# SOLUTIONS MANUAL

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BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TODAY

NINTH EDITION

# CHAPTER 2: COMMUNICATING IN TEAMS AND MASTERING LISTENING AND NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

## IMPORTANT CHANGES IN THIS EDITION

- Enhanced coverage of collaborative writing technologies, including content management systems and wikis
- Instant messaging now covered in the new Chapter 7
- New tables on assembling a business wardrobe and ensuring positive telephone etiquette

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Improving Your Performance in Teams
    Advantages and Disadvantages of Teams
    Characteristics of Effective Teams
    Team Communication
        Collaborative Writing Guidelines
        Collaborative Writing Technologies
    Group Dynamics
        Assuming Team Roles
        Allowing for Team Evolution
        Resolving Conflict
        Overcoming Resistance
    Etiquette in Team Settings
        In the Workplace
        In Social Settings

Making Your Meetings More Productive
    Preparing for Meetings
    Leading and Participating in Meetings
    Using Meeting Technologies

Improving Your Listening Skills
    Recognizing Various Types of Listening
    Understanding the Listening Process
    Overcoming Barriers to Effective Listening

Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills
    Recognizing Nonverbal Communication
    Using Nonverbal Communication Effectively

## LECTURE NOTES

### Improving Your Performance in Teams

A team is a unit of two or more people who work together to achieve a common goal.

Organizations can create different types of teams:
    Formal teams (such as committees) become a part of the organization's structure.
    Informal teams (such as a task force or problem-solving team) disband once they reach their goal.

Cross-functional teams pull together people
    From a variety of departments
    With different areas of expertise and responsibility

Participative management is the effort to involve all employees in decision making.

A successful team can provide advantages, such as
    Increased information and knowledge
    Increased diversity of views
    Increased acceptance of solutions
    Higher performance levels

Teams can also have disadvantages, such as
    Groupthink—members are willing to abandon personal opinions in favor of group cohesion
    Hidden agendas—private motives affect the group's interaction
    Free riders—noncontributing members aren't held individually accountable
    Cost—coordinating group activities costs time and money

The most effective teams
    Have a clear objective and a shared sense of purpose
    Communicate openly and honestly
    Reach decisions by consensus
    Think creatively
    Know how to resolve conflict

Lack of trust and poor communication are the most common reasons for failure in teams.

Collaborative writing and presenting efforts
    Let the team exploit each person's unique skills
    Require special effort to maximize productivity and minimize conflict

To collaborate effectively
    Select collaborators carefully
    Agree on project goals before you start
    Give your team time to bond before diving in
    Clarify individual responsibilities
    Establish clear processes

Avoid writing as a group
 Trying to compose as a group is usually slow and painful
 For shorter projects, assign the actual writing to one person
 For longer projects, assign sections to individual writers
Make sure tools and techniques are ready and compatible across the team
Check to see how things are going along the way

**\*See Transparency 4 for a summary of these points**

Collaborative writing technologies can help you manage complex projects.
 Content management systems have formal processes, such as check-out and
  check-in procedures, workflow rules, etc.; often used to manage large websites
 Wikis are usually less formal and promote quick, direct collaboration
 Enterprise wikis add features such as access control, rollback, etc.
 Wiki benefits:
  Simple to use
  Freedom to post or revise material immediately, without authorization
 Wiki writing guidelines:
  Relax expectations of authorship control and recognition; it's about the team
  Encourage people to edit and improve content whenever then can
  Focus on text content; formatting and design options are usually limited
  Using editing and commenting tools appropriately (e.g., use the comment page, rather
   than inserting comments directly into the content)
  Experiment in the *sandbox* first to get used to the wiki's capabilities

Group dynamics are the interactions and processes that take place in a team.

Productive teams tend to develop norms (rules) that are conducive to business.

