



Objectives of Technical Communication

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Objectives to be Achieved

Clarity

Conciseness

Accuracy

Organization

Achieving Clarity



If there is a CC
(complimentary copy)



When many people will
hear your presentation.



When time has passed

Achieving Clarity [Contd.]



Provide Specific Details



Answer the Reporter's
Questions



Use Understandable
Words

Provide Specific Details

- Avoid vague adjectives and adverbs (some, recently)

BEFORE

Our latest attempt at molding preform protectors has led to some positive results. We spent several hours in Dept. 15 trying different machine settings and techniques. Several good parts were molded using two different sheet thicknesses. Here's a summary of the findings.

First, we tried the thick sheet material. At 240°F, this thickness worked well. Next, we tried the thinner sheet material. The thinner material is less forgiving, but after a few adjustments we were making good parts. Still, the thin material caused the most handling problems.

Answer to the Reporter's Questions

Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?

BEFORE

Date: November 16, 2014
To: Staff
From: Earl Eddings, Manager
Subject: Research

Please be prepared to plan a presentation on research. Make sure the information is very detailed. Thanks.

Use Understandable Words

Avoid Obscure
Words

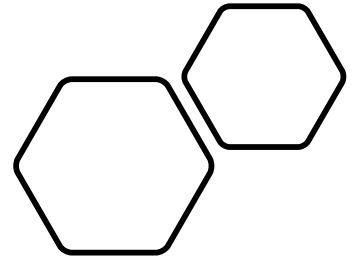
Write to express, not
to impress; write to
communicate, not to
confuse.

Before

aforementioned
initial
in lieu of
accede
as per your request
issuance
this is to advise you
subsequent
inasmuch as
ascertain
pursuant to
forward
cognizant
endeavor
remittance
disclose
attached herewith
pertain to
supersede
obtain

After

discussed above
first
instead of
agree
as you requested
send
I'd like you to know
later
because
find out
after
mail
know
try
pay
show
attached
about
replace
get



Practice Clarity

The following sentences are unclear. They will be interpreted differently by different readers. Revise these sentences by replacing the vague words with more specific information.

1. We need this information as soon as possible.
2. The machinery will replace a flawed piece of equipment in our department.
3. Failure to purchase this will have a negative impact.

Achieving Conciseness



Conciseness saves time



Conciseness
Increases Readability



Technology Demands
Conciseness (PG 68)

Achieving Conciseness

[Contd.]

Limiting Word Length

Limit Prepositional Phrases

Limit Sentence Length

Limit Paragraph Length

Limiting Word Length



Try To use one- and two-syllable words



Try to avoid old-fashioned, legalistic words, like “pursuant,” “accordance,” and “aforementioned.

Limiting Prepositional Phrases



Occasionally, however, prepositional phrases create wordy sentences.



A prepositional phrase includes a preposition and a noun or pronoun that serves as the object of the preposition.



For example, “at a rapid rate” is a prepositional phrase.

Limiting Sentence Length

READABILITY

Very easy to read

Plain English

Extremely difficult to read

LENGTH OF SENTENCES

Average sentence length is 12 words or less.

Average sentence length is 15 to 20 words.

Average sentence length exceeds 20 words.

- The GNOME Documentation Style Guide (a Unix and Linux desktop suite and development platform) provides this information about readable sentence length

Use Meat Cleaver Method of Revision

One way to limit the number of words per sentence is to cut the sentence in half or into thirds.



BEFORE

I would like you to take into consideration the following points, which I know will assist you in better applying new HIPAA rules and regulations currently burdened by the need to execute all data manually and on paper rather than through standardized, electronic transmissions.

AFTER

Please consider the following points. This will help you apply new HIPAA rules by submitting data online instead of having to type text on separate forms.

Limiting Sentence Length

01

Delete "Be
Verbs"

02

Avoid Shun
Words

03

Avoid
Camouflaged
Words

04

Avoid
Expletive
Pattern

05

Avoid
Passive
Voice

Delete “Be Verbs”

is, are, was, were, would, will,
been, and am.

Bill is of the opinion
that stock prices will
decrease.

Bill thinks stock prices
will decrease.



Avoid Shun Words

- Another way to write more concisely is to avoid words ending in -tion or -sion—shun sounds. For example:
- *‘came to the conclusion’* - concluded (or decided, ended, stopped)

Avoid Camouflaged Words



Camouflaged words are similar to shun words.



In both instances, a key word is buried in the middle of surrounding words (usually helper verbs or unneeded prepositions).



For example, in the phrase ‘*make an amendment to*’, the key word *amend* is camouflaged behind unnecessary words.

Avoid Expletive Pattern



When you begin sentences with “there” or “it,” you create the expletive pattern of sentence structure.



