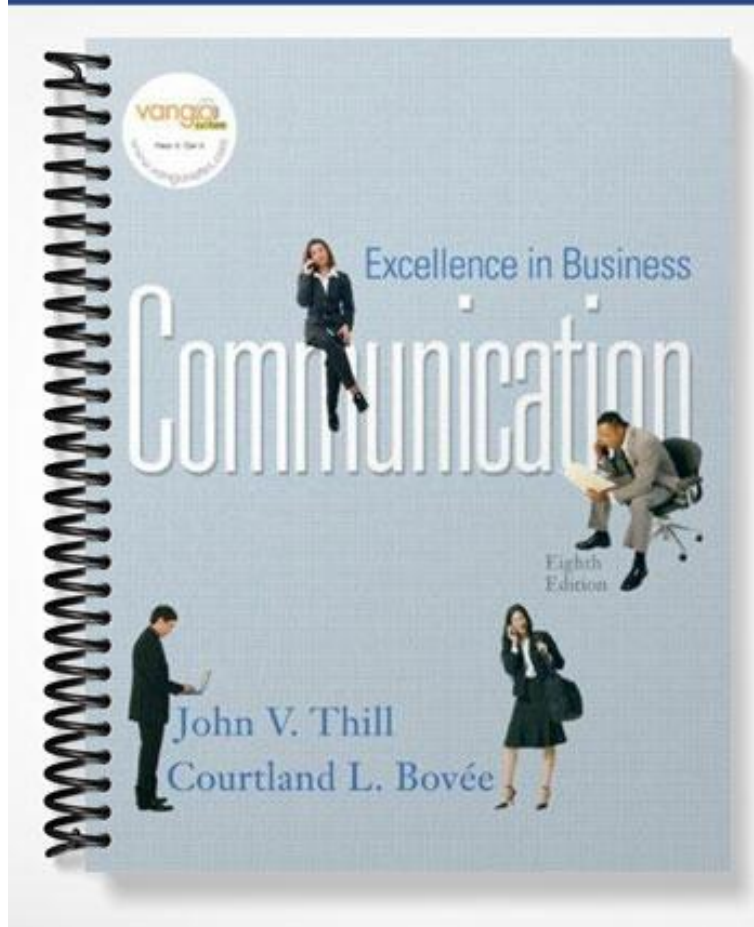


# SOLUTIONS MANUAL



# 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

## 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

### 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

### Developing Your Business Etiquette

Business Etiquette in the Workplace

Business Etiquette in Social Settings

## 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 they 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

### **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.

### **Developing Your Business Etiquette**

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

Mobile 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 mobile phone in public if at all possible
- 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

### **SPECIAL FEATURE BOX: SENDING THE RIGHT SIGNALS (p. 58)**

1. Students should recognize that the boss's smile and averted glance could have any one of several meanings, and the employee would likely need to look for additional evidence before reaching a correct conclusion. For instance, the boss might have been planning to give the employee a raise next month and now has to decide whether to announce the good news immediately or wait as originally planned. Or the boss might be impressed with the employee's initiative at asking for a raise but is unable to provide one, so glancing away is an opportunity to buy a few seconds to formulate a sympathetic response. At the other extreme, the boss might be trying to suppress a laugh at the impudence of an employee who clearly doesn't deserve a raise.
2. Eye contact is an important and expected nonverbal behavior in many business cultures, including that of the United States. However, constant staring makes most people extremely uncomfortable and might be a sign of someone with limited social skills and limited potential for compatibility within an organization.

## 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. 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.”
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. “Rowland Manufacturing project: Southern team to bring everyone up to date on what they have learned so far.”
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. Omit the topic; it isn’t relevant to all meeting attendees.
  - 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. Replace the sentence with this: “We’ll need to brainstorm ideas for how we can meet this challenge as a team.”
  - 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. 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.”
  - 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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Topics for Friday include the following:

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See you all on Friday.

## COMMUNICATION DILEMMAS AT THE CONTAINER STORE (PP. 62–63)

1. The eight employees who now report to you once had a reputation for being a tight-knit, supportive team, but you quickly figure out this that team is in danger of becoming dysfunctional. For example, minor issues that functional teams routinely handle, from cleaning up the lunch area to helping each other on the sales floor, frequently generate conflict within this group. What steps should you take to help your crew return to positive behavior?
  - a. No. With so much negative behavior already engrained, this team is probably beyond healing itself. At the very least, an outside change agent can accelerate the process. See (b).
  - b. Yes. Leading the “team restoration” project yourself will help avoid any power conflicts that might emerge if the team was left to its own devices.
  - c. No. You might be an extraordinary leader, but that’s no guarantee that your mere presence is all that is needed to turn the situation around. This situation requires active intervention.
  - d. No. Demanding that the negative, unprofessional behavior stop immediately could backfire in such a situation because it does nothing to remove the conditions that have allowed the negative behaviors to sprout and grow.
  
