

CHAPTER 1

Issues and Trends in Professional Communication

Exercises, Workshops, and Discussion Forums

1. Brainstorming Elements of Effective Communication

Answers will depend on students' experiences. Skills and characteristics may include:

- Clear
- Direct
- Honest
- Appropriate
- Accurate
- Professional
- Respectful
- Timely
- Concise
- Ethical
- Conveyed:
 - Through an appropriate medium
 - With an awareness and understanding of the audience and audience needs
 - With appropriate frequency
 - Using an appropriate tone
- Sincere
- Open
- Intentional
- Responsible
- Accountable
- Trustworthy
- Goal-oriented
- Cost-effective
- Logical

2. Gen Z: Career Priorities and Expectations

Answers will vary depending on the entry-level job found.

3. Taking a Professional “Selfie”

Answers will vary.

4. Exploring Professional Codes of Conduct

Answers will vary.

5. Assessing the Impact of Online Disinhibition

Answers will vary.

6. Establishing Boundaries for Self-Disclosure

Answers will vary.

7. Team-Building Activity

Answers will vary.

8. Establishing Guidelines for Ethical Workplace Communication

Answers will depend on student discussion. Look for guidelines that require honest internal and external communication, including not misleading the audience by withholding information (particularly omitting information that could result in harm).

9. Facing Ethical Challenges

Answers will depend on student experience and discussion. Discussion could include the following:

- a) Do long-distance calls cost the company? Many companies have flat-rate plans, making long-distance calls permissible (provided calls are made during lunch/break times). Calls to friends and relatives would also be permissible for business reasons (they are clients/potential clients or an information source). Calls may also be allowable if employees need to make short, important calls at specific times—especially if an employee intended to make a call outside of work hours but then worked overtime. Intent and disclosure is the key: Long-distance calls are often ethical if the employee is not trying to be deceptive and would disclose calls to leadership.
- b) Because the text is difficult to read, important information seems to be suppressed or de-emphasized, which is unethical. Not making safety information clear can also lead to company liability issues. However, students could argue that it is common knowledge that SUVs have lower side-door impact panels than cars; therefore, the company may not be expected to clearly disclose the panel weakness.
- c) Lying on a resumé or during an interview is unethical. Students may argue that embellishing is expected in these situations, and enhancing the truth, without being dishonest and causing potential harm, may be possible and acceptable.
- d) Disclosing confidential company information is typically not permissible. While employers can conduct video surveillance, they should inform employees about it.
- e) Disclosing patient information is illegal and, therefore, impermissible.
- f) Falsifying expense reports is dishonest and impermissible.
- g) Lying on a performance review is an unethical abuse of power.

10. Discussing the Instagram Phenomenon

Answers will depend on student experience and discussion.

11. Considering Privacy

Answers will depend on student discussion. Common/likely answers are included below.

- a) Unless the girlfriend's name is listed on the account, the bank teller should not be giving out that information, even if it is an emergency. The bank teller has no way to verify the truth of the girlfriend's statement, and, under law, she is not allowed to give out bank account information to someone other than the account holder without the holder's express permission.
- b) This is an example of putting corporate privacy standards at risk. Someone on the public network could gain access to information that could constitute a breach of trust between your company and its clients.
- c) The IT engineer should not have asked you to leave your log-in information in the open, and you should not leave it somewhere anyone could find it. You risk someone using your identity to gain access to private corporate information, potentially risking your company and your company's clients. Also, you should have a stronger password in place to ensure no one could easily guess and gain access to your computer.
- d) The landlord has no right to ask for your SIN and you are under no obligation to give it to him. He can use other methods to ensure your identity. Giving him your SIN puts you at risk of being a victim of fraud and identity theft. Examining your social media accounts is not a "background check." If you have privacy settings on your social media accounts that would prevent your private account from being found, you are under no obligation to direct the landlord to those pages and give him permission to view them. If he wants to look at your public social media pages for your business, there is nothing you can do to prevent it; however, ethically, he should not be basing the rental of a space off of your social media pages. But it offers a good example of why you should be careful of what you put on social media.

Writing Improvement Exercises

1. Establishing Your Goals in Business Communication

Answers will vary for each student.

2. Writing a Personal Statement

Answers will vary for each student.

3. Assessing Communication Needs for Employment

Answers will vary for each student, but examples are provided below.

