An Introduction to Organizational Communication

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About the Authors

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Dr. Wrench has published five previous books: *Intercultural Communication: Power in Context, Communication, Affect, and Learning in the Classroom* (2000, Tapestry Press), *Principles of Public Speaking* (2003, The College Network), *Human Communication in Everyday Life: Explanations and Applications* (2008, Allyn & Bacon), *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication: A Hands-On Approach* (2008 & 2013, Oxford University Press), *The Directory of Communication Related Mental Measures* (Summer 2010, National Communication Association), *Stand Up, Speak Out: The Practice and Ethics of Public Speaking* (2011, Unnamed Publisher), and *Scared Speechless: Communication Apprehension, Avoidance, and Effectiveness* (2013, Allyn & Bacon). Dr. Wrench is also the editor of three books on the subject of organizational communication: *Casing Organizational Communication* (2011, Kendall Hunt), *Workplace Communication for the 21st Century: Tools and Strategies that Impact the Bottom Line: Vol. 1. Internal Workplace Communication*, and Vol. 2. External Workplace Communication (2013, both with Praeger). Dr. Wrench was the editor of the *Ohio Communication Journal* from 2005-2007, served as an associate editor for *Communication Research Reports* from 2007-2010, and been on the editorial board for numerous academic journals.

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PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

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Preface

We know that choosing the appropriate textbook for your classroom is always a time consuming process. *Communication Within, Between, and Among Organizational Stakeholders: Theory, Research, and Practice for the 21st Century* will include a lot of content that is available in other books in addition to content not available at all in other organizational communication books on the market. We've also included a number of pedagogical features to the book to make the reading experience more meaningful.

The field of organizational communication has undergone an interesting history over the past century. Starting out as simple how-to manuals for business speaking and developing into the full-fledged discipline that it is today, organizational communication is a unique area of study with its own history, trends, and research methodologies. When selecting an organizational communication textbook, many professors struggle with finding a book that is theoretically strong, current, and relevant to their students. First, this book will examine both the historic and modern theories of organizational communication. While there are clear theory chapters (Chapter 2 "Organizational Communication Ethics" & Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"), the book will also incorporate other theories when examining various issues in the book. To make this book theoretically strong, we plan to include one chapter that examines the historic theories of organizational communication and one that examines modern theories of organizational communication. We believe that a strong theoretical foundation is important for any student studying organizational communication.

Second, this book will contain information about the history of the field while demonstrating the new ideas and avenues of research currently being undertaken. We believe that students should have a firm grasp of this history of the field, but they also need to know the current state of the field. Throughout the book we will examine the history behind concepts and then show how those concepts are currently being used in research.

Lastly, we want our book to be relevant to your students. One of the greatest challenges current professors have is teaching a generation of students more concerned with how knowledge will impact their lives than the process of learning. For this reason, we plan to incorporate our own personal anecdotes from working in various professions and used a variety of case studies from real organizations to help students see how the information contained within the book is actually exhibited within the real working environment. Furthermore, each chapter will end with a set of discussion/review questions that ask students to relate the content of the chapter in an applied manner.

In addition to being theoretically strong, current, and relevant to students, we will also incorporate three clear directions within this book: an international focus, communication ethics, and the interdisciplinary tradition of organizational communication. In a world where "multinational corporation" and "globalization" are commonplace, preparing individuals for interacting with others around the world in organizations is increasingly important. All three of the authors of this book have extensive international experience that includes living abroad and studying international business. Many of the anecdotes and case studies that will be included within this book use a very specific international focus to demonstrate how the book's concepts can be applied to international organizational communication.

Second, we strongly believe that ethics is an extremely important part of the modern landscape of organizations. While some books include specific chapters examining ethics, we've decided to include issues of ethics at every turn in this book. Understanding how to be an ethical communicator in a modern organization is an extremely important reality in today's business. To aid in this process, we will include boxes periodically in the book called "Communicating Ethically" to call attention to ethical issues related to a chapter's content.

Lastly, our book will embrace the interdisciplinary tradition of organizational communication. While we strongly believe that communication scholars add a unique perspective to the discussion of organizational communication, we also realize that there are many scholars in industrial/organizational psychology, organizational behavior, and organizational sociology who have strongly impacted our view of organizational communication and continue to add to the discussion of organizational communication. While this is a book that first, and foremost, examines organizational communication, we believe it is necessary to include numerous variables that appear in modern organizational communication research, but have not made their way into other organizational communication textbooks (e.g., organizational justice, organizational citizenship, organizational charlatanism, etc.).

Structure of the Book

> PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

<u>Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication"</u> of this book is designed to introduce you to the world of organizational communication. Specifically, this chapter provides definitions for both "organization" and "communication," which is followed by a history of the field and an explanation of the three research traditions used in organizational communication.

<u>Chapter 2 "Organizational Communication Ethics"</u> & <u>Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"</u> will introduce you to the classic theories in organizational and the modern theories in organization. These two chapters demonstrate how the field has progressed historically in terms of perspectives on organizational structure and management.

<u>Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication"</u> will be designed to introduce you to a very specific facet of organizations: culture & climate. This chapter is designed to demonstrate how organizations and organizational members co-create a sense of culture that permeates different organizations. The chapter also examines how scholars examine organizational culture and climate and the effects culture and climate have on organizational stakeholders.

<u>Chapter 5 "Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders"</u> will examine how communication formally and informally occurs within organizations. Additionally, this chapter provides a brief introduction to the research practice of communication network analysis.

<u>Chapter 6 "Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization"</u> & <u>Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives"</u> will be designed to introduce you to the importance of leadership within an organization and various practices associated with leadership in the organization. Within these two chapters, readers are introduced to a wide range of theoretical positions on leadership while also examining effective leadership practices.

<u>Chapter 8 "Organizational Identity and Diversity"</u> will examines the role of the subordinate or follower in organizational communication. Specifically, this chapter

examines subordinate/follower traits, perceptions of supervisor/leaders, and perceptions of organizations.

Chapter 9 "Teams in the Workplace" through Chapter 14 "Stress, Conflict, and Negotiation" will examine how communication actually occurs within an organization. A variety of different facets related to organizational communication are examined in these chapters. Some of the concepts discussed can improve organizational communication and others are very destructive to organizational communication.

Lastly, Chapter 15 "The Dark Side of Organizational Communication" & Chapter 16 "Corporate Communications: Communicating with External Stakeholders" will examine how organizations interact and communicate with external stakeholders. Specifically, Chapter 15 "The Dark Side of Organizational Communication" examines the processes related to the field of corporate communications (public relations, marketing, sales, etc.) and Chapter 16 "Corporate Communications: Communicating with External Stakeholders" examines strategic communication (issue management, risk communication, and crisis communication).

Overall, these sixteen chapters are designed to give you a brief overview of the field of organizational communication. We sincerely hope that this book will be the first step you take in your journey into the world of organizational communication. We hope that you are able to avoid ethical pitfalls and strive for organizational communication that edifies individuals instead of tearing them down in the workplace. Remember, no organization is perfect because the people within an organization are never perfect. We cannot expect organizations to be perfect, but there's nothing wrong with striving for perfection.

Chapter 1

Introduction to Organizational Communication

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Why Organizational Communication Matters

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Welcome to your first book in organizational communication. This book assumes that you have some background in the field of human communication and probably minimal exposure to the world of organization studies. In the Preface of this book, which we strongly encourage you to read, we discussed the reasons why studying organizational communication matters in the 21st Century.

Your average employed person working in the United States averages 7.5 hours of work per day (7.9 hours on the week days; 5.5 hours on the weekend). This study from the US Department of LaborThe US Department of Labor. (2010). American time-use survey—2010 results [Press release]. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/atus.pdf further noted that these are just the hours a person spends in a traditional working environment. People further spend about 36 minutes a week interacting with an educational organization, about 43 minutes shopping, and about 16 minutes attending religious services or volunteering. When people traditionally hear the word "organization" they most often jump right to the idea of a workplace. However, an organization is a much broader term and covers a lot more ground than just someone's workplace. As such, time that is spent in an educational environment, shopping, attending religious services, and volunteering are also examples of someone interacting with or in an organization.

This book looks at organizational communication as a broad term that encompasses a wide array of organizational types, which we'll explore in more detail elsewhere

in this chapter. Even if you just take the average 7.5 hours per day an individual spends "working" in an organization, you will end up in an organizational environment a little over 111 days per year. If you work for 40 years, you'll basically spend 12 of those years at work. We don't tell you this to scare you, but to help you understand the importance of knowing how to interact and behave in organizations. So, let's get started!

1.1 What is an Organization?

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the three common components of the various definitions of the term "organization."
2. Differentiate among the four types of organizations: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

As with any academic endeavor, one must understand what one is studying before one can delve into the specifics and intricacies of the subject matter. For this reason, this section is going to start by defining what is meant by the term "organization" and then looking at three different ways of categorizing different types of organization.

Defining "Organization"

Many people have attempted to define what is meant by the word "organization." Instead of following suit and throwing yet another definition into the mix, we've selected a number of definitions from common dictionary definitions to ones used by business, psychology, economics, and communication scholars. Table 1.1 "Defining "Organization"" contains a partial list of the different types of definitions seen across various academic disciplines.

Table 1.1 Defining "Organization"

Dictionary Definition
(1) the act of organizing or the state of being organized; (2) an organized structure or whole; (3) a business or administrative concern united and constructed for a particular end (4) a body of administrative officials, as of a political party, a government department, etc (5) order or system; method.organization. (2009). Collins English Dictionary—Complete & Unabridged 10th Edition. Retrieved March 18, 2012, from Dictionary.com website: http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/organization

General Business Definitions
"a system of consciously coordinated activities of two or more persons."Barnard, C. I. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pg. 73.
"The accomplishment of an objective requires collective effort, men set up an organization designed to coordinate the activities of many persons and to furnish incentives for others to join them for this purpose."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 5.
"A social unit of people, systematically structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals on a continuing basis. All organizations have a management structure that determines relationships between functions and positions, and subdivides and delegates roles, responsibilities, and authority to carry out defined tasks. Organizations are open systems in that they affect and are affected by the environment beyond their boundaries."organization. (n.d.). Retrieved March 18, 2012, from BusinessDictionary.com website: http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/organization.html
"a Body of individuals working under a defined system of rules, assignments procedures, and relationships designed to achieve identifiable objectives and goals."Greenwald, H. P. (2008). *Organizations: Management without control*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 6.
Organizational Behavior Definitions
"a social unit within which people have achieved somewhat stable relations (not necessarily face-to-face) among themselves in order to facilitate obtaining a set of objectives or goals."Litterer, J. A. (1963). *Organizations: Structured behavior*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, pg. 5.
"an organization is a complex system, which includes as subsystems: (1) management, to interrelate and integrate through appropriate linking processes all the elements of the system in a manner designed to achieve the organizational objectives, and (2) a sufficient number of people so that constant face-to-face interaction is impossible."Lundgren, E. F. (1974). *Organizational management: Systems and process*. San Francisco: Canfield Press, pg. 7.
Economics Definition
A short hand expression for the integrated aggregation of those persons who are primarily involved in: "(1) the undertaking or managing of risk and the handling of economic uncertainty; (2) planning and innovation; (3) coordination, administration and control; (4) and routine supervision" of an enterprise.Harbison, F. (1959). Entrepreneurial organization as a factor in economic development. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 70*, 364–379, pg. 365.
Industrial/Organizational Psychology Definition
"work consists of patterned human behavior and the 'equipment' consists of the human beings."Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York, NY: John Wile & Sons, pg. 55.
"lively sets of interrelated systems [task, structure, technology, people, and the environment] designed to perform complicated tasks."Levitt, H. J. (1972). *Managerial*

psychology: An introduction to individuals, pairs, and groups in organizations. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, pg. 265.
Organizational Communication Definitions
"social collectives in which people develop ritualized patterns of interaction in an attempt to coordinate their activities and efforts in the ongoing accomplishment of personal and group goals."Kreps, G. L. (1986). Organizational communication. New York: Longman, pg. 5.
"including five critical features—namely, the existence of a social collectivity, organizational and individual goals, coordinated activity, organizational structure, and the embedding of the organization with an environment of other organizations."Miller, K. (2012). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Wasdworth-Cengage, pg. 11.
"Communicative structures of control."Mumby, D. (in press). *Organizational communication*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
"an organized collection of individuals working interdependently within a relatively structured, organized, open system to achieve common goals."Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). *Organizational communication for survival: Making work, work* (4th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 1.
"an aggregate of persons, arranged in predetermined patterns of relationships, in order to accomplish stated objectives."Redding, W. C. (1964). The organizational communicator. In W. C. Redding & G. A Sanborn (Eds.), *Business and industrial communication: A source book* (pp. 29–58). New York: Harper & Row, pg. 33.

