CHAPTER 3: Planning Business Messages

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 3 introduces students to the first step in the three-step writing process: planning business messages. Students are guided through important planning stages including analyzing their situation and developing an audience profile. Other planning stages addressed include gathering necessary information and adapting the message to the audience and purpose. The discussion of message adaptation includes detailed coverage of how to choose the best channel and medium for various message situations. The chapter helps students understand that all media are not equally effective in all situations. The chapter guides readers through the activities involved in organizing a message: defining the main idea, limiting the scope of the main idea, choosing between direct and indirect organizational approaches, and outlining content.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process
Analyzing the Situation
  Defining Your Purpose
  Developing an Audience Profile
Gathering Information
  Uncovering Audience Needs
  Providing Required Information
Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels
  The Most Common Media and Channel Choices
    Oral Medium, In-Person Channel
    Oral Medium, Digital Channel
    Written Medium, Print Channel
    Written Medium, Digital Channel
    Visual Medium, Print Channel
    Visual Medium, Digital Channel
    The Unique Challenges of Communication on Mobile Devices
  Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channels
Organizing Your Message
  Defining Your Main Idea
  Limiting Your Scope
  Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches
  Outlining Your Content
  Building Reader Interest with Storytelling Techniques
The Future of Communication: Haptic Technologies
  What's Your Prediction?
Chapter Review and Activities

TEACHING NOTES

Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process
Whether your writing task is routine or more complex, your goal is to create messages that are effective and efficient.

Following the three-step writing process will help meet these goals:

- Planning business messages
    - Analyze the situation
    - Gather information
    - Select the right media and channels
    - Organize the information
- Writing business messages
    - Adapt your audience
    - Compose the message
- Completing business messages
    - Revise the message
    - Produce the message
    - Proofread the message
    - Distribute the message

To schedule your time over the three-step process:

- Use roughly half your available time for planning.
- Use a quarter of your time for actual writing.
- Use the remaining quarter of your time for completing the project.

Analyzing the Situation
Successful messages start with a clear purpose that connects the sender's needs with the audience's needs.

All business messages have a general purpose and a specific purpose. General purposes of business messages are:

- To inform
- To persuade
- To collaborate
- To initiate a conversation

Specific purposes of business messages include:

- What you hope to accomplish with the message
- How your audience should respond after receiving your message

Ask yourself these questions before proceeding, to ensure that the purpose merits the time and

effort required for you to prepare the message:

- Will anything change as a result of your message?
- Is your purpose realistic?
- Is the time right?
- Is your purpose acceptable to your organization?

Audiences must know what's in it for them—which of their needs will be met or what problems will be solved by listening to your advice or doing what you ask? Develop an audience profile by completing the following steps:

- Identify your primary audience.
- Determine audience size and geographic distribution.
- Determine audience composition.
- Gauge audience members' level of understanding.
- Understand audience expectations and preferences.
- Forecast the audience's likely reaction.

Gathering Information

After you've generated a clear picture of your audience, the next step is to assemble the information that you will include in your message.

Formal techniques for finding, evaluating, and processing information are discussed in Chapter 10.

A variety of informal techniques enable you to gather insights and focus your research efforts:

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

Different situations will require varying amounts of effort to determine your audience's information needs. In some cases, those needs will be readily apparent, while others will require some detective work to find out what information is needed.

Once you've identified your audience's information needs, your next step is to satisfy those needs completely; be sure to deliver the right *quantity* of required information as well as verify the *quality* of that information. Before including information in your document, be sure your information is:

- Accurate
- Ethical
- Pertinent

Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels

The medium is the form a message takes and the channel is the system used to deliver it.

Media can be divided into oral, written, and visual forms. All three can be distributed through digital and non-digital channels.

Oral medium, in-person channel: includes face-to-face conversations, interviews, speeches, and in-person presentations and meetings.

