

# CORPORATE COMMUNICATION BEST PRACTICES

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For: Barbados Institute of  
Management and Productivity



# ABOUT ME

I am a marketing and communications consultant with a PhD in Marketing and 15+ years' experience conducting marketing research, creating strategies, and curating content for companies here and abroad. I am enthusiastic about helping people develop and present their best selves which is why I am so passionate about teaching.

I teach young adults and professionals how to communicate their products, services and personal brands effectively. I have been teaching at the tertiary level in the areas of marketing and communications.



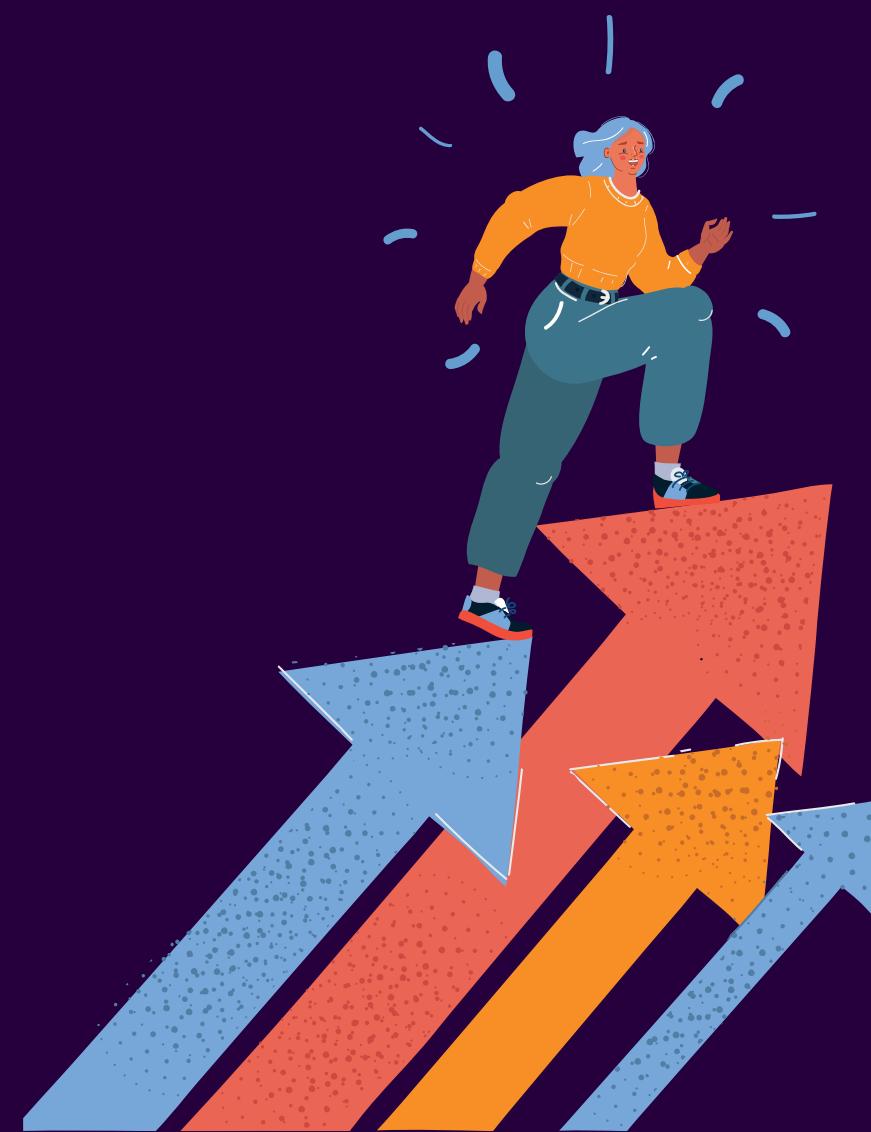
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# ACHIEVING CAREER SUCCESS THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION



# WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

- The act of exchanging thoughts, messages, or information
- Everything we do or say, or don't do or say, communicates something.  
So we need to think about how this communication can be most effective.





# WHY IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IMPORTANT TO SUCCESS IN TODAY'S BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT?



## Some jobs are primarily about communicating

- The essence of communication is sharing information.
- Communication is effective only when others understand your message correctly and respond to it the way you want.



## Effective communication

- Helps manage workflow and improve business relationship.
- Enhances professional image.

# BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Benefits of effective communication:
- Closer ties with the marketplace.
- Opportunities to influence conversations & trends.
- Increased productivity and faster problem solving.
- Better financial results.
- Early warning of potential problems.
- Stronger decision making with reliable information.
- Clear and persuasive marketing messages.
- Greater employee engagement.
- Higher employee satisfaction; lower turnover

# EMPLOYERS' COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

- Organize information logically and completely.
- Express and present coherently and persuasively.
- Listen effectively for real meaning.
- Communicate effectively with diverse audiences.
- Use communication technologies efficiently.
- Use accepted standards of high-quality writing and speaking (e.g. grammar, spelling).
- Communicate with courtesy and respect.
- Communicate ethically.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

- Practical:
  - Give useful information.
- Factual:
  - Facts rather than impressions.
- Concise:
  - Highlight key points and summarize.
- Clear:
  - Express specific expectations and responsibilities.
- Persuasive:
  - Offer compelling arguments and recommendations.

# TYPES OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATIONS

**01**

## INTERNAL

Exchange of information within an organization.

**02**

## EXTERNAL

Exchange of information and ideas with external constituents.

**03**

## FORMAL

Through predetermined means

**04**

## INFORMAL

Not prescribed by organisation; grapevine

# FORMAL COMMUNICATION

## DOWNWARD

- Organizational decisions.
- Help employees do their jobs.

## UPWARD

- Solve problems and make decisions.
- Accurate and timely information from lower-level employees.
- Problems, trends, opportunities for improvement.

## HORIZONTAL

- From department to department.
- Share information and coordinate tasks.