After reading this laundry list of different definitions for the word "organization," you may wonder how you to determine which one is the best? Well, to be honest—we think they all have something to offer. When you look at the various definitions for the word "organization," you will start to see a certain pattern emerge of consistent themes within the definition. Jason WrenchWrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. examined a similar list of definitions and concluded that there are three primary features that run through all definitions of the term "organization": the structure, the goal, and the people.

Organizational Structures

The first major theme commonly seen in the various definitions of the word "organization" has to do with **structure**[1]. When we talk about how organizations are structured, we are talking primarily about how they function in terms of what happens both within an organization and how an organizations functions within its external environment. For our purposes, we will look at structure in terms of four

1. How an organization functions in terms of what happens both within the organization itself and within its external environment.

basic processes: external environment, input, throughput, and output ([Figure 1.1 "Organizational Structures"](#))

Figure 1.1 *Organizational Structures*

External Environment

The first factor to consider when thinking about an organization is the external environment that an organization exists in. The **external environment**[2] consists of all vendors, competitors, customers, and other stakeholders who can have an impact on the organization itself but exist outside the boundaries of the organization. Changes in the external environment where an organization exists will have an effect on the organization itself. For example, image that the government is going to pose new regulations on your industry, these new regulations will have an effect on how the organization must function. When it comes to how organizations interact with its external environment, we often refer to two different types of boundaries. An organization that has **open boundaries**[3] allows for the free flow of information to the organization and is more likely able to adapt to changes that occurs within the environment. **Closed boundaries**[4], on the other hand, occur when an organization tries to insulate itself from what is occurring within its environment. When an organization has closed boundaries, that organization ends up being less aware of what is going on within the external environment and sets itself up for major problems or obsolescence.

Input

The next major aspect of an organization's environment involves inputs. **Inputs**[5] are those resources that an organization brings in from the external environment in order for the organization to accomplish its goals. Typically, resources can be discussed in three general categories: physical materials, people, and information. First, organizations bring in physical materials that it needs to accomplish its goals. Whether its computers, desks, light fixtures, or supplies necessary to build silicon microchips, organizations rely on a variety of vendors in the external environment to provide physical materials.

The second type of input necessary from the external environment involves people. People can either come in the forms of workers, which are necessary resources for any organization. An organization is reliant on bringing in skilled workers to help the organization accomplish its goals. One of the biggest complaints many organizations have is a lack of skilled or qualified workers. Depending on the organization, skills or qualifications can run from specific college or graduate

2. All of the vendors, competitors, customers, and other stakeholders who can have an impact on the organization itself but exist outside the boundaries of the organization.

3. Organizations that allow for the free flow of information to the organization and is more likely able to adapt to changes that occurs within the environment.

4. When an organization insulates itself from what is occurring within its external environment.

5. Those resources that an organization brings in from the external environment in order for the organization to accomplish its goals.

degrees to specific industry experience to specific technical know-how. According to Julian L. Alssid, executive director of the Workforce Strategy Center in New York, "Employers seem to be less willing to invest in training in this economy. Again, it is the combination of the right credential and practical experience they look for."Balderrama, A. (2010, February 22). Available jobs, not enough skilled workers [online article]. Retrieved from http://msn.careerbuilder.com/Article/ MSN-2192-Job-Search-Available-Jobs-Not-Enough-Skilled-Workers/, Paragraph 7.

The final type of input an organization needs is information. **Information**[6] refers to any data that is necessary for an organization to possess in an effort to create knowledge.Atwood, C. G. (2009). *Knowledge management basics: A complete how-to guide.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press. According to the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), data is "is raw and without context and can exist in any form, usable or not."ASTD. (2006). Managing organizational knowledge. In E. Biech (series Ed.), *ASTD Learning System, Vol. 8.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press, pg. 2. Often organizations end up with piles of data including customer service reports, market trends, and other material typically in the raw, numerical form. Organizations then turn this data into information by giving the data meaning through some kind of interpretation. While most people think of data as purely numerical, there are other non-numerical types of data that can be important to turn into information. For example, if the US congress passes a new law that impacts how your organization must handle customer records, the law may not specifically say how your organization must comply with the law. In this case, the new law is data and your organization must turn that law into usable information in the form of its own policies and procedures. When you combine information with understanding that leads to action, information is transformed from information to knowledge.

6. Any data that is necessary for an organization to possess in an effort to create knowledge.

7. When an organization actively looks for data or existing information that could be transformed into useable knowledge.

8. When an organization faces a specific problem or crisis and then either makes sense of data/information it poses or searches the external environment for data or information that could be useful.

So, how do organizations go about acquiring data that can lead to action? ASTD discusses two types of external environment scanning processes that organizations can employ: proactive and reactive.ASTD. (2006). Managing organizational knowledge. In E. Biech (series Ed.), *ASTD Learning System, Vol. 8.* Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press. First, **proactive scanning**[7] occurs when an organization actively looks for data or existing information that could be transformed into useable knowledge. For example, doing research on what your competitors in an effort to stay on top of your market is an example of proactive scanning. The second type of scanning, **reactive scanning**[8] occurs when an organization faces a specific problem or crisis and then either makes sense of data/information it poses or searches the external environment for data or information that could be useful. Ideally, if an organization does a good job with proactive scanning, reactive scanning will not be necessary very often. When an organization is forced to use reactive scanning, time gets wasted as they attempt to find the data/information and turn it into actionable knowledge.

Throughput

Throughput[9] is ultimately what an organization does with inputs within the confines of the organization itself. Throughput can range from the use physical materials, people, and information to how organizations structure themselves internally to create goal oriented throughput. While we cannot discuss every possible way an organization can utilize inputs, we should note that the issue of internal organizational structure is very important at this level of an organizations. For this reason, we really must discuss two ways that organizations commonly structure hierarchies.

A **hierarchy**[10] is a categorization system where individuals/departments are ranked over other individuals/departments based on skills, centrality, and status. First, organizations can place people/departments over others because of specific skill sets. For example, managers are placed over workers because of their skills in managing people. While we know this isn't always why people get promoted, the general idea of a management class of people is because managers can help organize employees towards the organization's goal(s). Second, people can be ranked over others because of their centrality to the organization's goals. For example, if your organization is a tech company, the product developers may be ranged structurally over people in customer support or marketing because without the product developers there is no need for customer support or marketing. Lastly, organizations can be organized based on status, an individual's relative position to others as a result of esteem, privilege, or responsibility. When someone gets promoted to a higher position, her or his status increases in terms of a formal hierarchy. Whether that promotion is a result of esteem, privilege, or responsibility doesn't matter at this point, only the elevation within the hierarchy.

Now that we've discussed what a hierarchy is, let's talk about the two common ways that organizations are typically patterned: flat vs. tall hierarchies (Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies").

Figure 1.2   Hierarchies

The first image in Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies" represents **tall hierarchies**[11], they are called such because they represent many, many hierarchical layers between those at the bottom of the hierarchy and those at the top of the hierarchy. Two commonly discussed tall hierarchies are the Catholic Church and the US military. With the Catholic Church, you have the average parishioner at the bottom of the hierarchy the Pope at the top of the hierarchy. In the US military, you have your average enlisted soldier at the bottom of the hierarchy and the President of the United

9. What an organization does with inputs within the confines of the organization itself.

10. A categorization system where individuals/departments are ranked over other individuals/departments based on skills, centrality, and status.

11. Any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves.

States (in her/his commander in chief title) at the top of the hierarchy. In both cases, the people at the bottom have little or no communication with those at the top of the hierarchy.

The second image in <u>Figure 1.2 "Hierarchies"</u> represents **flat hierarchies**[12] where there are only a couple of hierarchical layers between those at the bottom and those at the top of the hierarchy. Think of these organizations like mom and pop restaurants. In a typical small restaurant, the owner may also serve as the chef and may only have a handful of waitstaff, table bussers, and dish cleaners as employees. In these hierarchies, it is very easy for those at the bottom of the hierarchy to communicate with those at the top of the hierarchy.

Output

The final aspect related to organizational structure is **output**[13], which is the ultimate product or service that an organization disseminates back to the external environment. Whether one is create the components of a cell phone or sending computer technicians to people's homes, every organization is designed to produce some kind of service or product for the external environment. Even nonprofit organizations like the American Red Cross are producing a range of both products and services for the external environment.

Organizational Goals

Organizations have many goals, but it helps to clarify those goals into a simple typology (classification into ordered categories). Edward Gross examined the various types of organizational goals and created a simple typology consisting of five distinct goals that organizations have: output, adaptation, management, motivation, and positional.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294.

Output

The first type of goal that organizations commonly have are referred to as output goals, or organizational goals that are "reflected, immediately or in the future, in some product, service, skill or orientation which will affect (and is intended to affect) that society."Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294, pg. 287. While Gross was initially discussing goals in terms of educational organizations, the goals also apply to other organizational types as well. In essence, every organization has some type of output goal that will be released back into the external environment. For a pizza chain, the output goal could be the pizza it delivers to your house (product); the customer

12.

13. The ultimate product or service that an organization disseminates back to the external environment.

service it gives customers (service); or the expertise in pizza making it brings to the enterprise (skill).

Adaptation

The second type of organizational goal argued by Edward Gross are adaptation goals, or goals that an organization has in terms of adapting to the external environment.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. All organizations exist in environments that change, and successful organizations are going to change and adapt to that external environment. One of the biggest risks many organizations face if they do not adapt to the external environment is obsolescence, which "occurs when there is a significant decline in customer desire for an organization's products or services."Wrench, J. S. (2012). *Casing organizational communication.* Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt, pg. 11. Many organizations becomes so focused on making a specific product that the product eventually is no longer wanted or needed by customers, which will lead to the eventual death of an organization.

Management

The next type of organizational goal discussed by Edward Gross are management goals, which involves three types of decisions: (1) who will manage or run an organization, (2) how to handle conflict management, and (3) output goal prioritization.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. First, organizations need to decide on the formal structure of an organization and who will exist at various rungs of the hierarchy. In addition to determining the formal structure, these goals also determine what type of and who holds power within the organizational hierarchy. Second, managerial goals focus on how conflicts within the organization will be handled. Organizations have a vested interest in keeping the organization running smoothly, so too much conflict can lead to interpersonal or inter-departmental bickering that has negative consequences for the organization. Lastly, management goals determine the overarching direction of the organization itself. As the saying goes, someone has to steer the ship. We'll discuss different types of leaders in <u>Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives"</u>, but for now we'll just note that having a clear direction and clear prioritization of the products and services an organization has is very important for the health of an organization. If an organization tries to do too much, the organization may end up scatter-brained and not function as a cohesive whole. If the organization tries to do one and only one thing, the organization may become obsolescent. Overall, people in management must place output goal prioritization very high on the to-do-list.

Motivation

The fourth common goal organizations have, as discussed by Edward Gross, are motivational goals or goals set out to ensure that all employees are satisfied and remain loyal to the organization.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. There is a wealth of research that has examined the importance of employee motivation on job satisfaction and worker productivity.Latham, G. P. (2007). *Work motivation: History, theory, research, and practice.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. In a study conducted by Whitman, Van Rooy, and ViswesvaranWhitman, D. S., Van Rooy, D. L., & Viswesvaran, C. (2010). Satisfaction, citizenship behaviors, and performance in work units: A meta-analysis of collective construct relations. *Personnel Psychology, 63*, 41–81. doi:10.1111/ j.1744-6570.2009.01162.x, the researchers examined the relationship between job satisfaction and employee productivity across 73 different research studies that have examined the subject. Overall, the researchers concluded that satisfied employees were more productive. Secondly, ensuring that employees are motivated also helps to ensure that employees remain loyal to an organization. According to Hart and Thompson, employee loyalty is "an individual's perception that both parties to a relationship [employee and organization] have fulfilled reciprocal expectations that 1) demote enduring attachment between two parties, and that 2) involve self-sacrifice in the face of alternatives, and that 3) are laden with obligations of duty."Hart, D. W., & Thompson, J. A. (2007). Untangling employee loyalty: A psychological contract perspective. *Business Ethics Quarterly, 17*, 297–323, pg. 300. By this definition employees are loyal because they knowingly enter into a relationship with an organization, sacrifice part of themselves to the organization (and vice versa), and thus feel a sense of obligation or duty to the organization. Of course, loyalty only works when an employee feels that the organization is standing up to its end of the reciprocal expectations. If an employee feels that an organization is not meeting its basic obligations, then the employee will view that organization unkindly and the employees loyalty will diminish over time.Hajdin, M. (2005). Employee Loyalty: An Examination. *Journal Of Business Ethics, 59*, 259–280. doi:10.1007/s10551-005-3438-4 As such, organizations must strive to make one of its goals ensuring that it is meeting its basic obligations towards employees in an effort to foster employee loyalty.

