

Foundations of Business Communication

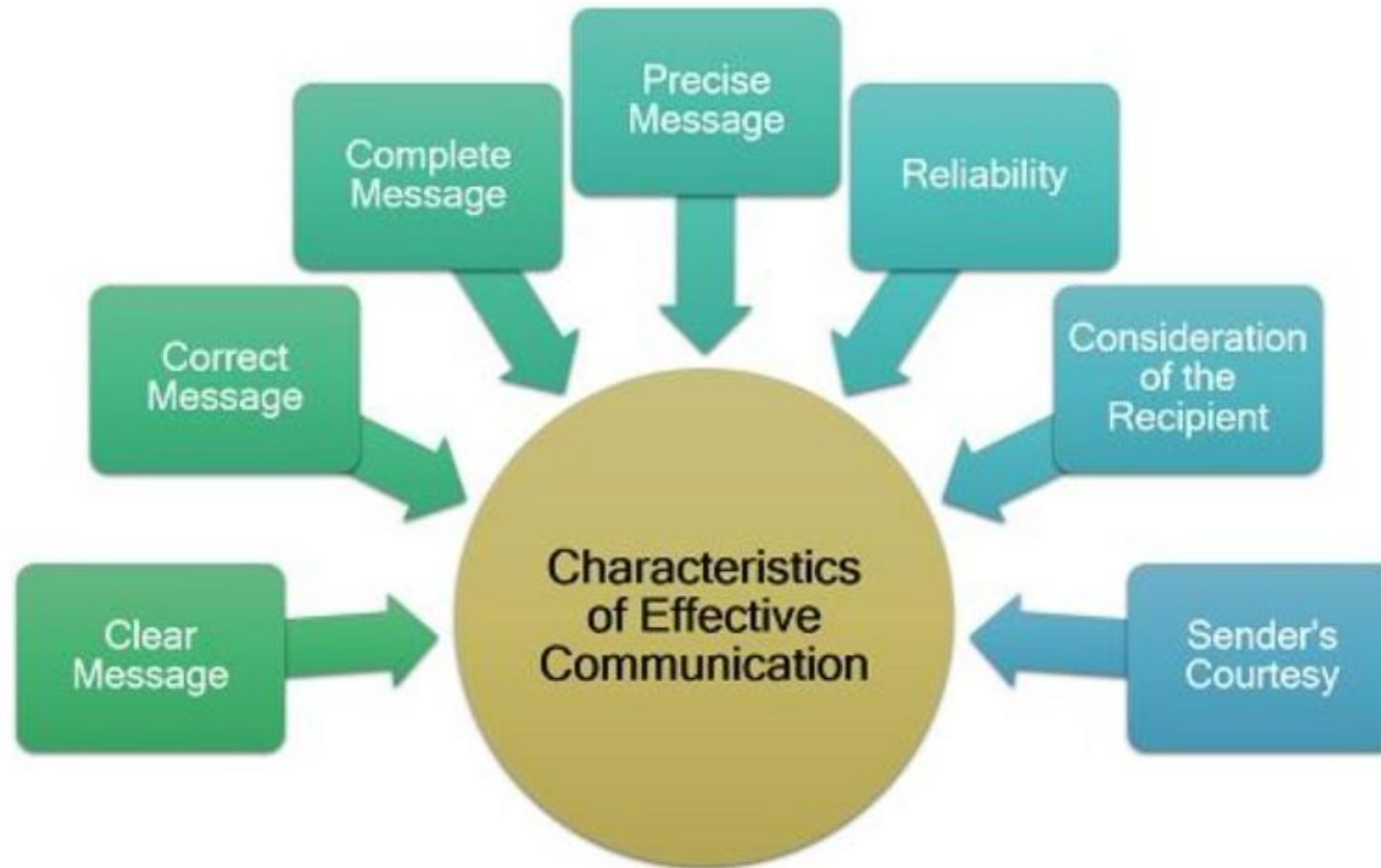
Business Communication (HS-218) week-2

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Properties of business communication



- **Clear Message:** The message which the sender wants to convey must be **simple**, easy to **understand** and **systematically framed** to retain its meaningfulness.
- **Correct Message:** The information communicated **must not be vague or false** in any sense; it must be **free from errors** and **grammatical mistakes**.
- **Complete Message:** Communication is the base for decision making. If the information is incomplete, **it may lead to wrong decisions**.
- **Precise Message:** The message sent must be **short and concise to facilitate straightforward interpretation** and take the desired steps.
For example:
 - 1- 'All of the students who are new to this school are required to attend a meeting that has been scheduled for Friday the 22nd of September'.
 - 2- 'New students are required to attend a meeting on Friday, September 22'.

