadership Approaches

In Chapter 1, we invited you to see yourself as a leader—even if not appointed as “the leader”—someone who influences others around you. Being aware of how you influence others and others influence you can enhance your communication effectiveness.

What kind of a leader are you? Do you seek to impose your positions on others or readily accept what others suggest? And what leadership approach do you prefer? Answers to these questions are where you begin developing an awareness of your organizational leadership and how you communicate at work. Two ways to enhance your awareness of your communication with yourself and others are by understanding different approaches to leadership and how people are motivated by leaders.

Approaches to Leadership

Some people have a gift for leadership; influencing others just seems to come naturally to them. Others have to work at developing their leadership abilities. Your becoming aware of the various approaches to leadership will allow you to have invaluable insight into your own leadership abilities and potential and how you communicate with others.

Trait Approach

The **trait approach** to leadership suggests that there are certain psychological and communication traits as well as physical attributes that make leaders effective. Over the course of several years of study, leadership researchers have identified intelligence, confidence, extroversion, social skills (including communication skills), administrative skills, enthusiasm, and even physical height as some of the traits effective leaders typically possess.⁵ One research study found that across several cultures, the most admired qualities of a leader are honesty, being forward-looking, competence, and being inspirational.⁶ A more recent study found that although some leadership traits, such as honesty and humility, affect leadership effectiveness in a direct manner, most leadership traits are influence by other variables such as culture and other situational factors.⁷

In another study, researchers tested different dimensions of a traits on leadership effectiveness.⁸ For example, they tested for differences between dispositional and proximal traits. **Dispositional traits** tend to be more deeply ingrained and more difficult to change. **Proximal traits** are more fluid and change based on education or other types of training. Dispositional traits include motivation, energy, dominance, integrity, creativity, and charisma. Proximal traits include your tendencies to use interpersonal communication, managerial, and decision-making behaviors. The research concluded that both dispositional and proximal traits were strongly related to leadership effectiveness.

Functional Approach

The **functional approach** to leadership suggests that leaders exist to perform essential functions or behaviors that help an organization to achieve its goals. According to the functional perspective, leadership behaviors fall into two categories: task leadership and process leadership.

Task-oriented behaviors are specifically aimed at accomplishing a goal or set of goals, whereas process-oriented behaviors help maintain a satisfactory workplace climate. Both types of leadership are essential. Examples of task- and process-oriented behaviors are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 ■ Task-Oriented and Process-Oriented Behaviors⁹

Task Oriented Behaviors	Process Oriented Behaviors
Coordinating leaders reach their goals by coordinating communication, which includes ensuring that all points of view are considered and by connecting ideas to help others make sense of communication, reducing uncertainty around problem-solving or decision-making.	Encouraging leaders maintain workplace climate by supporting and recognizing others. Encouragement is a leadership behavior aimed at increasing team members' confidence and elevating their hopes and aspirations.
Summarizing leaders reach their goals by summarizing where we have been and where we are going. Often, people in the middle of a discussion cannot tell exactly where the discussion began and where it is going. People often get off track and wander in their communication. Summarizing helps people focus.	Gatekeeping leaders maintain workplace climate by encouraging quiet team members to talk more and highly social team members to talk less. Gatekeeping is like directing traffic. To keep the traffic flowing, you need one lane of traffic to move forward while holding another lane of traffic back.

Task Oriented Behaviors	Process Oriented Behaviors
Elaborating leaders reach goals by helping others visualize an idea. For example, coworking or sharing office space is growing in popularity, but needs clarifying for many employees who are used to their own private offices. Elaborating is when leaders show how office spaces are shared along with reserving small spaces for conversations needing privacy, as well as sharing kitchen and other social spaces that support innovation and collaboration.	Diffusing tensions leaders maintain workplace climate by monitoring and creating workplace climate. If a team is getting frustrated, leaders step in and encourage all team members to take a break. Changing the environment often has a way of reducing the tension, allowing teams to refocus.

Both task and process leadership are essential to the success of leading individuals or teams. When a team does not make progress on its task, members feel frustrated and dissatisfied. Similarly, when a team does not maintain a healthy climate, members will focus their attention and energy on their own dissatisfaction with the team rather than on their assigned task.

Styles Approach

The **styles approach** to leadership suggests that leaders choose one of three primary styles when attempting to get work done: (1) authoritarian, (2) democratic, or (3) laissez faire. What differentiates the three styles are the strategies that leaders use to influence others.¹⁰

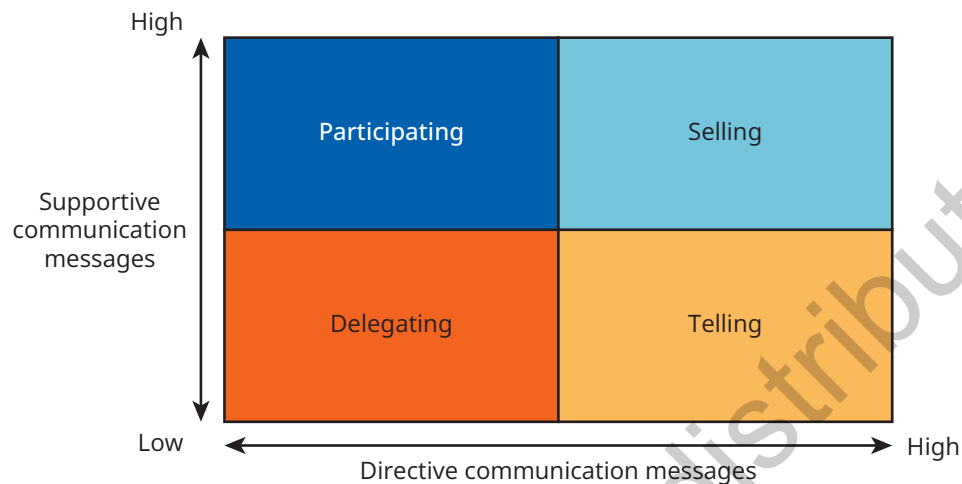
- Authoritarian leaders influence by giving orders and seeking to control others. Authoritarian leaders assume positions of intellectual and behavioral superiority in groups. They make the decisions, give the orders, and generally control all activities.
- Democratic leaders consult with others before issuing orders. Research suggests that a democratic leadership style usually results in increased trust and greater cohesiveness and consensus than a dictatorial leadership approach does.¹¹ Democratic leaders have more faith in those they lead than authoritarian leaders do and consequently try to involve members in making decisions.
- Laissez-faire leaders take a hands-off, laid-back approach to influencing others. This leadership style is based on the assumption that the less direction provided by the leader, the better. Laissez-faire leaders see themselves as “first among equals,” no stronger or weaker than other group members. They assume the group will direct itself. Laissez-faire leaders avoid dominating groups.