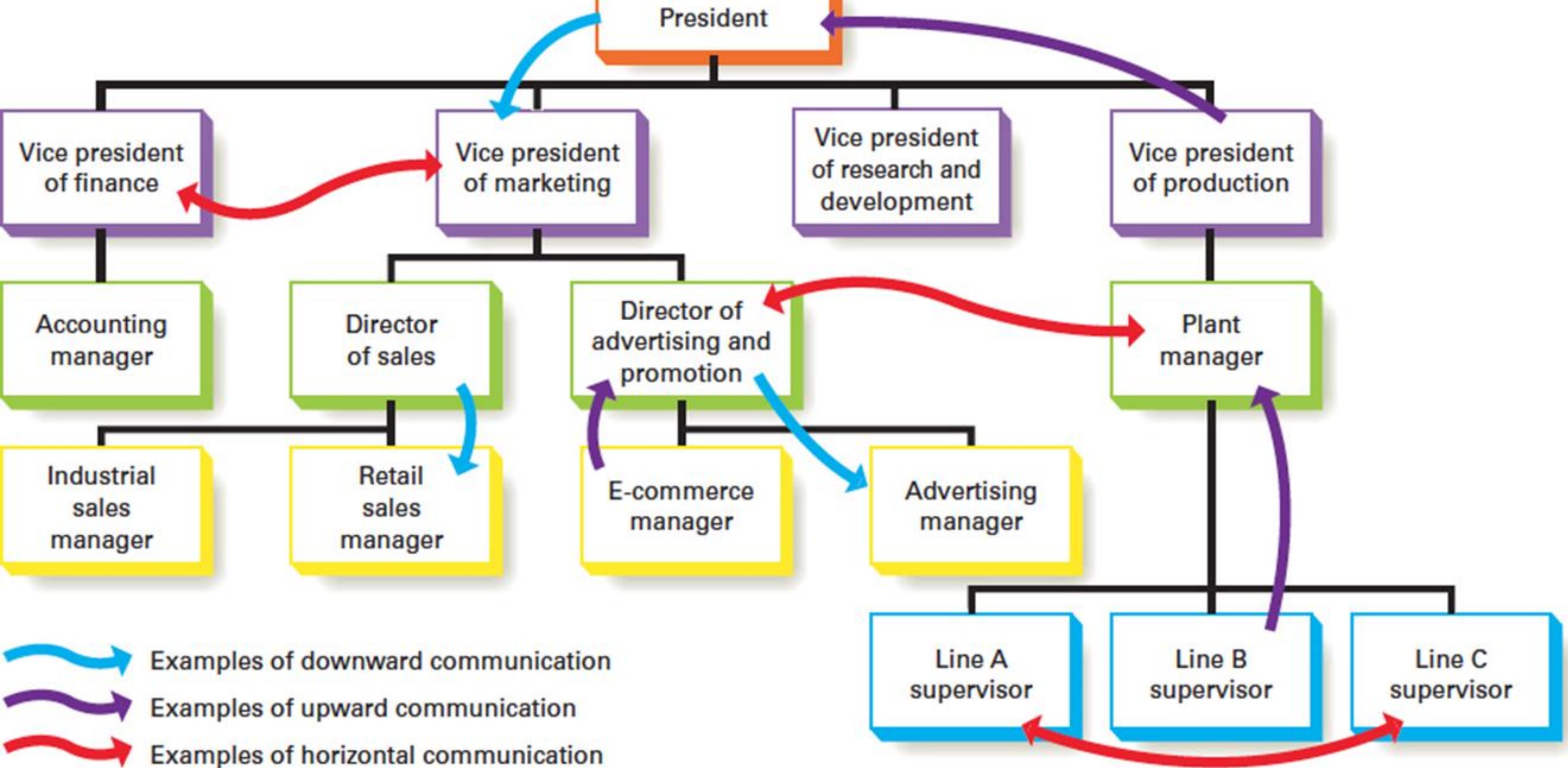
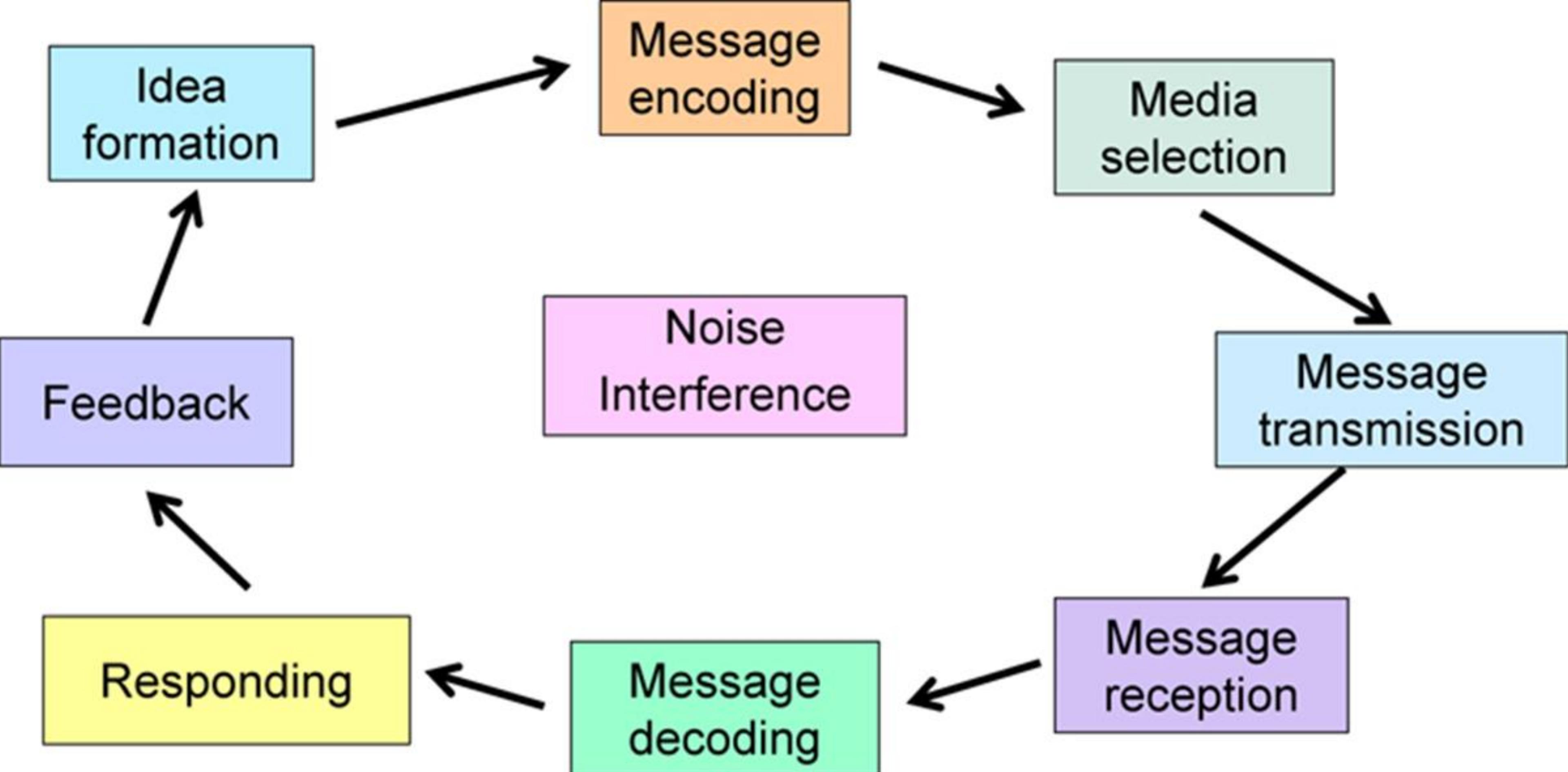


Figure 1–5 Formal Communication Network



# Communications Process

# CHARACTERISTICS OF INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

## **Informal internal communication network:**

- Communication that occurs outside the formal network:
- Grapevine or the rumour mill.
- Flourishes when employees don't receive information they want or need.
- Helps spur growth of social media in business.