Positional

The final type of organizational goal described by Edward Gross are positional goals, which are goals that attempt to position an organization within the environment in comparison to other organizations within the same market.Gross, E. (1969). The definition of organizational goals. *The British Journal of Sociology, 20*, 277–294. For example, imagine that your organization is an automotive tool manufacturer. Your organization will attempt to position itself against other automotive tool manufacturers that exist in the market. There are two common ways to position

one's self within a specific market: 1) higher volume at a lower price or 2) higher quality at a higher price. The first way to position one's self within a market is to create more products or faster service at a cheaper cost. The second way to position one's self in the market is to create a luxury product/service that costs more. While the product or service costs more, you provide the appearance of being the luxury brand. In a 2011 article in *PCWorld*, the authors mention that 56% of new cellphone users were purchasing an Android device as compared to only 28% that purchased an iOS (iPhone) device.Kellog, D. (2011, September 26). In U.S. market, new smartphone buyers increasingly embracing Android [Press release]. Retrieved from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/in-u-s-market-new-smartphone-buyers-increasingly-embracing-android/ Simply put, the Android is cheaper and there are more versions of the Android available for cellphone subscribers. Only Apple makes iOS compatible cellphones and they are typically more expensive than Android devices. Apple has historically set itself up as a luxury line in the computing industry while PCs and now Android cellphones are cheaper and made for the mass market. Interestingly, iPhones actually only account for 4% of the overall cell phone market in November 2011, but accounted for 52% of industry profits.Hamburger, E. (2011, December 7). These charts tell the real story of Android vs. *Business Insider*. iPhone. Retrieved from http://www.businessinsider.com/android-vs-iphone-charts-2011-12 Clearly, the iPhone may not be getting a strong percentage of the market share, but it is still beating out its competition.

Organizational People

The final characteristic common the various definitions of the word "organization" involves people. In Jason Wrench's original discussion of the three common themes related to people, he discussed interdependency, interaction, and leadership.Wrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. For our purposes, we also pose the notion of control as an important factor related to people as well.

Interdependency

The first term associated with people in organizations is the concept of interdependency. **Interdependency**[14] is mutual dependence or depending on one another. Interdependency is the notion that people within an organization are dependent upon one another to achieve the organization's goals. If one part of the organization stops functioning properly, it will impact the other parts of the organization. For example, imagine you are a copyeditor for a publisher in New York City. If you get behind on your job, the graphic designers, marketing

14. Mutual dependence or depending on one another.

professionals, printers, and other groups of people will also get behind. At the same time, interdependency can also help an organization. If you working with a solid group of colleagues, if something happens to get you behind others can help pull the slack and keep things moving forward on schedule. Overall, people impact each other in organizations.

Interaction

Our interactions with others help define and create what is an organization. Without the interactions we have with our coworkers, customers, and other stakeholders, an organization really doesn't exist. For this reason, you can almost say that the "thing" we call an organization doesn't really exist because it's not a physical structure, but rather an organization is the outcome of our interactions with others. An organization may have physical things within it (desks, computers, pencils, etc.), but the actual organization is ultimately the people that make exist.

At the same time, people within an organization also interact with each other in various roles in an effort to accomplish the organization's goal(s). People within organizations and people who come in contact with organizations are constantly in a state of interaction. As we will learn later in this book, organizations have many different stakeholders (an individual or group that has an interest in the organization), and each different set of stakeholders requires different communication strategies. Ultimately, communicative interaction is one of the most basic functions of any organization.

Control

As the definition of organization from Dennis Mumby, organizations are inherently entities that must control the behavior of its members while members generally strive for their own sets of needs.Mumby, D. (in press). *Organizational communication.* Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. When one group has one set of needs and desires and another has a different set of needs and desires, we refer to these groups as being in dialectical tensions. Table 1.2 "Dialectical Tensions" contains many of the dialectical tensions that exist between organizations and its various members.

Table 1.2 Dialectical Tensions

What the Organization Needs/Wants	What Workers Need/Want
Minimize Costs	Maximize Salary/Benefit Package
Systemization of Job Duties	Autonomy to do one's job

What the Organization Needs/Wants	What Workers Need/Want
Ability to Streamline the Organization	Job Stability
Agreement	Dissent
Transparency	Privacy
Conventionality	Innovation
Organization-Focused	Self-Focused
Permanence	Change
Rights of the Organization	Rights of the Individual
Work life	Social life

As a result of these inherent dialectical tensions, organizations try to stack the deck in its favor to maximize its needs and desires, and subsequently minimizes the needs and desires of workers in the process. Let's briefly examine each of these dialectical tensions in turn.

Minimize Costs vs. Maximize Salary/Benefits. The first dialectical tensions occurs when organizations try to keep their overhead costs low while workers try to maximize what they earn in terms of both salary and benefits (insurance, stock options, retirement, etc.).

Systemization vs. Autonomy. Organizations like stability, so they prefer workers who learn how to do a specific task and then systematize that task in the most efficient manner. As such, organizations (especially in manufacturing contexts) will train in explicit detail exactly how an employee should accomplish a task. Workers, on the other hand, prefer to have autonomy when making decisions for how best to accomplish their daily work and do not enjoy being micromanaged.

Streamline vs. Stability. Organizations are fundamentally focused on the bottom line, and therefore often want to have the ability to streamline the organization in an attempt to maximize profits. If an organization can lay off workers and maintain maximum productivity, then it's often in the organization's best interest to do so. While streamlining is good for an organization, it can create a chaotic environment for employees who crave job stability. Workers want to know that their work is appreciated and it will keep them employed.

Agreement vs. Dissent. The next dialectical tension listed here is agreement vs. dissent. In this tension, organizations prefer for workers to blindly follow and do what organizational leaders dictate. Workers, on the other hand, want to have a

voice to articulate when they disagree with the dictates of leaders or the general direction of the organization. We'll explore the area of organizational dissent more in Chapter 5 "Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders".

Conventionality vs. Innovation. Organizations are innately slow moving organisms that do not like change, so it's very common to hear "But we've *always* done it that way." Workers on the other hand want to bring their own creative problem solving skills to the table and think of new and innovative processes and procedures that could benefit both the organizations and the workers. While not all worker ideas spot-on, organizations that stick to conventional ways of thinking may end up losing a lot of employees who prefer more freedom to be innovative.

Transparency vs. Privacy. In our world today organizations are increasingly want to know what workers are doing in the workplace. As such, organizations expect that employee's work lives are completely transparent and will do everything from monitoring e-mail and telephone calls to installing software on workers' computers that logs and monitors key strokes made on a keyboard. Workers, on the other hand, are increasingly demanding that there be some privacy especially in their digital lives.

Organization vs. Self-Focused. Organizations innately want workers to be focused on their jobs and improving their productivity. Workers, on the other hand, want to focus on themselves and improving themselves. Many organizations will support self-improvement as long as it has a clear benefit for the organization, but workers often want to focus on their own improvement even if that improvement has no benefits for the organization or may lead the worker to find a new organization.

Permanence vs. Change. When looking at the permanence/change dialectic, organizations strive to maintain knowledge and thus keep people who are hard workers for the long haul. Often, organizations call this employee loyalty. Workers on the other hand, desire change and can get very bored doing the same work day-in and day-out. Often workers become pigeonholed in specific jobs with specific duties, that there is no way to get out besides leaving the organization itself. Overall, organizations in our society have many more tools at its disposal to get its way than do workers.

Organizational vs. Individual Rights. Ultimately, when it comes to organizations the focus is on the organization and its rights and less on the individual's rights. Workers believe that their human rights shouldn't stop at the front door of the organization. For example, many workers are shocked when organizations fire them for posts that are made on social networking websites. Workers believe these posts should be private and organizations looking at these posts is a violation of

one's privacy rights. Organizations, on the other hand, believe looking at social networking site posts is a completely appropriate behavior and well within its rights as an organization. While this specific example also overlaps with the transparency/privacy dialectic, the focus here is on whose rights are more important.

Work vs. Social Life. The last dialectical tension associated with organizational control is the focus on work vs. social life. Organizations believe that workers should be focused purely on their work life. As a result of digital technology, it has become increasingly easier for people to be on call 24-7 by their organizations. Workers, on the other hand, believe they are entitled to a social life that does not involve one's organization. Furthermore, workers often believe that as long as their private, social life behavior does not impact their work life, their organization's should stay out of their personal lives. Many organizations go so far as to include "morality clauses" into contracts that enable them to fire employees whose person-life behavior is deemed inappropriate for organizational members.

Leadership

The last term associated with people in organizations is leadership. Any organization must have an individual or clearly discernible group that guides the organization towards accomplishing its goal(s). Without strong leadership, individual members of an organization are left to their own ideas of how to accomplish the organization's goals. Basically, if you have too many people trying to lead, you'll end up with an organization that is stretched entirely too thin to accomplish anything.

The opposite of leadership is followership. If an organization is going to thrive, it must have strong leadership and followers who are willing to follow that leader. In Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives" we'll examine leadership and followership.

Types of Organizations

The last factor in understanding organizations is to realize that there are numerous types of organizations. For a good overview of the different taxonomies that have been created trying to categorize these different types of organizations, we recommend reading Carper and Snizek's article on the subject.Carper, W. B., & Snizek, W. E. (1980). The nature and types of organizational taxonomies: An overview. *Academy of Management Review, 5*, 65–75. For our purposes in this book, we are going to use the classification scheme originally posed by Peter M. Blau and W. Richard Scott.Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative*

approach (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Blau and Scott created a taxonomy of organizations that included four distinct categories: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

Mutual Benefit Associations

The first type of organization that exists is the **mutual benefit organization**[15], which is focused on providing for its membership. Some examples are "political parties, unions, fraternal associations, clubs, veterans' organizations, professional associations, and religious sects."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 45. People generally join these types of organizations because of the benefits of membership. When these organizations are first being created, organizational members are generally very involved in the creation of the organization. However, once one of these organizations has been around for a while, the majority of the members become passive and let the minority run the organization.

Business Concerns

The second type of organization is the **business concerns organization**[16], which is focused on doing well for the organization itself. According to Blau and Scott, the "dominant problem of business concerns is that of operating efficiency—the achievement of maximum gain at minimum cost in order to further survival and growth in competition with other organizations." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 49. Most for-profit organizations will fall into the business concerns organization. Business concerns organizations are faced with problems associated with "maximizing operating efficiency in a competitive situation."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 43. Because of the need to cut costs and maintain a competitive advantage, these organizations are often cold and calloused in how they treat its members and customers.

Service Organizations

According to Blau and Scott, **service organizations**[17] are "one whose prime beneficiary is the part of the public in direct contact with the organization, with whom and on whom its members work—in short, an organization whose basic function is to serve clients." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 51. Service organizations can include "social-work agencies, hospitals, schools, legal aid societies, and mental health clinics." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach.* San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 51. The basic problem service organizations face is "the problems associated with the conflict between professional service to

15. Organization focused on providing for its membership.

16. Organization focused on doing well profitably for the organization and its stakeholders.

17. Organization whose prime concern is providing products or services for a specific public clientele.

clients and administrative procedures are characteristic of service organizations." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 43. Often service organizations are steeped in organizational hierarchies and procedures that prohibit providing the easiest and fastest service to potential clients.

Commonweal Organizations

The last type of organization discussed by Blau and Scott are **commonweal organizations**[18] "where the prime beneficiary is the public-at-large."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach* (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pg. 44. Some examples of commonweal organizations include "the State Department, the Bureau of Internal Revenue, military services, police and fire departments, and also the research function as distinguished from the teaching function in universities."Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach*. San Francisco: Chandler, pg. 54. All of these organizations were created because they represented areas where the general public needed some level of protection or knowledge or the organization serves administrative purposes of the government. Overall, the crucial problem posed "by commonweal organizations is the development of democratic mechanisms whereby they can be externally controlled by the public." Blau, P. M., & Scott, W. R. (1962). *Formal organizations: A comparative approach* (2004 printing). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, pg. 43.

18. Organization designed to benefit society at large.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When one analyzes a variety of definitions for the term "organization," three common themes tend to emerge: the structure, the goal, and the people. Organizational structure examines how an organization functions both internally and with its larger external environment. The goal is the general purpose a group of people is trying to achieve. Lastly, the people refer to the various internal and external stakeholders associated with the organization.
- There are four common organizational types: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal. Mutual benefit organizations are designed to help the individuals who belong to the group (e.g., fraternities, sororities, clubs, etc...). Business concerns organizations are primarily concerned with turning a profit for the organization and its shareholders (e.g. anything from Walmart and Citibank to your local grocery story or restaurant). The third type of organization is the service organization, which is geared towards providing a specific service to people within society (e.g., hospitals, legal-aid societies, etc...). Lastly, commonweal organizations are those that are generally run by the government for the greater good of society (e.g., the military, fire/ police departments, department of education, etc...).