Group dynamics are affected by
 The roles played by team members
 The current phase of team development
 The team's success in resolving conflict
 Success in overcoming resistant

Team members can play various roles:
 Self-oriented roles
 Team-maintenance roles
 Task-facilitating roles

As teams grow and evolve, they generally pass through five phases:
 Orientation
 Conflict
 Brainstorming
 Emergence
 Reinforcement

Another common model, proposed by Bruce Tuckman:
    Forming
    Storming
    Norming
    Performing
    Adjourning

Conflict is a natural part of any team experience, and it is not necessarily bad

Conflict can result from
    Intrateam competition for resources or recognition
    Equally good but incompatible ideas
    Poor communication
    Lack of trust
    Power struggle and ambiguous authority
    Incompatible goals

Conflict can be constructive if it
    Forces important issues into the open
    Increases the involvement of team members
    Generates creative ideas for problem solution

Conflict can be destructive if it
    Diverts energy from more important issues
    Destroys morale
    Polarizes or divides the team

For the win-win strategy to work, everybody must believe that
    It's possible to find a solution that both parties can accept
    Cooperation is better for the organization than competition
    The other party can be trusted
    Higher status doesn't entitle one party to impose a solution

Conflict can be resolved through
    Proaction: deal with conflict before it escalates
    Communication: get opposing parties actively involved in resolution
    Openness: Get feelings out into the open
    Research: Get the facts before attempting a resolution
    Flexibility: Make sure people consider all possible solutions
    Fair play: Insist on a fair solution that doesn't hide behind rules
    Alliance: Unite the team against an "outside force" instead of each other

**\* See Transparency 5 for an exercise in resolving conflict.**

**Note to Transparency 5:**  When you join a company, you expect and benefit from the use of certain equipment and supplies that are company property. Team members share the available company resources in order to contribute to the overall team effort.

It's frustrating to see someone else taking undue advantage of those resources. In some cases, people taking more expensive supplies or equipment can actually threaten the success of the team. If you witness someone abusing the company's trust, you can probably expect the pattern to continue, unless you do something about it

Some students might be reluctant to interfere; however, by keeping silent, they become "accomplices" in this person's thievery No one likes to betray co-workers, but the dilemma here would be no different if someone were stealing expensive computer equipment

When attempting to overcome irrational resistance, try to
> Express understanding
> Bring resistance out into the open
> Evaluate others' objections fairly
> Hold your arguments until the other person is ready for them

Observing business etiquette helps you
> Appear polished, professional, and confident, making a positive impression on other people
> Put others at ease so that they are comfortable enough to do business with you

Personal appearance matters include
> Understanding the norms and expectations in any environment
> Matching your style of dress to the situation
> Remembering that cleanliness and neatness are more important than costliness
> Following company policy regarding hairstyle
> Smiling genuinely at appropriate times

When placing phone calls
> Plan them carefully
> Have relevant questions or information ready
> Schedule them for an opportune time

Cell phones can be disruptive, and some employers have banned or restricted their use.

When meeting people, learn about their cultural customs beforehand.

When introducing yourself, include a brief description of your role in the company.

When introducing two other people, remember to
> Speak both their first and last names clearly
> Offer some information to help them ease into a conversation
> Introduce the lower-ranking person to the senior-ranking person

When conducting business over a meal, be sure that you
> Choose foods that are easy to eat

Save wine or liquor until after business is concluded

Leave business papers under your chair until entrée plates have been removed

Avoid using your cell phone in public

Choose topics of conversation carefully (avoid politics, religion, other emotional topics)

Avoid going overboard when chatting about personal interests

Don't complain about work

Avoid profanity

Be careful with humor

Listen with respect

## Making Your Meetings More Productive

Meetings are unproductive when they

Wander off the subject

Lack an agenda

Run too long

To increase the productivity of meetings, prepare carefully:

Decide on your purpose—whether you need an informational or a decision-making meeting.

Select participants whose presence is essential.

Choose a time and location that are appropriate.

Set the agenda.

An effective agenda answers three questions:

What do we need to do in this meeting to accomplish our goals?

What issues will be of greatest importance to all participants?

What information must be available in order to discuss these issues?