## **Informal outside communication:**

- Informal contacts with customers and other stakeholders:
- Alert to changing customer needs.
- Form impressions about your company.
- Requires care: vital to company success.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## **Globalization of business and increase in workforce diversity:**

- Businesses reach across international borders.
- Employees must communicate with many other cultures.
- Companies must understand laws, customs and business practices of other countries.
- Diverse workforce requires extra attention in communication.
- Diverse workforce can yield significant competitive advantage from broader perspectives and ideas.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## Evolution of organizational structures:

- Tall structures have many layers of management:
- Can lead to communication breakdowns and delays.
- Flat structures reduce number of layers to allow communication to flow faster with fewer distortions.
- Matrix structures present unique challenges in that employees report to two managers at the same time.
- Network structure (virtual organization) brings in talent from external partners:
  - Results in more communication challenges.
- Communication will be influenced by corporate culture

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## **Growing reliance on teamwork:**

- Both traditional and innovative structures rely heavily on teamwork.
- Key reason that teams fail is poor communication.

## **Increasing value of business information:**

- Competitive insights: understand competitors' strengths and weaknesses.
- Customer needs: invest time and money to better understand customers' needs.
- Regulations and guidelines: government regulations in employment, environment, taxes.
- Communicate these issues throughout the organization.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## **Pervasiveness of technology:**

- Technology influences almost every aspect of business communication today.
- Time efficiencies, socialization opportunities.
- Use technology intelligently.
- Challenge is to keep current with technology.

## **Need for cybersecurity and privacy protection:**

- Increased need for security due to cyber attacks.
- Global, not local, issue.
- Ransomware, social engineering, two-factor authentication.
- Provide awareness and education to employees.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## Barriers to effective communication:

- Interference that distorts the sender's meaning.
- Noise and distractions:
  - External and internal.
  - Multitasking creates distractions.
- Competing messages:
  - Too many messages at one time.
  - Results in information overload.
- Filters:
  - Any human or technological intervention between the sender and the receiver.
  - Can be intentional or unintentional

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## Barriers to effective communication (cont'd):

- Perceptual differences:
  - Individuals choose what is important based on their perception of reality.
  - Selective perception:
    - Fit new detail into existing pattern by distorting information.
  - Shared personal, professional, and cultural experiences ensure meaningful communication.
- Language differences:
  - Between speakers of same language.
  - Between speakers of different languages.
  - Ensure understanding through feedback.

# UNIQUE CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

## Barriers to effective communication (cont'd):

- Restrictive environments:
  - Can be intentional or unintentional.
  - Tall hierarchies often result in loss of message quality.
  - Develop effective means for employees to share ideas.
- Deceptive tactics:
  - Influence others to shape expectations and behaviours.
- Can be illegal or unethical:
  - Exaggerate benefits.
  - Quote inaccurate statistics.
  - Hide negative information behind optimistic attitude.
- Personal preferences influence perceptions.

# STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING MORE EFFECTIVELY ON THE JOB

## Improve Business Communication Skills

- Training.
- Master skills through study and practice.

## Minimise Distractions

- Reduce noise, visual clutter and interruptions.
- Set aside time to deal with messages.
- Mark messages “urgent” only if they are really urgent.
- Send messages only to people who need them.

## Adopt an Audience-Centered Approach

- Understand how audiences receive messages.
- Use following strategies to cut through too many messages and noise
- Understand how audiences decode messages
- Understand how audiences respond to messages
- Know as much as you can about your audience

# STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNICATING MORE EFFECTIVELY ON THE JOB



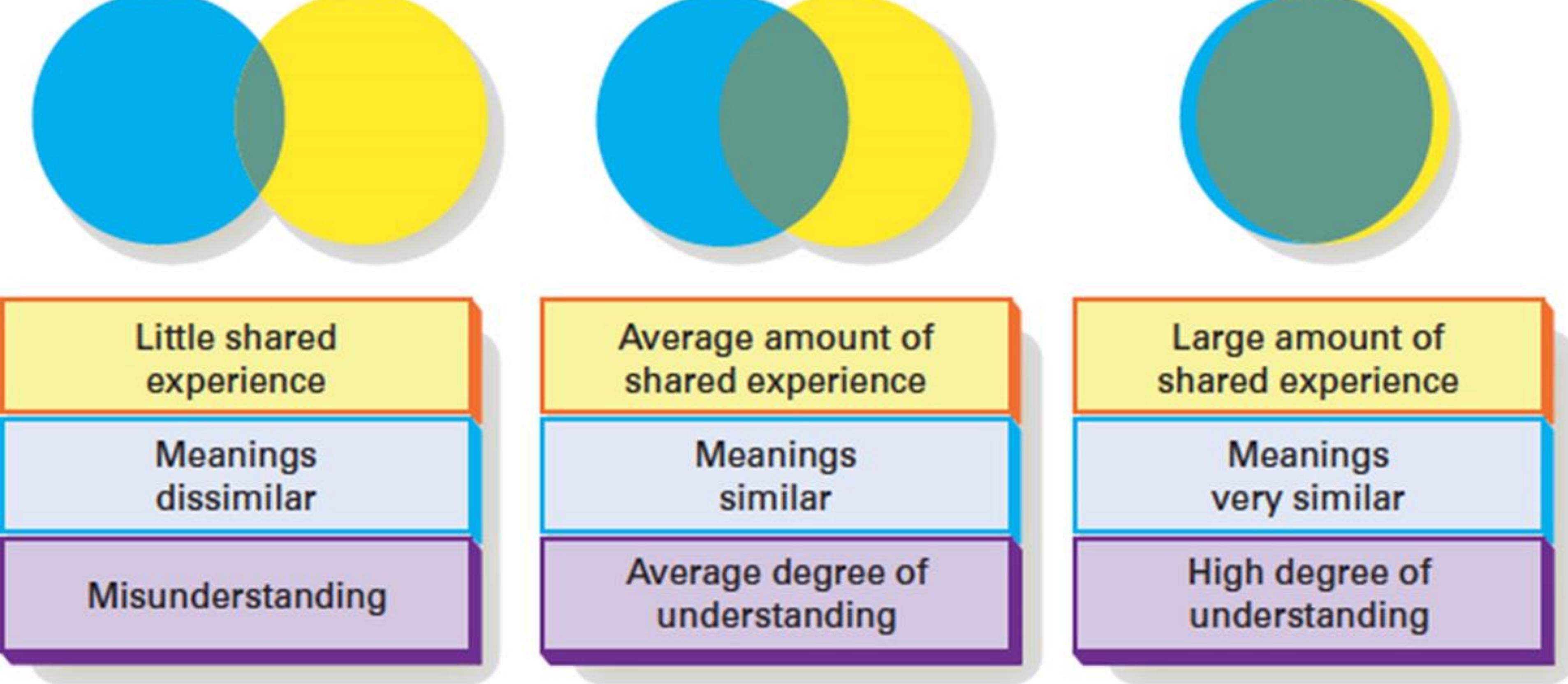
## Be Sensitive to Business Etiquette

- The way employees conduct themselves can have a profound influence on careers and company's success.
- Learn expectations of others, especially in other cultures.