EXERCISES

1. Think of an organization you currently belong to (or have belong to in the past). Looking at Figure 1.1 "Organizational Structures", how has your organization interacted with its environment with regards to input, throughput, and output.?
2. Of the ten dialectical tensions discussed in Table 1.2 "Dialectical Tensions", which one do you think has the strongest impact on an organization you current belong to (or has belong to in the past)? Why do you think this dialectical tension causes the most imbalance of control?
3. From your own organizational interactions, find two different organizations that fit into each of the four types of organizations: mutual benefit, business concerns, service, and commonweal.

1.2 What is Communication?

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define and explain what is meant by the term "human communication."
2. Explain the basic model of communication and how it applies to the organizational context.

First and foremost, there is no agreed upon definition of the word "communication" by various scholars. In fact, various scholars have attempted to examine the term and generally found that there are a vast array of different approaches to understanding the term.Dance, F. E. X. (1970). The "concept" of communication. *The Journal of Communication, 20*, 201–210.'Dance, F. X. (1984). What is communication?: Nailing Jello to the wall. *Association for Communication administration Bulletin, 48*, 4–7.'Losee, R. M. (1999). Communication defined as complementary informative processes. *Journal of Information, Communication and Library Science, 5*(3), 1–15.'Nilsen, T. R. (1957). On defining communication. *Speech Teacher, 6*(1), 10–17. In one of the most exhaustive examination of the types of definitions created by various academics, Frank Dance examined 95 unique definitions and broke them down into fifteen different types of definitions.Dance, F. E. X. (1970). The "concept" of communication. *The Journal of Communication, 20*, 201–210. While all of these definitions may exist, not all of them are clearly applicable for our purposes as we study organizational communication. For this reason, we are going to focus on defining the term "human communication."

The first step in defining the term "human communication" is to acknowledge that the attempt you are making is one in a voice of many. The definition of "human communication" we will provide here is not necessarily the best or the one most commonly used in every communicative context, but it is the one we will use to guide this book. In the words of Frank Dance when he wrote about what makes human communication human, "Human communication is indeed a dappled thing, swift, slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim. The search for its essence and the study of its meaning is a search rich in the doing, not in the done."Dance, F. E. X. (1980). Swift,

slow, sweet, sour, adazzle, dim: What makes human communication human. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 44*, 60–63, pg. 63.

For the purposes of this book, we define **human communication**[19] as the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. This definition can be easily broken down into a series of characteristics: source, message, channel, and receiver. Figure 1.3 "Basic Model of Communication" provides a general representation of what this model looks like within the public speaking context, but can easily be applied to other communicative contexts (interpersonal communication, small group/team communication, mass communication, etc.). Let's briefly break this definition and model down into four core areas that must be understood: process, source, message, channel, and receiver.

Figure 1.3   Basic Model of Communication

Process

First, and foremost, it is important for anyone studying communication to remember that communication is a **process**[20], which indicates that there are no distinct beginnings to communication nor ends. By process, we mean that communication is a series of interactions that alter with time and produce changes in those involved in the interactions. We should also mention that there are many external factors that can influence the process as well. The success or failure of informative or persuasive attempts can alter how people interact with each other in future interactions. Additionally, one's cultural background can affect how people approach the communicative process. In essence, there are a number of factors that are constantly at play within an interaction that effect the communication process.

Source

The "**source**[21]" is the individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning. To help us understand the role of the source we will look at the two major components here: individual/group and message.

19. The process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.

20. The notion that there are no distinct beginnings to communication nor ends.

21. The individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning.

Individual vs. Group

We refer to this position in the basic communication model as either an individual or a group because depending on the communicative context, the source of a message could represent a single person's ideas or an entire group's ideas. For example, if you are providing an employee feedback about her or his job performance, the message you are sending may come from you and you alone. However, if you are the CEO of a corporation delivering a press conference, your message may be coming out of your mouth but may represent dozens of individuals involved in the crafting of the message. Often receivers are completely unaware of the number of people involved in the crafting and filtering of a message before they receive the message itself. Furthermore, in the position as a CEO, you would also be viewed as the mouthpiece of the organization, so anything you say is also attributed to the organization, which could represent thousands of people.

Message

The basic goal of the source is to take an idea that is occurring in her or his mind and someone transmit that same idea to another person (or persons). The "idea" someone is trying to send to a receiver is the **message**[22]. We refer to this transmission of a message from the source to the receiver as "stimulating meaning" because the source is attempting to transmit the idea in her or his head and communicate in such a fashion that the receiver will understand the idea in the same way as the source. One very important caveat to stimulating meaning is ensuring that meaning is actually achieved. One of the biggest mistakes some novice managers have is assuming that if they tell an employee something, their message has actually been understood in the way it was intended to be understood. As such, it's very important to ensure a receiver is understanding the meaning of a message in the way a source intends for that message to be understood.

One of our coauthors was recently involved in a labor negotiation. The employees in the organization believed that the organization was financially healthy and thus they deserved better pay. The organization, on the other hand was not financially healthy. The discrepancy between the two arose because there was a pot-of-money that the employees believed could be tapped to give them raises. Unfortunately, that specific pot-of-money was untouchable because the organization oversaw the management of the money but could not actually use the money for its own devices. As a peripheral member of the negotiations, our coauthor recommended that the organization get its auditing firm to clearly specify in a note to the employee negotiators what the uses of the fund were. Our coauthor realized that the organization's negotiators had a problem communicating this message because the receivers viewed them as biased. By having the outside (and thus impartial) auditing team craft the specific message, the employee negotiators finally

22. The "idea" someone is trying to send to a receiver.

understood the problem backed down on their demands. This example involves both problems sending a message (from the organization to the employee negotiators) and then a solution to ensure understanding (from the auditing firm to the employee negotiators). The example also illustrates another common problem with transmissions of messages, receivers must see the source as credible and trustworthy or the receivers may dismiss the message as inherently biased.

Channel

When a source decides to create a message, he or she can rely on three primary channels to send that message. A **channel**[23] is "*the means by which a message is carried from one person to another* [emphasis in original]."Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 10. As we are discussing human communication, break these channels into three distinct types: verbal, nonverbal, and mediated.

Verbal

The **verbal**[24] channel consists of specific spoken sounds that represent real phenomena or ideas. For example, when we say the word "office," we know that the letters o-f-f-i-c-e do not represent an actual physical location but rather the idea of a location where work occurs. Of course, for understanding to occur, the source and the receiver must have the same understanding for how words are intended to be understood. In fact ensuring that people communicating in an organization are using the same lexicon is such a common problem that there are numerous humor books that have been written on the subject.Beckwith, L. (2006) *The dictionary of corporate bullshit: An A to Z lexicon of empty, enraging, and just plain stupid office talk.* New York, NY: Broadway Books.'Fugere, B., Hardaway, C., Warshawsky, J. (2005). *Why business people speak like idiots: A bullfighter's guide.* New York, NY: Free Press.

Nonverbal

The second channel people can transmit a message through is the **nonverbal**[25] channel, which encompasses any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves. Everything from how someone gestures, looks (physical attractiveness, dress, jewelry, etc.), sounds, smells, etc... can impact how others will view that person. Research has indicated that between 65 to 95% of someone's understanding of a verbal message is dependent upon the nonverbal behavior associated with the verbal message.Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. For examine, imagine you walk into a colleague's office and she's clearly red-faced and her fists are clenched. You ask her

23. The means by which a message is carried from one person to another.

24. Specific spoken sounds that represent real phenomena or ideas.

25. Any stimuli that could elicit meaning that is not contained in words themselves.

how she's doing and she flatly responds, "fine." If you pay attention to only the verbal message sent, "fine," you will interpret her message as she's excellent (like fine wine). However, when you interpret her nonverbal behavior, you'll quickly ascertain that she is far from "excellent" but may not want to talk about what happened at the moment.

Mediated

The last channel a source can send a message through is a **mediated**[26] channel. A mediated message is any message that is sent using some kind of technology (print-form, auditory, visual, electronic, etc...). Historically, some of the earliest writings on communicating with employees were about creating employee newsletters to communicate better. In today's technologically advanced world, we are increasingly spending more and more time communicating with each other at work using mediated computer technologies. From e-mail, to Skype, to Twitter, LinkedIn, to blogs and vlogs, to who knows what comes next, we are increasingly becoming more and more dependent on mediated forms of communication in the workplace.

Receiver

While we've discussed the receiver a message throughout the entire section, we should note that the **receiver**[27](s) is ultimately the person interpreting and understanding a source's message. When a receiver attends to a source's message, he or she must interpret that message in light of her or his understanding of the message. If the source uses unfamiliar words, the receiver may not accurately interpret the message in the intended way. For this reason, it's important for a source to consider any feedback the receiver sends about the message to ensure that understanding has occurred.

A Few Notes About The Basic Model

While this model presents communication in an easily digestible, linear fashion, we also recognize that in many communicative contexts (like a business meeting) we may be functioning in the roles of source and receiver simultaneously. The definition presented here (as well as the basic model) are starting points for understanding human communication that have been developed and expanded upon since the 1940s.Shannon, C. E., & Weaver, W. (1949). *The mathematical theory of communication.* Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press.'Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., & Richmond, V. P. (2008). *Human communication in everyday life: Explanations and applications.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, pg. 10.

26. Any message that is sent using some kind of technology (print-form, auditory, visual, electronic, etc...).

27. The person interpreting and understanding a source's message.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Human communication is the process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.
- The basic model of communication examines four basic components: source, message, channel, and receiver. The source of a message is the individual or group who is originating an idea and attempting to transmit that idea to another person or persons. The message is the idea that is attempting to be transmitted. The channel is the specific method of communication an individual uses to convey a specific message: verbal (the use of words), nonverbal (other communicative characteristics outside of the words themselves), and mediated (the use of technology to convey a message). Lastly, the receiver is the individual who is targeted for a message who receives the message and then has to make sense of the message itself.

EXERCISES

1. Look at the definition of human communication provided in this book. Do you think this definition accurately reflects how humans communicate with one another? Why or why not?
2. Image you've been asked to run a meeting consisting of five people. Explain how a meeting consisting of five people would relate to the basic model of communication.

1.3 History of Organizational Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the three different ways the term "organizational communication" can be understood according to Stanley Deetz.
2. Define the term "organizational communication" as it is used within this book.
3. Identify some of the major historical events in the creation of the field of "organizational communication."

Now that we've examined what we mean by "human communication" in this book, let's switch gears and discuss the nature of "organizational communication." To help us understand what is meant by the term "organizational communication," we'll explore differing ways of viewing the term and then a basic conceptual definition that we will use in this book.

Ways of Viewing Organizational Communication

Stanley Deetz argues that defining what is meant by the term "organizational communication" is only half the question. "A more interesting question is, 'What do we see or what are we able to do if we think of organizational communication in one way versus another?' Unlike a definition, the attempt here is not to get it right but to understand our choices." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pg. 4. Instead, Deetz recommends that we attempt to understand the three conceptualizations that are available to "organizational communication" scholars and students: the discipline, ways to describe organizations, and a phenomenon within organizations.

"Organizational Communication" as a Discipline

The first way the term "organizational communication" is commonly used is as a descriptor tool that refers to a specific sub-division of the communication field. However, organizational communication is not an academic area of study unique to the field of communication studies. Because organizational communication is a unique discipline there are courses, books, and degrees all associated with the study of organizational communication. According to Dennis K. Mumby and Cynthia Stohl, "A community of scholars constitutes a disciplinary matrix when they share a set of paradigmatic assumptions about the stud of a certain phenomenon."Mumby, D., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 50–72, pg. 52. In essence, organizational communication is a discipline because people who study it share a common conception of the study of this thing called "organizational communication." Mumby and Stohl go on to note that "This does not mean that there is a consensus on every issue, but rather that scholars see objects of study in similar ways, and use the same language game in describing these phenomena." Mumby, D., & Stohl, C. (1996). Disciplining organizational communication studies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 10*, 50–72, pg. 52. In fact, you may find your teacher or even yourself disagreeing with our interpretation of certain aspects of organizational communication, which is very much a normal part of any academic discipline.

"Organizational Communication" as a Descriptor

The second way we can view the term "organizational communication" is as descriptor for what happens within organizations. Deetz explains, "to think of communication as a way to describe and explain organizations. In the same way that psychology, sociology, and economics can be thought of as capable of explaining organizations' processes, communication might also be thought of as a distinct mode of explanation or way of thinking about organizations." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pg. 5. As you will quickly see in this book, organizational communication as it has been studied in the past and continues to be studied today is a hybrid field, which means that people in a variety of different academic areas conduct research on the topic. People in anthropology, business, psychology, sociology, and other academic areas conduct research that is fundamentally about organizational communication. Communication scholars differ in how we approach organizational communication because our training is first, and foremost, in human communication, so we bring a unique history and set of tools to the stud of organizational communication that other scholars do not possess.