Situational Approach

The **situational approach** views leadership as an interactive process that links a particular style of leadership to the situation. If there is a crisis, people need a quick-thinking, decisive leader who can orchestrate what needs to be done. During more routine situations, the leader may just need to back off and let others do their thing. Because leadership style is not a one-size-fits-all concept, a skilled leader adapts to the situation.

Like other situational leadership theories, behavioral scientist Paul Hersey’s model uses various combinations of task- (or directive) and relationship- (or supportive) oriented leadership messages to describe four leadership styles as they relate to different situations.¹² See Figure 2.2 to understand how the four leadership styles map to directive and supportive messages.

Figure 2.2 ■ Four Leadership Styles



- *Telling.* Leaders who strongly emphasize performance of the team's task and pay little attention to relationship issues—that is, their style is high directive and low supportive—are described as having a “telling” style.
- *Selling.* Leaders whose style reflects a high directive and high supportive approach are identified as having a “selling” leadership style. Thus, while both telling and selling leadership styles are directive, leaders following a selling style are concerned that the team accepts and internalizes the orders given.
- *Participating.* Leaders who focus less on directive or task messages and place more emphasis on supportive or relationship messages exhibit a “participating” style. Leaders with a participating style are driven primarily by concern for relationships and a need for all group members to share in decision-making.
- *Delegating.* A “delegating” leadership style reflects a low directive approach as well as a low supportive approach to communication. A leader with a delegating style takes a hands-off attitude and allows the team to direct itself.

According to Hersey, these four leadership styles may be more or less appropriate depending on situational factors. A few of those factors include the urgency of the work that needs to be completed. If there is urgency in the situation, then leaders are more likely to engage in telling. Another situational factor includes the “bench-strength” of the team. A strong bench is a team who is experienced and has the skills, abilities, and competencies to get the work completed. When working with a strong bench or team, delegating may be most appropriate. A weak bench lacks the experiences as well as skills, abilities, and competencies and probably requires more selling and participating.

Figure 2.2 Reflects how the four leadership styles that comprise Hersey's Situational Leadership Theory map to high- and low-directive and supportive communication messages.

Transformational Leadership Approach

Transformational leadership motivates others to move beyond self-interest and work for the greater collective good.¹³ Transformational leaders have a sense of vision and purpose. They get others on board by helping others see how they can make a significant contribution to the vision of the organization. Transformational leadership is the process of influencing people to see the future in new ways.¹⁴ They influence members of the organization by giving them a glimpse of the future, energizing or realigning the culture, or giving the organization a new structure.¹⁵

Management consultant and author Peter Senge proposes that transformational leadership relies on three critical skills:¹⁶

- *Building a shared vision.* This involves encouraging the development of an elevated and aspirational pathway forward.
- *Challenging mental models.* This is a process of challenging the assumptions that others have that can slow down innovation and creative problem solving.
- *Engaging in systems thinking.* This means understanding the complexity of organizations, specifically how all units work together to reach desired outcomes. Systems thinking is believing and understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Put simply, by working together as a system, you are able to achieve outcomes that exceed your capacity and expectations.¹⁷

Communication scholars Joann Keyton and Stephenson Beck note that “a transformational leader is an exceptionally expressive who communicates in such a way as to persuade, influence, and mobilize others.”¹⁸ A transformational leader acts as a role model, leading by example. Through the use of persuasive and inspirational public speaking skills, this type of leader communicates and builds a shared vision among group members.

Recap

Leadership Approaches

Approach	Description
Trait	Effective leaders possess certain traits or characteristics that contribute to their effectiveness.
Functional	Leaders influence others by performing two primary functions: Task functions, which help accomplish the work. Process functions, which help establish a positive climate.
Styles	Leaders tend to act in one of three primary styles: Authoritarian leaders direct and control others. Democratic leaders solicit input from others and seek to lead by involving others in the decisions. Laissez-faire leaders intentionally influence others only when asked or directed by others to lead.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Approach	Description
Situational	Leadership is an interactive process in which a leader adapts their approach based on the needs of the group. More structured tasks and high-stress situations call for more directive leadership. Less structured tasks and situations in which positive interpersonal relationships are important call for more democratic leadership.
Transformational	A leader influences others by developing a shared vision and using listening and relationship-building skills to create a climate of trust.

Leading Others at Work

Being Aware of Your Work Ethic¹⁹

An expectation that hiring managers value and assume in all employees is a **work ethic**, which is a personal set of values that determines how employees approach their work. Employees with strong work ethics are highly motivated and produce consistently high-quality results. Although a work ethic can be taught, hiring managers look for employees who come to a position with a work ethic already established.

Showing the values associated with a good work ethic can increase your employability and help you position yourself for better job opportunities. Employees with an excellent work ethic are often considered by employers for special projects because these people are viewed as reliable, dedicated, and disciplined.

How would you assess your work ethic? Which of these statements reflect your work ethic? The more statements that apply to you, the stronger your work ethic.