For example: ‘It has been decided that ten engineers will be hired’.

Conciseness: Practice

The following sentence is too long. Revise it for conciseness

“On two different occasions, I have made an investigation of your residence, and I believe that your sump pump might result in damage to your neighbor’s adjacent property. I have come to the conclusion that you must take action to rectify this potential dilemma, or your neighbor might seek to sue you in a court of law.”

Achieving Accuracy

Grammatical
Correctness

Spelling
Check

National Bank
1800 Commerce Street
Houston, TX

September 9, 2014

Adler's Dog and Oat Shop
8893 Southside
Bellaire, TX

Dear Sr:

In response to your request, your account with use has been close out. We are submitted a check in the amount of \$468.72 (your existing balance). If you have any questions, please fill free to contact us.

Achieving Organization

Analysis

Spatial
Organization

Chronology

Importance

Comparison/
Contrast

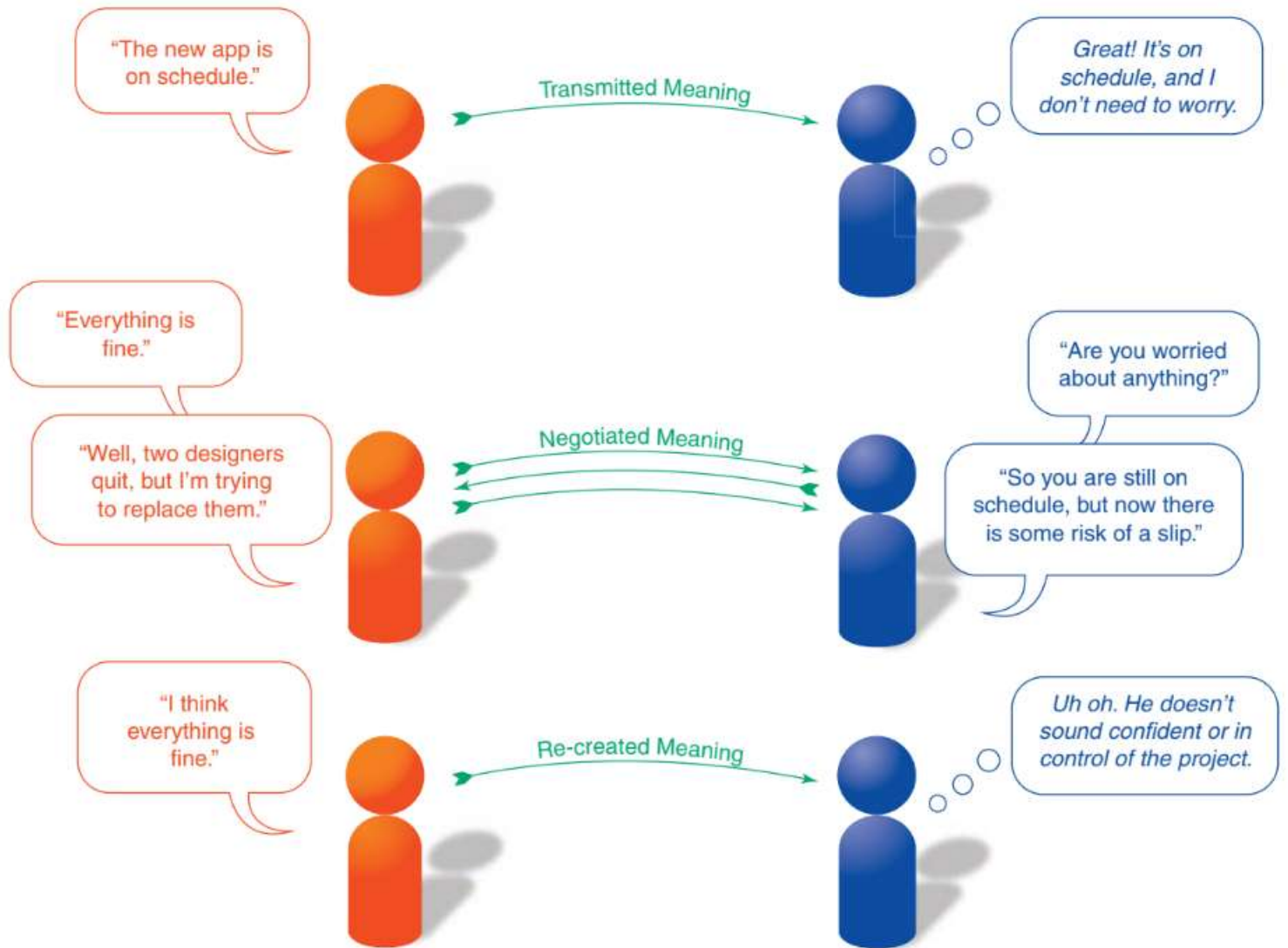
Problem/Solution

Cause and Effect

References

- Gerson, S. J., & Gerson, S. M. (2014). *Technical Writing Process and Product*. Pearson
- Chapter 3
- For extra practice, work on exercises at the end of chapter