- **Reliability:** The **sender** must be sure from his end that whatever **he is conveying is right by his knowledge**. Even the **receiver must have trust on the sender** and can **rely on the message** sent.
- **Consideration of the Recipient:** The **medium** of communication and other **physical settings** must be planned, keeping in mind the **attitude, language, knowledge, education level and position** of the receiver.
- **Sender's Courtesy:** The message must reflect the **sender's courtesy, humbleness and respect** towards the receiver.

Conditions for better communication



- **Observance:** A person must possess sharp **observing skills** to gain more and **more knowledge and information**.
- **Clarity and Brevity:** The message must be drafted in **simple words**, and it should be **clear and precise** to create the desired impact over the receiver.
- **Listening and Understanding:** The most crucial skill in a person is he must be a **good, alert and patient listener**. He must be able to **understand and interpret** the message well.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** A person must be **emotionally aware** and has the **ability to influence** others from within.
- **Self-Efficacy:** Also, he/she must have **faith in himself/herself** and has **capabilities to achieve the objectives of communication**.

- **Self-Confidence:** Being one of the essential communication skills, **confidence enhances the worthiness** of the message being delivered.
- **Respectfulness:** Delivering a message with courtesy and **respecting the values, beliefs, opinions and ideas of the receiver** is the essence of effective communication.
- **Non-Verbal Communication:** To connect with the receiver in a better way, the **sender must involve the non-verbal means communication** too. These include **gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, postures**, etc.
- **Selection of the Right Medium:** Choice of the correct medium for communication is also a skill. It is necessary to select an **appropriate medium according to the situation, priority of the message, the receiver's point of view**, etc.
- **Providing Feedback:** Effective communication is always a two-way process. A person must take as well as **give feedback to bring forward the other person's perspective too**.

Activity:

- Write at least five properties/conditions that you think are necessary for an effective business communication.

The communication model/process

By viewing communication as a process, you can identify and improve the skills you need to be more successful. Many variations on this process model exist, but these eight steps provide a practical overview:

- **The sender has an idea.** Whether a communication effort will ultimately be **effective starts right here and depends on the nature of the idea and the motivation for sending it.**
- **For example,** if your motivation is to offer a solution to a problem, you have a better chance of crafting a meaningful message than if your motivation is merely to complain about a problem

- **The sender encodes the idea as a message.** When someone puts an idea into a message—which you can think of as the “**container**” for an idea—he or she is encoding it, or expressing it in words or images. Much of the focus of this course is on developing the skills needed to successfully encode your ideas into effective messages.
- **The sender produces the message in a transmittable medium.** With the appropriate message to express an idea, the sender now needs a **communication medium to present that message** to the intended audience. To update your boss on the status of a project, for instance, you might have a dozen or more media choices, from a phone call to an instant message to a slideshow presentation. i.e. **1-written, 2-oral, 3-visual.**

- **The sender transmits the message through a channel.** Just as technology continues to increase the number of media options at your disposal, it continues to provide new communication channels you can use to transmit your messages. The distinction between medium and channel can get a bit murky, but think of the medium as the form a message takes (such as a Twitter update) and the channel as the system used to deliver the message (such as a mobile phone).
1-Digital, 2-In-person, 3-Print
- **The audience receives the message.** If the channel functions properly, the message reaches its intended audience. However, mere arrival at the destination is no guarantee that the message will be noticed or understood correctly. As “How Audiences Receive Messages” (page 60) explains, many messages are either ignored or misinterpreted as noise.

- **The audience decodes the message.** After a message is received, the receiver needs to extract the idea from the message, a step known as decoding. “How Audiences Decode Messages” (page 61) takes a closer look at this complex and subtle step in the process.
- **The audience responds to the message.** By crafting messages in ways that show the benefits of responding, senders can increase the chances that recipients will respond in positive ways. However, as “How Audiences Respond to Messages” (page 62) points out, whether a receiver responds as the sender hopes depends on the receiver (1) **remembering** the message long enough to act on it, (2) **being able to act on it**, and (3) being **motivated to respond**.

