eleventh edition

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Making Connections in a Digital World

LESIKAR + FLATLEY + RENTZ

Business Communication

MAKING CONNECTIONS IN A DIGITAL WORLD

ELEVENTH EDITION

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Dr. Raymond V. Lesikar has served on the faculties of the University of North Texas, Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge, The University of Texas at Austin, and Texas Christian University. He served also as a visiting professor at the University of International Business and Economics, Beijing, China. His contributions to the literature include six books and numerous articles.

Dr. Lesikar has been active in consulting, serving over 80 companies and organizations. Included in this group are Kaiser Aluminum, Goodyear, Exxon, Sears, Ethyl, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Veterans Administration, Crown Zellerbach, Gulf States Utilities, Dow Chemical, Ford Motor Company, Gulf-South Executive Development Program, and the Air War College. He is a Fellow, Distinguished Member, and former president of the Association for Business Communication. In addition, he has served ABC in many capacities over the years. He also holds membership in the Federation of Administrative Disciplines and is a former president of the Southwest Social Science Association. His distinguished teaching career was highlighted by his service as major professor for 23 recipients of the doctoral degree.

Dr. Marie E. Flatley is a Professor of Information and Decision Systems at San Diego State University, where she teaches various courses in business communication. Additionally, she has served as a Fellow at the university's Center for Teaching and Learning and as a Qualcomm Fellow in the pICT (people, Information, Communication, and Technology) program. She received her B.B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Flatley is active in numerous professional organizations, including the Association for Business Communication, the California Business Education Association, Delta Pi Epsilon, and the National Business Education Association. She has served as president of the Association for Business Communication and is a distinguished member of the Association. The California Business Education Association recently named her Business Educator of the year for the senior college/university level. Additionally, she has served as an editorial board member for the *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal,* associate editor for the *Journal of Business Communication* and editor for the *NABTE Review.* Currently she is a reviewer and member of the editorial review board for the *Journal of Education for Business.*

Her current research interests involve using technology to assist with the communication process. Her research spans the investigation of the effective use of blogs to making good channel choices to using video email and various wireless technologies.

Dr. Kathryn Rentz is an Associate Professor in the English Department at the University of Cincinnati. She taught her first business writing class as a doctoral student at the University of Illinois in the early 1980s and has been teaching workplace writing ever since. She helped establish the University of Cincinnati's professional writing program and has served as its coordinator. She has also won the English Department's teaching award, directed the department's graduate program, and helped direct the composition program.

Dr. Rentz's affiliation with the Association for Business Communication goes back to her beginnings as a business writing teacher. She has performed many roles for the association, including serving on the board of directors, organizing a conference, and chairing the publications board. She served two terms as an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Business Communication* and was Interim Editor from 2000–2001, for which she won the Francis W. Weeks Award of Merit.

Dr. Rentz has published articles and commentary on pedagogy, genre theory, narrative, and ethics in such journals as *Business Communication Quarterly,* the *Journal of Business Communication, Technical Communication Quarterly,* and the *Journal of Business and Technical Communication.* She has participated in many professional meetings and seminars over the years and is always learning from her colleagues and her students.

PREFACE

Our overall objective in this revision was to produce the most technologically current and pedagogically effective book in the field. We modestly believe we have succeeded. Because in a sense business communication is technology in today's digital business world, to thoroughly emphasize technology wherever it applies was a logical first goal in our efforts. In working to produce the most pedagogically effective book possible, we continued to pursue the goals that enabled preceding editions to enjoy wide acceptance. These goals were to produce the most authoritative, thorough, learnable, and teachable book possible. Our specific efforts in pursuing all these goals are summarized as follows.

TECHNOLOGICALLY CURRENT

Because the computer and the Internet have affected business communication in so many ways, we worked this subject into the book wherever applicable. Where technology is integral to the way business communicates today, we integrated it into the text discussion. In those cases where technology helps students perform special tasks, we presented it in boxes. Additionally, both the textbook cases and the Web cases use technology in ways typical of today's businesspeople. We believe these efforts will enable students to leverage the power of the computer to save time and improve work quality.

AUTHORITATIVE

The authors are an interdisciplinary team with diverse training and experience who have worked to bring you the subject matter authoritatively from a thorough review of the field. In addition to being well-respected teachers, scholars, and leaders themselves, they have integrated their ideas with information from other researchers and practitioners in the mainstream of business communication, providing the enhanced value of multiple perspectives.

Throughout the text are realistic examples of current business problems and practices. You will find that business information is integrated into examples, message models, reports, text boxes, and end-of-chapter questions, problems, and cases. The extensive range of cases covers both internal and external communication as well as a wide variety of business environments. Furthermore, the cases cover a broad spectrum of challenges that students are likely to find in the workplace—from routine, everyday cases to complex scenarios requiring research and extensive analysis.