Advantages include:
- Opportunity for immediate feedback
- Resolve misunderstandings and negotiate meanings
- Rich nonverbal cues
- Allow for expression of emotion

Disadvantages include:
- Limited reach
- Reduced control over the message
- Unless recorded, no permanent record of communication

Oral medium, digital channel: includes telephone calls, voice-mail messages, and podcasts.

Advantages include:
- Can provided opportunity for immediate feedback
- Not restricted to participants in same location
- Allow for time-shifted consumption

Disadvantages include:
- Lack of nonverbal cues other than voice inflection
- Recorded messages can be tedious to listen to

Written medium, print channel: includes memos, letter, reports, and proposals.

Advantages include:
- Allow writers to plan and control messages
- Can reach geographically dispersed audience
- Offer a permanent, verifiable record
- Minimize the distortion that can accompany oral messages
- Can avoid immediate interactions
- Deemphasize any inappropriate emotional components
- Give recipients time to process messages before responding

Disadvantages include:
- Limited opportunities for timely feedback
- Lack nonverbal cues
- Can require more time, resources to create, distribute it
- Can require special skills to prepare or produce

Written medium, digital channel includes tweets, website content, PDFs, email, IMs, blogs, and social networking.

Advantages include:
- Generally, all advantages of written printed plus fast delivery
- Flexibility of format, structure
- Ability to link to related content
- Broader sharing, easier interaction with audience
- Easy integration with other media types

Disadvantages include:
- Can be limited in reach and capability
- Requires Internet or mobile phone connectivity
- Security and privacy issues
- Easy to overuse
- Productivity concerns

Visual medium, print channel includes photographs, diagrams, as standalones or supporting material in printed documents.

Advantages include:
- Convey complex ideas and relationships quickly
- Less intimidating than long blocks of text
- Reduces burden on audience to figure out how pieces of message fit
- Can be easy to create and integrate in reports

Disadvantages include:
- Can require artistic skills to design and technical skills to create
- Require some technical skills to create
- More time consuming than writing text
- Can be expensive to print

Visual medium, digital channel includes infographics, interactive diagrams, animation, and digital video.

Advantages include:
- Generally, all advantages of visual printed and written digital
- Can personalize and enhance experience for audience
- Offers persuasive power of multimedia format, especially video

Disadvantages include:
- Potential time, skills, and resources needed to create
- Can require large amounts of bandwidth

The mobile digital channel has become significant in business communication of all types, but it presents some challenges that must be considered.

- Screen size and resolution
- Input technologies
- Bandwidth, speed, and connectivity limitations
- Data usage and operational costs

To select the best medium for your message, consider the following factors:

- Media richness
- Message formality
- Media and channel limitations
- Urgency
- Cost
- Audience preferences
- Security and privacy

Organizing Your Message

Organizing your message well helps your audience understand and accept your message, and saves time for both you and your audience.

In addition to saving time and energy for your readers, good organization saves *you* time and energy by allowing you to focus on *how* you want to say something, rather than struggling with *what* you want to say next.

Developing an organizational plan allows you to avoid putting ideas in the wrong places or composing material you don't need to. Get advance input from your audience to make sure you're on the right track, and, in the case of larger projects, divide the writing job among co-workers.

Defining your main idea is a vital step in organizing messages. The *topic* of your message is the overall subject. Your *main idea* is a specific statement about the topic of your message.

When you are having difficulties determining your main idea, try the following strategies:

- Brainstorming
- Journalistic approach
- Question-and-answer chain
- Storyteller's tour
- Mind mapping

The *scope* of the message is the range of information presented, the overall length, and the level of detail. It is important for the scope of the project to correspond with the main idea.

After you've defined your main ideas, you are now ready to decide between two sequences used to present your information: the *direct* or *indirect* approaches.

- Direct approaches are best used when you know that your audience will be receptive to your message; start with your main idea and follow it with supporting evidence.
- Indirect approaches are best used when your audience will be skeptical about or even resistant to your message; begin with the evidence first and build your case before presenting the main idea.

After you've decided on your approach, use one of the two outline forms to sketch out your ideas (alphanumeric or decimal outlines).