- **The audience provides feedback to the sender.** In addition to responding (or not responding) to the message, audience members may give feedback that helps the sender evaluate the effectiveness of the communication effort. **Feedback can be verbal (using written or spoken words), nonverbal (using gestures, facial expressions, or other signals), or both.** Just like the original message, however, this feedback from the receiver also needs to be decoded carefully. A smile, for example, can have many meanings.

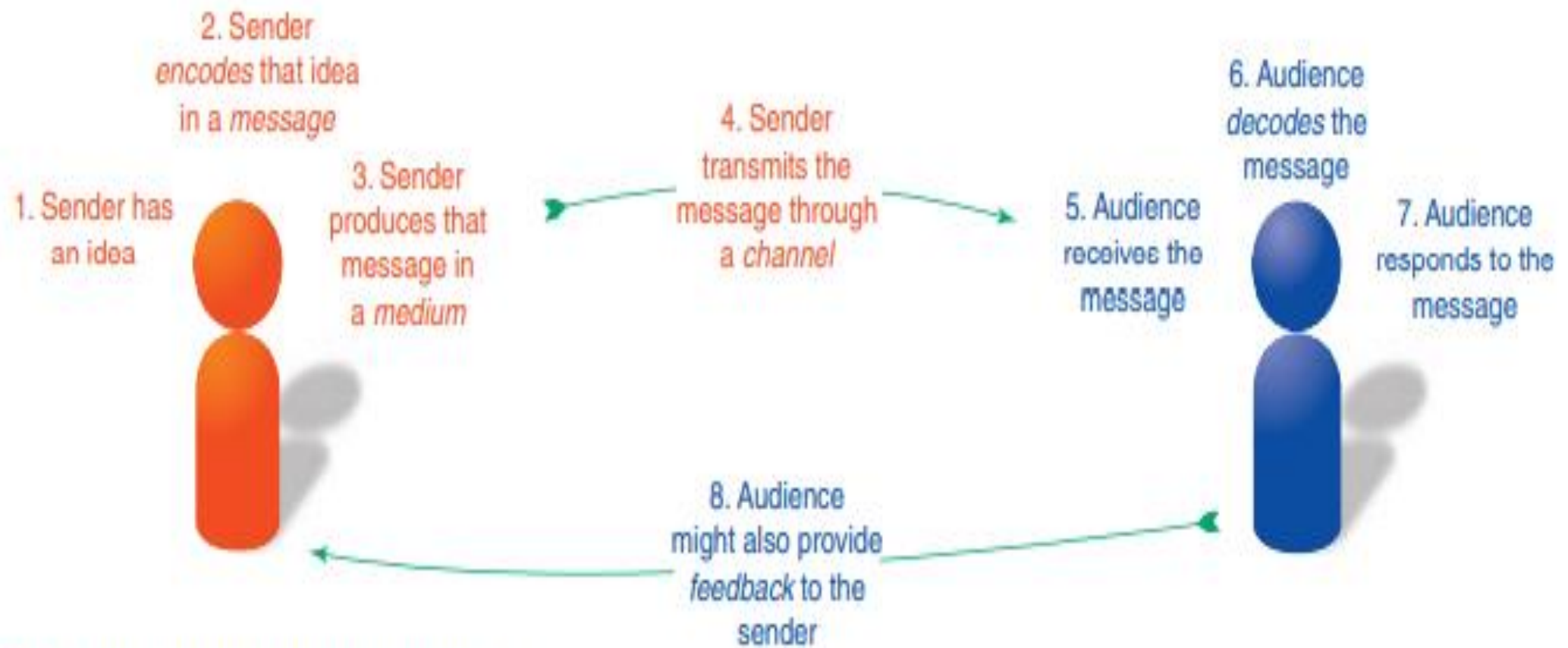


Figure 1.5 The Basic Communication Process

This eight-step model is a simplified view of how communication works in real life; understanding this basic model is vital to improving your communication skills.