- A commitment to completing high-quality work or performing work to the best of one's abilities
- Being responsible and showing up to work on time
- Being cooperative and having a willingness to work with others
- Taking pride in one's work
- Being honest and respectful
- Having a willingness to learn from constructive feedback

Approaches to Motivating Others

Becoming a mindful communicator and leader involves becoming aware of the beliefs you have about what motivates people to follow leaders. Why do you believe people would follow you, and how do these beliefs ultimately influence your leadership style and ability to lead? Researchers have identified a number of different approaches to how organizations function and how the messages they use do or don't motivate others. Three of these motivational approaches include classical, human relations, and human resources.

The Classical Approach to Motivation

The classical approach to motivation is based on the principle of reward and punishment.²⁰ Put simply, workers are motivated to work hard when they are rewarded for good work and not rewarded for poor work. Leaders who believe that employees are motivated by rewards set up systems that recognize hard work and employees who meet all deadlines. You will often hear them talking and boasting about the year-end bonuses, trips, or preferred schedules that they give to “model” employees.

Under the classical approach, work is organized like an assembly line in which each person is trained to do their part in producing whatever it is that the team is creating. Leaders know the most efficient way to get work done, and employees are praised and rewarded when they follow the prescribed work processes and procedures.

The Human Relations Approach to Motivation

The human relations approach to motivation is based on the idea that people are influenced not just by power and position, but they have their own motivations for working hard or not.²¹ You can't just tell people what to do and expect that they will do it. In fact, humans are influenced by their working conditions and how they are treated in the workplace. The human relations approach focuses on relationships where employees are motivated by leaders who consider them to be partners at work; they are motivated by leaders who pay attention to them and work to meet their needs. Under this approach, you will hear leaders respecting their employees by asking them how they can help support them. This approach motivates others by recognizing the leader-employee relationship and where work is ultimately a partnership.

The Human Resources Approach to Motivation

The human resources approach to motivation views people as resources who can be more engaged in enhancing team effectiveness as well as taking more responsibility for the work that the team produces. This approach seeks to empower people to participate in the work of the organization or team. Under this approach, you will hear leaders empowering team members to solve problems and make decisions. You might hear leaders saying, “I don't care how you get the job done, what's important to me is getting it done.”

Being Aware of Organizational Culture

We've emphasized that there are many things to be aware of as you communicate with others in business and professional settings including approaches to leadership and motivation. A key factor that has a pervasive influence on each of these elements is the culture of an organization.²²

Organizational culture is the learned pattern of beliefs, values, assumptions, rules, and norms that are shared by the people in an organization. A culture is revealed to others in a number of different daily routines and practices, ranging from how people communicate and treat each other to how they spend their free time and money.

Organizational culture includes what it feels like to be in an organization; whether the organization maintains a rigid, do-it-by-the-book approach or is a more relaxed, informal place to work. The culture of an organization also affects all aspects of how the work is accomplished. Your shopping experience at Walmart, for example, is probably different from your shopping experience at an upscale department store like Nordstrom. Both sell shirts, socks, and shoes, but

what it feels like to shop at each place is distinctive and different from the experience at the other retail establishment. The stores have a different organizational culture in terms of how employees interact with customers. You are met at Wal-Mart by a greeter who shoves a shopping cart your way; at Nordstrom you receive more individual attention (and pay higher prices).

Why is it important to be aware of organizational culture? Because it influences how you communicate with others and how you do your work. There is considerable research about how we are socialized into a particular job or organization. To be “socialized” means to understand what is expected of us when we work in an organization.²³ It is through our communication with others—whether it’s our boss, our colleagues, or our customers—that we truly understand the culture of an organization. To be aware of more than just surface features of organizational culture, it’s important to understand how organizational culture is developed and evolves.

Organizational Culture Is Communicated Both Explicitly and Implicitly

Sometimes organizational culture is explicitly spelled out in written policies and verbal directives; in other instances, the culture is conveyed indirectly. The “rules of conduct” document that you get during your onboarding with a new organization is one example of how culture is communicated explicitly. **Rules** are documented, they convey the expectations and standards. **Norms**, on the other hand, are implicitly communicated meaning that you are expected to learn them by observing others. Norms, or what is considered normal or “standard” employee behavior, are often just as important as rules and regulations. An example of a rule may be the documented time you and your team colleagues are expected to be at work. An example of a norm may be employees attend happy hour on Fridays after work. Attending the happy hour is not documented but is considered usual behavior.

Most cultural aspects are not written; instead, people learn them by observing as well as by talking with other people. You learned the organizational culture at your school not just by reading the student handbook but also by observing other students and talking with them. You observe how people communicate and what they communicate about to understand the organizational culture.

Organizational Culture Includes Multiple Factors

There is not just one factor that contributes to what it feels like to be in an organization but many factors. Here are a few of the factors that shape and reflect organizational culture:

Written Rules and Policies

As we’ve noted, sometimes organizational culture is explicitly expressed in written policies. These rules and policies may be found on a website or in a handbook or presented during orientation sessions. But if you only looked at the written policies, you’d miss a lot of the forces that shape the culture. It’s often more informal communication channels that give you the most important clues about organizational culture.

Stories

“Hey, did you hear what happened to Marcie last night?” Not only will such an opening line get your attention, but the story itself can offer clues to the culture of an organization. The stories and gossip that circulate in an organization reveal information about the values and expectations of the organization. Are supervisors valued or made fun of? Are staff members respected? Do people

express genuine warmth for others, or are suspicion and mistrust embedded in the tales that are told? Listening to the stories and how they are expressed (whether with playful humor or mean spirits) can help you identify organizational culture.

Metaphors

Noting the metaphors—the comparisons or analogies that are used to describe the organization—can provide clues about organizational culture. “We’re all like family here,” says your new coworker. That metaphor sends a different message than someone saying “Welcome to the circus.”