Ensure a productive meeting by

Keeping the meeting on track

Following agreed-upon rules

Encouraging participation

Participating actively

Closing effectively

The minutes of a meeting summarize

The important information presented

The decisions made

The people responsible for follow-up action

In formal meetings, one person is appointed to record the minutes.

In small meetings, attendees often make their own notes on their copies of the agenda.

Key elements of the minutes include

A list of those present

A list of those who were invited but didn't attend

The times the meeting started and ended

All major decisions

All assignments of tasks to meeting participants

All subjects that were deferred to a later meeting

A summary of all important discussions, noting names of those contributing major points

Advances in meeting technologies have been stimulated by the

High cost of travel

Loss of valuable work time

Increased security concerns

Growing reliance on global workforces and partnerships

Virtual teams have members who work in different locations and interact electronically through virtual meetings

Among the newest tools available to virtual teams are online brainstorming and wikis.

Groupware is an umbrella term for systems that let people simultaneously

Communicate

Share files

Present materials

Work on documents

Shared workspaces are "virtual offices" that

Give everyone on a team access to the same set of resources and information.

Are accessible through a web browser

Let teams organize files into a collection of electronic folders

Control which team members can read, edit, and save specific files

Allow only one person at a time to work on a given file or document

May include presence awareness

Videoconferencing combines live audio and video, through either a dedicated room-based system or a desktop (computer-based) system.

Web-based meetings combine instant messaging, shared workspaces, videoconferencing, and other tools such as virtual whiteboards for online collaboration.

## Improving Your Listening Skills

Effective listening

Strengthens organizational relationships

Enhances product delivery

Alerts the organization to opportunities for innovation

Allows the organization to manage growing diversity

Helps companies stay informed, up to date, and out of trouble

Helps build trust not only between organizations but also between individuals

You will become a more effective listener by learning to use several methods of listening:

Content listening emphasizes information and understanding, not agreement or approval.

Critical listening emphasizes evaluating the meaning of the speaker's message on several levels (logic of the argument, strength of evidence, validity of conclusions, implications of the message, intentions of the speaker, omission of any important or relevant points).

Empathic listening emphasizes understanding a speaker's feelings, needs, and wants (without advising or judging).

Active listening means turning off your internal filters and biases and making a conscious effort to truly hear and understand what the other party is saying.

Most people aren't very good listeners—in general, people

Listen at or below a 25 percent efficiency rate

Remember only about half of what has been said in a 10-minute conversation

Forget half of that within 48 hours

Mix up the facts when questioned about material they've just heard

The listening process involves five separate steps:

Receiving

Decoding

Remembering

Evaluating

Responding

A key challenge is that people think faster than they speak:

Most people can process 500 to 800 words per minute.

Most speakers usually talk at a rate of 120 to 150 words per minute.

Consequently, listeners' minds have a lot of free time to wander.

To become a good listener, recognize and overcome potential barriers throughout the listening process:

Avoid interrupting or creating distractions that make it hard for others to pay attention.

Avoid selective listening, in which you pay attention only to those topics in which you have an interest.

Focus on the speaker (because people think faster than they speak, their minds tend to wander).

Avoid prejudgment, and listen with an open mind.

Avoid misinterpreting messages because of the lack of common ground.

Don't rely on your memory.

To remember material, you must first capture it in short-term memory, than successfully transfer it to long-term memory.

Use four techniques to store information in long-term memory:

Associate new information with something closely related.

Categorize new information into logical groups..
Visualize words and ideas as pictures
Create mnemonics.

## Improving Your Nonverbal Communication Skills

Nonverbal communication is the interpersonal process of sending and receiving information both intentionally and unintentionally, without using written or spoken language.