Types of communication

- Verbal communication
- Non-verbal communication
- Written communication
- Listening
- Visual communication

Verbal communication

- Verbal communication occurs when we engage in speaking with others. It can be face-to-face, over the telephone, via Skype or Zoom, etc. Some verbal engagements are informal, such as chatting with a friend over coffee or in the office kitchen, while others are more formal, such as a scheduled meeting. Regardless of the type, it is not just about the words, it is also about the caliber and complexity of those words, how we string those words together to create an overarching message, as well as the intonation (pitch, tone, cadence, etc.) used while speaking. And when occurring face-to-face, while the words are important, they cannot be separated from non-verbal communication.

Non-verbal communication

- What we do while we speak often says more than the actual words. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, posture, eye contact, hand movements, and touch. For example, if you're engaged in a conversation with your boss about your cost-saving idea, it is important to pay attention to both the their words and their non-verbal communication. Your boss might be in agreement with your idea verbally, but their nonverbal cues: avoiding eye contact, sighing, scrunched up face, etc. indicate something different.

Written communication

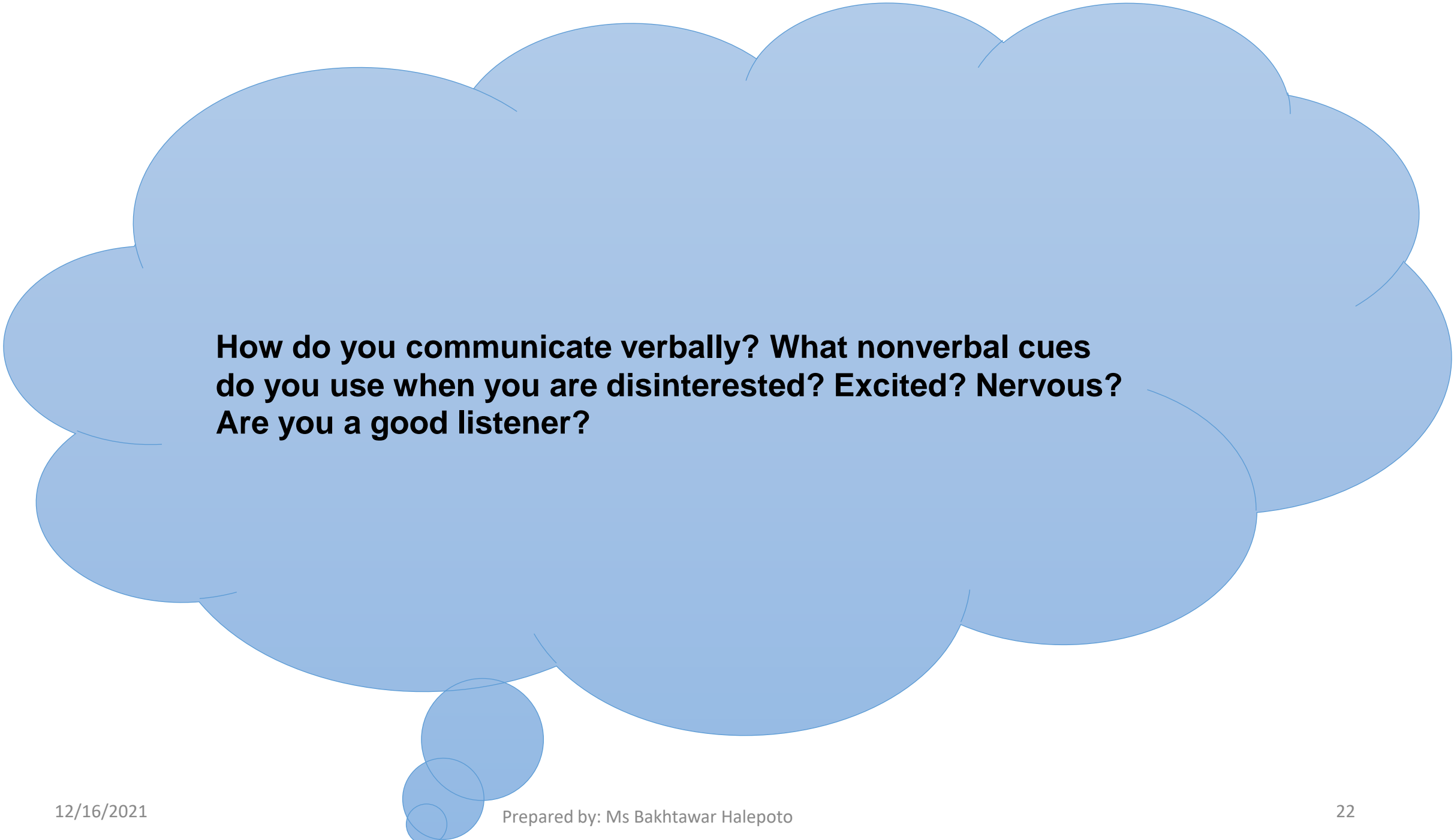
- Whether it is an email, a memo, a report, a Facebook post, a Tweet, a contract, etc. all forms of written communication have the same goal to disseminate information in a clear and concise manner – though that objective is often not achieved. In fact, poor writing skills often lead to confusion and embarrassment, and even potential legal jeopardy. One important thing to remember about written communication, especially in the digital age, is the message lives on, perhaps in perpetuity. Thus, there are two things to remember: first, write well – poorly constructed sentences and careless errors make you look bad; and second, ensure the content of the message is something you want to promote or be associated with for the long haul.