Whichever outline form is used, the following three steps should be followed:

- Define the main idea.
- Identify major supporting points.
- Provide examples and evidence.

Another technique to consider while organizing your message is storytelling. Stories can be an effective way to organize messages in a surprising number of business communication scenarios, from recruiting and training employees to enticing investors and customers. It's just a matter of adapting storytelling techniques to business situations.

Stories help readers and listeners imagine themselves living through the experience of the person in the story. As a result, people tend to remember and respond to the message in ways that can be difficult to achieve with other forms of communication.

The Future of Communication: Haptic Technologies

Haptic communication, or haptics, is the study of touch in a communication context. Touch is a vital aspect of human-to-human and human-to-machine interaction, but it is missing from most forms of digital communication. However, the field of haptic technology is enabling touch and tactile sensations in a growing number of ways. Many video game controllers use haptic feedback to give players some sense of the feel of driving a racecar, for example.

Mobile devices and wearables such as smartwatches are incorporating haptic input and output in ways that simulate the nuances of human touch. The ability to remotely manipulate objects and machines through simulated touch control is another intriguing promise of haptics.

The technology has exciting potential in such diverse areas as training, online retailing, and increasing the number of devices that are usable by people with limited vision.

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES STUDENTS OFTEN FACE

Many of your students will have difficulty in planning, composing, and completing effective business messages because of their lack of business experience and lack of understanding regarding business processes and procedures.

Students often have trouble distinguishing between a topic and the main idea. Provide numerous examples of both topics and main ideas, and ask students to identify the main idea in each one. This practice should help them include the main idea in the first paragraph of good news, routine, and goodwill messages.

Students rarely have an immediate appreciation for the three-step writing process. They want to dive right in, often before they have completed any type of planning, and perhaps before they fully understand the communication situation. Take time to explore Figure 3.1, the Three-Step Writing Process, to set the stage for the importance of planning. Also, instruct students to complete the message planning skills self-assessment at the end of the chapter.

Encourage students to outline their message. Emphasize that although it isn't important to have fully developed outline labels or even a typed outline, outlining helps them identify what to include in their message and how to order their message.

New employees are often criticized for their lack of audience understanding and the resulting insufficient information they include in their messages. To provide perspective on the need for audience analysis, discuss the communication needs of organizations recently in the news. Share good and bad examples of messages to various audiences. Stress the importance of assessing what audience members already know and understand, what they need to know, and how much information is necessary to eliminate time-consuming follow-ups (i.e., those calls, emails, and letters that people must initiate to obtain missing information).

Although students may be experienced in using the "direct" approach, they may not be familiar with the term. They may also be unfamiliar with the indirect approach. Be sure to explain that the direct approach is also known as the deductive approach, since many students will also be unfamiliar with the terms *deductive* and *inductive*. Refer students to Figure 3.6 for additional explanation of the differences between direct and indirect approaches.

When assigned a case at the end of a writing chapter, students often have difficulty identifying information to include beyond what is presented in the case. Discuss gathering the necessary information through company records, informal interviews with colleagues, and so on. Encourage students to provide sufficient information about logical specifics such as dates, amounts, product names, model numbers, and so forth.

Owing to their limited business experience, students may not quickly select the most effective medium for a communication situation. They will likely be experienced users of email and instant messaging, and may routinely tend to choose an electronic means of communication. Because of this, try to provide examples of situations that require some other means of communication. Have students complete exercises in which they must select effective channels for situations and defend their choices.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM EXERCISES

1. *Application Exercises.* This chapter provides a great opportunity for getting students to work with shorter components of a document. Students enjoy working on the various end-of-chapter exercises in class. You may ask them to work on the exercises independently or in teams of two. Sometimes partners can develop an effective solution more quickly than individuals working alone, and team members can learn from each other. To ensure efficiency, announce a time limitation for completing a specific number of items.