2. While you’re trying to figure out how to handle the overall team situation, you notice that the morning and evening huddles often degenerate into little more than complaint sessions. Workers seem to gripe about everything from difficult customers to the temperature in the store. Some of these sound like valid business issues that might require additional training or other employee support efforts; others are superficial issues that you suspect are simply byproducts of the negative atmosphere. How should you handle complaints during the huddles?
  - a. No. People who are upset and believe they have valid complaints will grow even more negative if they feel that their concerns aren’t being taken seriously.
  - b. No. This approach simply ignores problems that have evidently been festering for some time. Plus, if people are truly upset, these negative emotions and behaviors are going to find some way to surface. If employees can’t use the huddles to air their complaints, they’re like to air them during less-appropriate times of the work day.
  - c. Yes. Tracking each issue immediately send the message that you care about your employees and their concerns. Moreover, by treating the complaints as problems to be solved, rather than mere criticisms, you can pull the team together and move forward as a more cohesive unit.
  - d. No. This approach would probably just add even more negativity to an already challenging situation. It would also make the huddles even less productive than they’ve already become. And over time, such a confrontational approach will also discourage open communication, which means that you as the manager may not receive vital feedback.

3. After observing the staff in action for a couple of weeks and interviewing several dozen shoppers, you conclude that some employees are more effective than others when it comes to listening to customers and helping them find the right solutions to their individual needs. For instance, a few customers complained that the store employees who waited on them “didn’t seem to hear what I was saying,” and several others said that “they expected me to know the names of every product in the store before they could help me.” You recognize these as classic listening challenges, and you want to work with the corporation’s training specialists to design a short course in effective listening. Which of the following strategies will you emphasize in the course?
  - a. No. Content listening is the right strategy in many instances, but automatically applying it in every situation would be a mistake. For instance, if customers don’t really know what they’re looking for or aren’t really sure if they really want anything at all, content listening won’t yield much useful information.
  - b. No. Empathic listening will be appropriate for some customers and some situations, but it will be inappropriate for others, such as a customer who knows exactly what she wants and only needs to fit out where it is in the store.
  - c. No. Critical listening is the ideal strategy to use when customers are describing needs in vague terms or perhaps when they’ve jumped to conclusions that may not be in their best interests. However, as with content and empathic listening, automatically applying critical listening to every situation would be a mistake. For instance, for the customer who knows exactly what he or she needs and is able to describe it clearly, critical listening would be more complicated and time consuming than the situation justifies.
  - d. Yes. The very essence of the “you” attitude is communicating in a way that best meets your audience’s needs, so automatically assuming any single listening style would be a flawed strategy. Instead, train employees to identify clues that will help them select the best listening style for each individual situation.
  
4. First impressions can make or break the sale in retailing, and those impressions are created by everything from the cleanliness of the parking lot to the personal appearance of the store employees. Four job candidates are waiting outside your office, and you have a few moments to observe them before inviting them in for an initial interview (you can see them through the glass wall but can’t hear them). Based on the following descriptions, which of these people seems like the best fit for The Container Store? Why?
  - a. No. This woman doesn’t appear to be taking the interview process very seriously. While Candidate C also commits a fashion faux pas with her sun dress and sandals, at least she didn’t go barefoot as this candidate did. Moreover, listening to her iPod minutes while waiting to be interviewed suggests that Candidate A is unwilling to engage with the people around her.
  - b. No. This candidate’s inability to manage the relatively simple process of a job interview suggests he would struggle mightily with the complexities of helping customers or participating in the operation of a retail store.

- c. Yes. This woman's casual dress is a mark against her, to be sure, but dressing appropriately is an easily trainable skill. The positive attributes she has demonstrated, particularly in her helpful, engaging conversation with a complete stranger, shows that she could have a bright future in sales and customer service.
- d. No. This candidate appears to have a bit of an attitude problem, particularly for a company that values teamwork and interaction as much as The Container Store does.

### **APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE (pp. 65–66)**

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. 66)

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

### Exercises (pp. 66–67)

- 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 may 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 that 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.
- 2.11 This exercise gives students an opportunity to reflect on a variety of behaviors that are out of place in any professional setting. They should also be able to view this situation from the client's perspective and thereby understand the negative impact of these inappropriate actions. The memo should explain how poor etiquette undermines relationships and reflects negatively on both the businesspeople who display it and the companies that employ them.