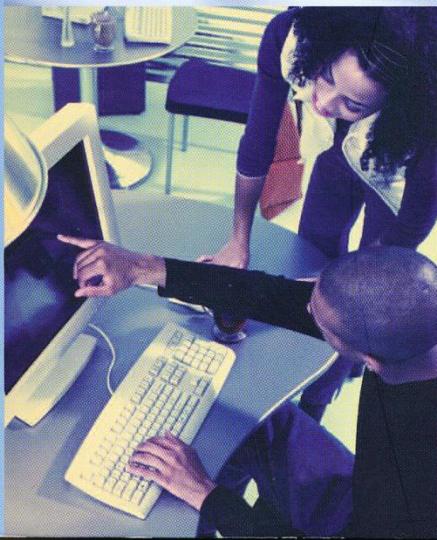


# STRATEGIES FOR BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL WRITING



SEVENTH EDITION

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## Audience Analysis: The Problem and a Solution

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Every communication situation involves three fundamental components: a writer, a message, and an audience. However, many report writers treat the communication situation as if there were only two components: a writer and his message. Writers often ignore their readers because writers are preoccupied with their own problems and with the subject matter of the communication. The consequence is a poorly designed, ineffective report.

As an example, a student related to the class her first communication experience on a design project during summer employment with an automobile company. After she had been working on her assignment for a few weeks, her supervisor asked her to jot him a memo explaining what she was doing. Not wanting to take much time away from her work and not thinking the report very important, she gave him a handwritten memo and continued her technical activities. Soon after, the department manager inquired on the progress of the project. The supervisor immediately responded that he had just had a progress report, and thereupon forwarded the engineer's brief memo. Needless to say, the engineer felt embarrassed when her undeveloped and inadequately explained memo became an official report to the organization. The engineer thought her memo was written just to her supervisor, who was quite familiar with her assignment. Due to her lack of experience with organizational behavior, she made several false assumptions about her report audience, and therefore about her report's purpose.

The inexperienced report writer often fails to design his report effectively because he makes several false assumptions about the report writing situation. If the writer would stop to analyze the audience component, he would realize that:

1. It is false to assume that the person addressed is the audience.
2. It is false to assume that the audience is a group of specialists in the field.
3. It is false to assume that the report has a finite period of use.
4. It is false to assume that the author and the audience always will be available for reference.
5. It is false to assume that the audience is familiar with the assignment.
6. It is false to assume that the audience has been involved in daily discussions of the material.
7. It is false to assume that the audience awaits the report.
8. It is false to assume that the audience has time to read the report.

Assumptions one and two indicate a writer's lack of awareness of the nature of his report audience. Assumptions three, four, and five indicate his lack of appreciation of the dynamic nature of the system. Assumptions six, seven, and eight indicate a writer's lack of consideration of the demands of day-by-day job activity.

A report has value only to the extent that it is useful to the organization. It is often used primarily by someone other than the person who requested it. Furthermore, the report may be responding to a variety of needs within the organization. These needs suggest that the persons who will use the report are not specialists or perhaps not even technically knowledgeable about the report's subject. The specialist is the engineer. Unless he is engaged in basic research, he usually must communicate with persons representing many different areas of operation in the organization.

In addition, the report is often useful over an extended period of time. Each written communication is filed in several offices. Last year's report can be incomprehensible if the writer did not anticipate and explain his purpose adequately. In these situations, even within the office where a report originated, the author as well as his supervisor will probably not be available to explain the report. Although organizational charts remain unchanged for years, personnel, assignments, and professional roles change constantly. Because of this dynamic process, even the immediate audience of a report sometimes is not familiar with the writer's technical assignment. Thus, the report writer usually must design his report for a dynamic situation.

Finally, the report writer must also be alert to the communication traps in relatively static situations. Not all readers will have heard the coffee break chats that fill in the details necessary to make even a routine recommendation convincing. A report can arrive at a time when the reader's mind is churning with other concerns. Even if it is expected, the report usually meets a reader who needs to act immediately. The reader usually does not have time to read through the whole report; he wants the useful information clearly and succinctly. To the reader, time probably is the most important commodity. Beginning report writers seldom realize they must design their reports to be used efficiently rather than read closely.

The sources of the false assumptions we have been discussing are not difficult to identify. The original source is the artificial communication a student is required

to perform in college. In writing only for professors, a student learns to write for audiences of one, audiences who know more than the writer knows, and audiences who have no instrumental interests in what the report contains. The subsequent source, on the job, is the writer's natural attempt to simplify his task. The report writer, relying upon daily contact and familiarity, simply finds it easier to write a report for his own supervisor than to write for a supervisor in a different department. The writer also finds it easier to concentrate upon his own concerns than to consider the needs of his readers. He finds it difficult to address complex audiences and face the design problems they pose.