2. *Planning Effective Messages.* Lead a discussion about sample messages that are unclear, incomplete, and full of errors. (It is especially effective when faculty provide examples of these messages that come from your own files.) Then ask students to plan a memo to members of an organization. Use this activity to help students understand the planning stage of the three-step process. Students will need to define the situation as well as identify both the general purpose and the specific purpose of the message. Ask students to complete an audience profile by jotting down answers to the profile questions presented in the chapter. Before students can write the memo, they also need to identify the information to include in their message. A related exercise can be found in the Practice Your Skills section at the end of the chapter (Audience Profile).

3. *Analyzing Your Audience.* Assign students to work in teams. Provide a list of situations and ask the teams to complete an audience profile for each situation. Conduct a discussion to help students recognize the value of knowing this information before beginning to write. You may wish to use the Audience Profile exercise in the Practice Your Knowledge materials at the end of the chapter.

4. *Selecting Effective Channel and Media.* Compile a list of communication situations and ask students to identify two effective communication media/channel combinations, and one ineffective example. Students could also work in teams on this exercise. Students should explain their choices during class discussion. This can be an effective way to address the chapter discussion of selecting effective media/channel combinations. Be sure to stress all the advantages and disadvantages of the various options. A related exercise can be found in the Practice Your Knowledge section at the end of the chapter.

5. *Critiquing Poorly Organized Messages.* Ask students to critique poorly written documents that you distribute. You may use a document from your files, or you could provide a disorganized outline of contents from a report. Ask students to work in teams of two to identify as many problems as possible. Project a sample solution on a large screen. You may also assign the outlining activity in the Practice Your Skills activities at the end of the chapter.

6. *Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches.* Provide students with a list of situations. Refer them to Figure 3.6, and ask them to determine which organizational approach would be more effective for each situation. To emphasize channel and media selection, you may also want students to select an effective medium for each situation. Related exercises are available in the Practice Your Skills materials at the end of the chapter.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

3-69. The three major steps in the writing process are (1) planning, (2) writing, and (3) completing business messages. (LO 3.1; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-70. Answers to starred discussion items not provided.

3-3. To develop an audience profile, one needs to identify the primary audience, determine the size of the audience and its geographic distribution, determine the composition of the audience, gauge audience members' level of understanding, understand audience expectations and preferences, and forecast probable audience reaction. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-4. The three attributes of quality information are that it is accurate, ethical, and pertinent. (LO 3.3; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-5. Answers to starred discussion items not provided.

3-6. It would be better to send a printed letter rather than a digital message when the audience may not have Internet or mobile phone connectivity. There are also privacy and security concerns with written digital messages, so for messages that are highly sensitive, a printed letter might be preferable. Since the digital printed medium also tends to be overused, a printed letter might be a better option to make sure your message stands out and is noticed. (LO 3.4; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-7. The topic of your message is the overall subject, such as employee insurance claims. Your main idea is a specific statement about the topic of your message, such as your belief that a new web-based claim filing system would reduce costs for the company and reduce reimbursement delays for employees. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

APPLY YOUR KNOWLEDGE

3-8. Answers to starred discussion items not provided

3-9. The medium/channel combination that should be used is written digital. It allows for fast delivery and can reach geographically dispersed audience, like these manufacturers around the world. Important supporting material to help finalize the agenda could be linked to the communication. If necessary, photos and videos could be embedded. Of course, the users would all need to have connectivity to participate in conversation. Since this medium/channel combination can be vulnerable to security issues, proper precautions should be taken to ensure that the confidential material is not compromised. (LO 3.4; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-10. Answers to starred discussion items not provided.