"Organizational Communication" as a Phenomenon

The final way one can view the term "organizational communication" is to view it as a specific phenomenon or set of phenomena that occurs within an organization. For example, when two employees get into a conflict at work, they are enacting organizational communication. When the chief financial officer of an organization is delivering a PowerPoint presentation on the latest quarterly earnings to the organization's board of directors, he or she is engaging in organizational communication. The latest advertisement campaign an organization has created for the national media is another example of organizational communication.

A Conceptual Definition of "Organizational Communication"

The definition we will use for organizational communication in this book stems primarily out of the last of Deetz's three views of "organizational communication." Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual Foundations. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3–46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. For the purposes of this book, we define **organizational communication**[28] as the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages. You'll notice the similarities between this definition and the one we provided earlier for human communication. Let's break this definition down by exploring the primary unique factor in this definition, organizational stakeholders.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary of Business Terms*, a **stakeholder**[29] is "any party that has an interest in an organization. Stakeholders of a company include stockholders, bondholders, customers, suppliers, employees, and so forth."Scott, D. L. (Ed.). (2009). stakeholder. In *The American heritage dictionary of business terms* (p. 503). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. As discussed in the Preface of this book, there are a range of different stakeholders that exist for an organization. Here is just a short list of some of the stakeholders within an organization: workers, managers, shareholders, etc... Every organization also has to be concerned with stakeholders who exist within the organization's external environment: competitors, community members, governmental agencies, etc... Basically, every organization has a wide range of stakeholders that it must attend to in order to run itself smoothly.

A History of Organizational Communication

Instead of providing a long, drawn out history of the field of organizational communication as we know it today, we've provided you a brief timeline dating

28. The process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.

29. Any individual or group who has an interest within the organization.

back to the 1750s when the Industrial Revolution began in the United Kingdom. The introduction of steam-powered machinery forever changed the way businesses operated and led to the eventual creation of the modern corporation. Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication" is a summary of the major events in the history of organizational communication. This table is not meant to be an exhaustive list, but only a representative list of some of the major key-moments in the study of organizational communication.

Table 1.3 Major Events in Organizational Communication

1750	Industrial Revolution starts in the United Kingdom and quickly transforms the nature of business.
1908	A. E. Phillips publishes the first public speaking book specifically aimed at business men, *Effectively Speaking.*
	Harvard Business School becomes the first academic program to focus on the scholarship of business.
1910, April	The first meeting of the Eastern Public Speaking Conference is held. The association changed itself to the Speech Association of the Eastern States in 1950 and then to the Eastern Communication Association in 1973.
1914	The National Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking is formed and holds is first convention the following the year. This association changed its names four times over the next hundred years: National Association of Teachers of Speech, 1923; Speech Association of America, 1946; Speech Communication Association, 1970; and National Communication Association, 1997.
1919	Edward L. Bernays and Doris Fleishman open the first public relations firm.
1929	William Phillips Sandford and Willard Hayes Yeager are the first speech scholars to publish a public speaking book aimed at business professionals titled *Business and Professional Speaking.*
1937	W. Charles Redding publishes an article titled "Speech and Human Relations" in the academic journal *The Speaker.* Redding is widely considered the father of organizational communication.
1938	Chester Barnard publishes *The Functions of the Executive* and argues that "The first function of the executive is to develop and maintain a system of communication" (p. 226).
1941	Paul F. Lazarsfeld publishes the first review of the discipline of communication based on his and others' research at the Bureau of Applied Social Research and determines that communication could be broken into four categories: 1) who, 2) said what, 3) to whom, and 4) with what effect.
1942	Alexander R. Heron argues that successful communication with one's employees is necessary for good business in his book *Sharing Information with Employees.*

1945	University of Denver holds the first graduate-level seminar in industrial communication.
1949	Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver publish *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, which provides the first major model of human communication (source, message, receiver, noise).
1952	The first dissertation specifically in industrial communication was completed by Keith Davis in the department of business at Ohio State University. The title of the manuscript was "Channels of Personnel Communication within the Management Setting."
1953	Ohio State University and the University of Nebraska offer the first Ph.D. degrees conferred by speech departments in industrial communication.
1961	Lee Thayer, a speech professor with an interest in communication in businesses, publishes *Administrative Communication* which is the first true textbook in organizational communication.
1963	The *Journal of Business Communication* is started by the American Business Communication Association.
1964	W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn publish *Business and Industrial Communication: A Source Book*, which compiled copies of previously published articles on a wide range of organizational communication topics. The publication of this book is generally seen as the true start of the field of organizational communication.
1967	The first "Conference on Organizational Communication" is held at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. At the conference, Philip K. Tompkins reviews the state of organizational communication and divides the types of research into two categories: (1) informal and formal channels of communication and (2) superior-subordinate relationships. Tompkins' presentation marks the official acceptance of the term "organizational communication."
	Henry Voos publishes *Organizational Communication: A Bibliography* sponsored by the Office of Naval Research.
1968	Division IV, organizational communication, becomes an officially recognized group by NSCC, which became the International Communication Association in 1970.
1972	W. Charles Redding publishes his book *Communication with the Organization: An Interpretive Review of Theory and Research*. In this monograph he poses 10 basic postulates of organizational communication.
1973	The Academy of Management authorizes a new division within its association titled Organizational Communication.
1982	The *Western Journal of Communication* publishes a series of articles based out of a conference held in Alta, Utah, "The Summer Conference on Interpretive Approaches to the Study of Organization Communication." This series of articles argues for the importance of incorporating interpretive methods in the study of organizational communication.

1983	Linda Putnam and Michael E. Pacanowsky publish *Communication and Organizations: An Interpretive Approach.* This edited book further solidifies the importance of interpretive research methods in organizational communication.
1987	Fredric M. Jablin, Linda L. Putnam, Karlene H. Roberts, and Lyman W. Porter publish the *Handbook of Organizational Communication: An Interdisciplinary Perspective.*
1991	Wert-Gray, Center, Brashers, and Meyers publish an article titled "Research Topics and Methodological Orientations in Organizational Communication: A Decade in Review." The authors find that of the 289 articles published in the 1980s, 57.8% were social scientific, 25.9% were qualitative, 2.1% were critical, 14.2% were categorized as other.
1993	Dennis Mumby puts for a research agenda for critical organizational communication research in an article titled "Critical Organizational Communication Studies: The Next 10 Years" in *Communication Monographs.*
2001	Fredric M. Jablin and Linda L. Putnam publish *The New Handbook of Organizational Communication: Advances in Theory, Research, and Methods.*
2004	Elizabeth Jones, Bernadette Watson, John Gardner, and Cindy Gallois publish an article titled "Organizational Communication: Challenges for the New Century" in the *Journal of Communication.* In the article they identify six challenges organizational communication scholars face in the 21st Century: (1) innovate in theory and methodology, (2) acknowledge the role of ethics, (3) move from the microlevel to macrolevel issues, (4) examine new organizational structures, (5) understand the communication of organizational change, and (6) examine diversity and intergroup communication.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Stanley Deetz articulated three different ways the term "organizational communication" can be understood: the discipline, ways to describe/explain organizations, and a phenomenon within organizations. His first perspective describes organizational communication as an academic discipline that consists of an intellectual history, textbooks, courses, degrees, etc… The second way to describe organizational communication as a way of describing organizations. Under this perspective, organizational communication is used to describe and/or explain how organizations functions. Lastly, organizational communication is a specific set of behaviors that is exhibited within an organization itself. People talk and interact with one another, which is a form of organizational communication, and through these interactions we actually create the phenomenon that is an organization.
- In this book, the authors define "organizational communication" as the process whereby an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another an organizational stakeholder (or group of stakeholders) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages.
- The history of organizational communication is a complicated one. Starting with the industrial revolution and the evolution of the modern corporation, the idea of organizational communication was ultimately crystalized in the 1950s and 1960s. During the early years, most of the research conducted examining communication within an organization was conducted from a social scientific perspective, but starting in the 1980s with the work of Linda Putman, organizational communication research has become more diversified to include both interpretive and critical perspectives.

EXERCISES

1. Find two examples of how you could use the term "organizational communication" for each Stanley Deetz's three conceptualizations of the term. Did you find this process easy or difficult? Why?
2. Look at the definition of organizational communication provided in this book. Do you think this definition accurately reflects the nature of organizational communication? Why or why not?
3. Since the 1960s, which decade do you think has been the most important in the transformation of the field of organizational communication? Why?

1.4 Approaches to Organizational Communication Research

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

In Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication" you saw the basic history or of organizational communication and how it's grown into the academic discipline that it is today. The earliest years in the development of the field were predominantly marked by either thought pieces written about organizational communication or were driven by social-scientific/quantitative research. If you read Table 1.3 "Major Events in Organizational Communication" carefully, starting in the early 1980s new voices began emerging in the field of organizational communication brining both qualitative/interpretive and then rhetorical/critical approaches to the study of organizational communication. In this section, we are going to examine each of these different methodological traditions and the types of research questions commonly posed in each. As authors, we find it very important to have this discussion in the first chapter because you'll come in contact with all three methodological approaches as you read this book. We want you, as readers, to be able to critically analyze the research we are presenting and understand how the different methodological traditions impact our understanding of the phenomenon that is organizational communication. To help with this purpose, we are going to explore the two major branches of organizational communication: social-scientific/quantitative and qualitative (both interpretive and critical).

Social-Scientific/Quantiative

The first major tradition in organizational communication is the social-scientific/quantitative tradition to organizational communication. The bulk of the early work

in organizational communication either focused on prescriptive methods for business speaking or came from outside the field of communication studies until the 1960s. The 1960s represented a period when the field started to solidify and create professional boundaries to differentiate itself from business, psychology, sociology, and speech. During these early years of the field, the goal of organizational communication research was very scientific. In essence, researchers would use theory to form a series of hypotheses, the researchers would then test these hypotheses through experimental observation, and the outcomes of the experimental observations would help the researchers revise the original theory, which inevitably lead to new research questions and hypotheses. The predominant research methodology available at the time stemmed out of the world of social psychology and was based in statistics. As noted in the two studies examining organizational methodology discussed in the history of organizational communication, the bulk of research conducted today is still from this social-scientific or quantitative perspective.Spence, P. R., & Baker, C. R. (2007). State of the method: An examination of levels of analysis, methodology, representation, and setting in current organizational communication research. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association, 36*, 111–124.'Wert-Gray, S., Center, C., Brashers, D. E., & Meyers, R. A. (1991). Research topics and methodological orientations in organizational communication: A decade in review. *Communication Studies, 42*, 141–154. For social scientists, there are three general avenues of research that are common: survey, experiments, and content analyses.

Survey Research in Organizational Communication

The first common type of social scientific method utilized in organizational communication is probably the most common in communication research as a whole, the survey. **Surveys**[30] involve a series of questions designed to measure individuals' personality/communication traits, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge on a given subject. Surveys are as popular as they are because you can get massive amounts of information from a wide array of people very quickly. However, one always has to question whether or not a survey is adequately using the right types of participants for a specific study. For example, using a group of college students to discuss workplace violence may not be very accurate because of the limited exposure your average undergraduate college student has in the work world. As such, you want to look for studies that utilize people who not in school and work for a living outside of the college environment if at all possible.

Experimental Research in Organizational Communication

The second type of common social-scientific/quantitative study conducted by communication researchers is the experiment. Like in the physical sciences, the goal of an **experiment**[31] is to manipulate some facet of a participant's experience to

30. Form of social-scientific research based on a series of questions designed to measure individuals' personality/communication traits, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge on a given subject.

31. Form of social-scientific research based on the manipulation of some facet of a participant's experience to determine how that participant responds.

determine how that participant responds. For example, in a study examining the impact that an initial handshake has on potential interviewers, you could have a trained confederate (someone the participants do not know is working for the researcher) enter into a potential job interview and shake the hands in an aggressive, average firmness, or weak fashion. The goal of this potential study would be to determine if the interviewer's experiences with the potential job candidate would differ based on the type of handshake he or she used at the beginning of an interview. In this hypothetical study, we, as the researchers, would manipulate the type of handshake an interviewer receives at the beginning of the interview in some kind of random fashion to ensure we are not accidentally biasing the results. Overall, experiments generally involve a lot of planning and time to pull-off competently.

Content Analysis in Organizational Communication

The final type of research conducted on the banner of social-scientific/quantitative research is the content analysis. A **content analysis**[32] involves taking a series of artifacts and numerically coding information contained within the artifacts to see if a discernible pattern emerges. First, we need to define what we mean by artifacts. In this sense of the word, artifacts are objects made by organizational members capturing communication attempts. For example, speeches of CEOs found on YouTube could be a video artifact or press releases from Fortune 500 corporations could be a different type of artifact. Second, we then numerically code these artifacts looking for specific details. For example, maybe we're going to analyze speeches made by Fortune 500 CEOs looking for terms that resemble patriotic themes: patriotism, United States, duty, honor, America, etc… Our could would be to get a numerical count of this specific type of image. We could then also analyze the incidence of these themes across different organizational types: banking, automotive, etc… In this case, the goal would be to see if different types of organizations have CEOs who are more likely to invoke images of patriotism than other types of organizations.