Nonverbal cues affect communication in three ways:
Complementing verbal language (strengthening, weakening, or completely replacing words)
Revealing truth (often conveying more than the words spoken)
Conveying information efficiently (conveying nuance or volumes in a single instant)

Nonverbal communication can be grouped into six general categories:
Facial expression
Gesture and posture
Vocal characteristics
Personal appearance
Touch
Time and space

To be a better speaker and listener, pay closer attention to nonverbal cues in every situation:
Be aware of the cues you send when you're talking.
Be aware of the cues you send when you're not talking (through clothing, posture, and so on).
Be aware of the cues you receive when you're listening.

## HOW DID "WE" TURN INTO "I"? (P. 43)

Students should consider several points: (1) Trying to get recognition at this point could hurt more than it helps (because it will be obvious that you're trying to get credit, whereas the meeting presented a more subtle opportunity for recognition). (2) Any effort to get individual recognition for anyone on the team could get you branded as someone who isn't a team player, which could damage your career prospects for a long time to come. (3) You can't be entirely sure that you haven't already received recognition by name (e.g., Jackson may have communicated this information privately to one or more board members). And (4) if this problem is recurring, rather than a one-time event, you have a more serious issue that needs to be resolved.

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS ALL AROUND THE WORLD (P. 55)

1.  Foreign films provide students with the opportunity to observe the nonverbal behavior used by people of other cultures. Students should compare the expressions and gestures they would use in a given situation to those used by the actors in the film. By noting differences, students learn what might be expected of them if they were communicating with someone from that culture.

2.  Students can examine the benefits and limitations of trying to adapt to cultural differences or trying to help another person adapt.

## DOCUMENT MAKEOVER (ONLINE)
## Version Marked with Improvements and Chapter Concepts

**Return—Path: <louis.caan@dmg.com>**

**Date: Mon, 27 Aug 2008 10:30:25 (CST)**

**From: Louis Caan <louis.caan@dmg.com>**

**To: West Coast Sales Team**

**Subject: Topics for next team meeting**

Our regional team meeting is this Friday. ~~We'll use the time to discuss our current issues.~~ The purpose of this meeting is to bring everyone up to date on the current projects and brainstorm ideas to tackle upcoming challenges. [Communicate meeting purpose clearly.] Of particular importance is the Rowland Manufacturing inventory management project. Because of our past difficulty meeting the needs of the manufacturing sector, it's critical that we execute this project well and learn all that we can from it. If successful, we'll be able to use it as a model for future projects.

Topics for Friday include the following:

1.  Action items from last meeting: Item owners to provide status reports. (5 minutes)

2.  ~~Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team.~~ Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team to provide update, including what has gone well, what challenges have come up, and key lessons learned to date. [Communicate required information clearly to ensure productive discussion.] (15 minutes)

3.  Customer satisfaction: Northern team to summarize results of the most recent survey. (10 minutes)

4.  ~~Southern team's discretionary budget: Team leader to update me on spending plans for the coming quarter. (5 minutes)~~ [Omit; include only topics relevant to all meeting participants.]

5.  Cost cutting initiative: Senior management has challenged all departments to reduce operating costs by 10% in the next fiscal year. ~~I want to share my ideas for meeting this challenge.~~ We'll need to brainstorm ideas for how we can meet this challenge as a team. [Use collaborative approach to include input from all team members.] (10 minutes)

6.  Additional topics: Please send any additional topics you wish to cover by 3:00 p.m. on Thursday. (10 minutes)

Those of us here in the Northern district will meet in Room 231, and we'll teleconference with the Southern team in Room 106 in Los Angeles. ~~We all know that it is easy to become distracted when we aren't all in the same room, so let's all try to be very focused on Friday.~~ Please turn all cell phones off and use your laptops and PDAs for note taking only so that we can remain focused on the discussion. [Communicate expected meeting etiquette.]

See you all on Friday.