3-11. Fourteen points to support your main idea is excessive; review your main points and try to group them together so that you have no more than a half dozen main points. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

PRACTICE YOUR SKILLS

Exercises for Perfecting Your Writing

Specific Purpose. Statements of purpose should be similar to the following:

3-12. I want to inform the manager about the type and number of outdated items in the warehouse. Or: I want to persuade the manager to get rid of outdated items in the warehouse. Or: I want to work with the manager to solve the problem of outdated items in the warehouse. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-13. I want to inform the customers and the news media about my company's plans. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-14. I want to encourage employees to save water. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-15. I want to find out what happened to the shipment. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-16. I want to explain how the content management system works. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Audience Profile. The precise answers here are less important than thinking about the audience. Students should consider both informational and motivational needs, and should put themselves in the audience's position. Here are some possibilities:

3-17. The reader is a dealer in financial trouble who is likely to be embarrassed and hostile when your letter is received. The dealer needs to know what can be done to satisfy the manufacturer and what will happen if nothing is done about the bill. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-18. The readers of the ad are people who read the food section of the local newspaper. They are either indifferent to or moderately interested in the product. They need to know why this peanut butter is better than other brands: price, flavor, purity, and packaging. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-19. The reader is the manager of the property management company who will most likely be displeased to receive this letter since the writer has been experiencing "persistent problems," and he or she will have to take action to resolve the situation. The reader needs to know what specific problems with the heating and air conditioning have been occurring and for how long. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-20. The reader will be a recruiter who receives hundreds of similar résumés and who will be basically indifferent unless the company is actively recruiting large numbers of new employees. The reader needs to know what makes this particular job candidate different from all the rest. The reader also needs to know about the candidate's career objectives, background, and experience. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-21. The reader is a customer service representative who is likely to be detached about the

letter, having dealt with many similar problems. If satisfied that the customer has a justifiable claim, the reader will probably approve the adjustment. The letter should explain how the damage occurred and justify the $150 estimated for repairs. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Media and Purpose. For each example that students cite, they should identify the general purpose (for example, to inform, to persuade, to collaborate) and a specific purpose (for example, to get a job, to make a purchase, to obtain a refund, and so on). They should comment on the appropriate timing (such as phone solicitations at dinner time), the appropriate medium and channel combination (such as a printed form letter for a personal message), the credibility of the sender (such as Marie Osmond as spokesperson for NutriSystem or Jessica Simpson for ProActiv), and the practicality of purpose (such as a sales message for a high-ticket item sent to a college student).

3-22–3-36. Answers will vary based on the examples that students cite. (LOs 3.2 and 3.4; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Message Organization: Choosing the Approach. Indicate whether the direct or the indirect approach would be best in each of the following situations. Write *direct* or *indirect* in the space provided:

3-37. <u>*Direct:*</u> This is a routine request. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-38. <u>*Direct*</u>: This is a routine request. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-39. <u>*Indirect:*</u> To soften the bad news, the letter should begin with a neutral buffer. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-40. <u>*Indirect:*</u> Again, a neutral buffer would make the audience more receptive. Presenting the reason first will help the audience understand why the uncomfortable temperature is necessary. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-41. <u>*Indirect:*</u> To persuade the reader to pay the debt, the writer should begin by pointing out how the reader will benefit from this course of action. However, if the indirect approach repeatedly fails, a more direct approach might be necessary, which is inappropriate for email messages. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Message Organization: Drafting Persuasive Messages. If you were trying to persuade people to take the following actions, how would you organize your argument? Write *direct* or *indirect* in the space provided.

3-42. <u>*Indirect:*</u> The reader will be motivated mainly by "bottom-line" considerations. Demonstrate that the cost of hiring two more people will lead to increased sales or profits. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-43. *Direct*: The company recruiter will be looking for a qualified person to fill existing openings. Begin with the type of job you're seeking; then explain your qualifications for that job. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-44. *Direct*: The bank will be motivated by financial considerations. You need to demonstrate that the loan is justified and that you will be able to pay it back. Explain why you need the money; then offer evidence that you are a good credit risk. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-45. *Direct*: You want to collect a small amount from a regular customer whose account is only slightly past due. The person will probably be willing to pay, given a history of prompt payment. Begin the message by pointing out the benefits of paying; then make a direct appeal for payment. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-46. *Indirect*: The person is either unable or unwilling to pay. You need to provide a real incentive to settle the debt. Point out the consequences of failing to pay. You might also offer to arrange a repayment schedule that is practical, given the person's financial position. (LO 3.5; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