Communication at Workplace



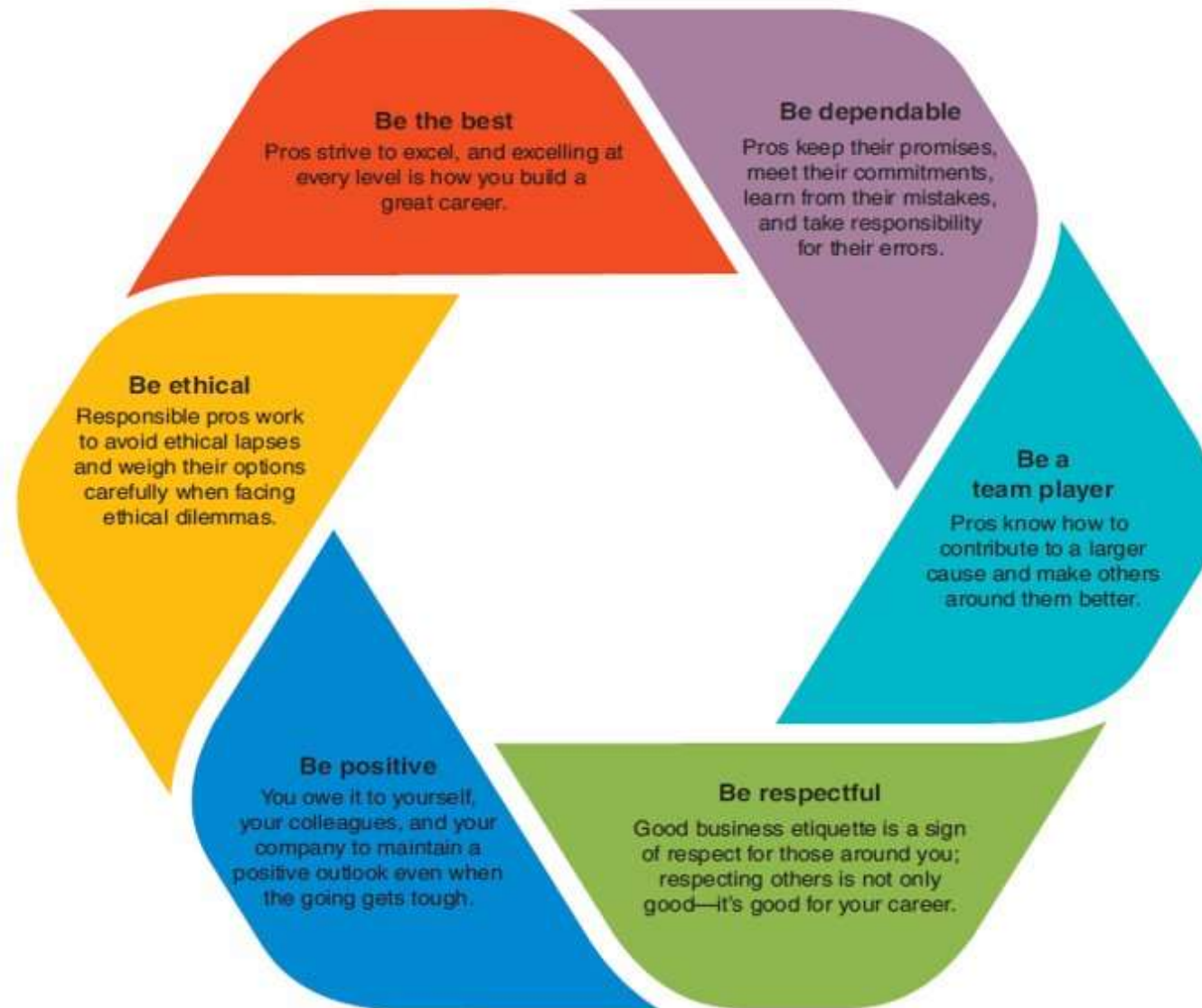
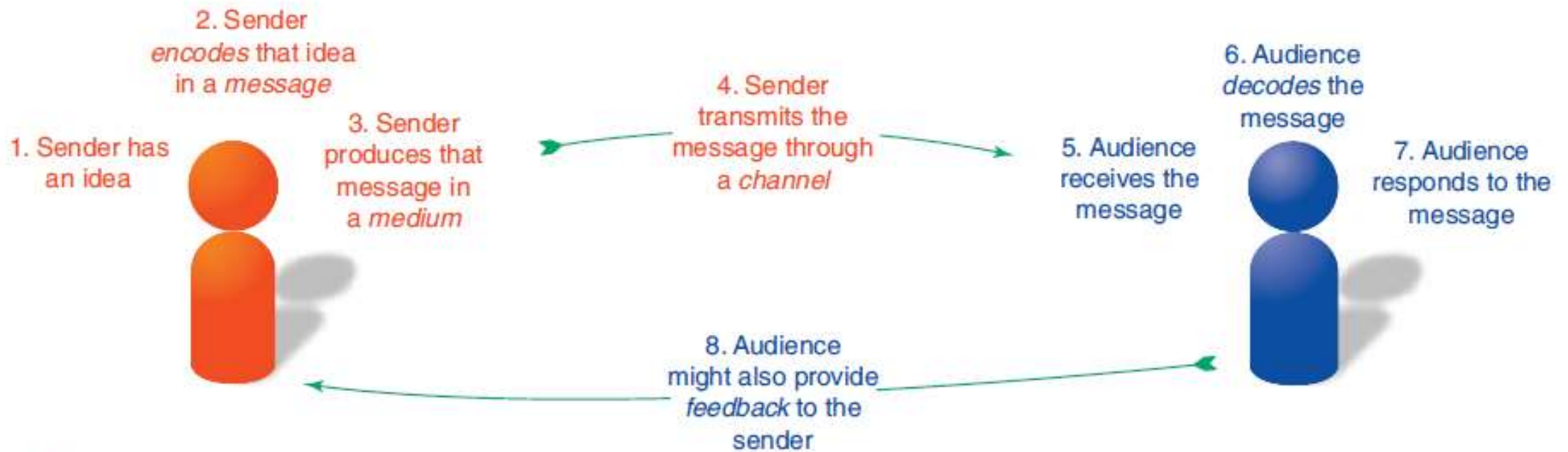
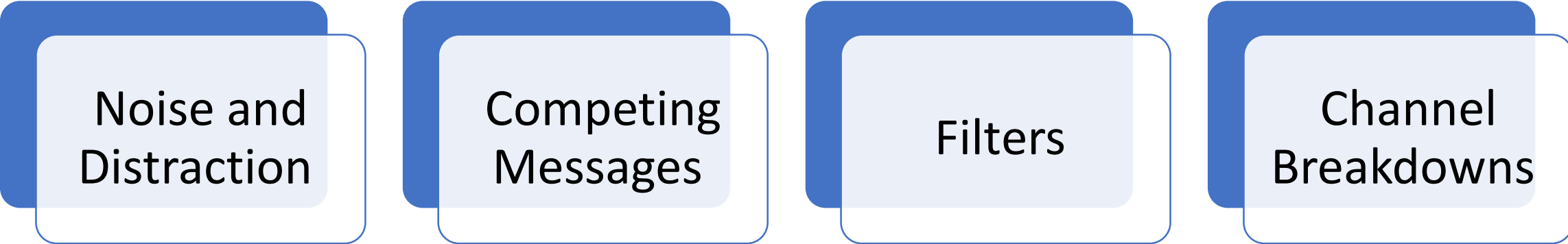