## Multiple Choice Options: (correct answer is underlined)

1.  Choose the option that communicates the purpose of the meeting better than this sentence: "We'll use the time to discuss our current issues."
    a.  Replace sentence with this: "The purpose of this meeting is to discuss our current issues."
    b.  Change the sentence to read: "We'll use the time to bring everyone up to speed on the challenges and opportunities before us."

      c. Omit the sentence; the list of topics conveys the meeting purpose.

      d. <u>Substitute this: "The purpose of this meeting is to bring everyone up to date on the current projects and brainstorm ideas to tackle upcoming challenges."</u>

2. Select the best option for improving this meeting topic: "Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team."

      a. "Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team to provide update, including what has gone well, what challenges have come up, and key lessons learned to date."

      b. "Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team to provide status report."

      c. "Rowland Manufacturing project: Overview of what has and has not gone well."

      d. <u>"Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team to bring everyone up to date on what they have learned so far."</u>

3. Choose the best option for improving this meeting topic: "Southern team's discretionary budget: Team leader to update me on spending plans for the coming quarter."

      a. Substitute this: "Southern team's discretionary budget: Team leader to provide overview of anticipated expenditures in the coming quarter."

      b. <u>Omit the topic; it isn't relevant to all meeting attendees.</u>

      c. Abbreviate the topic: "Southern team's discretionary budget: Team leader to provide update."

      d. Substitute this: "Discretionary budget: Southern team to report on spending plans in the coming quarter."

4. Select the best option for improving this sentence: "I want to share my ideas for meeting this challenge."

      a. Substitute this: "I want to get your feedback on some ideas I have for meeting this challenge."

      b. <u>Replace the sentence with this: "We'll need to brainstorm ideas for how we can meet this challenge as a team."</u>

      c. Replace the sentence with this: "I want to tell you my plans for meeting this challenge."

      d. Replace the sentence with this: "Come prepared to report on areas where you plan to trim expenses."

5. Choose the option that communicates expected meeting etiquette better than this sentence: "We all know that it is easy to become distracted when we aren't all in the same room, so let's all try to be very focused on Friday."

      a. Substitute this: "Even though we won't all be in the same room, it is important that everyone is fully engaged in Friday's discussion."

      b. <u>Replace the sentence with this: "Please turn all cell phones off and use your laptops and PDAs for note taking only so that we can remain focused on the discussion."</u>

      c. Substitute this: "We all need to be very focused in this meeting, so cell phones, laptops, and PDAs will be strictly prohibited."

d.  Change the sentence as follows: "We all know that it is easy to become distracted in teleconferences, but everyone is expected to participate as though we are all at the same table together."

## Final, Improved Version

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See you all on Friday.

# COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES AT THE CONTAINER STORE (p. 57)

## Individual Challenge

This is a chance to demonstrate an understanding of productive meetings. The student may want to couch a response to Tindell as, "If I had a chance to lead the huddle, here's what I would do":

- Take a few minutes before each session to clarify my objectives, which are somewhat different for morning and evening huddles.
- Sketch out a specific agenda for each session, and try to stick to it.
- Honor everyone else's time by starting and finishing on time.
- Display an appropriate amount of energy and enthusiasm—just enough to keep everyone engaged, but not so much that it seems forced or phony.
- Politely control each participant's airtime: if a few people are dominating the discussion, acknowledge their input and then ask others to contribute; encourage shy or quiet people to participate (and build their confidence via one-on-one conversations outside of the meeting).
- Increase involvement by assigning specific agenda items to individual participants. This action can build shared ownership and responsibility for a more productive session.
- Wrap up by summarizing or repeating key goals, concerns, and issues (more important at the end of a long meeting, but also worthwhile for short meetings if attention seems to be waning).

## Team Challenge

In a manufacturing company, especially one running multiple shifts per day, a huddle-like meeting can be used to discuss the day's production goals, alert everyone to personnel absences, share quality tips, review maintenance schedules, and cover other operational issues. Depending on the company's culture, it's also an opportunity for team-building activities (birthday celebrations, etc.). In a service company such as an ad agency, where people work more flexible schedules and may spend many hours or days per week out of the office, it may make more sense to have fewer meetings, such as a brief meeting on Monday morning (to review the week's activities, announce client visits, and launch new projects) and another session toward the end of the week to discuss progress and problems, brainstorm solutions, summarize client visits, share creative ideas, and so on.