Subject: Skills Employers Seek

Date: May 12, 2021

From: Simone Frangos <SFrangos@lakefieldtechnologyinstitute.on.ca>
To: Camille Cisse <CCisse@lakefieldtechnologyinstitute.on.ca>

Dear Ms. Cisse,

As instructed in class, I investigated the communications skills that employers are looking for when they recruit employees. Using the Indeed job search site, I reviewed a variety of positions posted for my hometown, Waterloo, Ontario. I discovered that regardless of the position, level, education requirements, or type of organization, all employers value written and verbal communication skills. I've outlined the communications requirements provided in fifteen postings of very different positions below:

- Flight Attendant: “Excellent interpersonal, communication and customer service skills”
- Administrative Assistant: “Must be a strong communicator; strong verbal/written skills”
- Purchasing Coordinator: “Strong written and verbal communication skills in order to interact with suppliers and co-workers to implement changes, resolve discrepancies and/or other supply chain related and operational matters”
- Marketing Analyst: “Excellent interpersonal, communication and customer service skills” and “Strong communication skills both verbal and written (in English, French an asset)”
- Funeral Services Assistant: “Good written and verbal communication skills”
- Lab Patient Technician: “Excellent communication skills”
- Graphic Communication Co-worker: “Excellent verbal, written communication and critical discussion abilities”
- Patrol Officer: “Excellent communication and human relations skills including proven success in mediation of sensitive situations is essential” and “The Patrol Officer exhibits qualities such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, trustworthiness, leadership, confidence, patience, attention to detail, self-discipline, excellent analytical and problem solving skills, negotiating skills, conflict avoidance skills, resolution and mediation skills, excellent written and verbal communication skills and must be open and approachable to members of a diverse university community.
- Tourism Services Coordinator: “Excellent communications skills (both oral and written) with the ability to communicate with all levels of staff, stakeholders and the general public”
- Manager, Insurance Client Service: “Strong communication (verbal and written) and relationship management capabilities”
- Scheduler: “Effective communication, organizational, time management and problem-solving skills required”
- Supervisor, Technical Services: “Communication and human relations skills to supervise and evaluate staff; develop and maintain relationships with city staff regarding maintenance contracts; deliver classroom and road training sessions; explain safety, equipment operating, and maintenance procedures to staff; respond to public complaints related to road conditions and activities; conduct presentations to internal/ external groups; and participate as an effective team member” and “Ability to write technical reports, specifications, memos, accident reports, inspection reports, correspondence, operational manuals, and instructional sheets on safety matters, hazardous material handling, and equipment operation. Ability to participate in the development of equipment operating and

maintenance procedures. Ability to read and interpret manuals (e.g., health and safety, provincial standards, traffic, heavy equipment/roads maintenance)”

As a result of this investigation, I am motivated to continue developing my communications skills to increase my employment opportunities when I graduate.

Regards,
Simone

Variation:

The Mitra Das resumé in Chapter 10 was used for the exercise.

Communication	Skills
Verbal Communication	Provided professional and friendly customer service
	Developed strong communication skills in leading staff
	Polished speaking skills by giving seminars to staff and leading team-building exercises
Written Communication	Wrote clear, concise inventory-control procedures
	Designed professional in-store signage
	Achieved over 80% in university and college communication courses

4. Communicating with Team Members

Answers will vary.

Case Study Exercises

1. Land Acknowledgment Rethink

The acknowledgement does not mention Indigenous peoples or specify the traditional territories or treaties related to the land.

2. The Ethics of Job Blogging

- a) Answers will vary. Many issues are outlined under the ethical communication and privacy in the workplace sections.
- b) Answers will vary. See the discussion of ethical lapses and why they happen.
- c) Answers will vary. See privacy in the workplace and libel sections.
- d) Answers will vary.

- e) Answers will vary. Generally, employees should be cautious about their conduct on social media websites to avoid breaching privacy and ethical policies in the workplace.

3. Ethical Dilemmas in Fundraising

- a) Answers will vary.
b) Answers will vary.

4. Improving Virtual Team Interaction

- a) Best practices not followed:
- Responsiveness: Participants in different time zones didn't receive timely messages.
 - Clarity: Not all participants were able to hear or been seen during the call. Some participants were not able to be involved in breakout sessions. Participants were not aware they would be still be seen during breaks.
 - Mode: The meeting organizer, technology specialist, and participants were not familiar with the virtual meeting software and did not have time for adequate training.
- b) Suggestions:
- Use virtual meeting software that the meeting organizer or technology specialist are familiar with or postpone the meeting to allow time for training.
 - Give clear steps to participants about the software and time to become familiar with it.
 - Determine a mutually convenient meeting time across time zones.
 - Send messages in advance recognizing participants in different time zones may receive and respond to them later.
 - Ensure all participants can be seen (e.g. lighting and room set-up) and heard.
 - Ensure all participants can engage in planned activities (e.g. breakout sessions).
 - Turn off video during breaks or inform participants that they can still be seen.