Listening

- The act of listening does not often make its way onto the list of types of communication. Active listening, however, is perhaps one of the most important types of communication because if we cannot listen to the person sitting across from us, we cannot effectively engage with them. Think about a negotiation – part of the process is to assess what the opposition wants and needs. Without listening, it is impossible to assess that, which makes it difficult to achieve a win/win outcome.

Visual communication

- We are a visual society. Think about it, televisions are running 24/7, Facebook is visual with memes, videos, images, etc., Instagram is an image-only platform, and advertisers use imagery to sell products and ideas. Think about from a personal perspective – the images we post on social media are meant to convey meaning – to communicate a message. In some cases that message might be, look at me, I'm in Italy or I just won an award. Others are carefully curated to tug on our heartstrings – injured animals, crying children, etc.



How do you communicate verbally? What nonverbal cues do you use when you are disinterested? Excited? Nervous? Are you a good listener?

THREE MODES OF COMMUNICATION

| Interpersonal | Interpretive | Presentational |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way communication with active negotiation of meaning among individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication with no recourse to the active negotiation of meaning with the writer, speaker, or producer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-way communication intended for an audience of readers, listeners, or viewers |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spontaneous • Usually involves exchange of information • Meaningful | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reader, listener or viewer interprets what the author, speaker, or producer wants the receiver of the message to understand | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation of information; not exchange • No direct opportunity for the active negotiation of meaning exists |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants observe and monitor one another to see how their meanings and intentions are being communicated and make adjustments and clarifications accordingly | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation differs from comprehension and translation in that it implies the ability to read, listen or view “between the lines,” including understanding from within the cultural mindset or perspective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the intended audience is successful in its interpretation, the “presenter” needs knowledge of the audience’s language and culture |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and listening (conversation) • Reading and writing (text messages, messages on social media, letters) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading of authentic texts (websites, stories and other literature, articles, signs) • Listening to authentic texts (speeches, messages, songs, radio news, ads) • Viewing of authentic materials (videos, movies, presentations, TV shows, commercials, news, plays) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing (messages, articles, advertisements, flyers, brochures, short stories, reports, scripts, Power Point presentations); • Speaking (telling a story, giving a speech, TV or radio news, drama presentations including skits, presentation to jury) |

Tools of communication

- New communication technology is dramatically affecting the way workers interact. In our always-connected world, businesses exchange information by **e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, smartphones, fax, voice mail, powerful laptop computers, and tablets**. Satellite communications, wireless networking, teleconferencing, and videoconferencing help workers conduct meetings with associates around the world. Social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube as well as blogs, wikis, forums, and peer-to-peer tools help businesspeople collect information, serve customers, and sell products and services.

Unprofessional

Professional

Uptalk, a singsong speech pattern, making sentences sound like questions; *like* used as a filler; *go for said*; slang; poor grammar and profanity.

Messages with incomplete sentences, misspelled words, exclamation points, IM slang, and mindless chatter; sloppy messages signal that you don't care, don't know, or aren't smart enough to know what is correct.

E-mail addresses such as *hotbabe@outlook.com*, *supasnugglykitty@yahoo.com*, or *buffedguy@gmail.com*.