To ensure effectiveness in a meeting with remote attendees, the session leader should assume the role of moderator to ensure everyone's full engagement and participation. Some of the participation ideas suggested above become even more important during a teleconference or online meeting.

## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE (P. 58)

1. Few activities in business today are the sole focus of a single individual, so successful teamwork is vital to virtually everything a company does. Even individual salespeople who travel from customer to customer outside the office rely on a support staff to coordinate schedules, provide customer service, and help with other tasks. Similarly, marketing and research teams rely on feedback from the salespeople. Moreover, many tasks are just too large for any single person, and many others require input and insights from multiple employees. As a result, successful teams can improve productivity, creativity, employee involvement, and even job security.

2. Teams should take care to select collaborators carefully, agree on project goals before they start, give the team time to bond before diving in, clarify individual responsibilities, establish clear processes, make sure tools and techniques are ready and compatible across the team, avoid writing as a group, and check to see how things are going along the way.

3.  When members play self-oriented roles, they focus on personal needs, so they tend to be less productive. In contrast, members who assume team-maintenance roles help team members work together, so they're generally more productive. Members who play task-facilitating roles are also more productive because they help solve problems or make decisions.

4.  Groupthink is the willingness of team members to set aside personal opinions and values to go along with the rest of the team, because belonging to the group seems more important than making the right decision. Groupthink can lead to poor-quality decisions and ill-advised actions, sometimes inducing people to act unethically.

5.  Organizations can help team members successfully resolve conflict by proactively dealing with minor conflicts early, facilitating communication among those directly involved in the conflict, bringing feelings out in the open, researching the reasons for the problem, allowing the flexibility to consider different solutions, promoting fair solutions, and encouraging internal alliances to fight "outsiders" instead of "insiders."

6.  Teams rely on frequent, sometimes constant, interaction between members. Without some attention to etiquette, members can start to resent one another. At the very least, that resentment can create distractions, and in the worst cases, it can create dysfunctional behavior.

7.  Wikis tend to have fewer rules and procedures and lower skills requirements than formal content management systems, so companies choose them when fast, flexible, low-cost collaboration is important.

8.  The listening process consists of receiving (actually hearing the message), decoding (assigning meaning), remembering (storing the message for future reference), evaluating (weighing the ideas), and responding (reacting to the message).

9.  Someone using content listening is trying to understand and retain the speaker's message. Someone using critical listening is trying to understand and evaluate the meaning of the speaker's message. Someone using empathic listening is trying to understand the speaker's feelings, needs, and wants and to appreciate his or her point of view.

10. An individual can communicate nonverbally through the use of facial expression, gesture and posture, vocal characteristics, personal appearance, touching behavior, and time and space.

## APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE (p. 59)

1.  Nonverbal communication can reinforce the points you're trying to make in the meeting (or it can interfere if it clashes with your words). For example, a meeting leader might reinforce a call to order by standing up to say "Let's begin." Other nonverbal signals include using hand gestures and changing voice tone to emphasize topics, nodding to show approval, or raising an eyebrow to indicate reservations. Nonverbal signals also regulate the flow of conversation. For example, to discourage an out-of-turn speaker, depending on the culture, such signals might include facially expressing interest or boredom, covering lips with a finger, or frowning. At the same time, a motion of the hand or widening curious eyes could encourage a speaker to continue.

2.  Students should list remarks that take the boss's point of view into consideration and that avoid any confrontational or accusatory statements. Students should draw on what they've learned about message receptivity to phrase everything in a tone and style that will make their comments easy for any boss to hear and accept.

3.  Conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity and innovation, encourages interest and curiosity among group members, provides a forum for airing problems and releasing tension, and fosters an environment of self-evaluation. In addition, constructive conflict can force important issues into the open, speed up their resolution, and be a catalyst for change. Conflict frequently becomes bad or disruptive when there is a strong polarization of opinions. In this case, conflict can retard communication, reduce group cohesiveness, and stifle the generation and creativity of new ideas. Sometimes a group whose culture is high in avoidance will suppress or avoid conflict. This avoidance can result in poor decisions because they stand unquestioned.