## AUDIENCE COMPONENTS AND PROBLEMS THEY POSE

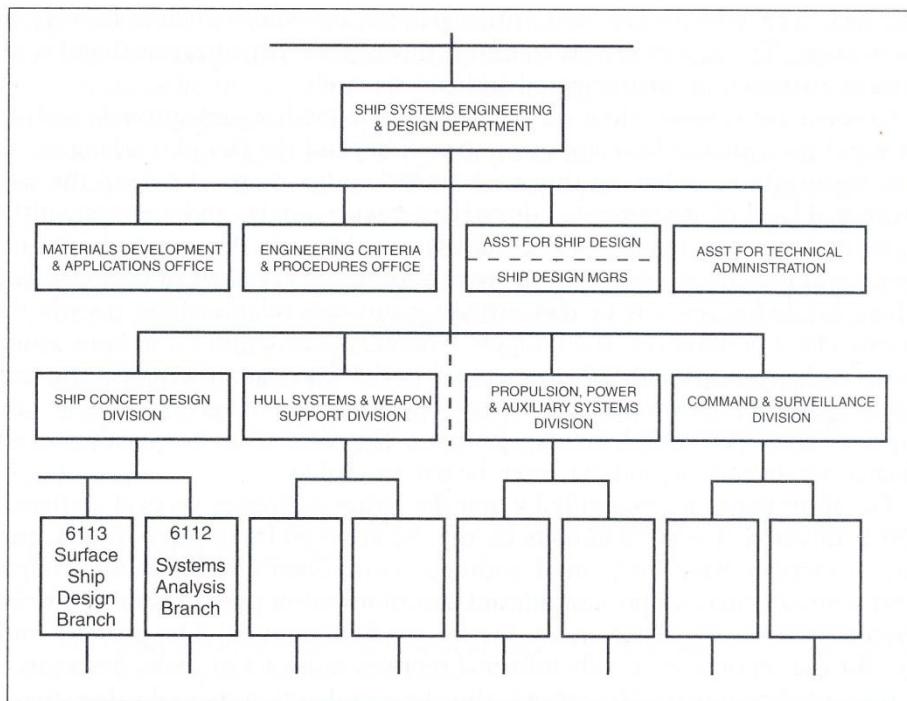
To write a report you must first understand how your audience poses a problem. Then you must analyze your audience in order to be able to design a report structure that provides an optimum solution. To explain the components of the report audience you must do more than just identify names, titles, and roles. You must determine who your audiences are as related to the purpose and content of your report. "Who" involves the specific operational functions of the persons who will read the report, as well as their educational and business backgrounds. These persons can be widely distributed, as is evident if you consider the operational relationships within a typical organization.

Classifying audiences only according to directions of communication flow along the paths delineated by the conventional organizational chart, we can identify three types of report audiences: *horizontal*, *vertical*, and *external*. For example, in the organization chart in Figure 1, *Part of Organization Chart for Naval Ship Engineering Center*,<sup>1</sup> horizontal audiences exist on each level. The Ship Concept Design Division and the Command and Surveillance Division form horizontal audiences for each other. Vertical audiences exist between levels. The Ship Concept Design Division and the Surface Ship Design Branch form vertical audiences for each other. External audiences exist when any unit interacts with a separate organization, such as when the Surface Ship Design Branch communicates with the Newport News Shipbuilding Company.

What the report writer first must realize is the separation between him and any of these three types of audiences. Few reports are written for horizontal audiences within the same unit, such as from one person in the Surface Ship Design Branch to another person or project group within the Surface Ship Design Branch itself. Instead, a report at least addresses horizontal audiences within a larger framework, such as from the Surface Ship Design Branch to the Systems Analysis Branch. Important reports usually have complex audiences, that is, vertical and horizontal, and sometimes external audiences as well.

An analysis of the problems generated by horizontal audiences—often assumed to pose few problems—illustrates the difficulties most writers face in all

<sup>1</sup>A reference in H. B. Benford and J. C. Mathes, *Your Future in Naval Architecture*, Richards Rosen, New York, 1968.