THOROUGH

We worked diligently to cover the subject thoroughly. The content of the earlier editions was based on the results of two extensive surveys of business communication teachers. In this edition we supplemented the results of those surveys with suggestions from the highly competent professionals who reviewed the book. And we implemented the research findings and suggestions we heard from colleagues at professional meetings. The result is a book whose content has been developed and approved by experts in the field. It includes sound advice on writing and speaking for business in both internal and external communication situations, using graphics or visuals, and leveraging technological tools to improve the process and the product. Additionally, it incorporates material that meets the needs of both beginning and advanced students. As well as we can determine, this edition covers every topic that today's business communication leaders say it should have.

LEARNABLE

As in earlier editions, we worked hard to make the book serve the student in every practical way. Our goal was to make the learning experience easy and interesting. The book's structured problem-solving approach guides students through the analytical process for various kinds of business messages, blending concrete advice with a focus on critical thinking, judgment, and creativity. To support this we include the following features, all of which have proved to be highly successful in preceding editions:

Readable writing. The writing is in plain, everyday English—the kind the book instructs the students to use.

Learning objectives. Placed at the beginning of all chapters, clearly worded objectives emphasize the learning goals and are tied in to the chapter summaries.

Introductory situations. A realistic description of a business scenario introduces the student to each topic, providing context for discussion and examples.

Outlines of messages. To simplify and clarify the instructions for writing the basic message types, outlines of message plans follow the discussions.

Margin notes. Summaries of content appear in the margins to help students emphasize main points and to review text highlights.

Full document illustrations. Well-written models with detailed margin comments are provided for all kinds of documents—text messages, emails, letters, memos, proposals, and short and long reports.

Specialized report topics. A list of research topics by major business discipline is available for teachers who prefer to assign reports in the students' areas of specialization.

Communication matters. Boxes containing anecdotal and authoritative communication messages add interest and make points throughout the book.

Abundant real business illustrations. Both good and bad examples with explanatory criticisms show the student how to apply the text instructions.

Cartoons. Carefully selected cartoons emphasize key points and add interest.

Photographs. Full-color photographs throughout the text emphasize key points and add interest to content. Teaching captions enhance the textual material.

Computer and web-based Internet applications. Computer and web-based applications have been integrated throughout the book wherever appropriate—into topics such as readability analysis, graphics, research methods, and formatting.

Computer use suggestions. For students who want to know more about how useful computers can be in business communication, pertinent suggestions appear in boxes and on the text website.

Chapter summaries by learning objectives. Ending summaries in fast reading outline form and by learning objectives enable students to recall text highlights.

Critical thinking problems. Fresh, contemporary, in-depth business cases are included for all message and report types—more than in any competing text.

Critical thinking exercises. Challenging exercises test the student's understanding of text content.

Critical thinking questions. End-of-chapter questions emphasize text concepts and provide material for classroom discussion.

New cases. As in past editions, the realistic and thorough case problems are new and updated.

Student Resource portion of the Online Learning Center <www.mhhe.com/lesikar11e>. Additional resources are provided on a comprehensive, up-to-date website. Included are online quizzes, PowerPoint slides, web cases, video cases, an extensive collection of annotated links to relevant websites organized by topic, and more.

TEACHABLE

Perhaps more valuable than anything we can do to help the teacher teach is to help the student learn. The features designed to provide such help are listed above. But there are additional things we can do to help the teacher teach. We worked very hard to develop these teaching tools; and we think we were successful. We sincerely believe the following list of features created for this edition is the most useful and effective ever assembled for a business communication textbook.

Instructor's Resource Manual. The following support material is available for easy use with each lecture:

Sample syllabi and grading systems (rubrics).

Summary teaching notes.

Teaching suggestions with notes for each kind of message.

Illustrated discussion guides for the slides/transparencies.

Answers to end-of-chapter critical thinking questions.

Answers to end-of-chapter critical thinking exercises.

Sample solutions to selected cases.

Case problems from the previous edition (online).

Grading checklists and software. (Part of the Online Learning Center). Lists of likely errors keyed to marking symbols are available for messages and reports. Similarly, symbols for marking grammatical and punctuation errors are available. They help the teacher in the grading process and provide the students with explanations of their errors. Similarly, a software tool coordinated with the text grading symbols is available. It's particularly helpful with students' documents received digitally.

PowerPoint slides. Complete full-chapter slide shows are available for the entire text. These colorful slides provide summaries of key points, additional examples, and examples to critique.

Transparency package. Available on request.