An outgoing message with strident background music, weird sounds, or a joke message.

Soap operas, thunderous music, or a TV football game playing noisily in the background when you answer the phone.

Using electronics during business meetings for unrelated purposes or during conversations with fellow employees; raising your voice (cell yell); forcing others to overhear your calls.

Sending and receiving text messages during meetings, allowing texting to interrupt face-to-face conversations, or texting when driving.

Speech habits

E-mail

Internet

Voice mail

Telephone presence

Cell phones, tablets

Texting

Recognizing that your credibility can be seriously damaged by sounding uneducated, crude, or adolescent.

Messages with subjects, verbs, and punctuation marks. Employers dislike IM abbreviations. They value conciseness and correct spelling, even in brief e-mail messages and texts.

E-mail addresses should include a name or a positive, businesslike expression; they should not sound cute or like a chat room nickname.

An outgoing message that states your name or phone number and provides instructions for leaving a message.

A quiet background when you answer the telephone, especially if you are expecting a prospective employer's call.

Turning off phone and message notification, both audible and vibrate, during meetings; using your smart devices only for meeting-related purposes.

Sending appropriate business text messages only when necessary (perhaps when a cell phone call would disturb others).

Channels of Communication

- The medium is the form a message takes and the channel is the system used to deliver the message. The distinction between the two isn't always crystal clear, and some people use the terms in different ways, but these definitions are a useful way to think about the possibilities for business communication.
- The simplest way to categorize media choices is to divide them into **oral (spoken), written, and visual**. Each of these media can be delivered through **digital, in-person and visual channels**. This creates six basic combinations: **oral medium-In-person, Oral medium-digital channel, Written medium-printed channel, Written medium-digital channel, Visual medium-printed channel, Visual medium-digital channel**.

Oral Medium, in-Person Channel

- The oral medium, in-person combo involves talking with people who are in the same location, whether it's a **one-on-one conversation** over lunch or a more **formal speech or presentation**. Being in the **same physical space is a key distinction** because it enables the nuances of nonverbal communication more than any other media/channel combo.
- By giving people the ability to see, hear, and react to each other, in-person communication is useful for encouraging people to ask questions, make comments, and work together to reach a consensus or decision. Face-to-face interaction is particularly helpful in complex, emotionally charged situations in which establishing or fostering a business relationship is important. Managers who engage in frequent “walk-arounds,” chatting with employees face-to-face, can get input, answer questions, and interpret important business events and trends.

Oral Medium, Digital Channel

- Oral media via digital channels include any transmission of **voice via electronic means, both live and recorded, including telephone calls, podcasts, and voicemail messages. Live phone conversations offer the give-and-take of in-person conversations and can be the best alternative to talking in person.** Without a video component, however, they can't provide the nuances of nonverbal communication. **Podcasts** can be a good way to share lectures, commentary, and other spoken content.

Written Medium, Print Channel

- Written, printed documents are the classic format of business communication. Memos are brief printed documents traditionally used for the routine, day-to-day exchange of information within an organization. **Letters are brief written messages** sent to customers and other recipients outside the organization. Reports and proposals are usually longer than memos and letters, although both can be created in **memo or letter format**. These documents come in a variety of lengths, ranging from a few pages to several hundred, and usually have a fairly formal tone.

Written Medium, Digital Channel

- Most of your business communication efforts will involve written digital messages, with everything from super-short **tweets to website content to book-length reports distributed as portable document format (PDF) files**. Business uses of written digital messages keep evolving as companies look for ways to communicate more effectively. For example, **email** has been a primary business medium for several decades, but it is being replaced in many cases by a variety of other digital formats. 4 Chapters 7 and 8 take a closer look at various written-digital combinations, from email to instant messaging (IM) to social networks.

Visual Medium, Print Channel

- **Photographs and diagrams** can be effective communication tools for conveying emotional content, spatial relationships, technical processes, and other content that can be difficult to describe using words alone. You may occasionally **create visual printed messages** as standalone items, but most will be used as supporting material in printed documents.