**FIGURE I** Part of Organization Chart for Naval Ship Engineering Center

report writing situations. A systems engineer in the Systems Analysis Branch has little technical education in common with the naval architect in the Surface Ship Design Branch. In most colleges he takes only a few of the same mathematics and engineering science courses. The systems engineer would not know the wave resistance theory familiar to the naval architect, although he could use the results of his analysis. In turn, the naval architect would not know stochastics and probability theory, although he could understand systems models. But the differences between these audiences and writers go well beyond differences in training. In addition to having different educational backgrounds, the audiences will have different concerns, such as budget, production, or contract obligations. The audiences will also be separated from the writer by organizational politics and competition, as well as by personality differences among the people concerned.

When the writer addresses a horizontal audience in another organizational unit, he usually addresses a person in an organizational role. When addressed to the role rather than the person, the report is aimed at a department or a group. This means the report will have audiences in addition to the person addressed. It may be read primarily by staff personnel and subordinates. The addressee ultimately may act on the basis of the information reported, but at times he serves only to transfer the report to persons in his department who will use it. Furthermore, the report may have audiences in addition to those in the department

addressed. It may be forwarded to other persons elsewhere, such as lawyers and comptrollers. The report travels routinely throughout organizational paths, and will have unknown or unanticipated audiences as well.

Consequently, even when on the same horizontal organizational level, the writer and his audience have little in common beyond the fact of working for the same organization, of having the same "rank" and perhaps of having the same educational level of attainment. Educational backgrounds can be entirely different; more important, needs, values, and uses are different. The report writer may recommend the choice of one switch over another on the basis of cost-efficiency analysis; his audiences may be concerned for business relationships, distribution patterns, client preferences, and budgets. Therefore, the writer should not assume that his audience has technical competence in the field, familiarity with the technical assignment, knowledge of him or of personnel in his group, similar value perspectives, or even complementary motives. The differences between writer and audience are distinctive, and may even be irreconcilable.

The differences are magnified when the writer addresses vertical audiences. Reports directed at vertical audiences, that is, between levels of an organization chart, invariably have horizontal audience components also. These complex report writing situations pose significant communication problems for the writer. Differences between writer and audience are fundamental. The primary audiences for the reports, especially informal reports, must act or make decisions on the basis of the reports. The reports thus have only instrumental value, that is, value insofar as they can be used effectively. The writer must design his report primarily according to how it will be used.

In addition to horizontal audiences and to vertical audiences, many reports are also directed to external audiences. External audiences, whether they consist of a few or many persons, have the distinctive, dissimilar features of the complex vertical audience. With external audiences these features invariably are exaggerated, especially those involving need and value. An additional complication is that the external audience can judge an entire organization on the basis of the writer's report. And sometimes most important of all, concerns for tact and business relationships override technical concerns.

In actual practice the writer often finds audiences in different divisions of his own company to be "external" audiences. One engineer encountered this problem in his first position after graduation. He was sent to investigate the inconsistent test data being sent to his group from a different division of the company in another city. He found that the test procedures being used in that division were faulty. However, at his supervisor's direction he had to write a report that would not "step on any toes." He had to write the report in such a manner as to have the other division correct its test procedures while not implying that the division was in any way at fault. An engineer who assumes that the purpose of his report is just to explain a technical investigation is poorly prepared for professional practice.

Most of the important communication situations for an engineer during his first five years out of college occur when he reports to his supervisor, department head, and beyond. In these situations, his audiences are action-oriented line

management who are uninterested in the technical details and may even be unfamiliar with the assignment. In addition, his audiences become acquainted with him professionally through his reports; therefore, it is more directly the report than the investigation that is important to the writer's career.

