

Technical Communication in the Workplace

Chapter: 1

Technical Writing

- Types of documents/genres
- Content/ concrete data
- Style/ level of formality
- Tone
- Transitions
- **Economy**
- **You Attitude**

The key to successful communications is to make the reader feel – in every memo, in every letter, in every email, in every phone call, in all contact – that the most important person in our business relationship is **YOU**, the READER, not me/I, the writer.

Features	Purpose	Writer's Knowledge of Topic	Audience	Criteria of Evaluation	Graphic Elements
Academic Writing	Communicating what the student knows about the topic to earn a high grade	Less than the teacher who evaluates the writing	The teacher who assigned the project or classmates	Depth, logic, clarity, unity, supporting evidence, and grammar	Sometimes used to explain and persuade
Workplace Writing	Getting something done within an organization	Usually more than the reader's knowledge	Often several people with differing professional backgrounds	Clear content organization, appropriate to the needs of busy readers	Frequently used to help readers find information and understand ideas

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 6, 2011
TO: Holly Newsome
FROM: Michael Allen
SUBJECT: Printer Recommendation

Introductory Summary

Recently you asked for my evaluation of the Hemphill 5000 printer/fax/scanner/copier currently used in my department. Having analyzed the machine's features, print quality, and cost, I am quite satisfied with its performance.

Features

Among the Hemphill 5000's features, I have found these five to be the most useful:

1. Easy-to-use control panel
2. Print and copy speed of up to 34 pages per minute for color and black-and-white
3. Ability to print high-quality documents like brochures & report covers
4. Built-in networking capability
5. Ability to scan documents to or from a USB port

In addition, the Hemphill 5000 offers high-quality copies, color copies, and faxes, and it uses high-capacity ink cartridges to reduce costs.

Print Quality

The Hemphill 5000 produces excellent prints that rival professional typeset quality. The print resolution is 1200 x 1200 dots per inch, among the highest attainable in combination printer/fax/scanner/copiers. This memo was printed on the 5000, and as you can see, the quality speaks for itself.

Cost

Considering the features and quality, the 5000 is an excellent network combination printer for work groups within the firm. At a retail price of \$239, it is also one of the lowest-priced combination printers, yet it comes with a two-year warranty and excellent customer support.

Conclusion

On the basis of my observation, I strongly recommend that our firm continue to use and purchase the Hemphill 5000. Please call me at ext. 204 if you want further information about this excellent machine.



Use a Programmable Thermostat Properly

A programmable thermostat is ideal for people who are away from home during set periods of time throughout the week. Through proper use of pre-programmed settings, a programmable thermostat can save you about \$180 every year in energy costs.

Overview information summarizes the document's main point

How Do You Choose the Right One for You?

To decide which model is best for you, think about your schedule and how often you are away from home for regular periods of time—work, school, other activities—and then decide which of the three different models best fits your schedule:

Heading is phrased as the main question readers will ask

7-day models are best if your daily schedule tends to change, for example, if children are at home earlier on some days. These models give you the most flexibility and let you set different programs for different days—usually with four possible temperature periods per day.

Paragraphs and sentences are short

5+2-day models use the same schedule every weekday, and another for weekends.

Color is used to highlight key items

5-1-1 models are best if you tend to keep one schedule Monday through Friday and another schedule on Saturdays and Sundays.

Programmable Thermostat Settings

You can use the table below as a starting point for setting energy-saving temperatures, and then adjust the settings to fit your family's schedule and stay comfortable.

Setting	Time	Setpoint Temperature (Heat)	Setpoint Temperature (Cool)
Wake	6:00 a.m.	< 70° F	> 78° F
Day	8:00 a.m.	Setback at least 8° F	Setup at least 7° F
Evening	6:00 p.m.	< 70° F	> 78° F
Sleep	10:00 p.m.	Setback at least 8° F	Setup at least 4° F

Table provides easy-to-read comparative data

Audience of Technical Writing

- Supervisors and their superiors
- Colleagues in your own department
- Subordinates in your department
- Employees at other departments or branches
- Clients
- Subcontractors and vendors





**At workplace
we are both the
consumers and
producers of
technical
communication**

TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS

Correspondence

Memos to your boss and to your
Routine letters to customers, vendors etc
Letters to customers
Sales letters to potential customers
Electronic mail to co-workers or customers

Short Reports

Analysis of problem
Recommendation
Equipment Evaluation
Progress or periodic report
Description of results of a laboratory work or a company trip

Long Reports

Project report in field or laboratory work
Proposal and Feasibility study

Other Examples

Abstract or summary of technical articles
Technical article or presentation
Operation manual
Website

Purpose of Technical Writing

People in the working world communicate technical information for a number of purposes, many of which fall into one of two categories:

Inform or Persuade?