## Make Feedback Constructive

- Constructive feedback (or constructive criticism) focuses on the processes and outcomes of communication:
- Destructive feedback delivers criticism with no effort to stimulate improvement:



**Figure 1–6** How Shared Experience Affects Understanding

# MASTERING LISTENING, NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ETHICS IN BUSINESS



# EFFECTIVE LISTENING

- One of the most important skills in the workplace.
- Strengthens organizational relationships.
- Alerts opportunities for innovation.
- Raises early awareness of problems that can develop into serious image and reputation issues.
- Provides competitive edge in enhancing performance.



# EFFECTIVE LISTENING

## **Recognizing and understanding active listening:**

- Seeking to understand and interpret the meaning behind the message:
  - Consider the speaker's perspective.
  - Focus completely on what the speaker is saying.
  - Avoid distractions.
  - Ask clarifying questions to avoid misunderstanding.
  - Avoid criticizing or attacking.
  - Help reduce contentious situations.
  - Strengthen rapport.
  - Build stronger relationships.
  - Open communication between parties

# Recognizing Various Types of Listening

Type of Listening	Emphasis Is On...	Do's	Don'ts
<b>Content Listening:</b> Primary goal is to understand and retain the speaker's message.	Information gathering and understanding Retention of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ask questions to clarify the material and probe for details.</li><li>Focus on the information and look for the main ideas and patterns.</li><li>Paraphrase what the speaker says</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evaluate the speaker's style or presentation at this point. It does not matter whether you agree or disagree, only that you understand.</li></ul>
<b>Critical Listening:</b> Primary goal is to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message on several levels.	Evaluating the logic of the argument, strength of the evidence, and validity of the conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Analyze the implications of the message for you and your organization, and the speaker's intentions and motives.</li><li>Ask questions to explore different points of view and determine credibility.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overlook the reason for omitting certain points or information.</li><li>Be misled by bias or the package in which the information is presented.</li><li>Confuse opinions for facts.</li></ul>
<b>Empathic Listening:</b> Primary goal is to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants to help the speaker vent the emotions that prevent a calm, clear-headed approach.	Appreciating the speaker's viewpoint, regardless of whether you share that perspective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Let the speaker know that you appreciate his or her feelings and understand the situation.</li><li>Once you establish this connection, help the speaker move on to search for a solution.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offer advice unless the person specifically asks for it.</li><li>Judge the speaker's feelings or communicate that he or she should not feel a particular emotion.</li></ul>

# EFFECTIVE LISTENING

## Overcoming barriers to effective listening:

- Controllable and uncontrollable barriers:
  - Physical barriers may be uncontrollable: physical room, temperature, background noise.
  - Interruptions and nonverbal behaviours are controllable:
  - Wait to ask questions.
- Selective listening: tune out what is said.
  - Think ahead instead of focusing on the speaker.
- Defensive listening: only hear what confirms own view of topic.
- Misinterpretation due to lack of common ground.



# IMPROVING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## Nonverbal communication:

- Interpersonal process of sending and receiving information without using written or spoken language.
- Vital role in communication because it can strengthen or weaken a verbal message.
  - Strengthens:
    - Nonverbal signals match spoken words.
  - Weakens:
    - Nonverbal signals don't match words.

# RECOGNISING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

- Facial expressions and eye contact:
- Gesture and posture
- Vocal characteristics
- Personal appearance
- Touch
- Time and space



# USING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVELY

- Ensure that nonverbal signals match words.
  - Don't overcompensate bad news with positive body language.
- Think about professional image of dressing, the way of sitting/walking.
- Consider professional image of business documents.
- Pay attention to speaker's nonverbal cues.
- Understand cultural influences on body language.
- Recognize that nonverbal cues may be influenced by the situation.

# MAKING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION CHOICES

Ethics are the accepted principles of conduct in society

Ethical communication:

- Includes all relevant information; is true and not deceptive.
- Unethical communication:
- Falsehoods and misleading information:
- Omitting essential information.
- Plagiarism: can be illegal.
- Selective misquoting: create untruthful impressions.
- Misrepresenting numbers: intentional manipulation.
- Distorting visuals: exaggeration of reality.
- Failing to respect privacy or information security.



# MAKING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION CHOICES

## **Ensuring ethical communication:**

- Requires ethical individuals, ethical leadership and appropriate policies.
- Code of ethics:
  - Responsible employers establish clear ethical guidelines and written codes of ethics.
  - Help employees determine what is acceptable.
- Ethics audits monitor progress and compliance.

# MAKING ETHICAL COMMUNICATION CHOICES

## Ensuring ethical communication (cont'd):

- Ethical communication decisions based on:
  - Defining situation fairly and accurately.
  - Explaining intention in communicating a message.
  - Understanding impact of message on receivers.
  - Balancing greatest good with least possible harm.
  - Assessing possible change of assumptions in future.
  - Personal comfort in communication message.

Would you be proud to describe your communication choice to someone you admire?

# USING NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVELY

## Ensuring legal communication:

- Promotional communication: truth in advertising.
- Contracts: legally binding promises.
- Employment communication: governed by laws.
- Intellectual property: patents, copyrights, trade secrets, Internet domain names.
- Financial reporting: adhere to stringent reporting laws.
- Defamation: false published statements that damage character or reputation of a person.
- Transparency requirements: who is behind the information.



# PLANNING, WRITING AND COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

# The Three-Step Writing Process

Step 1 Plan	Step 2 Write	Step 3 Complete
<p><b>Analyze the Situation:</b> Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.</p> <p><b>Gather Information:</b> Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.</p> <p><b>Choose Medium and Channel:</b> Identify the best combination for the situation, message and audience.</p> <p><b>Organize the Information:</b> Define your main idea, limit your scope, select the direct or indirect approach and outline your content.</p>	<p><b>Adapt to Your Audience:</b> Be sensitive to audience needs by using a “you” attitude, politeness, positive emphasis and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company’s preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.</p> <p><b>Compose the Message:</b> Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.</p>	<p><b>Revise the Message:</b> Evaluate content and review readability; edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.</p> <p><b>Produce the Message:</b> Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.</p> <p><b>Proofread the Message:</b> Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.</p> <p><b>Distribute the Message:</b> Deliver your message using the chosen channel; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.</p>

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Optimise your writing time!!