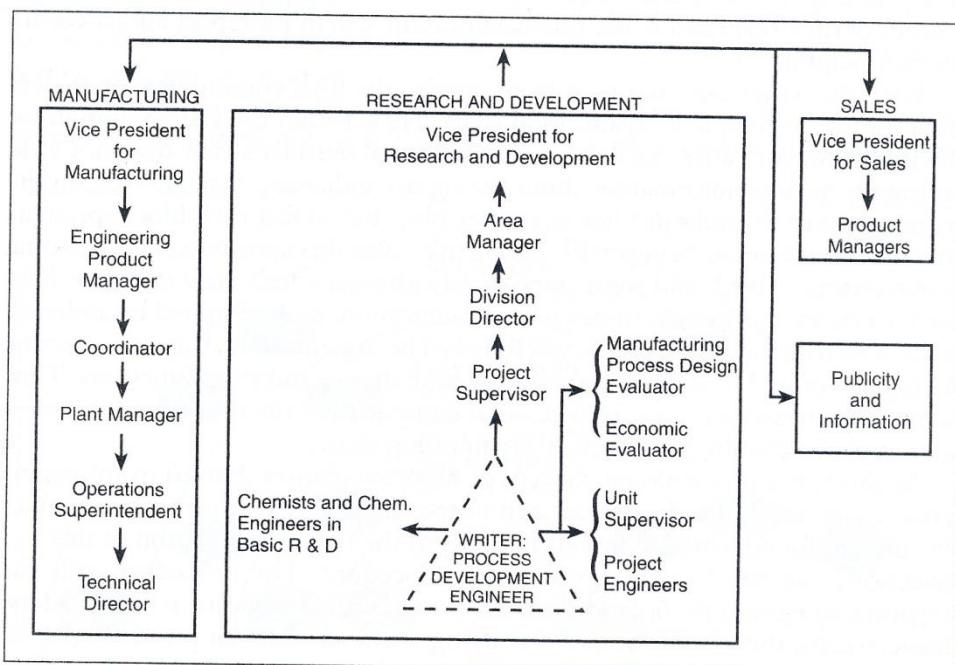
Audience components and the significant design problems they pose are well illustrated by the various audiences for a formal report written by an engineer on the development of a process to make a high purity chemical, as listed in Figure 2, *Complex Audience Components for a Formal Report by a Chemical Engineer on a Process to Make a High Purity Chemical*. The purpose of the report was to explain the process; others would make a feasibility study of the process and evaluate it in comparison to other processes.

The various audiences for this report, as you can determine just by reading their titles, would have had quite different roles, backgrounds, interests, values, needs, and uses for the report. The writer's brief analysis of the audiences yielded the following:

He could not determine the nature of many of his audiences, who they were, or what the specifics of their roles were.

His audiences had little familiarity with his assignment.

His report would be used for information, for evaluation of the process, and for evaluation of the company's position in the field.



**FIGURE 2** Complex Audience Components for a Formal Report by a Chemical Engineer on a Process to Make a High Purity Chemical

Some of his audiences would have from a minute to a half hour to glance at the report, some would take the report home to study it, and some would use it over extended periods of time for process analysis and for economic and manufacturing feasibility studies.

The useful lifetime of the report could be as long as twenty years.

The report would be used to evaluate the achievements of the writer's department.

The report would be used to evaluate the writing and technical proficiencies of the writer himself.

This report writer classified his audiences in terms of the conventional organization chart. Then to make them more than just names, titles, and roles he asked himself what they would know about his report and how they would use it. Even then he had only partially solved his audience problem and had just begun to clarify the design problems he faced. To do so he needed to analyze his audiences systematically.

## A METHOD FOR SYSTEMATIC AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

To introduce the audience problem that report writers must face, we have used the conventional concept of the organization chart to classify audiences as *horizontal*, *vertical*, and *external*. However, when the writer comes to the task of performing an instrumentally useful audience analysis for a particular report, this concept of the organization and this classification system for report audiences are not very helpful.

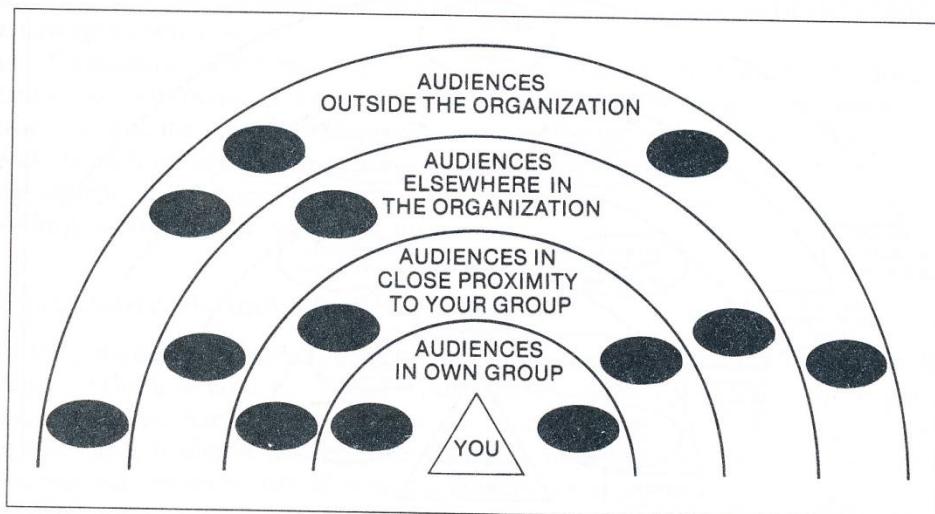
First, the writer does not view from outside the total communication system modeled by the company organization chart. He is within the system himself, so his view is always relative. Second, the conventional outsider's view does not yield sufficiently detailed information about the report audiences. A single bloc on the organization chart looks just like any other bloc, but in fact each bloc represents one or several human beings with distinctive roles, backgrounds, and personal characteristics. Third, and most importantly, the outsider's view does not help much to clarify the specific routes of communication, as determined by audience needs, which an individual report will follow. The organization chart may describe the organization, but it does not describe how the organization functions. Thus many of the routes a report follows—and consequently the needs it addresses—will not be signaled by the company organization chart.