Ceremonies

Noting organizational rituals and what gets celebrated and rewarded can give you insights into what is valued. If employees get awards for perfect attendance or for achieving high work output, then those achievements are clearly valued by the organization. If people get recognition for working 10, 20, or 30 years at the organization, then you know that longevity is valued and rewarded. Do colleagues frequently go out to lunch together to celebrate birthdays? What gets celebrated and the behaviors that are spotlighted provide significant clues about organizational culture.

Artifacts and Décor

Do people have cubicles or private offices? Is there matching furniture, or do people have a hodgepodge of chairs and desks in their workspace? The attention given to what the physical space in the organization looks like is another clue that helps decode the organizational culture.



Physical space in an organization often defines the organizational culture, such as the open floor plan of the Facebook corporate offices in Palo Alto, California.

Gilles Mingasson / Getty

Fine art on the office walls rather than tattered and torn posters suggests that top management wants to create an inviting work experience. For example, Facebook’s corporate offices in Palo Alto, California, reflect an organizational culture that promotes cooperation. Rather than working in offices, Facebook staff members work in large open spaces or in conference rooms, which are called aquariums because they are glassed cubes within a room. One reporter described it this

way: “No cubicles, no offices, no walls, just a rolling tundra of office furniture.”²⁴ The appearance of an organization can give you insight into whether it’s an austere, serious work environment or a place where people are encouraged to have fun and be innovative.

Developing Your Career

Conduct a Cultural Audit

While researching an organization or during the interview process, make sure you’re aware of the organization’s culture and if you’re a good cultural fit. Here’s how to do that. Look for the cultural elements included on the organization’s website, visit the reception area, observe employees from the parking lot, talk to people who work at the organization, and review annual reports and other printed materials. Consider these areas of investigation:

Environment

- Office equipment and furniture
- Cleanliness of facility
- Signage and branding
- Decorations
- Lighting
- Employee dress and grooming

Communication

- Employee greetings
- Use of formal or informal communication
- Use of humor
- Use of metaphors
- Consistent use of vision, mission, and values
- Upward or downward

Ceremonies and Events

- Regular staff events
- Celebration of birthdays, holiday parties, and quarterly celebrations for reaching goals

Rules and Policies

- Literal policy enforcement
- Number of rules and policies
- Mention of standard operating procedures (SOP)
- Signage of rules
- Amount of training focusing on policy

Rewards

- Award criteria: quantity/quality
- Type of awards
- Frequency of awards

Organizational Culture Is Multilayered and Multifaceted

When we talk about the culture of an organization, don’t get the idea that there is only one culture per organization. There are many layers and pockets of organizational culture within a single

organization. People in upper management may operate in a formal, structured organizational culture, but the custodial staff may have a more relaxed, joking, and informal culture. Employees may go out for dinner after work or socialize after hours with each other's families. Middle managers, however, may never socialize outside of work. Even at the same level of an organization, there may be different cultural expectations. For example, perhaps in a company's software development department everyone jokes with their colleagues and tells silly stories, and people laugh a lot. But in the information technology department, there is a more serious, get-down-to-business approach to work. Although both departments are at the same level in the organization, there are organizational cultural differences that are due to tradition and the personalities and social styles of the workers. As organizational culture expert Judith Martin has noted, "Some aspects of the culture will be shared by most members . . . other aspects . . . will be interpreted differently by different groups, creating subcultures that overlap and nest within each other."²⁵

Organizational Culture Changes

Organizational culture is not static. Organizational cultures morph and evolve based on a number of factors, including the people who join or leave the organization, the adoption of new policies or the discarding of old policies, new technology, new leadership, and a host of other factors. Because organizational culture is fluid, it's sometimes hard to pin down the organizational culture once and for all. It was Greek philosopher Heraclitus who said, "You can never step in the same river twice." One constant element in our lives, as well as in our work, is change. The pace of life and the development of new technological tools that are being introduced into the workplace support Heraclitus's notion that, because of change, the "river" that was here yesterday is different than the "river" here today. The organizational culture of yesterday is not the organizational culture of today or tomorrow.

We've noted why it's important to be aware of organizational culture as a general concept, but it's especially important to understand the culture of an organization as you develop leadership experience. Such awareness can help you understand your role as both a leader and a follower. "Why is she doing this now?" asks an exasperated team member. Or, "What is the reason for this new policy? Don't we have enough to do without filling out new forms on the web?" asks a frazzled coworker. Understanding the role of organizational culture can give you insight into the "Why" questions that you and others may ask when working in business and professional settings, especially when a leader proposes a new idea. A new policy, procedure, or ritual may be instituted not because of the whim of the leader (although that certainly may be the case), but as a result of the leader's understanding of the organizational culture. Rather than trying to interpret the action of a specific leader microscopically, in isolation from the larger culture of the organization, viewing leadership behavior from the broader perspective of organizational culture may provide new insights as to why new initiatives are suggested.

Being Aware of Organizational Power

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

important to be aware of the sources of power and the factors that enhance someone's ability to influence others.

Types of Power at Work²⁶

Why does one person in a workplace relationship have power over the other? Understanding the sources of power can help you analyze the power that you have and that others have over you. Being mindful of how people can influence you and how you may influence others can enhance your leadership effectiveness. Social psychologists John French and Bertram Raven developed a classic framework for identifying the sources of power.²⁷ The five sources of power they identified are legitimate (or position) power, referent power, expert power, reward power, and coercive power.

Legitimate Power

This type of power is based on respect for a position that a person holds. President, vice president, director, supervisor all have power because of the position they hold relative to other people.

Referent Power

This type of power comes from our attraction to another person or the charisma a person possesses. We let people we like influence us. We change our behavior to meet their demands or desires because we feel attracted to them.