The more you use the three-step process, the more intuitive and automatic it will become.

### Reserve:

- 50% of your time for planning
- 25% for writing
- 25% for completing

Thoughtful planning is necessary to make sure you provide the right information in the right format to the right people.



# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## **Analysing the situation**

Understanding the situation is essential for getting the content and tone of a message right.

## **Developing an audience profile**

- Identify your primary audience.
- Determine audience size and geographic distribution.
- Determine audience composition.
- Gauge audience members' level of understanding.
- Understand audience expectation and preferences.
- Forecast probable audience reactions.

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Gathering information

- Consider the audience's perspective.
- Listen to the community.
- Read reports and other company documents.
- Talk with supervisors, colleagues, or customers.
- Ask your audience for input.

## Uncovering audience needs

- Audience members may be unable to articulate exactly what they want.
- Try to think of relevant information needs that your audience may not have expressed.
- Use judgment.

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Providing required information

- Journalistic approach: who, what, when, where, why, and how
- Be sure the information is accurate.
- Quality of information is just as important as quantity
- Double-check every piece of information
- Be sure the information is ethical.
- Be sure the information is pertinent.

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## **Media and Channel Options**

The simplest way to categorize media choices is to divide them into oral (spoken), written, and visual.

Each can be delivered through digital and nondigital channels.

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Media and Channel Options

- Oral medium, in-person channel
  - Management by walking around
- Oral medium, digital channel
- Written medium, print channel
  - Memos, letters
- Choose a printed message when you:
  - Want to make a formal impression
  - Are legally required to provide information in printed form
  - Want to stand out from the flood of digital messages
  - Need a permanent, unchangeable, or secure record

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channel Options

- Formality
- Media and channel limitations
- Urgency
- Cost
- Audience preferences
- Security and privacy

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Organizing Your Information

Good organization helps the receivers of your message in three ways:

- It helps them understand your message.
- It helps them accept your message.
- It saves your audience time.



## Defining Topic and Main Idea

General Purpose	Example of Specific Purpose	Example of Topic	Example of Main Idea
To inform	Teach customer service representatives how to edit and expand the technical support wiki	Technical support wiki	Careful, thorough edits and additions to the wiki help the entire department provide better customer support.
To persuade	Convince top managers to increase spending on research and development	Funding for research and development	Competitors spend more than we do on research and development, which helps them create more innovative products.
To collaborate	Solicit ideas for a companywide incentive system that ties wages to profits	Incentive pay	Tying wages to profits motivates employees and reduces compensation costs in tough years.

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Defining your main idea

If your main idea isn't clear, multiple creative approaches can clarify and refine it.

- Brainstorming
  - Generating as many ideas as possible
- Journalistic approach
- Question-and-answer chain
  - Start with a key question and work back to the message
- Storyteller's tour
- Mind mapping
  - Generate and organize ideas

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Limit your scope

- The scope of your message is the range of information you present, the overall length, and level of details.
- Limit the number of major supporting points to the most compelling and important ideas.
- The ideal length of a message depends on:
  - The topic
  - Your audience members' familiarity with the material
  - Their receptivity to your conclusions
  - Your credibility

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Choose your approach

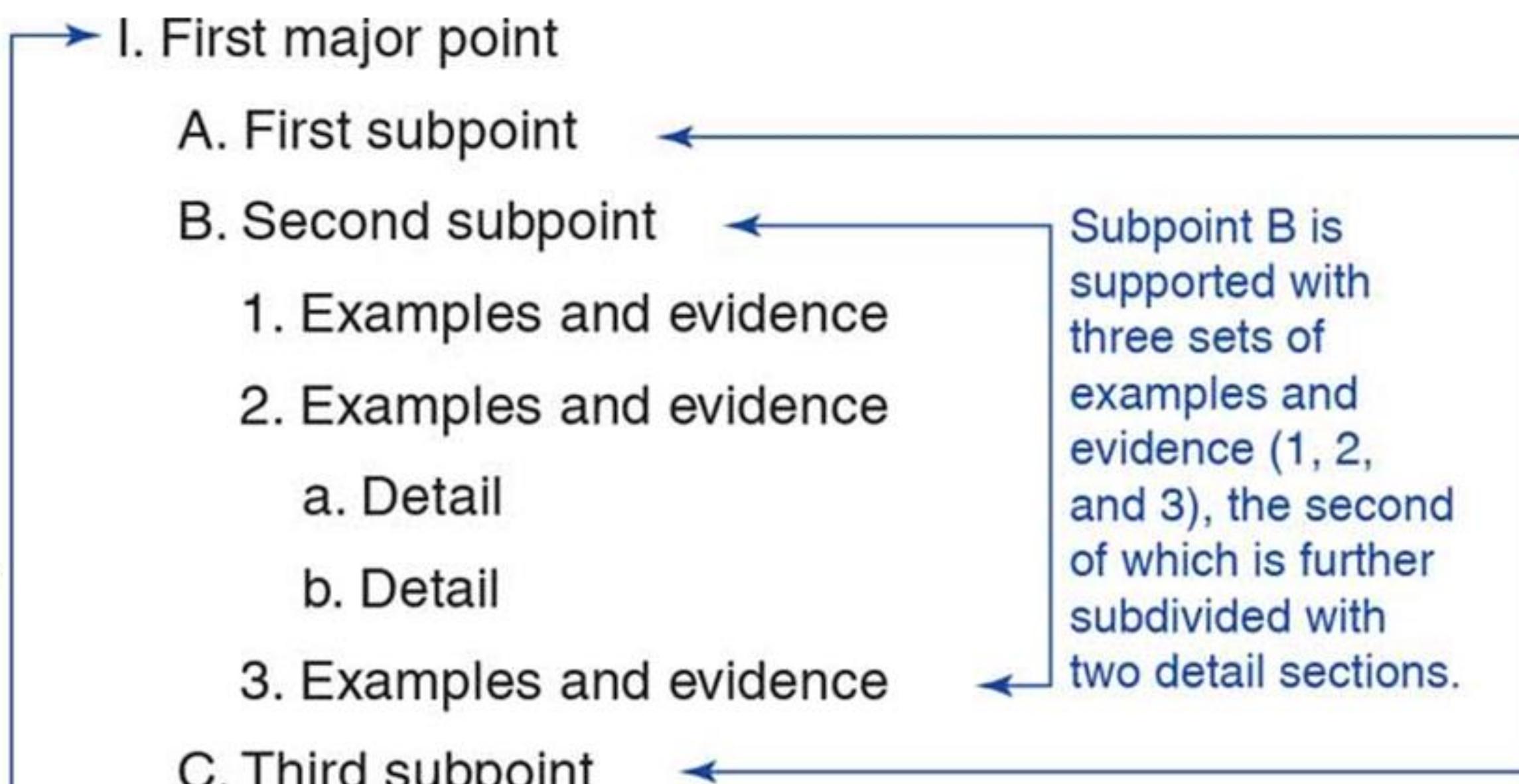
- Direct approach—starts with the main idea and follows with supporting points and evidence
- Indirect approach—starts with reasoning, evidence, and background information, and builds up to the main idea

Indirect approach is used when:

- Your audience is likely skeptical or hostile
- You need to convey negative information
- You want to persuade people

# Organizing Your Thoughts with a Clear Outline

The particular message is divided into two major points (I and II).