Video DVD to accompany Business Communication. These video cases are presented by real business people, focusing on the importance of communication in the workplace. Each segment presents a real business problem for student interpretation and classroom discussions. In addition to being motivational and informative, these videocases give the students practice to develop their listening skills. (Contact your McGraw-Hill/Irwin representative for more information.)

Test bank. This comprehensive collection of objective questions covers all chapters.

Computerized testing software. This advanced test generator enables the teacher to build and restructure tests to meet specific preferences.

Instructor resources portion of the Online Learning Center. <www.mhhe.com/lesikar11e> An up-to-date website fully supports the text. It includes a database of cases, new web cases that entail using web resources to write solutions, an author-selected collection of annotated links to relevant websites organized by topic, enhanced links for technology chapter, and other active learning material.

Blackboard/WebCT plug-ins for testing and review.

eBook in online and downloadable formats. A customizable version of the text is available as an ebook. One version can be subscribed to and viewed on the Web for anytime/anyplace access. Another version is downloadable for use with a new Zinio reader, an especially desirable option for students with tablets (or laptops) using Clear Type. For more information go to <http://www.zinio.com>.

Tools and Techniques Blog. This blog, accessible on the instructor's website, will include up-to-date material for lectures and assignments as well as a place to communicate with the authors.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

Because the reviewers and adopters generally approve of the organization of the book, we made no major organization changes. Thus the plan of presentation that has characterized this book through ten successful editions remains as follows:

Part I begins with an introductory summary of the role of communication in the organization, including a description of the business communication process.

Part II is a review of the basic techniques of writing and an introduction to messages and the writing process. Here the emphasis is on clear writing, the effect of words, and applications to messages, especially to email.

Part III covers the patterns of business messages—the most common direct and indirect ones.

Part IV concentrates on report writing. Although the emphasis is on the shorter reports and proposals, the long, analytical reports also receive complete coverage.

Part V reviews the other forms of business communication. Included here are communication activities such as participating in meetings, telephoning, dictating, and listening as well as giving presentations.

Part VI consists of special topic chapters for flexible use as customized for particular classes. The part includes chapters on cross-cultural communication, correctness, technology-assisted communication, and business-research methods.

Because teachers use these topics in different ways and in different sequences, they are placed in this final part so that they can be used in the sequence and way that best fit each teacher's needs.

RETAINED FEATURES

Many of our reviewers have commented on the value of particular items that we have kept and in some cases polished. Some are well tested and widely used while others, such as blogs, were in their infancy in the last edition. Here are just a few you will find here again.

- Ethical issues are integrated throughout with particular focus on ethical treatment of the reader and on ethical persuasion.
- Students are walked through the writing process and given effective strategies for planning, drafting, and revising.
- Traits of all major forms of business writing are discussed, from letters, memos, and reports to email, text messaging, and instant messaging.
- A building-block approach to writing skills is taken, providing advice on word choice, sentences, and paragraphs before discussions of major message types.
- Foundational advice is provided on report writing topics from data gathering and analysis to level of formality, structure, and format.
- Research is thoroughly covered, including gathering primary and secondary information and the use of databases and the Internet.
- Cross-cultural communication is discussed, with emphasis on using English with non-native English speakers.
- A full chapter on correctness is offered, using contemporary examples along with clear explanations.

ADDITIONS TO CONTENT

As with previous editions, we thoroughly updated this edition. We expanded coverage wherever we and our reviewers thought it would improve content. Our most significant additions or expansions are the following:

- Information about technology has been updated and integrated throughout with new emphasis on web-based applications and Office 12.
- The communication model has been adapted to business communication with special emphasis on business-related contexts and the communicators' relationship.
- Coverage of general persuasion concepts, including reader benefits and persuasive appeals (logical, emotional, and character based), has been expanded.
- Sections on internal messages have been added to Chapters 6 and 7 with new information on operational messages and negative announcements.
- The section on proposals has been extended, covering different purposes, types, and strategies.
- A new section on delivering virtual presentations has been included, along with expanded coverage on the use of photos as graphics or visuals.
- Updated material on job search, research, and documentation has been provided.

Finally, the website has updated online quizzes and new web-based and video cases. The web-based cases include ones for iPods (and mp3 devices).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Any comprehensive work such as this must owe credit to a multitude of people. Certainly, we should acknowledge the contributions of the pioneers in the business communication field, especially those whose teachings have become a part of our thinking. We are especially indebted to those business communication scholars who served as reviewers for this and past editions. They truly deserve much of the credit for improvements in this book. It is with a sincere expression of gratitude that we recognize them:

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Raymond V. Lesikar
Marie E. Flatley
Kathryn Rentz

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