Expert Power

This type of power is based on a person's knowledge and experience. We grant power to those who know more than we do or have some expertise we do not possess. You recognize, for example, that a young employee right of college knows more about technology than you do, so you grant her power over a more senior and experienced employee when troubleshooting a technology problem.

Reward Power

This type of power is based on another person's ability to satisfy your needs. Some rewards, such as pay raise or preferred work schedules are tangible, but most rewards are more interpersonal in nature, such as being included in important meetings.

Coercive Power

This source of power involves the use of sanctions or punishment to influence others. Sanctions include holding back or removing rewards. Your manager withholding information from you if you do not comply with their request is how this power is enacted. Punishment involves imposing something on another person that they do not want.

One of the first things to be aware of when managing power differences at work is to identify the type of power the other person is using. For example, if you're struggling with your boss over when a project should be completed, your boss—depending on their level of patience with you—may be trying to influence you to meet the designated deadline through referent power.

However, if you're still trying to negotiate the deadline, your boss may grow frustrated with you and resort to coercive power. You're not agreeing with the deadline date may force them to "pull the power play," which is "I'm the boss, and if you don't meet the deadline, then you will

force me to make other decisions.” You comply, because you know your boss has the ability to punish you.

Power and Sexual Harassment

Whenever there are power differences, there is always the potential for abuse. One form of abuse due to organizational power is sexual harassment. According to Susan Webb, who runs a consulting firm that specializes in human relations issues, **sexual harassment** is “deliberate and/or repeated sexual or sex-based behavior that is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned” (p. 12).²⁸ Sex-based behavior is expressed through both verbal and nonverbal messages in face-to-face communication. To better understand sexual harassment, we examine three components of Webb’s definition of sexual harassment.

The first component is recognizing when the verbal and nonverbal messages and behaviors in question are sexual or sex based in nature. This type of communication can be placed on a continuum from least to most severe. Examples of least severe include telling sexual jokes or making sexual innuendos, flirting, or asking someone out on a date. Examples of the most severe include forced fondling, attempted or actual rape, and sexual assault.

The second component is recognizing that the verbal and nonverbal messages are deliberate and/or repeated. Some messages are so graphic that the first time they are conveyed, they are considered sexual harassment. Other messages are more subtle and can be considered sexual harassment only if they are repeated—for example, brushing up against someone in the break room. According to Webb, “the more severe the behavior is, the fewer times it needs to be repeated before reasonable people define it as harassment; the less severe it is, the more times it needs to be repeated” (p. 13).²⁹

The third component is understanding that sexual harassment is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned. Webb mentions that “the less severe the behavior is, the more responsibility the receiver has to speak up; the more severe it is, the less responsibility the receiver has to speak up” (p. 14).³⁰ In other words, if an employee is being harassed with sexual jokes or innuendoes or is in the room when others are viewing pornography on the Internet, then it’s the employee’s responsibility to inform the others of how the behavior is affecting them. If the behavior is severe, such as fondling or sexual assault, then the employee should immediately discuss the situation with a supervisor, whose responsibility it is to manage the situation.

There are also two major classifications of sexual harassment: *quid pro quo* harassment and hostile environment harassment.

Quid pro quo sexual harassment is actual or threatened use of rewards or punishment to gain sexual compliance from a subordinate.³¹ (*Quid pro quo* is a Latin phrase that roughly translates as “something for something else.”) An example of *quid pro quo* sexual harassment in the workplace would be a manager threatening not to promote an employee unless the employee has sex with the manager. It’s sex or no promotion—something for something else.

Hostile environment sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that interferes with a person’s ability to perform a job or gain an education and that creates a hostile, intimidating, or offensive working environment.³² Examples of hostile environment sexual harassment in the workplace include constant use of lewd remarks and offensive language that demean a person’s sex.

Here are a few communication strategies for avoiding sexually harassing another person at work:

Avoid Sexual Messages and Behaviors

Sexual jokes, inappropriate touching, and sexual teasing are to be avoided. We often assume that others are like us and that they share our attitudes, beliefs, values—and our sense of humor. In the diverse workplace, this assumption is inaccurate. What one person takes as joking, another may find offensive and degrading.

Avoid Sex-Based Messages

Sex-based messages are not necessarily sexual in nature but are based on the person's sex, such as calling people "sweetie" or "hottie," whistling or catcalling, or messages such as "This is man's work. What are you doing here?" or "You should be home having more babies."

Stop Communicating Harassing Messages

Suppose that although you do not perceive your behavior as harassment, another person clearly does, and the individual takes responsibility and informs you of how they feel. To ignore this information is a clear violation of sexual harassment policy. Also, remember that jokes at first may not be bothersome, but over time, jokes cease to be funny, and people become uncomfortable when they have to listen to them repeatedly.

Be Aware of Other's Behaviors

Although people should be upfront and inform you when they find your messages sexually harassing, not everyone can be assertive. Some may feel threatened; others may not want to be pegged as being uptight or not a team player. Because of peer pressure, they may not express their discomfort. Some may even say "It doesn't bother me." But how they're behaving reveals that they are bothered. (For example, their arms may be crossed, or they may be using an adaptor, such as tapping a foot.)

Using Social Media, Technology and AI at Work

Mediated Sexual Harassment

Employees today need to be aware of not only what occurs in the physical office but also what is being said and done in the virtual office as well.

Mediated forms of sexual harassment including online, social mediated, and text-based sexual harassment can take many forms.³³ For example, an employee may spread sexual information about another employee or continuously harass them in a sexual manner.