Visual Medium, Digital Channel

- Business messages can come alive when conveyed by **visual media in digital channels. Infographics, interactive diagrams, animation, and digital video** have the potential to engage audiences in ways that other formats can't, which is why the use of visual elements in business communication continues to grow.
- Traditional business messages rely primarily on text, with occasional support from graphics such as charts, graphs, or diagrams to help illustrate points discussed in the text. However, many business communicators are discovering the power of messages in which the visual element is dominant and supported by small amounts of text. For the purposes of this discussion, think of visual media as formats in which one or more visual elements play a central role in conveying the message content.

- Messages that combine powerful visuals with supporting text can be effective for a number of reasons. Today's audiences are pressed for time and bombarded with messages, so anything that communicates quickly is welcome.
- Visuals are also effective at describing complex ideas and processes because they can reduce the work required for an audience to identify the parts and relationships that make up the whole.

TABLE 4.1 Medium/Channel Combinations: Advantages and Disadvantages

| Medium/Channel | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Oral, in-person | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunity for immediate feedback • Easily resolve misunderstandings and negotiate meanings • Involve rich nonverbal cues (both physical gesture and vocal inflection) • Allow expression of the emotion behind your message | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrict participation to those physically present • Unless recorded, provide no permanent, verifiable record of the communication • Reduce communicator's control over the message |
| Oral, digital | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide opportunity for immediate feedback (live phone or online conversations) • Not restricted to participants in the same location • Allow time-shifted consumption (for example, podcasts) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack nonverbal cues other than voice inflections • Can be tedious to listen to if not audience focused (recorded messages) |
| Written, printed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow writers to plan and control their messages • Can reach geographically dispersed audiences • Offer a permanent, verifiable record • Minimize the distortion that can accompany oral messages • Can be used to avoid immediate interactions • Deemphasize any inappropriate emotional components • Give recipients time to process messages before responding (compared to oral communication) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer limited opportunities for timely feedback • Lack the rich nonverbal cues provided by oral media • Often take more time and more resources to create and distribute • Can require special skills to prepare or produce if document is elaborate |