ACTIVITIES

3-47. Students will find that the chairperson is writing primarily for investors. The general purpose is to inform the audience about PepsiCo's financial results and business operations. The audience will want to know details about profit and loss, areas of strength and weakness, future prospects, and other data related to the company's performance—which affects its stock price (and the value of shareholders' investments). Students should be able to point out how the chairperson emphasizes the positive in the letter. (LO 3.2; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-48. Students' responses will vary based on their chosen Facebook pages. Responses should include the idea that each site has identified its primary audience and targeted its message accordingly. Geographic distribution of the audience may also be important if a site offers information on events/offerings pertinent to location. Level of understanding is important as well; a site geared to connoisseurs of a subject won't necessarily want to waste time with very basic information about that subject. Other factors to consider include audience expectations and preferences, and probably audience reaction. (LO 3.2, 3.3; AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-49. Students' responses will vary based on their chosen websites. Responses should include at least three modifications to improve the site for readability on a smartphone, targeting some of the following issues: content should be created/modified taking the screen size and resolution of a smartphone into consideration; attention should be paid to the input required from readers; content should be created/modified to account for the fact that not all users will be accessing it on a fast, reliable, in-office network; content creators shouldn't expect users to consume too much video or other data-intensive content. (LO 3.4: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-50. Student answers should focus on what they need to know about the audience in order to respond effectively. They must address two audiences: the disgruntled passenger, and the

other readers of the newspaper who may be potential cruise customers. A personal letter to the passenger would be appropriate, as would a diplomatically worded letter to the editor. For the travel publication, it would be best to respond directly to the customer (if possible), provide an answer letter to be published in the publication, and perhaps send out a special mailing to travel agents (if that seems warranted). A secondary audience in both cases would be the cruise line's management, who would be monitoring the handling of the situation. (LO 3.4: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-51. To some extent, the decision about what is relevant depends on what the students assume about the audience. Suggest that they begin by putting themselves in the position of a top manager. What would they need to know in order to make a decision about the new heating system? What factors would influence their decision?

The line between what is essential and what is irrelevant is debatable. For example, some boards might be interested in seeing two-year cost projections. Others would not want to consider such fine detail.

The following list shows the points that are probably of least value, arranged with the least valuable first:

   a. Plans for disposing of old heating equipment
   b. The history of cogeneration
   c. Scientific credentials of the developers of cogeneration
   d. Detailed 10-year cost projections

However, students might want to include a paragraph or two on any of these items, depending on the attitudes and level of knowledge of the audience. For example, if the top managers know virtually nothing about cogeneration, students would probably want to include a brief introduction that explained cogeneration. This introduction might provide some historical information and data about the developers. Basically, however, this would be background information to set the stage for more important material.

The body of the presentation could be arranged in three main sections:
   I. Installation of the cogeneration process
      A. Specifications of the equipment
      B. Estimates of time required to phase in equipment
   II. Economic impact of the cogeneration process
      A. Costs of installing and running equipment
      B. Detailed ten-year cost projections (optional)
      C. Plans for disposing of old equipment (optional)
   III. Advantages and disadvantages of the cogeneration process
      A. Stories about successful use in comparable facilities
      B. Risks assumed in using the process
      C. Alternative systems that might be considered
(LO 3.5: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-50. Students' responses should demonstrate a clear understanding of the difference between an ethical dilemma and an ethical lapse. They should also implement the journalistic approach by giving specifics on the *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of the incident. Finally, their podcasts should draw a general conclusion (based on the specifics they provide) that

offers advice on what to do and/or avoid doing in order to engage in ethical leadership. (LO 3.5: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