There are many different types of mediated sexual harassment that can occur in the "virtual office." Many of these types or forms of mediated sexual harassment are similar to in-person harassment. The difference being that the victim of the harassment is not always able to see or hear the individual committing the harassment. The following are some of the different types:

- Threatening sexual violence
- Harassing someone due to their sexual orientation or sex
- Sending pornographic images or videos
- Making sexual jokes
- Sending unsolicited intimate, explicit, or nude photographs
- Engaging in unwanted sexual conversations

- Sending someone pornography
- Sharing sexual rumors about someone
- Threatening to share sexual rumors or photos of someone

Most organizations have policies to protect employees from this type of online or text-based sexual harassment. Employees subjected to this type of sexual harassment are encouraged to follow their organization's human resource policies.

Being Aware of Organizational Change

Today, organizational change is happening all around us and organizations are doing their best to adapt to the change. **Organizational change** is not an event but a process that occurs when the structure of an organization changes or there is a change to how business is done to improve operations and meet new challenges.³⁴ It often requires adjustments in technology, processes, or changes in leadership.

Change is not an easy process for employees; they don't like to alter their habits. Like most people, employees prefer routines because they know what to expect. Your becoming aware of the drivers of change and how to communicate change will help you navigate change not only for yourself but also help you set change expectations for those you lead.

Drivers of Change

A **driver of change** is a significant trend that's likely to make a disruptive or transformative impact on an organization. Many organizations are experiencing a continuous cycle of change, rather than isolated events, and are anticipating even faster rates of change in the future. Is there more organizational change today than in years past? The answer is yes. Many experts state that the pace of change has dramatically increased due to factors like advancements in technology, changes to market dynamics, strained geo-political relationships, and environmental disasters such as fires, tornados, hurricanes, and floods. Other reasons driving change include the rapid rate of leadership turnover and organizations working hard to meet the needs of a multigenerational workforce, including meeting expectations for flexibility and adaptability.³⁵

One of your authors recently attended a workshop facilitated by the Institute for the Future, located in Palo Alto, California. Institute for the Future (ITF) is a nonprofit think tank and specializes in futures studies or helping organizations anticipate and prepare for long-term trends and potential disruptions. The Institute considers some of the more significant drivers of change to be those listed in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 ■ Drivers of Change Example Topics

Drivers of Change Example Topics

The climate crisis and climate mitigation efforts

The global switch to renewable energy sources

The pandemic and its long-term impacts

(Continued)

Table 2.2 ■ Drivers of Change Example Topics (*Continued*)

Drivers of Change Example Topics
Increasing economic inequality
Automation of work
Genomic research
Decreasing birth rates in Western countries and a “youth-boom” in Africa
Digital currencies, cryptocurrency, and programmable money
Alternatives to capitalism and market-based economies
Shifting religious majorities and increasing theological diversity
Smart cities infrastructure
Social media driven miscommunication, disinformation, and conspiracy theories
Rise of authoritarianism and loss of faith in democracy
Widespread adoption of facial recognition and surveillance technologies
Universal basic income and direct cash transfers
Internet shutdowns mandated by government and law enforcement
Lifelong learning and “reskilling” at the workplace
Regenerative design and the circular economy
The Internet of things
Augmented reality
Virtual reality
Satellite networks and the space Internet

The drivers of change listed in Table 2.2 will continue to challenge leaders as they strive to preserve employees’ preferences for routines and habits while also helping their organizations evolve and thrive. One driver of change that leaders must understand better is how AI will impact organizational change.

Artificial Intelligence and Change

As you already know, **artificial intelligence** (AI) is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. In today’s offices and organizations, AI has been shown to be better than or as good as humans in several tasks including developing web-based content, recommending products and services to clients, and assisting employees with their training and professional development.³⁶ In fact, many employees are feeling intimidated, excluded, and less necessary than ever before with younger employees feeling less nervous than older employees in terms of AI replacing them.³⁷ Table 2.3 showcases how AI is changing how we work and changing the workplace.

Table 2.3 ■ How AI Will Change Work and the Workplace³⁸

Description of Change	Impact of Change
From routine and repetitive job duties to more complex and elevated job duties	AI will automate many repetitive tasks increasing efficiency allowing employees to focus on more creative and strategic work.
From doing the “day-to-day” work to being a thought leader at work	As AI assumes routine tasks, employees will work more as “thought leaders” with advanced skills in critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and emotional intelligence.
From “being done” with learning to being a “lifelong” learner	Employees working alongside AI must engage in lifelong learning to remain relevant in the evolving job market. High-demand careers will require skills in AI development, deployment, and management.
From rigid, solo-based work to dynamic and adaptive team-based work	AI will promote greater collaboration between employees and remote teams. AI-powered tools will facilitate remote work and flexible schedules, allowing employees to work from anywhere and anytime.
From a productive workplace to a hyperproductive workplace	AI has the potential to significantly boost productivity across various industries, leading to economic growth and improved living standards.

Knowing the potential for how AI is going to impact organizational change is another reason why your becoming aware of how to communicate and facilitate change is important.

Communicating Change

Your learning how to facilitate and communicate change will set you apart from other leaders because it minimizes the disruptions to both employees and the work of the organization. One of the reasons why many leaders fail to manage change well is because they do not recognize it as a communication process. They are too busy implementing the change, when in reality, the change is a communication process of getting your employees ready for the change and asking for their help in processing the change.

There are numerous models of change management used by leaders throughout the country. Communication researcher Everett Rogers talked about change as the “diffusion of innovation.”³⁹ His model organized adopters of change into groups, including innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards and differentiated how different people embrace change at different speeds.

- **Innovators.** Early adopters who are comfortable with risk and readily embrace new ideas
- **Early adopters.** Opinion leaders who influence others to adopt the innovation
- **Early majority.** More cautious, waiting to see positive experiences before adopting
- **Late majority.** Skeptical and only adopt when the innovation becomes widely accepted
- **Laggards.** Resistant to change and may only adopt when there are no other options left

Another model of change management that your author team has used when they consult with organizations is the ADKAR model. This model has been adopted by many Fortune 500 companies, the U.S. Department of Defense, and other government agencies around the world.⁴⁰

The ADKAR model is effective because it focuses on how individuals change rather than on how organizations change, and it approaches change as a communication process rather than a structural process. ADKAR is an acronym for Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.