Figure 1.3 Elements of Professionalism
To be respected as a true professional, develop these six qualities.

Communication Process



Barriers to Communication



Noise and
Distraction

Competing
Messages

Filters

Channel
Breakdowns

Ethical Problem

Plagiarism

Omitting
Essential
Information

Misquoting
Numbers and
Statistics

Selective
Misquoting

Distorting
Visuals

Failing to
Respect
Privacy

References

- Business Communication Today
- Part 1, Chapter 1 (52-60)

Practice Task

Imagine you have been asked to construct a microblog (140 words maximum) for computer science students, focusing on the importance of version control systems (e.g., Git) in collaborative projects. Your microblog should incorporate the following key elements of technical communication:

- 1. Clarity:** Make your message easy to understand. Use specific details, answer the "reporter's questions" (Who, What, When, Where, Why, How), and avoid technical jargon that could confuse beginners.
- 2. Conciseness:** Keep it brief by limiting word, sentence, and paragraph length. Avoid unnecessary prepositional phrases, "shun" words, camouflaged words, and the expletive pattern.
- 3. Accuracy:** Ensure your grammar, spelling, and content are correct. Provide accurate and truthful information about the benefits and usage of version control.
- 4. Organization:** Structure your microblog using an organizational strategy (e.g., Importance, Problem/Solution, Chronology) to ensure a logical flow.