In short, the conventional concept of report audiences derived from organization charts is necessarily abstract and unspecific. For that reason a more effective method for audience analysis is needed. In the remaining portion of this . . . [selection], we will present a three-step procedure. The procedure calls for preparing an egocentric organization chart to identify individual report readers, characterizing these readers, and classifying them to establish priorities. Based upon an egocentric view of the organization and concerned primarily with what report readers need, this system should yield the information the writer must have if he is to design an individual report effectively.

### Prepare an Egocentric Organization Chart

An egocentric organization chart differs from the conventional chart in two senses. First, it identifies specific individuals rather than complex organizational units. A bloc on the conventional chart may often represent a number of people, but insofar as possible the egocentric chart identifies particular individuals who are potential readers of reports a writer produces. Second, the egocentric chart categorizes people in terms of their proximity to the report writer rather than in terms of their hierarchical relationship to the report writer. Readers are not identified as organizationally superior, inferior, or equal to the writer but rather as near or distant from the writer. We find it effective to identify four different degrees of distance as is illustrated in Figure 3, *Egocentric Organization Chart*. In this figure, with the triangle representing the writer, each circle is an individual reader identified by his organizational title and by his primary operational concerns. The four degrees of distance are identified by the four concentric rings. The potential readers in the first ring are those people with whom the writer associates daily. They are typically those people in his same office or project group. The readers in the second ring are those people in other offices with whom the writer must normally interact in order to perform his job. Typically, these are persons in adjacent and management groups. The readers in the third ring are persons relatively more distant but still within the same organization. They are distant management, public relations, sales, legal department, production, purchasing, and so on. They are operationally dissimilar persons. The readers in the fourth ring are persons beyond the organization. They may work for the same company but in a division in another city. Or they may work for an entirely different organization.

Having prepared the egocentric organization chart, the report writer is able to see himself and his potential audiences from a useful perspective. Rather than



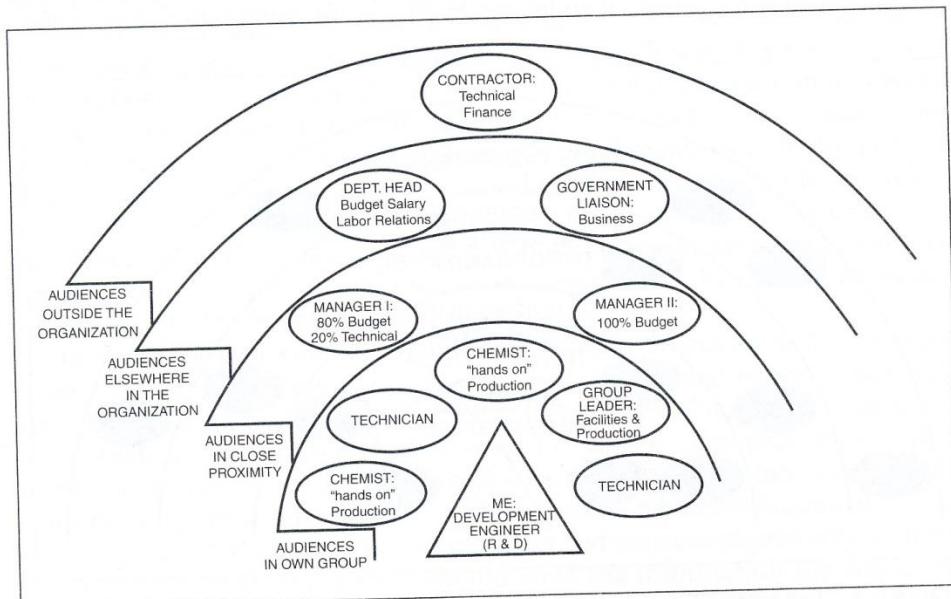
**FIGURE 3** Egocentric Organization Chart

seeing himself as an insignificantly small part of a complex structure—as he is apt to do with the conventional organizational chart—the writer sees himself as a center from which communication radiates throughout an organization. He sees his readers as individuals rather than as faceless blocs. And he sees that what he writes is addressed to people with varying and significant degrees of difference.