Awareness

Understanding the need for change and its implications. In this stage, leaders invest time in describing the change and why the change is important. Employees are informed of the internal and external drivers stimulating the change. For example, it could be an internal budgetary shortfall that is causing the change or externally a new set of competitors who have the potential to take customers away.

Desire

Developing a positive attitude toward the change and a willingness to participate. In this stage, leaders try to influence an employee's desire to change. Leaders do this by sharing how the change will affect the employee. Leaders who know their employees well can share how the change will impact not only the employee but perhaps their family, as well. For example, a merger with a larger organization that may be closer to where an employee lives, may allow an employee to work closer to home reducing commute time and increasing time with family.

Knowledge

Acquiring the necessary information and understanding of how to implement the change. In this stage of the change management process, leaders take the time to train and develop their employees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies they will need to navigate the change. Through training, an employee develops confidence in their ability to accommodate the change. They feel empowered to change, because leadership took the time to invest in their learning.

Ability

Demonstrating the skills and competencies to effectively execute the change. In this stage, leaders coach individuals as they put their new skills and knowledge to work. Ability is achieved when a person or a group has performed the change at the appropriate level. Leaders stand ready to support their employees as change is implemented and provide real time feedback to optimize their ability.

Reinforcement

Maintaining the new behaviors and sustaining the change over time. In this stage, leaders reinforce the change by recognizing employees for their work. Leaders create new traditions and ceremonies creating a culture around the change to ensure the change is sustainable over time. Through the reinforcement employees experience a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work.

Organizations will continue to change as a result of the drivers examined in this section. A leader's awareness of change and how to communicate change positively impacts how organizations and employees experience change. Leaders are encouraged to help employees understand

the need for change, provide with them with the education and training they need to make the change happen, and then recognize their contributions to the change process.

Be Aware of Organizational Ethical Challenges

Ethics, as introduced in Chapter 1, are the beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right and wrong. Mindful leaders are aware that ethics play an important role in the leadership process. Being sensitized to ethical communication and becoming aware of how to lead in an ethical manner will, we hope, prevent you from being seduced into unethical leadership practices.

Being honest is a key element of ethical communication. If you knowingly withhold key information, lie, or distort the truth, then you are not communicating in an ethical manner. Recently, the Boeing corporation, which used to be one of the country's premier organizations and most ethical in their practices, has been plagued with a number of ethics violations. These violations date back to the late 1970s and include document theft from the Pentagon, quality control violations, 737 Max design flaws, and most recently retaliation against whistleblowers or those who reported Boeing to governing agencies. These ethics violations have resulted in penalty payments exceeding 3 billion dollars.⁴¹ More importantly, these ethics violations have eroded the public's faith in Boeing's commitment to public safety.

Leaders are confronted with a number of ethical challenges. It's important for you to be aware of these challenges and prepared to manage them, including challenges of deceit, responsibility, and consistency.⁴²

Managing the Challenge of Deceit

Leaders usually have access to information that gives them power. Depending on how they decide to use the information, they may deceive people. If they decide to disclose the information, they must decide when to release it and to whom. If leaders decide to reveal the information, they may run the risk of violating someone's trust. If they decide to keep the information to themselves, they may mislead others who may need the information. This type of misleading occurred at Toyota. The executive team had access to information that informed them that their vehicles may have been unsafe. Rather than sharing the information with others, they decided to keep the information to themselves so they could protect their image as a producer of safe, quality products.⁴³ Ethical leaders manage the challenge of deceit by avoiding the following behaviors:

- Lying, especially when the lies will lead to personal benefit
- Using information solely for personal benefit
- Withholding knowledge that may benefit others
- Collecting information that violates others' privacy rights
- Disclosing information to people who do not have a need for or right to the information

Managing the Challenge of Responsibility

As a leader, you're not only responsible for your own ethical behavior; you're also responsible for the ethical behavior of your team members. How your followers behave ultimately reflects on you.

Although you don't have direct control over how your team members behave, you do have indirect control, in that you set the ethical tone for how your team is to conduct business. For example, if your followers see you taking office supplies home for personal use, processing time cards inaccurately, or treating administrative assistants and custodians disrespectfully, then chances are they, too, will behave in a similar way. Ethical leaders manage the challenge of responsibility by

- Modeling ethical conduct at all times
- Acknowledging and trying to correct ethical problems
- Taking responsibility for the consequences of their orders and actions
- Taking reasonable steps to prevent the unethical treatment of others
- Holding themselves to the same standards as their team members

Managing the Challenge of Consistency

Leaders interact with a variety of different team members and in different situations, making it difficult to behave in a consistent manner. Not all team members have the same needs, and effective leaders are aware of these individual differences and try to meet the needs of each team member. The challenge of consistency occurs when team members perceive leaders treating team members differently. If a leader treats all followers consistently, then some team members' needs will go unmet. If the leader treats team members differently, then some team members may perceive the leader as having favorites. Ethical leaders manage the challenge of consistency by:

- Being proactive and informing team members that to lead in an ethical manner, it's important to treat team members as individuals with individual needs
- Informing team members of the criteria they use for making decisions
- Sharing with team members, when appropriate, how they went about making a decision

Your awareness of these ethical challenges will influence the communication you use to manage them. Although working through such challenges is never easy, the five principles of communication will help you begin this process of leading in an ethical manner.

Assessing Your Skill

Ethical Business Practices⁴⁴

Evaluating your own ethical business practices is one way for you to become aware of your communication with yourself and others. Use the following self-assessment guide to identify your ethical strengths and weaknesses.⁴⁵ Answering "Yes" to any of the questions below may suggest some areas where you may be ethically weak.