Subpoint B is supported with three sets of examples and evidence (1, 2, and 3), the second of which is further subdivided with two detail sections.

The first major point is divided into three subpoints (A, B, and C).

- A. First subpoint
  - 1. Examples and evidence
  - 2. Examples and evidence
- B. Second subpoint

# PLANNING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Outlining your content

- Identify the main idea - this helps establish the goals and strategy of the message.
- Two considerations:
  - What you want your audience to do or think
  - Why it is beneficial for them to do so
- Assemble major supporting points
- Gather compelling examples and evidence

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Adopting the “you” attitude

Readers and listeners are more likely to respond positively when they believe messages address their concerns.

Adopting the “you” attitude is to focus on the reader’s needs by demonstrating genuine interest.

Instead of This	Write This
Tuesday is the only day that we can promise quick response to purchase order requests. We are swamped the rest of the week.	If you need a quick response, please submit your purchase order requests on Tuesday.
At Construction Resources, we are proud to supply the highest-rated engineered wood in the entire Midwest.	Ensure the integrity of your building projects with the highest-rated engineered wood in the entire Midwest.

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Maintain standards of etiquette

Manners in a social setting to foster a successful environment for communication.

Extra formality may be required when communicating with people higher up the organization chart or outside the company.

Instead of This	Write This
Once again, you've managed to bring down the website through your incompetent programming.	Let's review the last website update to explore ways to improve the process.
You've been sitting on our order for two weeks, and we need it now!	Our production schedules depend on timely delivery of parts and supplies, but we have not yet received the order scheduled for delivery two weeks ago. Please respond today with a firm delivery commitment.

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Emphasis the positive

- Communicate negative news without being negative.
- Euphemisms are phrases that convey your message without carrying a negative connotations.
- Avoid usage to hide the truth.

Instead of This	Write This
The problem with this department is a failure to control costs.	The performance of this department can be improved with tighter cost controls.
You failed to provide all the necessary information on the previous screen.	Please review the items marked in red so that we can process your order as quickly as possible.

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## **Use bias-free, inclusive language**

Language plays a fundamental role in cultural dynamics in the workplace.

When writing, choose words:

- that don't exclude anyone.
- that don't reflect overt or implicit biases.
- It's possible to use exclusionary or biased language without even knowing you are doing so.

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## **Establish your credibility**

Credibility is a measure of your believability based on how reliable you are and how much trust you evoke in others.

- Characteristics:
- Honesty
- Objectivity
- Awareness of audience needs
- Credentials, knowledge, and expertise
- Endorsements
- Performance
- Sincerity

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## **Project your company's image**

- The interests and preferred communication style of your company must take precedence over your own views and personal communication style.
- Review your company's communication guidelines.

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Use a conversational tone

Conversational tone is warm but business-like and emphasizes plain, clear language; not too formal and not too casual

- Avoid stale and pompous language
- Avoid preaching and bragging
- Be careful with intimacy
- Be careful with humor

## Use plain language

- Plain language presents information in a simple, unadorned style that lets audiences grasp your meaning quickly and easily.
- Three key benefits of using plain language:

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Use words effectively

- Choose strong, precise words.
- Choose familiar words.
- Avoid clichés and use buzzwords carefully.
- Use jargon carefully.

## Use words correctly

Be alert to confusion and disagreement over several common usage rules.

- They/their
- Split infinitive rule
- Awkward prepositions

# WRITING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Crafting unified, coherent paragraphs

An effective paragraph is:

- unified, focusing on a single topic.
- coherent, presenting ideas in a logically connected way.

Paragraphs vary in length and form.

- Topic sentence – introduces the topic
- Support sentences – explain, justify or extend the
- ~~Topic~~ transitions – help the readers move between sentences and paragraphs

# Five Techniques for Developing Paragraphs

Technique	Description	Example
Illustration	Giving examples that demonstrate the general idea	Some of our most popular products are available through local distributors. For example, Everett & Lemmings carries our frozen soups and entrees. The J. B. Green Company carries our complete line of seasonings, as well as the frozen soups. Wilmont Foods, also a major distributor, now carries our new line of frozen desserts.
Comparison or contrast	Using similarities or differences to develop the topic	When the company was small, the recruiting function could be handled informally. The need for new employees was limited, and each manager could comfortably screen and hire her or his own staff. However, our successful bid on the Owens contract means that we will be doubling our labor force over the next six months. To hire that many people without disrupting our ongoing activities, we will create a separate recruiting group within the human resources department.

# Five Techniques for Developing Paragraphs cont'd

Technique	Description	Example
Cause and effect	Focusing on the reasons for something	The heavy-duty fabric of your Wanderer tent probably broke down for one of two reasons: (1) a sharp object punctured the fabric, and without reinforcement, the hole was enlarged by the stress of pitching the tent daily for a week, or (2) the fibers gradually rotted because the tent was folded and stored while still wet.
Classification	Showing how a general idea is broken into specific categories	Successful candidates for our supervisor trainee program generally come from one of several groups. The largest group by far consists of recent graduates of accredited business management programs. The next largest group comes from within our own company, as we try to promote promising staff workers to positions of greater responsibility. Finally, we occasionally accept candidates with outstanding supervisory experience in related industries.

## Five Techniques for Developing Paragraphs cont'd

Technique	Description	Example
Problem and solution	Presenting a problem and then discussing the solution	Shoppers are clearly not happy with our in-store shopping app—it currently has an average rating of under two stars in both the Apple and Android app stores. After studying dozens of reviews, I've identified three improvements that should make the app much friendlier. First, the user interface is too cluttered. We need to simplify it by presenting only the information the user needs at any given point in time. Second, the app is too slow at guiding shoppers to products of interest. We need to speed up the GPS and near-field algorithms. Third, we need to add a shopping list tracking feature so that customers don't need to type in their desired products every time they go shopping.

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Revising Business Messages

### **Evaluate content, organization, style, and tone.**

- Make sure the information is accurate, relevant, and sufficient.
- Check that all necessary points appear in logical order.
- Verify that you present enough support to make the main idea convincing and compelling.
- Be sure the beginning and ending of the message are effective.
- Make sure you've achieved the right tone for the audience and the situation.