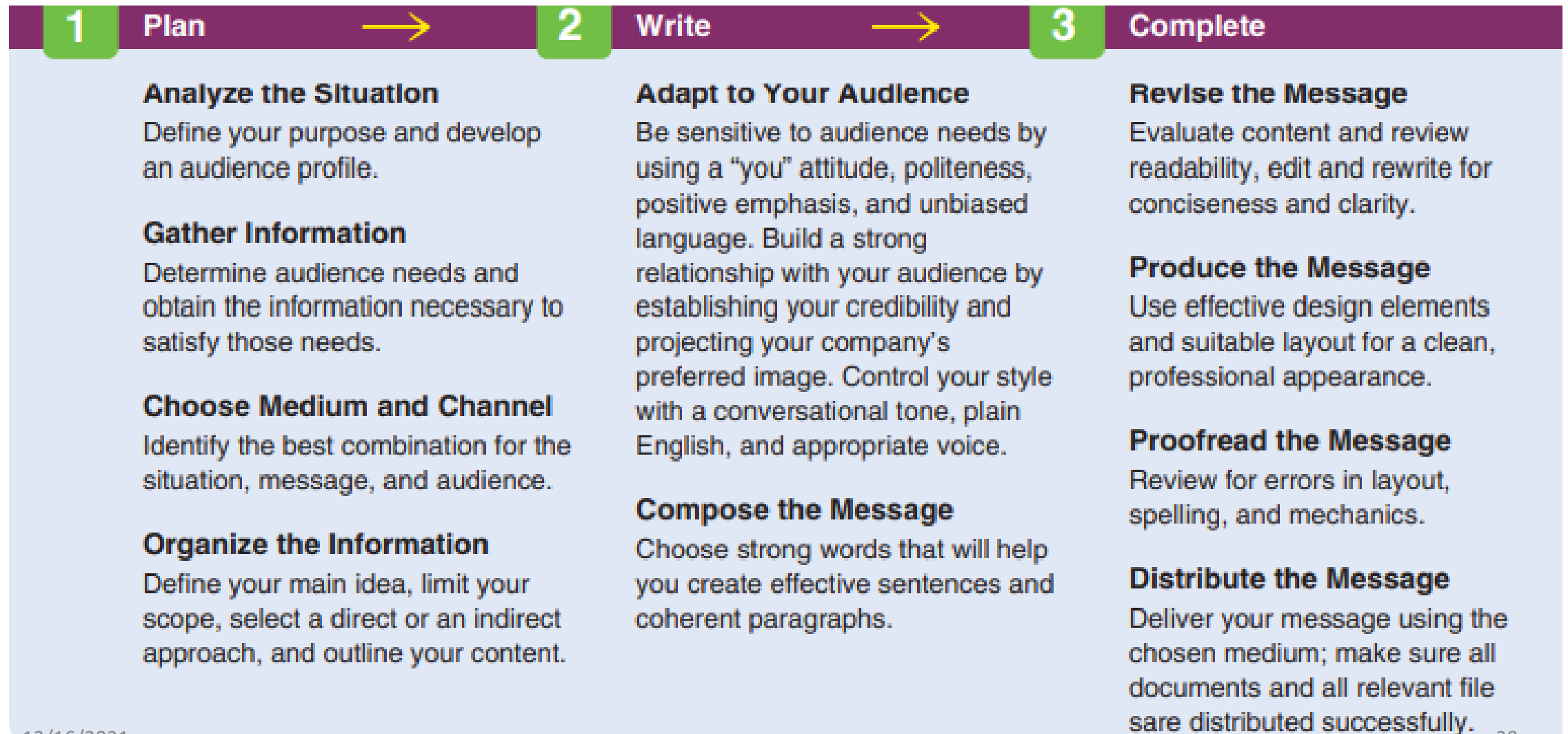
| | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Written, digital | <p>Generally, all the advantages of written printed documents plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Fast delivery •• Can reach geographically dispersed audiences •• Flexibility of multiple formats and channels, from microblogs to wikis •• Flexibility to structure messages in creative ways, such as writing a headline on Twitter and linking to the full message on a blog •• Ability to link to related and more in-depth information •• Can increase accessibility and openness in an organization through broader sharing •• Enable audience interaction through social media features •• Ease of integrating with other media types, such as embedded videos or photos | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Can be limited in terms of reach and capability (for example, on Twitter you can reach only those people who follow you or search for you) •• Require Internet or mobile phone connectivity •• Vulnerable to security and privacy problems •• Are easy to overuse (sending too many messages to too many recipients) •• Create privacy risks and concerns (exposing confidential data, employer monitoring, accidental forwarding) •• Entail security risks (viruses, spyware; network breaches) •• Create productivity concerns (frequent interruptions, nonbusiness usage) |
| Visual, printed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Can quickly convey complex ideas and relationships •• Often less intimidating than long blocks of text •• Can reduce the burden on the audience to figure out how the pieces of a message or concept fit •• Can be easy to create in spreadsheets and other software (simple charts and graphs), then integrate with reports | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Can require artistic skills to design •• Require some technical skills to create •• Can require more time to create than equivalent amount of text •• Can be expensive to print |
| Visual, digital | <p>Generally, all the advantages of visual printed documents and all the advantages of written digital formats plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Can personalize and enhance the experience for audience members •• Offer the persuasive power of multimedia formats, particularly video | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •• Potential time, cost, and skills needed to create •• Can require large amounts of bandwidth |

Understanding the process of written business Communication

- By following the process introduced in this lecture, you can create successful messages that meet audience needs and highlight your skills as a perceptive business professional.



Steps of written business communication



Steps of written communication

- **Step 1: Planning business messages.** To plan any message, first analyze the situation by defining your purpose and developing a profile of your audience. When you're sure what you need to accomplish with your message, gather the information that will meet your audience's needs. Next, select the best combination of medium and channel to deliver your message. Then organize the information by defining your main idea, limiting your scope, selecting the direct or indirect approach, and outlining your content.

- **Step 2: Writing business messages.** After you've planned your message, adapt to your audience by using sensitivity, relationship skills, and an appropriate writing style. Then you're ready to compose your message by choosing strong words, creating effective sentences, and developing coherent paragraphs.
- **Step 3: Completing business messages.** After writing your first draft, revise your message by evaluating the content, reviewing readability, and editing and rewriting until your message comes across concisely and clearly, with correct grammar, proper punctuation, and effective format. Next, produce your message. Put it into the form that your audience will receive and review all design and layout decisions for an attractive, professional appearance. Proofread the final product to ensure high quality and then distribute your message.

Thank you