To help others learn about a subject, carry out a task, or make a decision.

To reinforce or change attitudes and motivate readers to take an action.

Technical Writing is done by an informed writer conveying needed information to an uninformed reader.

Elements of Organization Culture

**1.Organizational
History**

1.Type of Business

**Management
Style**

Business Climate

- The economic and political factors that influence an organization's priorities, plans, and activities.
- These factors include competition, investor interests, regulations, and the overall health of the economy.

Two practices that are being used more often in the global business climate are outsourcing and offshoring...

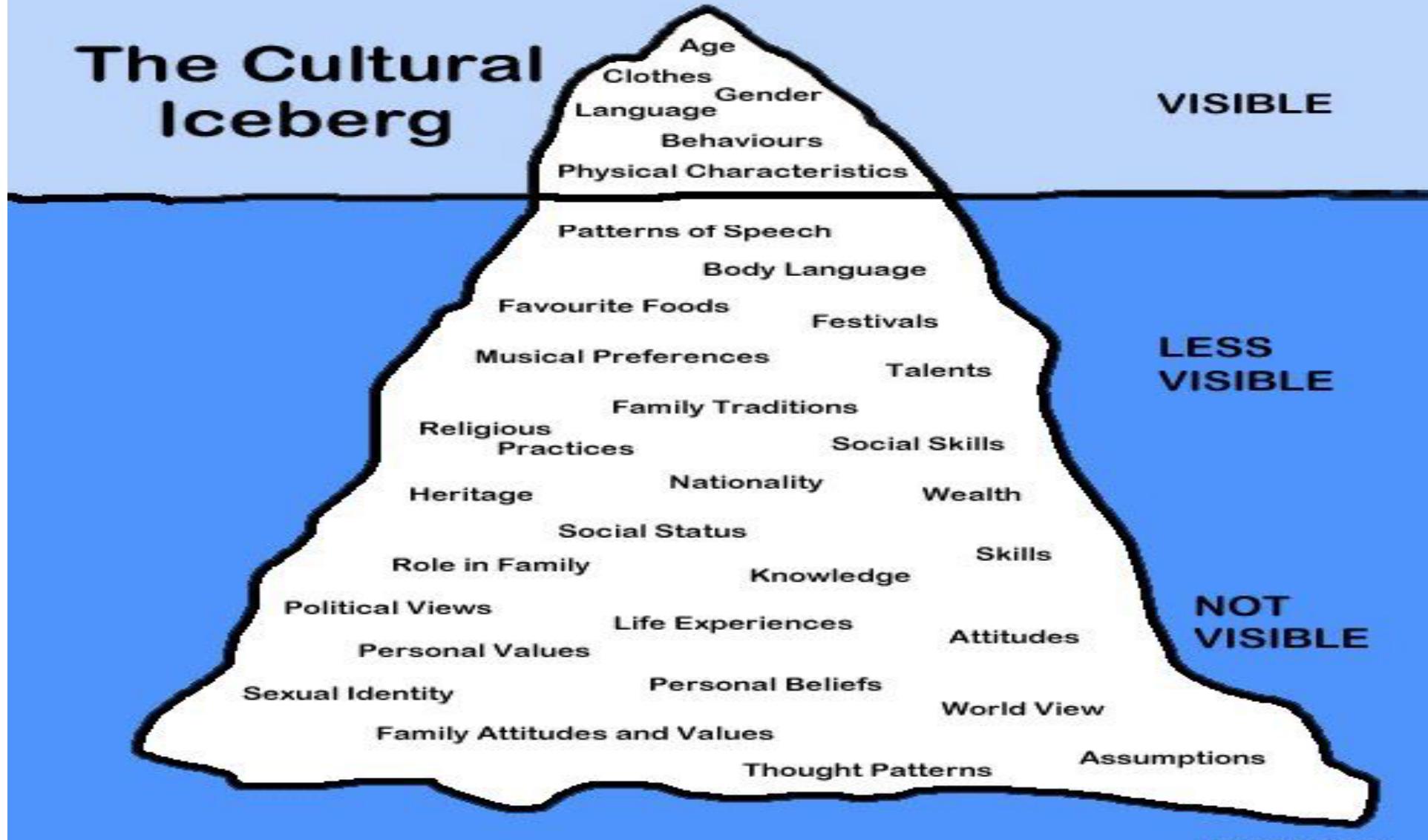
Outsourcing

the practice of purchasing goods or subcontracting services from an outside company. Both the client company and the company that is providing the goods or services may be in the same country, or they may be in different countries.

Offshoring

Happens when a company moves some of its operations to another country. This practice is often done to reduce labor costs, but it may also help a company work more efficiently **by creating offices** closer to suppliers or clients

The Cultural Iceberg



Understanding Cultures

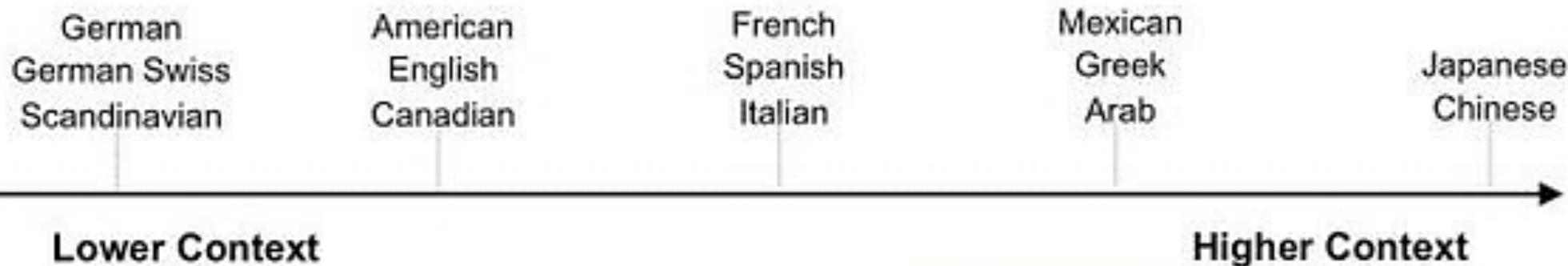
- All cultures have both common features and distinctive differences that must be studied. People in different cultures have different ways of thinking, different ways of acting and different expectations in communication.
- One of the ways that differences between cultures can be understood is through the concepts of high-context cultures and low-context cultures.

High-Context Cultures

- High-context cultures are fairly homogeneous, with the culture providing a high degree of context for communication. Thus, communications may be less explicit because members of the culture share characteristics such as religion, ethnic background, and education.
- Important characteristics of high-context cultures include:
 - Clear distinctions between insiders and outsiders
 - A focus on maintaining relationships, on saving face, and on helping others save face
 - A dependence on internalized cultural norms to govern behavior.

Low-Context Cultures

- Low-context cultures consist of diverse religions, ethnic backgrounds, and educational levels; as a result, communication must be explicit, because members of a group cannot assume that they share knowledge or attitudes. The culture provides a low degree of context for communication. The United States is an example of a low-context culture.
- Important characteristics that affect communication in low-context cultures include
 - Openness to outsiders
 - A focus on actions and solving problems, with a willingness to disagree openly
 - A dependence on formally established rules to govern behavior



Low Context

Communication:

- Specific
- Detailed
- Precise

Poorer at decoding:

- Unspoken message
- Body language

High Context

Communication:

- Less direct

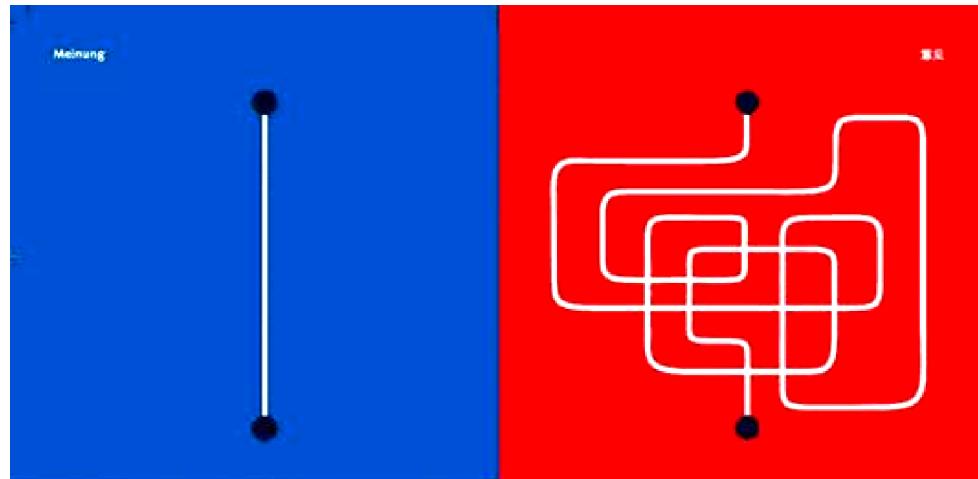
Emphasis on:

- Human relations

More sensitivity to:

- Non-verbals
- Feelings of others

The concept of **low-context** and **high-context** cultures offers a general way of thinking about how to relate to clients and colleagues in other cultures and countries, but if you find yourself working in a global, intercultural setting, you should understand the specific cultural practices of those you are working with.



Guidelines for Communicating Internationally

1. Simplify grammar and style rules
2. Use simple verb tenses and verb constructions.
3. Limit vocabulary to words with clear meanings.
4. Use language and terminology consistently. per meaning.”
5. Define technical terms.
6. Avoid slang terms and idioms.
7. Include visuals. Graphics are

Case Study: Intercultural Communication in a Global Business Environment

GlobalTech Solutions (GTS) is a multinational technology company headquartered in the United States, with offices in Europe, Asia, and South America. The company specializes in software development, IT consulting, and digital transformation services. GTS recently acquired a smaller tech firm, TechInnovate, based in Pakistan, to expand its market presence in Asia. As part of the acquisition, GTS plans to integrate TechInnovate's employees into its global operations. This integration involves a series of virtual meetings, cross-cultural training sessions, and collaborative projects between teams in the U.S. and Pakistan.

In the first virtual meeting between the U.S. and Pakistani teams, several communication issues arise. The American team notices that their Pakistani counterparts are unusually quiet during discussions. They rarely voice their opinions or disagree with any points made. Meanwhile, the Pakistani team feels that the American team is overly direct and somewhat aggressive in their approach, which makes them uncomfortable.

Key Players:

- John Davis: Project Manager from the U.S. team, known for his direct communication style.
- Saba Ali: Senior Developer from the Pakistani team, values harmony and prefers a consensus-driven approach.
- Sarah Lee: HR Manager at GTS, responsible for overseeing the integration process.
- Aslam Khan : HR Manager at TechInnovate, tasked with supporting the transition.

Questions:

Question 1: What are the key cultural differences in communication styles between the U.S. and Pakistani teams?

Question 2: How can GTS facilitate better communication between the teams?

Question 3: What strategies can John and Saba use to improve their collaboration?

Question 4: How can the HR managers, Sarah and Aslam, support a smoother integration process?

Cultural Differences: P. 10

Big picture vs. details	High-context vs. Low-context
Order vs. chaos	Monochronic vs. Polychronic
Formal vs. informal	Top-down communication vs. back and forth and up and down
Motivations and rewards	Personal achievement vs. financial rewards
Quality vs. quantity of decisions	methodical process
Giving and receiving feedback	Negative vs. positive feedback
Expressing opinions	Openly disagree
Role of managers	Egalitarianism vs. hierarchy
Willingness to sacrifice personal time	forgo personal time if needed.

Task:

- Based on these variations in culture (P:10), select any two countries and compare these elements
- Talk about at least 5 differences or similarities
- Examples could be in form of images, videos or case studies
- Submit a write up (350 words)