For more information on conducting quantitative research, we recommend reading Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, and McCroskey's *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication: A Hands-On Approach*.Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach.* New York: Oxford. The accompanying sidebar contains an example of a social-scientific/quantitative study in organizational communication.

32. Form of social-scientific research based on taking a series of artifacts and numerically coding information contained within the artifacts to see if a discernible pattern emerges.

Example of Quantiative/Social Scientific Research

Individual Differences in Managers' Use of Humor: Subordinate

Perceptions of Managers' Humor

By Brian J. Rizzo, Melissa Bekelja Wanzer, and Melanie Booth-Butterfield (1999)Rizzo, B. J., Wanzer, M. B., & Booth-Butterfield, M. (1999). Individual differences in managers' use of humor: Subordinate perceptions of managers' humor. *Communication Research Reports, 16*, 360–369.

In this study, Rizzo, Wanzer, and Booth-Butterfield set out to examine subordinates' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in the workplace. The researchers recruited 151 participants in introductory communication courses, graduate communication courses, and MBA courses. All participants were either current or past part-time (less than 40 hours per week) or full time (40 hours per week or more) employees of some organization.

The researchers used three mental measures in this study: Self and Manager Humor Orientation (individual's use of humor in interpersonal interactions—was completed once for self and once for their manager), Humor Behaviors (Individual's use of humor strategies in the workplace—was completed once for self and once for their manager), Manager Affect (degree to which a subordinate likes her or his manager), and Manager Effectiveness (degree to which a subordinate perceives her or his manager as effective).

The researchers had four hypotheses in this study (taken from page 362):

H1: High humor oriented individuals will report using more humorous behaviors in the workplace than low humor oriented individuals.

H2: Hugh humor oriented individuals will perceive more types of humorous behaviors as appropriate for their manager to use in the workplace than low humor oriented individuals.

H3: Subordinates perceptions of managers' humor orientation will be positively associated with liking toward these managers.

H4: Employees' perceptions of mangers' humor orientation will be positively related to perceptions of managerial effectiveness.

The Results

First, employees who rated themselves as using large amounts of humor in their daily interactions with others used more humorous behaviors in the workplace than those individuals who did not rate themselves as humorous.

Second, employees who rated themselves as using large amounts of humor in their daily interactions with others believed that managers could use a wider array of humor strategies in the workplace than those individuals who did not rate themselves as humorous.

Third, employees' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in her or his interactions with others was positively related to a subordinate's liking of that manager.

Lastly, employees' perceptions of their manager's use of humor in her or his interactions with others was positively related to a subordinate's perception of the effectiveness of that manager.

In essence, all four of this study's hypotheses were supported.

Qualitative

Research generally divides methods into two different epistemologies, or ways of knowing: social-scientific and humanistic. We've briefly discussed the first approach, social-science, in the previous section and we're going to explore the nature of this humanistic way of knowing, which is generally referred to as qualitative research.Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach.* New York: Oxford. Qualitative research is "It is at best an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world."Van Maanen, J. (1979). Reclaiming qualitative methods for organizational research: A preface. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 24*, 520–526, pg. 520. Because of the variety

of different approaches available under the larger title "qualitative," researchers often break discuss two different qualitative lines of inquiry: interpretive and critical.Fink, E. J., & Gantz, W. (1996). A content analysis of three mass communication research traditions: Social science, interpretive studies, and critical analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 73*, 114–134. We'll explore each of these in the rest of this section.

Interpretive

Interpretive research is not an easy idea to nail down, so any discussion of what interpretive research is must start by clearly distinguishing this approach from the social scientific one. According to Amedeo P. Giorgi, the social-scientific (often referred to as positivistic research by qualitative researchers) method can be broken into six general parts:

1. Reductionistic, the goal is to reduce phenomena into operational definitions for easy of study;
2. Deterministic, the belief that outcomes and phenomena are the result of causes that can be duplicated;
3. Predictive, the general goal of scientific research is to predict behavior;
4. Observer independent, researchers attempt to be as objective as possible and avoid influencing the data;
5. Empirical, only data that can be observed or obtained from participants is worthy of analysis;
6. Repeatable, research results should be replicated by other researchers; and
7. Quantitative, all phenomena should be numerically measured.Giorgi, A. (1971). Phenomenology and experimental psychology, In A. Giorgi, W. F. Fischer, & R. Von Echartsberg (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* (vol. 1, part 1). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press.

Fundamentally, Giorgi believed that social-scientific researchers are asking fundamentally wrong questions. Instead of asking how a phenomena should be measured, Giorgi believed that researchers should ask, "What do the phenomena mean?"Giorgi, A. (1971). Phenomenology and experimental psychology, In A. Giorgi, W. F. Fischer, & R. Von Echartsberg (Eds.), *Duquesne studies in phenomenological psychology* (vol. 1, part 1). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, pg. 21. Put a different way, interpretive research focuses on "how people communicate in their own natural environments, when they are guided by their own personal objectives, how they give meaning to their communication, especially when they are using communication for those pragmatic objectives that determine and control day-to-day existence."Chesebro, J. W., & Borisoff, D. J. (2008). Interpretive research. In J. S.

Wrench, C. Thomas-Maddox, V. P. Richmond, and J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Quantitative research methods for communication: A hands-on approach* (pp. 449–486). New York, NY: Oxford, pg. 451. Let's break this definition down into its functional parts.

Communicating in Natural Environments

The first major goal of interpretive research is the desire to see how people communicate in their natural environments. By natural environment, interpretive researchers do not want to view people engaging in communication within a laboratory setting. Instead, interpretivists want to observe people going about their daily communicative routines with their coworkers in a fashion that resembles as normal a communication experience as humanly possible.Yanow, D., & Ybema, S. (2009). Interpretivism in organizational research: On elephants and blind researchers. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 39–60). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Interpretivists believe that communication that in one's natural environment will be unforced and will resemble how people actually communicate instead of how they perceive their communication to be, which is an inherent problem with some social-scientific research (especially surveys).

Guided by Personal Objectives

Second, interpretivists want to observe participants as they go about their daily lives doing what they normally would do and not alter their behavior for the researcher(s). One of the inherent differences between social-scientific research and interpretivistic research is that interpretivists do not go into the research encounter expecting to "see" anything specific. Social-scientists set specific hypotheses, determine how to test those hypotheses, and test the hypotheses. By this purpose, social-scientists go into a research encounter expecting to "see" something very specific. Interpretivists, on the other hand, go into a research encounter to observe and learn and ultimately see what their participants show them. Instead of going in with a pre-set agenda, interpretivists watch how people behave when the participants are guided by their own personal objectives and not those of the researcher.

People Giving Meaning to their Own Communication

Lastly, interpretivists are interested in how people understand their own communicative behavior and give meaning to their own communicative behavior. Humans generally behave and communicate for a variety of reasons, and thus understand and prescribe a variety of meanings to their communication. An interpretivist is less concerned with attaching some kind of meaning to a researcher participant than they are with understanding how that research

participant views her or his own communicative behavior. As an outsider looking in, we can ascribe all kinds of incorrect attributions to an individual's communicative behavior. It's only when we get inside a communicative interaction from the participant's point-of-view, that we can truly begin to understand why someone is communicating a specific manner and how that communication is important to her or him. In the organizational environment, maybe a researcher is interested in understanding how people view the balance between their work lives and their personal lives. It's only after someone engages with people that a researcher can start to develop a better idea of how people view this phenomenon of work-life balance answering the question, "what does this phenomena mean?" Renee Cowan and Mary F. Hoffman did just this in their study examining how people view their work and personal lives in the accompanying sidebar.

For more information on conducting interpretive research, we recommend reading Lindlof and Taylor's (2002)Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. book on interpretive research methods in communication.

Example of Interpretive/Qualitative Research

The Flexible Organization: How Contemporary Employees Construct the Work/Life Border

By Renee Cowan and Mary F. Hoffman (2007)Cowan, R., & Hoffman, M. F. (2007). The flexible organization: How contemporary employees construct the work/life border. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 8*, 37–44.

In this study, the researchers set out to qualitatively examine how individuals manage their work lives and their personal lives with each other. Specifically, the researcher had one overarching research question in this study:

RQ1: How do employees of today define the terms flexibility and permeability in regard to work/life balance?

The researchers recruited 30 participants. All of the participants had to be at least 18 years of age and currently employed in an organization that provided benefits (e.g., retirement, stock options, health care, etc.). 99 percent of the sample were permanent employees, 44 percent were female and 56 percent were male. 70 percent of the sample was married and 76 percent of the sample had children.

All of the participants agreed to take part in an interview about their "perceptions and definitions of work/life balance, what balancing work/life issues meant and looked like in their lives, what their company did that made it easy or difficult to balance work/life issues, and any stories they had heard about people using work/life benefits in their company" (p. 39). Ultimately, the 30 interviews generated 112 single-spaced pages of transcribed text for analysis.

Overall, the researchers found that the terms "flexibility" and "permeability" were used interchangeably by the participants. Furthermore, these issues can be broken into four distinct themes: time, space, evaluation, and compensation.

Time Flexibility. Employees wanted to have flexibility in how their time was calculated by the organizations. This included flex time issues (instead of

coming in at 8 and leaving at 4, you could come in at 10 and leave at 6), and the possibility of examining time over a larger period (not always counting up 40 hours within one work week, but averaged over the entire year).

Space Flexibility. Employees saw space issues as a two prong construct: physical space and mental space. Physical space flexibility is the notion that individuals should have the ability to telecommute and work from home when capable. Mental space is the notion that individuals should be allowed to think about work at home and think about home at work.

Evaluation Flexibility. Employees believed that the evaluation of one's work should be based on the quality of the work itself and not on the amount of time an individual spends in the office doing the work.

Compensation Flexibility. Employees believed that their quality work should receive extra financial compensation (bonuses, increase in pay, etc.) or time compensation (increased number of vacation days, telecommuting options, etc.).

Critical

Traditional social-scientific research wants to make hypotheses and test them interpretive research wants to study how people communicate in a natural environment and understand that communication. Critical research is less interested with explaining or understanding organizational communication than it is with "analyzing values and judging, or criticizing, them."Fink, E. J., & Gantz, W. (1996). A content analysis of three mass communication research traditions: Social science, interpretive studies, and critical analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 73*, 114–134, pg. 115. As the word "critical" entails, critical research is about seeing how society, or for our purposes an organization, exists in a world of power imbalances. Within most groups there are those with power and those without power. Critical researchers strongly believe that those with power purposefully prevent those without from achieving equality. As such, "critical scholarship tends to stand on the side of 'weaker' parties when studying or commenting upon relations of dominance."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 61. According to Mats Alvesson and Karen L. Ashcroft, critical theory entails four specific parts:

1. The critical questioning of ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities (what might be called 'the 4 I's') deemed dominate, in some way harmful, and/or unchallenged.
2. Through some form of denaturalization and/or rearticulation.
3. With the aim of inspiring social reform in the presumed interest of the less-privileged and/or majority—particularly resistance to 'the 4 I's' that tend to fix people into unreflectively receiving and reproducing limited ideas, selves, motives, and practices.
4. While also maintaining at least some degree of recognition that 'real' (i.e., lived and living) conditions constrain choice and action in the contemporary organizational world. Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 63.

Questioning the 4 I's

The first part of critical theory identified by Alvesson and Ashcroft is the idea that critical theory helps people question ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that appear dominant and are in some way problematic.Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Let's look at these in turn. First, we have **ideologies**[33], which are the beliefs, myths, and doctrines that guide an individual, group, or organization. From the critical theorists perspective, they want to examine whether or not these ideologies that have been developed within an organization are fundamentally harmful (especially to workers). Furthermore, critical theorists question if specific ideologies have are unchallenged. By unchallenged, we mask whether or not a specific ideology is allowed to be pervasive and no questions the ideology or where it came from and how it stays. Often organizational leaders create ideologies that are inherently problematic for workers. If workers never question these ideologies, they'll stay in place for years or decades without ever being challenged. Critical theorists attempt to look at a variety of ideologies that exist (and get communicated) within an organization in an attempt to shed the light on how ideologies function to keep workers subjugated by management.

Second, critical theorists examine various institutions that are dominant in society and examine them to see if they are harmful for the general worker. In fact, it's this category of critical examination that really focuses its attention specifically on how modern organizations are institutions that attempt to create structures that keep workers subjugated. We'll talk more about this idea in Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication".