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Revising Business Messages

### Review for readability

- Consider using a readability index, but be sure to interpret the answer carefully.
- Use a mix of short, medium, and long sentences.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Use bulleted and numbered lists to emphasize key points.
- Make the document easy to skim with headings and subheadings.

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Revising Business Messages

### Edit for clarity

- Break up overly long sentences and rewrite hedging sentences.
- Impose parallelism to simplify reading.
- Correct dangling modifiers.
- Rework long noun sequences and replace camouflaged verbs.
- Clarify sentence structure and awkward references.

### Edit for conciseness

- Delete unnecessary words and phrases.
- Shorten long words and phrases.
- Eliminate redundancies.
- Consider rewriting sentences that start with **It is** or **There are**.

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Revising Business Messages

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# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Producing your message

The production quality of your message plays an important role in its effectiveness.

This refers to the total effect of:

- page or screen design
- graphical elements
- typography

## Design for readability

- It can improve message effectiveness.
- It sends a nonverbal message to readers, influencing their perception.



# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## When designing for readability, consider:

- **White space** separates elements in a design and helps guide the reader's eye.
- Most business documents use a flush left **margin** and a ragged right **margin**.
- **Typeface** is the visual design of letters, numbers, and other characters (font).
- **Type style** refers to any modification that lends contrast or emphasis to type: Boldface, italic, underlining, etc.

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Proofing Business Messages

### Look for writing errors

- Typographical mistakes
- Misspelled words
- Grammatical errors
- Punctuation mistakes

### Look for design and layout errors

- Lack of adherence to company standards
- Page or screen layout errors (such as incorrect margins and column formatting)
- Awkward page breaks or line breaks
- Inconsistent font usage (such as with headings and subheadings)

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Proofing Business Messages

### Look for design and layout errors cont'd.

- Alignment problems (columns, headers, footers, and graphics)
- Missing or incorrect page and section numbers
- Missing or incorrect page headers or footers
- Missing or incorrect U R L s, email addresses, or other contact information
- Missing or incorrect photos and other graphical elements
- Missing or incorrect source notes, copyright notices, or other reference items

# COMPLETING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Proofing Business Messages

### Looking for production errors

- Printing problems
- Browser compatibility problems
- Screen size or resolution issues for mobile devices
- Incorrect or missing tags on blog posts
- Missing files

A photograph showing a group of young women in red shirts handing out green brochures to an older man. They appear to be on a street or in a public area, possibly distributing information or advertising. The background shows other people and buildings.

# DISTRIBUTING BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Consider:

- Cost
- Convenience
- Time
- Security and privacy

# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Five main goals

- To convey the bad news.
- To gain acceptance for the bad news
- To preserve as much goodwill as possible
- To maintain (or repair) your reputation
- To reduce future correspondence



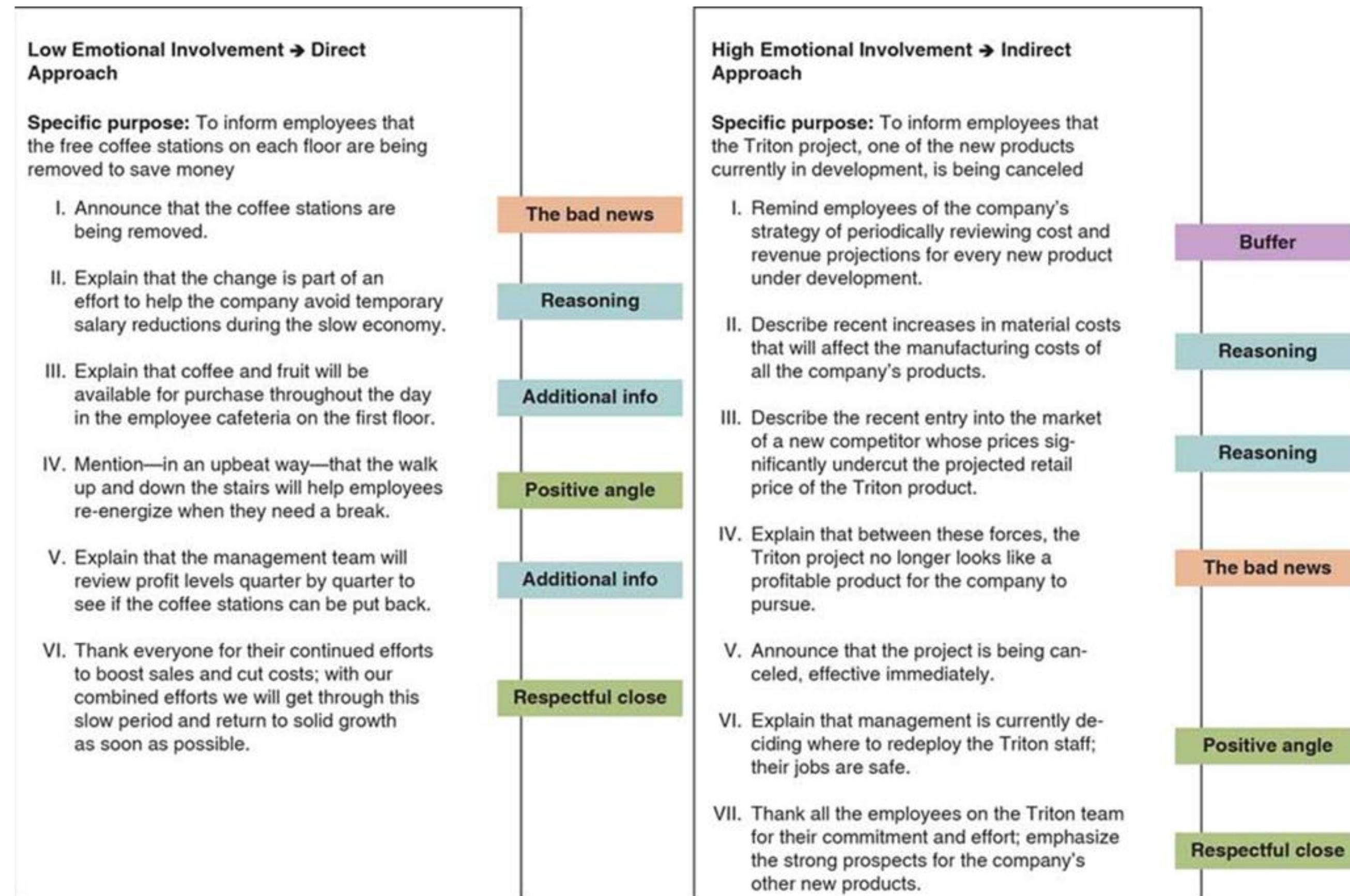
# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Creating Negative Business Messages