A good illustration of the perspective provided by the egocentric organization chart is the chart prepared by a chemical engineer working for a large corporation, Figure 4, *Actual Egocentric Organization Chart of an Engineer in a Large Corporation*. It is important to notice how the operational concerns of the persons even in close proximity vary considerably from those of the development engineer. What these people need from reports written by this engineer, then, has little to do with the processes by which he defined his technical problems.

The chemical engineer himself is concerned with the research and development of production processes and has little interest in, or knowledge of, budgetary matters. Some of the audiences in his group are chemists concerned with production—not with research and development. Because of this they have, as he said, “lost familiarity with the technical background, and instead depend mostly on experience.” Other audiences in his group are technicians concerned only with operations. With only two years of college, they have had no more than introductory chemistry courses and have had no engineering courses.

Still another audience in his group is his group leader. Rather than being concerned with development, this reader is concerned with facilities and production operations. Consequently, he too is “losing familiarity with the technical material.” Particularly significant for the report writer is that his group leader in



**FIGURE 4** Actual Egocentric Organization Chart of an Engineer in a Large Corporation

his professional capacity does not use his B.S.Ch.E. degree. His role is that of manager, so his needs have become administrative rather than technical.

The concerns of the chemical engineer/report writer's audiences in close proximity to his group change again. Instead of being concerned with development or production operations, these audiences are primarily concerned with the budget. They have little technical contact, and are described as "business oriented." Both Manager I and Manager II are older, and neither has a degree in engineering. One has a Ph.D. degree in chemistry, the other an M.S. degree in technology. Both have had technical experience in the lab, but neither can readily follow technical explanations. As the chemical engineer said, both would find it "difficult to return to the law."

The report writer's department head and other persons through whom the group communicates with audiences elsewhere in the organization, and beyond it, have additional concerns as well as different backgrounds. The department head is concerned with budget, personnel, and labor relations. The person in contact with outside funding units—in this case, a government agency—has business administration degrees and is entirely business oriented. The person in contact with subcontractors has both technical and financial concerns.

Notice that when this writer examined his audiences even in his own group as well as those in close proximity to him, he saw that the natures, the backgrounds, and especially the operational concerns of his audiences vary and differ considerably. As he widened the scope of his egocentric organization chart, he knew less and less about his audiences. However, he could assume they will vary even more than those of the audiences in close proximity.

Thus, in the process of examining the audience situation with an egocentric organization chart, a report writer can uncover not only the fact that audiences have functionally different interests, but also the nature of those functional differences. He can proceed to classify the audiences for each particular report in terms of audience needs.

Preparation of the egocentric organization chart is the first step of your procedure of systematic audience analysis. Notice that this step can be performed once to describe your typical report audience situation but must be particularized for each report to define the audiences for that report. Having prepared the egocentric chart once, the writer revises his chart for subsequent reports by adding or subtracting individual audiences.

### Characterize the Individual Report Readers

In the process of preparing the egocentric organization chart, you immediately begin to think of your individual report readers in particular terms. In preparing the egocentric chart discussed above, the report writer mentioned such items as a reader's age, academic degrees, and background in the organization as well as his operational concerns. All of these particulars will come to mind when you think of your audiences as individuals. However, a systematic rather than piecemeal audience analysis will yield more useful information. The second step of audience analysis is, therefore, a systematic characterization of each person identified in the

egocentric organization chart. A systematic characterization is made in terms of *operational, objective, and personal* characteristics.

The *operational characteristics* of your audiences are particularly important. As you identify the operational characteristics for a person affected by your report, try to identify significant differences between his or her role and yours. What are his professional values? How does he spend his time? That is, will his daily concerns and attitudes enable him to react to your report easily, or will they make it difficult for him to grasp what you are talking about? What does he know about your role, and in particular, what does he know or remember about your technical assignment and the organizational problem that occasioned your report to come to him? You should also consider carefully what he will need from your report. As you think over your entire technical investigation, ask yourself if that person will involve staff personnel in action on your report, or if he will in turn activate other persons elsewhere in the organization, when he receives the report. If he should, you must take their reactions into account when you write your report.

In addition, you should ask yourself, "How will my report affect his role?" A student engineer recently told us of an experience he had during summer employment when he was asked to evaluate the efficiency of the plant's waste treatment process. Armed with his fresh knowledge from advanced chemical engineering courses, to his surprise he found that, by making a simple change in the process, the company could save more than \$200,000 a year. He fired off his report with great anticipation of glowing accolades—none came. How had his report affected the roles of some of his audiences? Although the writer had not considered the report's consequences when he wrote it, the supervisor, the manager, and related personnel now were faced with the problem of accounting for their waste of \$200,000 a year. It should have been no surprise that they were less than elated over his discovery.