33. The beliefs, myths, and doctrines that guide an individual, group, or organization.

Third, critical theorists examine various interests to see if they are harmful to workers and remain unchallenged. By **interests**[34], we are specifically referring to whether or not an individual (or group of individuals) has a clear advantage or advancement of a personal or group agenda that is not necessarily clearly articulated to everyone within an organization. One of the more interesting and seedy aspects of modern organizational life is the issue of unarticulated or hidden interests that people (especially those in leadership positions) may have. Critical theorists attempt to seek out these interests and bring them to the light of day in an effort to show workers how they are being manipulated to help people in power achieve these interests. Furthermore, often the interests of those with power are not the same as those without the power.

Lastly, critical researchers attempt to examine various identities that could be harmful or under-challenged. For critical purposes, **identity**[35] refers to the state of being or believing that you are the same person or thing described or claimed by those with power. Under this premise, workers are often labeled with specific identities that are designed to subjugate the workers. For example, someone may be told that if he or she was a "good worker" then he or she wouldn't question having to put in 50 of 60 hours a week at a job. Inherent in this use of "good worker" is often the veiled threat that bad workers get fired and good workers have prospects at getting promoted. As such, workers often adopt either the good or bad worker identity without ever realizing that it is a tool of managerial control.

Denaturalization and/or Rearticulation

After identifying relevant ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities, a critical researcher must "articulate an alternative position that challenges conventional representations and critically probes (rather than taking at face value) the reported views and experiences of research participants."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 64. In essence, the critical theorist attempts to show individuals that the specific ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that they believe are steadfast and unchangeable, are in fact creations of people in power and can be altered. Part of this process involves the critical theorists clearly articulating a new vision for ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities that are more egalitarian or worker friendly.

Inspiring Social Reform

Further the notion of rearticulating ideologies, institutions, interests, and identities is taking those changes to a more societal level. The goal of a critical theorist is to not just notice problems that exist in society but to help people change the power

34. Whether or not an individual (or group of individuals) has a clear advantage or advancement of a personal or group agenda that is not necessarily clearly articulated to everyone within an organization.

35. The state of being or believing that you are the same person or thing described or claimed by those with power.

imbalances that exist. Part of this process is helping people see new ideas, selves, motives, and practices. In the organizational context, the goal is to emancipate workers or "break away from structures and ideologies that tend to constrain forms of consciousness into prespecified routes that stifle imagination."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 64.

Constraining Choice and Action

While it would be wonderful if modern organizations could be utopian enterprises where everyone was truly equal, critical theorists must also realize that overly revolutionary or radical perspectives on organizing and the modern workplace may not be realistic or helpful.Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Instead, critical theorists should focus the real lives and experiences that people in modern organizations have. This isn't to say that critical theorists must always be strictly "realistic," but rather critical scholarship "seeks to acknowledge how realizing ideals such as class, gender, race, and ecological justice may have drastic consequences for the material functioning of organizations alongside effects on member subjectivities."Alvesson, M., & Ashcraft, K. L. (2009) Critical methodology in management and organization research. In D. A. Buchannan & A. Bryman (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of organizational research methods* (pp. 61–77). Los Angeles, CA: Sage, pg. 65.

Overall, critical theory provides a very interesting and specific proactive perspective on organizational communication scholarship. For more information on conducting rhetorical/critical research, we recommend reading either Foss' (2004)Foss, S. K. (2004). *Rhetorical criticism: Exploration & practice* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland. or Swartz (1996)Swartz, O. (1996). *Conducting socially responsible research: Critical theory, neo-pragmatism, and rhetorical inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. books on rhetorical/critical research methods in communication.

Example of Rhetorical/Critical Scientific Research

The Communicational Basis of the Organizational Text as Macroactor:

A Case Study of Multilevel Marketing Discourse

By Walter J. Carl (2005)Carl, W. J. (2005). The communicational basis of the organizational text as macroactor: A case study of multilevel marketing discourse. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, 6*, 21–29.

In this study, Carl wanted to examine a macroactor (an individual who is empowered to speak on behalf of a large number of people). In this specific analysis, the macroactor was a letter to the editor in *Forbes* magazine by Ken McDonald the managing director of Quixtar, Inc. Prior to this letter, Karen J. Bannan had written an article in *Forbes* magazine titled "Amway.com" discussing how the notorious multi-level marketing firm Amway was the sister company of Quixtar along with the perils of multi-level marketing. McDonald's letter in response to the Bannan letter to the editor took issue with the article because it "'did not provide an accurate picture of the company,' citing an inaccurate understanding of the corporate relationship among Amway, Quixtar, and Alticor, unfair representations of Quixtar business meetings as 'cult-like,' and only publishing accounts from dissatisfied 'Independent Business Owners'" (p. 23).

The purpose of Carl's analysis of McDonald's letter was to demonstrate that the letter is a clear piece of organizational rhetoric. While the organization attempts to hide its actions in the voice of a single individual speaking out, the very act of this letter is clearly a message with backing from the institution itself. To aid in the development of his argument, McDonald examined four major issues "(1) the features of the text that make it a letter to the editor and not, for example, a press release or news story or some other kind of text [company logo, date, salutation, name of author, author identity, etc].; (2) the issue of authorship and its authorizing function [the signature on the letter with the company's logo makes the letter act as a function of the organization itself]; (3) the presuppositions that, thought absent, are necessary for the text to 'make sense' to its audience [the primary presupposition is that the reporter did nto provide a fair, accurate, and objective account of Quixtar]; and (4) how the text is constructed to orient to these presuppositions and to build up a

> rhetorical case imputing motive to *Forbes* magazine [the letter systematically explains why Quixtar felt the need to respond]" (pp. 23–24).

Comparing the Three Types

Now that we've explained how each of the three methodological traditions approaches organizational communication, let's see how the three compare when we put them side-by-side. Table 1.4 "How the Three Methods Compare Side-by-Side" provides an explanation for how the three methodological approaches differ in their understanding and approach to organizational communication.

Table 1.4 How the Three Methods Compare Side-by-Side

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	**Interpretive**	**Critical**
Basic Goal	The goal of social scientific research is to classify organizational communicative phenomena, measure them, and construct statistical models to explain the phenomena.	The goal of interpretive research is a complete, detailed description of the organizational communication phenomenon examined.	The goal of critical research is to examine how organizations exists in a world of power imbalances.
View of Organizations	Organizations are naturally existing phenomena open to description, prediction, and control.	Organizations are social entities with day-to-day talk, rites, rituals, and stories that develop its own unique culture that has aspects that are similar to other cultures.	Organizations are inherently places of power imbalances. Workers are typically subjugated by superiors who have implicit or expressed power.
Study Purpose	Social Scientific researchers have a very clear idea what they are examining at the start of a research study.	Interpretive researchers generally only have a vague idea of what they are looking for at the	Critical researchers generally select artifacts from organizations or about organizations and analyze those artifacts in an effort to see how

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	Interpretive	Critical
		start of a research study and prefer to view organizational phenomena from the viewpoint of their participants.	power is communicated and utilized within an organization.
Research Design	Social Scientific research designs are very carefully planned before the data are ever collected.	Interpretive research designs develop over the course of data collection.	Critical researchers can follow very stringent ways of analyzing artifacts or create the ways of analysis while examining the data.
Tools of Research	Scientific/quantitative researchers use a variety of measurement devices (e.g., questionnaires) as the primary tool of data collection.	Interpretive/ qualitative researchers collect their data themselves through interviews and observation, so the researcher is the primary tool of data collection.	Rhetorical/critical researchers do not need data sources beyond the act (an actual communication event) or artifact (the record of a communication event) being analyzed.
Writing Style	Numbers and statistics are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be very formal.	Words, pictures, and artifacts are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be very narrative.	Acts and artifacts are the primary forms of data. Writing tends to be narrative.
Research Scope	Social Scientific research tends to be more succinct, quickly conducted, and can be generalized to larger groups than the sample utilized in the study.	Interpretive research tends to be more detailed, time consuming, and limited to the group the researcher studied.	Critical research tends to be detailed in its analysis, but the findings should help researchers understand organizational communication in an effort to move towards egalitarian power structures.
View of Research	Social Scientific research is more objective and you are able to achieve a more detached view of the	Interpretive research is more subjective and you are able to achieve	Critical research is also highly subjective to the individual point of view of the critic. As such,

Issue	Methodological Traditions		
	Social Science	Interpretive	Critical
	communication phenomena.	an insider's point-of-view of the communication phenomena.	critics with differing political persuasions will view the same acts and artifacts in differing ways.
Purpose of Theory	Scientific/quantitative researchers view theory as the guiding metaphor for research. As such, research starts with theoretical ideas, poses hypotheses, tests them, and makes revisions to the theory.	Interpretive/ qualitative data collection ends with the creation of hypotheses and the generation of theory.	Theory can either guide a critical study or be arrived at through the process of analyzing an artifact.
Critiques	A lot of social scientific research is prescription based and looks at skills people need to have in modern organizations. However, the researcher is ultimately responsible for which skills are analyzed. Furthermore, there tends to be little research examining skills interculturally.	Interpretive research is often very subjective. Furthermore, there is a serious debate as to whether the information gained from one organization can or should impact how we view another organization.	Critical research is often very subjective and open to interpretation based on one's political persuasion. Furthermore, critical research tends to err on the side of those without power and are in the minority, so the innate political bias can be problematic for some.

Source: Wrench, J. S. (in press). Communicating within the modern workplace: Challenges and prospects. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 1. Internal workplace communication.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

At this point, you may be wondering about the state of organizational communication as a field today. Today there are still a wide range of scholars investigating organizational communication from a social-scientific, interpretive, and critical vantage point. In a 2007 article by Patric Spence and Colin Baker, the researchers set out to examine what types of methodologies modern organizational communication scholars were using.Spence, Patric, R., & Baker, C. R. (2007). State of the method: An examination of level of analysis, methodology, representation and setting in current organizational communication research. *Journal of the Northwest*

Communication Association, 36, 111–124. Using a period from 1998 to 2004, the researchers located 153 articles discussing organizational communication in major communication journals published by regional, national, and international communication associations. <u>Figure 1.4 "Types of Research Conducted"</u> demonstrates the basic findings from this study.

Figure 1.4 *Types of Research Conducted*

Source: Patric Spence & C. R. Baker, "State of the Method: An Examination of Level of Analysis, Methodology, Representation and Setting in Current Organizational Communication Research," Journal of the Northwest Communication Association 36 (2007): 111-124.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- The social scientific approach to organizational communication is based on the notion that researchers start by desiring to test a specific theoretical idea about organizational communication, which leads to specific hypotheses being made, data is the gathered and interpreted, and lastly the data leads to further generalizations that help to refine the original theory. Social scientists typically conduct research using surveys, experiments, or content analysis that can be analyzed using statistical reasoning.

EXERCISE

1. Create an experiment testing the impact that verbal, nonverbal, or mediated messages have on ensuring employee understanding about a new organizational policy.

1.5 Chapter Exercises

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Around the world this nonprofit has many different names: Albania, Rruga Sesam, Egypt, Alam Simsim; India, Galli Galli Sim Sim; Indonesia, Jalan Sesama; Israel, Rechov Sumsum; Palestine, Shara'a Simsim; Serbia, Ulica Sezam; South Africa, Takalani Sesame; and The United States of America, Sesame Street. In all, there are 20 versions of Sesame Street being produced through the Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit organization behind Sesame Street. The goal of the Sesame Workshop is to improve the lives in children and their societies in four specific domains: health & wellness; respect & understanding; literacy & numeracy; and emotional well being.

In the 2006 documentary The World According to Sesame Street, the filmmakers introduce you to a world coping with violence (Kosovo), AIDS (South Africa), poverty (India), and gender inequality (Egypt). And all over the globe, the Sesame Workshop teaches students their alphabets and numbers because the Sesame Workshop realizes that the only way to ensure a child's future is through education.

1. Of the four types of organizations discussed by Blau and Scott (1962), which type of organization is the Sesame Workshop? Why?
2. The Sesame Workshop is constantly attempting to address local issues with their international programs. If you were going to create a Sesame Street for corporations, what lessons do you think they need to learn?
3. If you were producing a new Sesame Street in Iraq, what kind of inputs from the environment do you think you would need?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Erik Lie and Randall Heron, two University of Iowa associate professors in finance, conducted a research study in 2005 that determined that many Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) were manipulating their stock-option accounting rules in order to increase their annual salaries. In fact, Lie and Heron found that upwards of 29 percent of all public corporations have major stock-option irregularities. Basically, organizations were delaying their stock paperwork for months in an attempt to look back and select the most lucrative dates for reporting, which is a violation of federal law. Lie and Heron found a way to actually determine whether or not an organization was perpetuating this type of fraud. When the researchers realized what they had found, they contacted the United States' Securities & Exchange Commission and showed The Wall Street Journal how to use options records to look for fraud.

As a result of their research, Lie and Heron established a consulting firm that examines whether accounting irregularities are simple paper-work mistakes or something more fraudulent. The two make more than $400 an hour examining corporations' accounting records and working with plaintiffs' lawyers as expert witnesses. In a world where CEOs are often being led out of their corporations in handcuffs, organizations and lawyers are forced to take Lie and Heron's research findings very seriously.