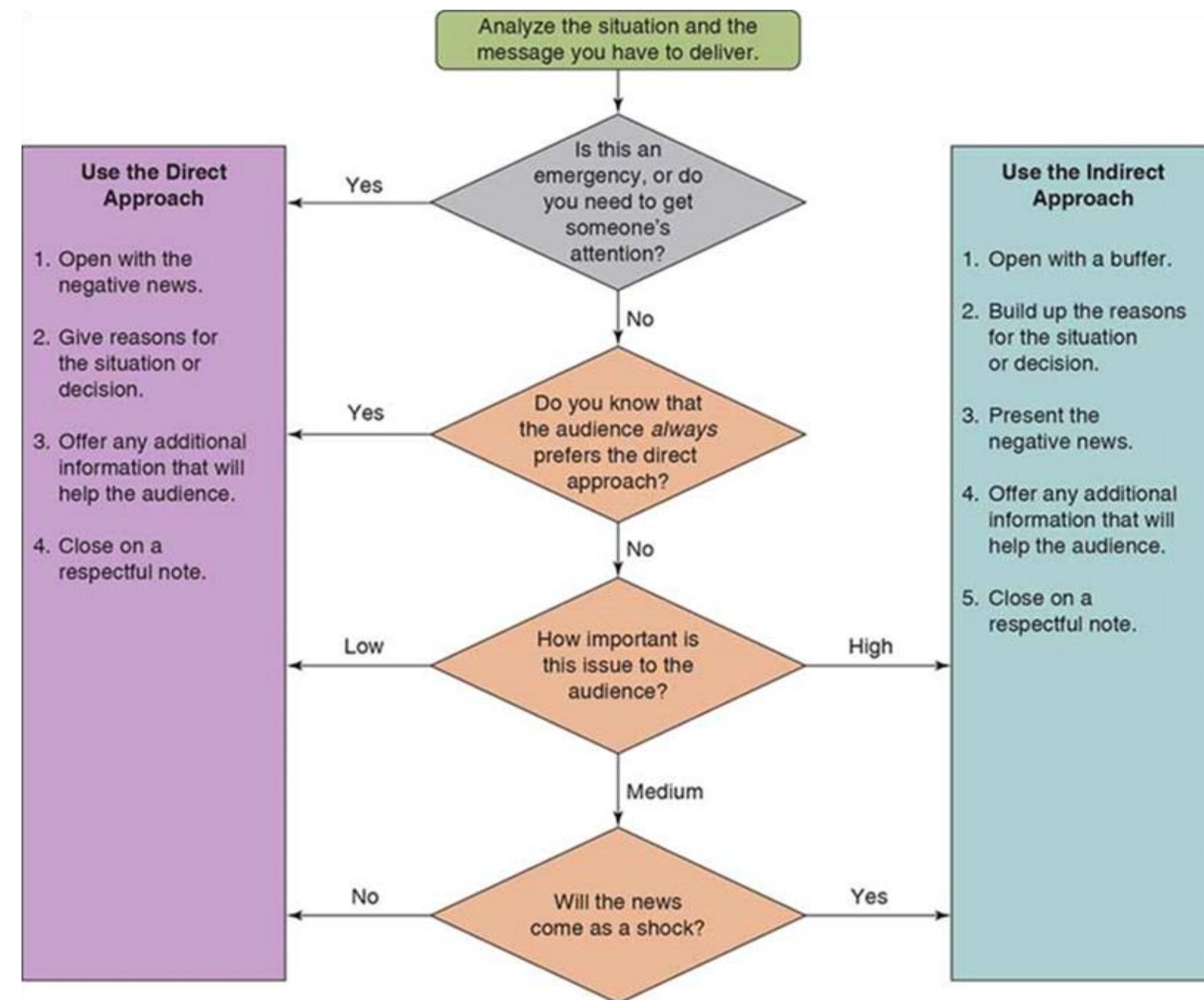
### Choose direct or indirect approach

- Consider using the direct approach when the audience is aware of the possibility of negative news, when the reader is not emotionally involved in the message, or when you know that the reader would prefer the bad news first.
- Consider using the indirect approach when the news is likely to come as a shock or surprise, when your audience has a high emotional investment in the outcome, and when you want to maintain a good relationship with the audience.

# Comparing the Direct and Indirect Approaches for Negative Messages



# Choosing the Direct or Indirect Approach



# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Creating Negative Business Messages

**For the indirect approach, open with an effective buffer.**

- Establish common ground with the audience.
- Validate the request, if you are responding to a request.
- Don't trivialize the reader's concerns.
- Don't mislead the reader into thinking the coming news might be positive.

# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Creating Negative Business Messages

### Provide reasons and additional information.

- Explain why the news is negative.
- Adjust the amount of detail to fit the situation and the audience.
- Avoid explanations when the reasons are confidential, excessively complicated, or irrelevant to the reader.
- If appropriate, state how you plan to correct or respond to the negative news.
- Seek the advice of company lawyers if you're unsure what to say.

# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Creating Negative Business Messages

### **Clearly state the bad news**

- State the bad news as positively as possible, using tactful wording.
- To help protect readers' feelings, de-emphasize the bad news by minimizing the space devoted to it, subordinating it, or embedding it.
- If your response might change in the future if circumstances change, explain the conditions to the reader.
- Emphasize what you can do or have done rather than what you can't or won't do.

# WRITING NEGATIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

## Checklist: Creating Negative Business Messages

### **Close on a respectful note.**

- Express best wishes without being falsely positive.
- Suggest actions readers might take, if appropriate, and provide them with necessary information.
- Encourage further communication only if you're willing to discuss the situation further.

# CHATGPT FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION



# WHAT IS CHATGPT?

ChatGPT is an AI-powered language model designed to generate human-like text.

## **ChatGPT is useful in Corporate Communication for:**

- Generating ideas
- Drafting and refining written content
- Conduct quick research

# WRITING CORPORATE LETTERS AND EMAILS WITH CHATGPT

## Step 1: Draft Professional Letters

### Example Prompt:

"Write a formal letter to stakeholders inviting them to a seminar on corporate communication best practices."

## Step 2: Create Email Campaigns

### Example Prompt:

"Compose a concise and engaging email inviting employees to participate in a communication training workshop."

## Step 3: Refine Drafts

### Example Prompt:

"Please improve this email(letter) to make it more persuasive and engaging."

# BEST PRACTICES FOR USING CHATGPT

## 1. Provide clear instructions

- Be specific about the tone, purpose, and audience
- Example: Instead of "Write a letter," try "Write a formal letter announcing a project launch to our partners."

## 2. Use iterative feedback

- Example: "Make this more concise." or "Add a call to action at the end."

## 3. Refine and personalise

- Customize responses to align with your brand's voice.

## 4. Avoid confidential information

- Do not share sensitive or private data with ChatGPT.

# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHATGPT

- **Transparency**
  - Be honest if AI-generated content is used in public communications.
- **Bias awareness**
  - Ensure outputs align with your organization's DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) goals.
- **Refine and personalise**
  - Customize responses to align with your brand's voice.

# GET IN TOUCH



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# THANK YOU