5. Privacy Breach and Reporting Ethics

- a) Options could be to ask the manager for follow up to confirm the company's obligations or suggest further discussion with relevant leaders in the organization.
- b) If clients were to be informed, the company should share the known details, including what possible types of data were exposed, when the breach occurred, and what the company is doing about the situation.

Online Activities

1. Best Practices and Winning Strategies of Leading Communicators

Answers will vary by group and winners/articles chosen.

2. Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Answers will vary.

3. Employability Skills Quiz

Students will rate their skills in an online quiz to gauge their employability.

4. Corporate Mission Statements

Answers will vary depending on the key words students focus on and what updates the companies make to their pages.

5. Corporate Mission Statements: Engaging with Indigenous Business

Answers will vary depending on the key words students focus on and what updates the companies make to their pages.

6. Facebook as a Business Tool

Answers will vary.

7. Corporate Social Responsibility

BMO: Business conduct (positive images of workforce), diversity and inclusion (image of indigenous ceremony, pride colours, cultural and ethnic minority employees), environmental stewardship (employees planting), giving (employees volunteering and participating in fundraisers), responsible banking, responsible lending, responsible investing (the last three buzzwords have images of various small business owners, green energy solutions, etc.)

Magna: “We have Magnatude. Magnatude is how small changes can add up to make an enormous impact.”

- Magna employees improving their communities globally (valentine’s day cards to children in hospital, cleaning up neighbourhoods, and donating to causes.
- Giving is part of the culture. Matching program that doubles the amount of money raised by employees. Since 2017, matched support for nearly 100 initiatives.
- “Improving our world is a team effort.”
- Local communities. Millions of dollars. A commitment to positive change. That’s Magna in action.

Detour Gold: Pro-active in environment management. Going beyond minimum requirements. Working with Indigenous groups that are stakeholders on the project. Minimizing footprint by minimizing waste rock through research and innovation. Protecting water resources. Sustainable water use management. Re-create habitats. Keeping in contact with stakeholders at all levels. Training and education programs. Partnering with local communities: employ and buy local.

8. Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting

Answers will vary depending on companies chosen.

9. Accolades for Social and Environmental Accountability

MEC: “We believe a quality product has the smallest possible footprint, that it’s made carefully and with respect for the people who produce it.”

- Sourcing and supply chain: “As a condition to doing business with MEC, all wholesale brands must sign our vendor manual, which includes agreeing to follow our supplier code of conduct.”
- Materials and technology: “It usually takes 18 months to two years for something to go from an idea to a real item you can buy. That may seem longer than expected, but MEC isn’t geared toward fast fashion. Instead, we focus on crafting well-made pieces with thoughtfully chosen materials that give solid value to members.”
- Packaging and transportation: “Over the years, the MEC Label team has found ways to cut down (or cut out) packaging for products when they’re shipped from factories. We also use recyclable materials so members can recycle packaging instead of it ending up in the landfill”. These include sushi-roll packaging, recycled paper hang tags, and no plastic bags in stores.
- Green buildings: “From the roofs of our buildings to the behind-the-scenes heating and cooling systems, MEC aims to maximize efficiency and minimize environmental impacts. Our goal is to create structures that are healthy and inviting for you and MEC staff.”
- Repairing and reusing products: gear rentals, gear swaps, fixes in store, tips for DIY fixes.

10. Canada’s Best Diversity Employers

Answers will vary depending on companies chosen.

11. Identifying Factors in Employee Engagement

Answers will vary depending on companies chosen.

12. Company Ethics Codes

Students should find that most companies’ ethics codes include policies and procedures on the following:

- Ethical behaviour
- Violation reporting
- Bribery and gift-giving/acceptance
- Fair competition
- Avoidance and disclosure of conflicts of interest
- Financial reporting
- Disclosure of confidential information
- Corporate citizenship/environmental stewardship/sustainability
- Use of company equipment
- Harassment
- Training
- Health and safety

13. Privacy and Your Workplace.

Answers will depend on individual experience and group discussion.

14. PIPEDA

Answers will vary.

15. Privacy Quiz: How Well Do You Know Your Privacy Rights?

Answers will vary.

16. Cybersecurity Knowledge Quiz

Answers will vary.

17. User Privacy on Social Networking Sites

Answers will vary.