

R.V. Lesikar, M.E. Flatley, K. Rentz, P. Lentz, and N. Pande, *Business Communication: Connecting in a Digital World* (13th ed.), 2015, New Delhi: McGraw Hill Education (India) Private Limited, 772 pp. ISBN-13: 978-93-513-4296-0

Communication: Lifblood of Every Organization

Business Communication is an art; it needs to be handled with creativity, empathy, acumen and conscientiousness. The advent of Twitter and tablets as leading performers on the technology panorama, along with Facebook, cloud applications, email marketing, has made the art of communication vital. Today it has become all the more important that one evaluates the communication situation and the audience, identify a suitable tactic for meeting a business goal, and use words and visuals with dexterity. A layman's definition of effective communication is 'to communicate to get the desired outcome'. Business communication requires investigation, judgement, resourcefulness and effort. There are several works available in the market which describe the process of communication along with its challenges/barriers and the issues faced by people and organizations. The basic principles and common outlines are useful, however preparing an effective written (document) or oral (presentation) communication implicates a lot of planning and review. Readers need to be told frankly that business communication is not that simple ... but if carried out with ingenuity, intelligence and conscientiousness, it can be exceptionally rewarding and even exciting. With this end in view, the book includes the most problem-solving cases, as compared to any book on the topic in the market—over 150 of them. The true-to-life situations make readers reflect upon exact contextual dynamics as they shape their messages, proposals, and reports. Additionally, the cases apprise readers of issues they are likely to come across in the workplace, from resolving ethical matters, sorting out management problems, and constructing company policies to reporting information, selling a product or idea, and manag-

ing customer and client relations. The representative drill that these cases provide is the significant take away of this book's approach. Along with upholding focus on the fundamentals of successful business communication, the present edition adapts to the current business and academic environments and integrates a novel approach to topics like: cross cultural communication, writing styles and technology in communication.

In *Business Communication: Connecting in a Digital World*, the authors have brought out the balance between currency and agelessness. The Indian adaptation forms a strong association within the text with features like: 'Cultural Vignettes,' 'Notes from India' and 'Case in Point,' delivering appropriate examples of the concepts discussed within each of the chapters, wherever needed.

This book is divided into six parts.

Part I: *Introduction*—The significant role of communication in the workplace, current challenges for communicators in business scenarios and the business communication process are highlighted in the beginning. The introductory challenge (a hypothetical workplace scenario) generates students' interest in the contents. The latest statistics on the importance of communication skills in the workplace is an added feature which holds the readers' interest. Research on workplace trends from the experts at the Institute for the Future, Apollo Research Institute, and the Aspen Institute adds value to the topic. There is also a focus on the growing importance of cross-cultural communication and the dimensions of cultural difference. Research on the cultural influences on online communication has been brought out effectively by the authors through lucid examples. The different types of handshakes in different cultures finds a detailed explanation on page 35 of the book.

Part II: *Fundamentals of Business Writing*—This part facilitates learners in making the best choice of words for their receivers and hence adapt to their expectations for successful transactions and also deals with techniques of writing effective sentences and paragraphs. Furthermore, it focuses on writing for a positive effect and stresses upon positive emphasis and conversational tone. A more

logical, less redundant organization and well-defined titles, make the chapter's points clearer and more discrete. For example: connotation and denotation, often-confused words and idioms are all discussed separately for better understanding. The detailed discussion on *faulty parallelism* is a value addition. The authors have added technology in brief a box on 'Courtesy in the Age of Mobile Devices' based on the latest advice from Emily Post's *Etiquette*.

Part III: *Basic Patterns of Business Messages*—Here, we come across the elaboration on the importance of skillful writing and readable formatting. It further points out the specifics of major mediums of business writing, which include: letters, memos, emails and social media. The Communication Matters box, which highlights the top email mistakes, is informative. The authors have succinctly offered current advice for writing web content, which is gaining significance these days. The authors suggest patterns for drafting various messages—good news, bad news, and neutral and discuss the method of crafting persuasive messages and proposals. The section on addressing the use of apologies in bad news messages provides insights into the art of writing bad news messages. There is detailed information on the dominance of indirectness in persuasive messages. There is also an account of how to conduct a winning job campaign, where the authors discuss at length the application documents, constructing the résumé, writing the cover message, developing a professional portfolio, and preparing for interviews. The authors cite current research on the value employers place on internships and clearly bring out the difference between features of print résumés and electronic résumés.

Part IV: *Fundamentals of Report Writing*—This comprises details about report writing: the basics of writing reports like: determining the report problem and purpose, assembling and analyzing data, creating a logical structure, writing and formatting the contents, and preparing reports collaboratively. The authors also discuss the common types of short reports with their characteristics, and the long, formal reports with their components. Moreover, there is a deliberation on using research to solve a business problem, and the research methods. Another salient feature of the book is the motivational section, 'Why Research Matters,' followed by an overview of the main categories of research. Such information facilitates readers in undertaking research projects with a better comprehension of its nuances. Use of visuals for better understanding and the general mechanics of constructing visuals has also been emphasized.

Part V: *Oral Forms of Business Communication*—With respect to oral communication, the authors provide details on efficient communication in meetings, keys to effective

interpersonal communication and delivering oral reports and business speeches. Readers very well relate to the reference to TED talks and their importance in enhancing oral communication skills. The requisites related to both verbal and nonverbal communication have been explained. The authors make effective use of illustrations, graphics, pictures to bring forth their points, thereby making the book more interesting. The clear language combined with conciseness enables the authors to cover a number of topics in each chapter.

Part VI: *Elements of Professionalism: Technological Proficiency and Correctness*—Finally, there is an analysis on how to leverage technology for better writing and advice on how to convey professionalism through accuracy in communication. It also showcases the importance of grammar and punctuation in communication. There is an interesting discussion on RSS feeds and tablet or smartphone apps as information-gathering tools. There is an additional input with guidelines on pronoun-antecedent agreement, which highlights the importance of using exact language in communication.

Overall, the authors seem to have come up with an efficient resource, where lot of information on the subject appears at one place. Research shows that increased use of digital written communication has reduced readers' skill with other media (oral communication: both verbal and non-verbal). Businesses need employees who can interview others, conduct effective teleconferences and acquire and share information. Many of the exercises and cases in this book require practice of these skills. Moreover, the appendices providing grading checklists, additional guidelines for formatting written documents, as well as advice and models for documenting sources, tend to appeal to the readers due to their usefulness and appropriateness. The book, for sure, has a promise to facilitate the readers in understanding and applying the seven C's of communication in oral and written form. The book also gives instructors a number of interaction points and many resources for creating engaging activities and assignments.

The book's appeal could have been enhanced by providing the cases and situations as supplements. This would have, by reducing the physical weight of the book, been more appreciated due to its compactness. Colourful images, visuals, and pictures would also have increased the visual appeal of the book.

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