By *objective characteristics* we mean specific, relevant background data about the person. As you try to identify his or her educational background, you may note differences you might have otherwise neglected. Should his education seem to approximate yours, do not assume he knows what you know. Remember that the half-life of engineering education today is about five years. Thus, anyone five to ten years older than you, if you are recently out of college, probably will be only superficially familiar with the material and jargon of your advanced technical courses. If you can further identify his past professional experiences and roles, you might be able to anticipate his first-hand knowledge of your role and technical activities as well as to clarify any residual organizational commitments and value systems he might have. When you judge his knowledge of your technical area, ask yourself, "Could he participate in a professional conference in my field of specialization?"

For *personal characteristics*, when you identify a person by name, ask yourself how often the name changes in this organizational role. When you note his or her approximate age, remind yourself how differences in age can inhibit communication. Also note personal concerns that could influence his reactions to your report.

A convenient way to conduct the audience analysis we have been describing and to store the information it yields is to use an analysis form similar to the one

in Figure 5, *Form for Characterizing Individual Report Readers* [p. 180]. It may be a little time-consuming to do this the first time around, but you can establish a file of audience characterizations. Then you can add to or subtract from this file as an individual communication situation requires.

One final point: This form is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. What is important for the report writer is that he thinks systematically about the questions this form raises. The novice usually has to force himself to analyze his audiences systematically. The experienced writer does this automatically.

### Classify Audiences in Terms of How They Will Use Your Report

For each report you write, trace out the communication routes on your egocentric organization chart and add other routes not on the chart. Do not limit these routes to those specifically identified by the assignment and the addresses of the report. Rather, think through the total impacts of your report on the organization. That is, think in terms of the first, second, and even some third-order consequences of your report, and trace out the significant communication routes involved. All of these consequences define your actual communication.

When you think in terms of consequences, primarily you think in terms of the uses to which your report will be put. No longer are you concerned with your technical investigation itself. In fact, when you consider how readers will use your report, you realize that very few of your potential readers will have any real interest in the details of your technical investigation. Instead, they want to know the answers to such questions as "Why was this investigation made? What is the significance of the problem it addresses? What am I supposed to do with the results of this investigation? What will it cost? What are the implications—for sales, for production, for the unions? What happens next? Who does it? Who is responsible?"

It is precisely this audience concern for nontechnical questions that causes so much trouble for young practicing engineers. Professionally, much of what the engineer spends his time doing is, at most, of only marginal concern to many of his audiences. His audiences ask questions about things which perhaps never entered his thoughts during his own technical activities when he received the assignment, defined the problem, and performed his investigation. These questions, however, must enter into his considerations when he writes his report.

Having defined the communication routes for a report you now know what audiences you will have and what questions they will want answered. The final step in our method of audience analysis is to assign priorities to your audiences. Classify them in terms of how they will use your report. In order of their importance to you (not in terms of their proximity to you), classify your audiences by these three categories:

- *Primary audiences*—who make decisions or act on the basis of the information a report contains.
- *Secondary audiences*—who are affected by the decisions and actions.
- *Immediate audiences*—who route the report or transmit the information it contains.

NAME:	TITLE:
<b>A. OPERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS:</b>	
1. His role within the organization and consequent value system:	
2. His daily concerns and attitudes:	
3. His knowledge of your technical responsibilities and assignment:	
4. What he will need from your report:	
5. What staff and other persons will be activated by your report through him:	
6. How your report could affect his role:	
<b>B. OBJECTIVE CHARACTERISTICS:</b>	
1. His education—levels, fields, and years:	
2. His past professional experiences and roles:	
3. His knowledge of your technical area:	
<b>C. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:</b>	
Personal characteristics that could influence his reactions—age, attitudes, pet concerns, etc.	

**FIGURE 5** Form for Characterizing Individual Report Readers

The *primary audience* for a report consists of those persons who will make decisions or act on the basis of the information provided by the report. The report overall should be designed to meet the needs of these users. The primary audience can consist of one person who will act in an official capacity, or it can consist of several persons representing several offices using the report. The important point here is that the primary audience for a report can consist of persons from any ring on the egocentric organization chart. They may be distant or in close proximity to the writer. They may be his organizational superiors, inferiors, or equals. They are simply those readers for whom the report is primarily intended. They are the top priority users.