4.  One effective way of encouraging others to participate is to divide the larger group into smaller discussion groups. People are more likely to contribute in smaller teams because it's not as easy to hide with fewer people. Teams can be as small as two people. Once the smaller groups rejoin the larger group, have a representative of each team comment on the team's findings. These representatives might also write their ideas on large sheets of paper or on a large board and explain their thinking to the larger group. Another way to discourage dominance by stronger members is to make it clear that you want everyone's input, so start at one side of the room and proceed around the room until everyone has contributed. To make sure everyone gets a turn, try limiting the time each member can speak or the number of ideas each member can discuss.

5.  You face two decisions here, actually: One is quite simple, but the other is not. The first decision is whether to ask the other person to take steps to avoid sending these inadvertent messages. You should emphasize that these messages are disruptive and potentially damaging to your colleague's career, as well as the careers of other team members (including yours). The second decision is whether you should take any action regarding the home-based business. If running such a business is not a violation of company policy, then it's a moot point as long as the colleague is still meeting his company responsibilities. However, if the possibility of an ethical violation does exist, then you face a decision about how to respond. This person's actions could be damaging to the company and therefore indirectly damaging to you personally. If you decide to take action, your first step should probably be to share your concerns with this person, making sure that your manner is respectful and nonthreatening. If the colleague has a reasonable explanation, then simply drop the issue. If it becomes clear that the colleague is acting against company policy and refuses to comply, then most employers would say that you were obligated to report the violation through whatever channels the company has provided for such purposes.

## PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Message for Analysis (p. 59)

Students should examine the sample agenda in Figure 2–2 and then reorganize and reword the information provided in the exercise to create a well-organized agenda. Here's one suggested agenda:

AGENDA
Budget Committee Meeting
December 12, 2008, 9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 3

I.   Call to Order
II.  Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
III. Director Reports
     A.  Greentree Site Director's Report on Cost Overruns
     B.  Finance Director's Report on Quarterly Revenues and Expenses
IV.  New Business
     A.  Discussion of Cost Overrun Issues
     B.  Discussion of Additional Quarterly Budget Issues
     C.  Presentation of Divisional Budget
V.   Announcements
VI.  Adjournment

**\* See Transparency Masters 2-1 and 2-2 at the end of this chapter's guide for poor and improved versions of this memo.**

## Exercises (pp. 59–60)

2.1   This exercise gives students real-world practice in listening, observing nonverbal cues, and critiquing a group in action. To answer the questions, students will have to pay attention to a number of things occurring at the meeting. By comparing notes with a partner, students will see that a person's own background and listening skills influence the type and content of the notes they take. What is obvious to one person may be worth noting to another. Similarly, poor listeners tend to have superficial notes.

2.2   Students should try to be as inclusive as possible, without making the situation unreasonably uncomfortable. Consider two options: They might ask the speech-impaired person to team up with one or more other employees and let that team report as a unit. Or they might provide an alternative way for this person to communicate during meetings, such as overhead slides or flip charts. Most important, since this communication challenge surely exists outside formal meetings, students may suggest working closely with the person to explore ways to help him or her contribute to the department's work flow.

2.3   Now that students are familiar with the win-win process for resolving conflict, this question should stimulate discussion of how to approach the situation differently and resolve the conflict by considering the other person's needs in addition to their own.

2.4   Although this member's response indicates he wants to be seen as playing a task-facilitating role, he actually seems to be playing a self-oriented role. Students may offer a variety of ways to deal with this situation. For example, next time the member calls for a vote prematurely, the student—who is the leader—can politely intervene and suggest that the vote be postponed until all members have had their say.