- Have I conducted personal business on company time?
- Have I used or taken company resources for personal purposes?
- Have I called in sick when I really wasn't?

- Have I used a derogatory term when referring to another person?
- Have I told or passed along an ethnic joke or sexually oriented joke?
- Have I engaged in negative gossip or spread rumors about someone?
- Have I “bad mouthed” the company or management to coworkers?
- Have I pried into a coworker’s conversations or private affairs?
- Have I passed along information that was shared with me in confidence?
- Have I knowingly ignored or violated an organizational rule or procedure?
- Have I failed to follow through on something I said I would do?
- Have I withheld information that others needed?
- Have I “fudged” on a time sheet, billing sheet, estimate, or report?
- Have I knowingly delivered a poor quality or defective good or service?
- Have I lied or manipulated the truth to make a sale?
- Have I accepted an inappropriate gift or gratuity?
- Have I taken credit for something that someone else did?
- Have I failed to admit to or correct a mistake I made?
- Have I knowingly let someone make an error and get into trouble?

Chapter Summary in Brief

Learning Objective 2.1 Identify and describe five approaches to organizational leadership.

Approaches to Leadership

- The trait approach to leadership suggests that there are certain psychological and communication traits as well as physical attributes that make leaders effective.
- The functional approach to leadership suggests that leaders exist to perform essential functions or behaviors that help an organization to achieve its goals.
- The styles approach to leadership suggests that leaders choose one of three primary styles when attempting to get work done: (1) authoritarian, (2) democratic, or (3) laissez faire. What differentiates the three styles are the strategies that leaders use to influence others.
- The situational approach views leadership as an interactive process that links a particular style of leadership to the situation.
- Transformational leadership approach is the process of influencing people to see the future in new ways.

Approaches to Motivating Others

- The classical approach to motivation is based on the principle of reward and punishment. Put simply, workers are motivated to work hard when they are rewarded for good work and not rewarded for poor work. The classical approach to organizations also assumes that there is one best way for a team or organization to perform a given task.
- The human relations approach to motivation is based on the idea that people are influenced not just by power and position, but they have their own motivations for working hard or not. You can't just tell people what to do and expect that they will do it. In fact, humans are influenced by their working conditions and how they are treated in the workplace.
- The human resources approach to motivation views people as resources who can be full partners in enhancing a team or organization. This approach seeks to empower people to participate in the work of the organization or team. In contrast to the human relations approach, a human resources approach asks workers and team members what they like or dislike and gives them more control over work processes.

Learning Objective 2.2 Describe the various factors of organizational culture.

Organizational Culture is Communicated Both Explicitly and Implicitly

Sometimes organizational culture is explicitly spelled out in written policies and verbal directives; in other instances, the culture is conveyed indirectly.

Organizational Culture Includes Multiple Factors

There are many factors that contribute to what it feels like to be in an organization. Other factors that shape and reflect organizational culture are written rules and policies, stories, ceremonies, metaphors, artifacts, and décor.

Learning Objective 2.3 Differentiate the five types of power, and explain how they inform your understanding of sexual harassment.

Types of Power

- Legitimate power arises from being elected, appointed, or ordained to lead or make decisions for a group or a team
- Referent power arises from being well liked
- Expert power arises from having information and being knowledgeable about issues or ideas
- Reward power arises from having the ability to bestow gifts, money, recognition, or other rewards valued by group members, or to remove unpleasant conditions
- Coercive power arises from having the ability to punish others

Power and Sexual Harassment

One form of abuse due to organizational power is sexual harassment, which is “deliberate and/or repeated sexual or sex-based behavior that is not welcome, not asked for, and not returned.” Sex-based behavior is expressed through both verbal and nonverbal messages and includes quid-pro-quo and hostile work environment sexual harassment.

Learning Objective 2.4 Explain how you see AI influencing change in today's organizations.

Drivers of Change

A driver of change is a significant trend that's likely to make a disruptive or transformative impact on an organization.

AI and Organizational Change

AI is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. In today's offices and organizations, AI has been shown to be better than or as good as humans in several tasks including developing web-based content, recommending products and services to clients, and assisting employees with their training.

Communicating Change

The ADKAR model is effective because it focuses on how individuals change rather than on how organizations change, and it approaches change as a communication process rather than a structural process. ADKAR is an acronym for Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, and Reinforcement.

Learning Objective 2.5 Identify and apply strategies for managing the ethical challenges of deceit, responsibility, and consistency.

Manage the Challenge of Deceit

Leaders usually have access to information that gives them power. Depending on how they decide to use the information, they may deceive people. If they decide to disclose the information, they must decide when to release it and to whom. If leaders decide to reveal the information, they may run the risk of violating someone's trust. If they decide to keep the information to themselves, they may mislead others who may need the information.

Manage the Challenge of Responsibility

As a leader, you're not only responsible for your own ethical behavior; you're also responsible for the ethical behavior of your team members. How your followers behave ultimately reflects on you. Although you don't have direct control over how your team members behave, you do have indirect control, in that you set the ethical tone for how your team is to conduct business.

Manage the Challenge of Consistency

Leaders interact with a variety of different team members and in different situations, making it difficult to behave in a consistent manner. Not all team members have the same needs, and effective leaders are aware of these individual differences and try to meet the needs of each team member. The challenge of consistency occurs when team members perceive leaders treating team members differently.

Key Terms

Artificial Intelligence

Classical approach to motivation

Dispositional traits

Drivers of change

Early adopters

Early majority

Ethics

Functional approach

Hostile environment sexual harassment

Human relations approach to motivation

Human resources approach to motivation

Innovators

Laggards

Late majority

Mindfulness

Norms

Organizational change

Organizational culture

Power

Proximal traits

Quid pro quo sexual harassment

Rules

Sexual Harassment

Situational approach

Styles approach

Trait approach

Transformational leadership approach

Work ethic

Do not copy, post, or distribute