In theory at least, primary audiences act in terms of their organizational roles rather than as individuals with distinctive idiosyncrasies, predilections, and values. Your audience analysis should indicate when these personal concerns are likely to override organizational concerns. A typical primary audience is the decision maker, but his actual decisions are often determined by the evaluations and recommendations of staff personnel. Thus the report whose primary audience is a decision maker with line responsibility actually has an audience of staff personnel. Another type of primary audience is the production superintendent, but again his actions are often contingent upon the reactions of others.

In addition, because the report enters into a system, in time both the line and staff personnel will change; roles rather than individuals provide continuity. For this reason, it is helpful to remember the words of one engineer when he said, "A complete change of personnel could occur over the lifetime of my report." The report remains in the file. The report writer must not assume that his primary audience will be familiar with the technical assignment. He must design the report so that it contains adequate information concerning the reasons for the assignment, details of the procedures used, the results of the investigation, and conclusions and recommendations. This information is needed so that any future component of his primary audience will be able to use the report confidently.

The *secondary audience* for a report consists of those persons other than primary decision makers or users who are affected by the information the report transmits into the system. These are the people whose activities are affected when a primary audience makes a decision, such as when production supervision has to adjust to management decisions. They must respond appropriately when a primary audience acts, such as when personnel and labor relations have to accommodate production line changes. The report writer must not neglect the needs of his secondary audiences. In tracing out his communication routes, he will identify several secondary audiences. Analysis of their needs will reveal what additional information the report should contain. This information is often omitted by writers who do not classify their audiences sufficiently.

The *immediate audience* for a report are those persons who route the report or transmit the information it contains. It is essential for the report writer to identify his immediate audiences and not to confuse them with his primary audiences. The immediate audience might be the report writer's supervisor or another middle management person. Yet usually his role will be to transmit information rather

than to use the information directly. An information system has numerous persons who transmit reports but who may not act upon the information or who may not be affected by the information in ways of concern to the report writers. Often, a report is addressed to the writer's supervisor, but except for an incidental memo report, the supervisor serves only to transmit and expedite the information flow throughout the organizational system.

A word of caution: at times the immediate audience is also part of the primary audience; at other times the immediate audience is part of the secondary audience. For each report you write, you must distinguish those among your readers who will function as conduits to the primary audience.

As an example of these distinctions between categories of report audiences, consider how audiences identified on the egocentric organization chart, Figure 4 [p. 176], can be categorized. Assume that the chemical engineer writes a report on a particular process improvement he has designed. The immediate audience might be his Group Leader. Another would be Manager I, transmitting the report to Manager II. The primary audiences might be Manager II and the Department Head; they would ask a barrage of nontechnical questions similar to those we mentioned a moment ago. They will decide whether or not the organization will implement the improvement recommended by the writer. The Department Head also could be part of the secondary audience by asking questions relating to labor relations and union contracts. Other secondary audiences, each asking different questions of the report, could be:

The person in contact with the funding agency, who will be concerned with budget and contract implications.

The person in contact with subcontractors, determining how they are affected.

The Group Leader, whose activities will be changed.

The "hands on" chemist, whose production responsibilities will be affected.

The technicians, whose job descriptions will change.

In addition to the secondary audiences on the egocentric organization chart, the report will have other secondary audiences throughout the organization—technical service and development, for example, or perhaps waste treatment.

At some length we have been discussing a fairly detailed method for systematic audience analysis. The method may have seemed more complicated than it actually is. Reduced to its basic ingredients, the method requires you, first, to identify all the individuals who will read the report, second, to characterize them, and third, to classify them. The *Matrix for Audience Analysis*, Figure 6, is a convenient device for characterizing and classifying your readers once you have identified them. At a glance, the matrix reveals what information you have and what information you still need to generate. Above all, the matrix forces you to think systematically. If you are able to fill in a good deal of specific information in each cell (particularly in the first six cells), you have gone a long way towards seeing how the needs of your audiences will determine the design of your report.

Types of audiences	Characteristics		
	Operational	Objective	Personal
Primary	①	④	⑦
Secondary	②	⑤	⑧
Immediate	③	⑥	⑨

**FIGURE 6** Matrix for Audience Analysis

We have not introduced a systematic method for audience analysis with the expectation that it will make your communication task easy. We have introduced you to the problems you must account for when you design your reports—problems you otherwise might ignore. You should, at least, appreciate the complexity of a report audience. Thus, when you come to write a report, you are less likely to make false assumptions about your audience. To develop this attitude is perhaps as important as to acquire the specific information the analysis yields. On the basis of this attitude, you now are ready to determine the specific purpose of your report.