EXPAND YOUR SKILLS

Critique the Professionals: In this exercise, students should address specifically how the examples they select demonstrate effective or ineffective media choices. Criteria for their assessments should include the factors discussed in the chapter. (LO 3.4: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Sharpen Your Career Skills Online: This exercise calls upon students to use Bovée and Thill's Business Communication Web Search to research information on an aspect of the writing process. Students will summarize the content of this source in an email to the instructor, or as a post for the class blog. In either case, the conventions for communicating in the particular medium should be observed, and the summary should clearly and effectively convey the information that was learned. (LO 3.1: AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

IMPROVE YOUR GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND USAGE

Level 1: Self-Assessment—Verbs

3-53. have become (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-54. knew (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-55. has moved (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-56. will do (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-57. will have returned (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-58. Leslie Cartwright will write the report. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-59. I failed to record the transaction. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-60. Has the claims department notified you of your rights? (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-61. We depend on their services for our operation. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-62. The customer returned the damaged equipment before we even located a repair facility. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-63. Everyone upstairs (*receive/receives*) mail before we do. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-64. Neither the main office nor the branches (*is/are*) blameless. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-65. C&B Sales (*is*/*are*) listed in the directory. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-66. When measuring shelves, 7 inches (*is*/*are*) significant. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-67. About 90 percent of the employees (*plan*/*plans*) to come to the company picnic. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Level 2: Workplace Applications

3-68. Cut two inches off the tree's trunk, place the tree in a water stand, and fill the stand with water. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-69. The newly elected officers of the board are John Rogers, president; Robin Doig, vice-president; and Mary Sturhann, secretary. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-70. Employees were stunned when they were notified that the trainee was promoted to manager after only her fourth week with the company. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-71. If you are seeking reliable data on U.S. publishers, *Literary Marketplace* is by far the best source. [*Or Literary Marketplace* is by far the best source for reliable data on U.S. publishers.] (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-72. To whom did you wish to speak? (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-73. The keynote address will be delivered by Seth Goodwin, the writer of six popular books on marketing, two novels, and a column for *Fortune* magazine. [*Or* any other rewrite that makes the items parallel.] (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-74. Often the reputation of an entire company depends on one employee who officially represents that company to the public. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-75. The executive director, along with his staff, is working quickly to determine who should receive the award. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-76. He and his co-workers, the top bowling team in the tournament, will represent our company in the league finals on Saturday. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-77. Listening on the extension, the security chief overheard details of the embezzlement plot. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-78. Visa cards are now accepted in response to our customers' demand for a more efficient and convenient way of paying for parking here at San Diego International Airport. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-79. The human resources department interviewed dozens of people, seeking the best candidate for the opening. [*Or* The human resources department interviewed dozens of people to find the best candidate for the opening.] (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-80. Libraries can be a challenging yet lucrative market if you learn how to work the "system" to gain maximum visibility for your products and services. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-81. Either a supermarket or a discount art gallery is scheduled to open in the mall. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

3-82. I have told my supervisor that whoever shares my office with me cannot wear perfume, use spray deodorant, or use other scented products. (AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)

Level 3: Document Critique—Well-Written Solution

Date: May 8, 2018
To: Stereo City Managers
From: Tom Dooley, Vice President, Real Estate, Stereo City
RE: Recent Cash Flow and Consumer Response—Survey

Thanks go to you and your staff for your hard work and cooperation during the reorganization of your stores. We believe revenues will rise to new heights if we reemphasize equipment sales as Stereo City's core business and reduce the visibility of our sideline retail products; however, we want to be certain that these changes are having the positive effect on your cash flow that we all expect and look forward to.

To help us make that determination in a timely manner, please respond to the following survey questions and fax them back by the end of next week. Please answer concisely, but use extra paper if necessary for details and explanations.

Your input is valuable not only to help headquarters improve service to you but also to help us all improve service to our customers. Stereo City must choose wisely and serve its customers well to thrive in a difficult retail environment.

By faxing the completed survey to my attention **before May 15**, you will help all of us at Stereo City improve service to our customers.

Thank you for your cooperation and support. You make Stereo City the man on the street's favorite place to purchase audio equipment!

Enc.
(AACSB Tag: Written and oral communication)