2.5   Before writing the blog posting to remind everyone in the department that it's important to stay on topic with blog comments, students should first consider why some people might be wandering off topic. Employees many feel that they have no other means of communicating with one another, so they're misusing the blog since it's the only channel at their disposal. They might be frustrated about something in the department or on the project. More likely,

however, employees are just being careless with their posts (a common problem with participatory media). The reminder message should stress that you don't want to discourage open communication, but that in order to keep the blog productive and useful for everyone, everyone involved needs to stay focused on the posted topics. A small amount of effort and attention from each member of the project will make sure the blog benefits everyone. The message could also include an invitation to contact you directly if any employees feel they have an important issue to raise that is outside the blog's topics.

2.6   This website describes the capabilities and benefits of electronic whiteboards. You may want to lead a discussion on the concept of using technology to assist group discussion. For example, effective use of technology means that the participants can focus on the meeting rather than on keeping records or taking notes.

2.7   This scenario should help students recognize the importance of keeping one's emotions under control. The boss's failure to notify employees is thoughtless—and poor project management, to boot—but expressing anger or frustration in the voice-mail message will accomplish nothing. Students should phrase their messages in a way to puts the company's interests above personal frustration or inconvenience. Since the meeting is with an important client, making sure it is successful is clearly in the company's (and the boss's) best interest.

2.8   Students will discuss how nonverbal messages need not be human gestures. They include the appearance of written messages. Students will consider how letter and memo quality is often judged first by overall appearance. You may want to refer students to Appendix A for a discussion of the importance of formatting and laying out business documents.

2.9   Many of these movements can be interpreted several ways, but the exercise leads students to think more clearly about how nonverbal cues influence their communication attempts. Particularly, the list should give students more insight into how they can learn from watching their audience while speaking. They might interpret the movements as follows:
   a. May indicate nervousness, discomfort with what's being said, or boredom
   b. Usually a nervous reaction
   c. Conveys a lack of respect—for the speaker and for oneself
   d. Skepticism, doubt, disbelief, or in some cases, an exaggerated negative commentary on a speaker's message, perhaps as a display for the benefit of others
   e. Lack of confidence, shyness, and weakness

   For the second part of the exercise, students may elaborate with a general discussion of the ways in which such nonverbal cues sometimes reinforce a speaker's words and meaning and sometimes offer conflicting and therefore confusing signals. Students might also mention that our response to nonverbal cues is often unconscious; that is, we interpret them almost as automatically as we express them. Thus differing cultural norms of nonverbal behavior can easily cloud communication.

2.10   This exercise helps students analyze their strengths and weaknesses with regard to listening skills. Encourage them to follow up on areas for improvement by rereading relevant parts of the chapter and looking for opportunities to practice their listening skills.

# AGENDA NOTES FOR BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING:

- Budget Committee Meeting to be held on December 12, 2008, at 9:30 A.M.

- I will call the meeting to order.

- Real estate director's report: A closer look at cost overruns on Greentree site.

- The group will review and approve the minutes from last quarter's meeting.

- I will ask the finance director to report on actual vs. projected quarterly revenues and expenses.

- I will distribute copies of the overall divisional budget and announce the date of the next budget meeting.

- Discussion: How can we do a better job of anticipating and preventing cost overruns?

- Meeting will take place in Conference Room 3, with WebEx active for remote employees

- What additional budget issues must be considered during this quarter?

# AGENDA:  BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 12, 2008—9:30 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

Conference Room 3—WebEx active for remote access

1. Call to order

2. Roll call

3. Review and approve agenda

4. Review and approve minutes from last quarter's meeting

5. Old Business:

|  | Person | Approx. Time |
|---|---|---|
| a. Real estate director's report: A closer look at cost overruns on the Greentree site | Janet | 15 minutes |
| b. Finance director's report: Actual versus projected quarterly revenues and expenses | Eduardo | 15 minutes |

6. New Business:

   Documents: Distribute overall divisional budget

   Discussion: How can we do a better job of anticipating and preventing cost overruns?

7. Announcements

   a. Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 11, 2009

   b. Call for announcements from others

8. Adjournment