1. While this specific case study examines accounting problems, do you think there are any communication problems that can lead to lawsuits?
2. Do you think a university researcher should be able to financially profit from her or his research?
3. While more than 2,000 organizations have been found to have options irregularities, Lie and Heron suspect that some of those organizations may be innocent. Could putting their research out into the public have a negative effect on innocent organizations? Do you think putting innocent organizations under more scrutiny in order to find guilty organizations justifiable?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

On October 9th 2007, Harris Interactive found that in the United States (32%) and Spain (28%) the most important aspect of one's job was their salary. While salary was found to be important elsewhere in Europe, Great Britain (33%), France (30%), Italy (29%), and Germany (25%); Europeans found the interesting nature of their jobs more important: Great Britain (36%), France (44%), Italy (37%), and Germany (44%). Whereas, in the United States (28%) and Spain (25%), lower percentages of people found the interesting nature of their job to be the most important.

The study also asked the international participants to what degree they liked their current Bosses. In the United States (65%), Great Britain (56%), and France (52%), the majority of individuals polled liked their bosses. However, in Italy (48%), Spain (34%), and Germany (47%), the majority of individuals polled did not like their bosses.

1. Why do you think individuals in the United States and Spain consider salary more important than the interesting nature of their job?
2. Why do you think individuals in Great Britain, France, Italy, and Germany find the interesting nature of their job more important than their salary?
3. Does it surprise you that individuals in the United States are considerably more satisfied with their bosses than the other countries polled?

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT HEAD

1. Joana works for an organization that prides itself on openness and transparency. However, the organization tends to actually insulate itself from what's going on with its various competitors, its local community, and even governmental regulations. Based on this information, what can you say accurately about Joana's organizations relationship with its external environment.

    a. the organization has open boundaries
    b. the organization has closed boundaries
    c. the organization has a tall hierarchy
    d. the organization has a flat hierarchy
    e. the organization has limited outputs

2. Stewart sat down with a set of spreadsheet data and quickly realized that if his coffee shop was going to last the summer it really need to spend more time focusing on business from tourists because they were his only real potential for growth. Which of Edward Gross's organizational goals is Stewart faced with?

    a. output
    b. adaptation
    c. management
    d. motivation
    e. positional

3. Diana works for an organization that on the surface says it's very creative and always looking for new ways of doing business. However, every time Diana brings up a new idea she's immediately shot down with a "but we've always done it this way" attitude from her management. Which of the dialectical tensions of control is Diana facing?

    a. systemization vs. autonomy
    b. agreement vs. dissent
    c. conventionality vs. innovation
    d. organization vs. self-focused
    e. organizational vs. individual rights

4. Who is considered to be the Father of Organizational Communication?

   a. Elton Mayo
   b. Chester Barnard
   c. Lee Thayer
   d. Fredric M. Jablin
   e. W. Charles Redding

5. Which of the three methodologies used by organizational communication scholars uses survey, experiments, and content analyses to examine organizational communication phenomena?

   a. social-scientific
   b. qualitative
   c. interpretive
   d. critical
   e. rhetorical

ANSWER KEY

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. e
5. a

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 2

Organizational Communication Ethics

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Why Ethics

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

In this chapter we examine how the philosophical world of ethics can be applied to organizational communication. When people hear the word "ethics" used in modern society, many different images and incidents quickly come to mind. Sadly, the 21st Century has already been plagued with many ethical lapses in the business sector. Turn on any major global news station, newspaper, magazine, or podcast and you're likely to hear about some business that is currently in a state of crisis due to lapses in ethical judgment. Table 2.1 "Modern Ethical Lapses" contains a short list of organizations and their various ethical lapses in judgment.

Table 2.1 Modern Ethical Lapses

Organization	Ethical Lapse
Arthur Andersen	Accounting Fraud & Shredding documents wanted in a criminal investigation
Boeing	Industrial Espionage
Bridgestone-Firestone	Delaying a recall of defective tires
Catholic Church	Sex Abuse and cover up
Coca-Cola	Taking groundwater from local farmers in India

Organization	Ethical Lapse
Enron	Accounting Fraud
Halliburton	Overbilling for products and services
Martha Stewart, Inc.	CEO committed insider trading with her sell of her ImClone stock.
McDonald's	8 individuals provided winning game pieces from McDonald's Monopoly game to family and friends.
Merrill Lynch	Lying to investors
Napster	Digital copyright violations
Parmalat	Italian dairy company's fraudulent accounting practices
Sanlu Group Co.	Chinese based company knowing distributes tainted baby formula.
Tyco	CEO was caught embezzling funds.
US Military	Prisoner Abuse in Iraq and Afghanistan
WorldCom	Accounting Fraud
Xerox	Exaggerating Revenues

In this chapter, four distinct areas of ethical understanding will be explored: nature of ethics, business ethics, communication ethics, and organizational communication ethics.

2.1 Nature of Ethics

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define the term "ethics" and how it relates to both means and ends.
2. Explain the four different ethical frameworks discussed in the ethical matrix.
3. Differentiate among the eleven philosophical perspectives of ethics and how they apply to both business ethics and communication ethics.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (1963)*The Oxford English Dictionary*. (1963). Oxford, Britain: At the Clarendon Press., the word "**ethics**[1]" is derived from the Greek ethos or the nature or disposition of a culture. Ethics is further characterized as both a field of study concerned with moral principles and the moral principles that govern or influence human behavior. Parhizgar and Parhizgar (2006)Parhizgar, K. D., & Parhizgar, R. (2006). *Multicultural business ethics and global managerial moral reasoning*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. define ethics as the:

...critical analysis of cultural values to determine the validity of their vigorous rightness or wrongness in terms of two major criteria: truth and justice. Ethics is examining the relation of an individual to society, to the nature, and or to God. How do people make ethical decisions? They are influenced by how they perceive themselves in relation to goodness and/or excellence. (p. 77)

Based on this definition, the study of ethics is "concerned with cultural value systems that are operable, either with intending to do something or actually doing something in the realm of goodness" (Parhizgar & Parhizgar, 2006, p. 77). As we shall see in this chapter, making this determination of "goodness" is not always black and white. To help illustrate this point, we will now examine four scenarios:

1. The philosophical study and evaluation of the means and ends of human behavior.

1. In an effort to win a new client for your business, you deliver a presentation about how your business is more suited for the client

than your competitors. You develop a well-honed argument based on the facts at hand. Ultimately, your business is able to really help the client expand her or his market share.

2. In an effort to win a new client for your business, you lie to a prospective client during a presentation. The client is impressed with your presentation and decides to sign a contract with your business. Unfortunately, the lying catches up with you and you end up doing the client more harm than good and the client starts to lose part of her or his market share.

3. In an effort to win a new client for your business, you lie to a prospective client during a presentation. The client is impressed with your presentation and decides to sign a contract with your business. Even though you lied to your client, your business is ultimately able to really help the client expand her or his market.

4. In an effort to win a new client for your business, you deliver a presentation about how your business is more suited for the client than your competitors. You develop a well-honed argument based on the facts at hand. After the client signs a contract with your business, you discover that one of your competitors is better suited for the client's specific interests. Ultimately, your business ends up doing your client more harm than good and the client starts to lose part of her or his market share.

When examining these four ethical scenarios, you'll notice that each scenario can be broken down into two clear parts: means and ends. According to McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond (2003)McCroskey, J. C., Wrench, J. S., & Richmond, V. P. (2003). *Principles of public speaking.* Indianapolis, IN: The College Network. "**means**[2]" are the tools or behaviors that one employs to achieve a desired outcome, and "**ends**[3]" are those outcomes that one desires to achieve. Both "means" and "ends" can be evaluated as either good or bad. Remember, the definition of ethics by Parhizgar and Parhizgar (2006) involves the intention to behave or actual behavior in the realm of goodness. McCroskey (2006)McCroskey, J. C. (2006). *An introduction to rhetorical communication: A Western rhetorical perspective* (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. takes the idea of ethics one step further and explains that examining the intent of the behavior is only half of the ethical equation. McCroskey believes that examining the "goodness" of the outcome of the behavior is also important when examining ethics. McCroskey's (2006) ethical frame work, which was later expanded upon by McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond (2003), can be seen as the combination of "good vs. bad means" and "good vs. bad ends" (<u>Figure 2.1 "The Ethical Matrix"</u>).

Figure 2.1   The Ethical Matrix

2. Component of ethical analysis where one examines the tools or behaviors that an individual or group of individuals employ to achieve a desired outcome.

3. Component of ethical analysis where one examines the outcomes that an individual or group of individuals desire to achieve.

Good Means—Good End—Ethical Behavior

The first ethical dilemma discussed earlier is an example of a "good" mean leading to a "good" end, or what is termed **ethical behavior**[4] in the ethical matrix. In this case, the presenter developed a clear argument based on facts in an attempt to persuade a client (mean). As a result of signing on with the presenter's company, the client increased her or his share of the market (end). In essence, the presenter had a good mean (persuasive argument) that lead to a good end (increased market share). Behavior that contains both a good mean and a good end is considered ethical behavior.

Bad Means—Bad End—Unethical Behavior

In the second ethical dilemma, we have an example of a "bad" mean leading to a "bad" end, or what is termed **unethical behavior**[5] in the ethical matrix. Specifically, in order to gain business, the presenter lied to the client (mean). Unfortunately, after the client was duped into signing with the presenter's company, the client lost part of the market share he or she had before getting involved with the presenter's company (end). In this case, the presenter had a bad mean (lied to client) that lead to a bad end (decreased market share). When a bad mean leads to a bad end, the behavior is considered unethical.

The first two quadrants in the ethical matrix are obvious and are easily discerned in the world of business. Often times, however, determining the ethical nature of behavior is not as clear as the first two examples. The next two examples provide the last two variations of means and ends combinations.

Bad Means—Good End—Machiavellian Ethic

In the third example, there was a "bad" mean that lead to a "good" end, or what is termed the **Machiavellian ethic**[6] in the ethical matrix. In this case, the presenter purposefully lied to the client in an effort to sign the client. After the client signed with the presenter's business, the client's share of the market increased. Here we have a situation where there was a bad mean (lied to client) that lead to a good end (increased market share). When a bad mean leads to a good end, we refer to this as the Machiavellian ethic. According to Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, and McCroskey (2008)Wrench, J. S., Thomas-Maddox, C., Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). *Quantitative methods for communication researchers: A hands on approach.* New York: Oxford University Press., the term "Machiavellian ethic" derives its name from:

4. Component of the ethical matrix where an individual employs good means that lead to a good end.

5. Component of the ethical matrix where an individual employs bad means that lead to a bad end.

6. Component of the ethical matrix where an individual employs bad means that lead to a good end.

...Niccolò Machiavelli [who] believed that the ends justify the means. Machiavelli's greatest work, The Prince, written in 1513, created much controversy because Machiavelli wrote that princes should retain absolute control of their lands and should use any means necessary to accomplish this end, including deceit. This notion was so outlandish that Pope Clement VIII described it as heretical. (pp. 27–28).

Some ethicists claim that a bad mean is always unethical while others claim that the end result is what matters when determining the goodness of a behavior.

Good Means—Bad End—Subjective Ethic

In the final ethical scenario, there was a "good" mean that lead to a "bad" end. In this case, the presenter developed a clear argument based on facts in an attempt to persuade a client (mean), or what is termed the **subjective ethic**[7] in the ethical matrix. Unfortunately, after the client signed with the presenter's company, the client lost part of the market share he or she had before getting involved with the presenter's company (end). When a good mean (well-honed argument) leads to a bad end (decreased market share), we refer to this as the subjective ethic. This specific ethical stance is deemed "subjective" because the intent of the presenter is ultimately only known to the presenter. In essence, under the subjective ethic, there are two possible implications. In one case, the presenter used a perfectly good mean (well-honed and honest argument) to sign the client and then purposefully decreased the client's market share; whereas in the second case the presenter used a good mean and the subsequent decreased market share was an unintended outcome. In the first case there is evidence of malice on the part of the presenter, and in the second case there are uncontrollable outcomes.

While a discussion of means and ends is a helpful way to frame ethical thoughts, there are many philosophical traditions that have explored the nature of ethics. Table 2.2 "Major Ethical Perspectives" lists eleven major philosophical perspectives used to determine what is and what is not ethical.

Table 2.2 Major Ethical Perspectives

7. Component of the ethical matrix where an individual employs good means that lead to a bad end.

Ethical Perspective	Basic Premises	Business Application	Communication Application
Altruism	The standard is based on doing what is best or good for others.	Ethical business behavior must be good for other people.	Communicative behavior must lead to a good end for the receiver.

Ethical Perspective	Basic Premises	Business Application	Communication Application
Categorical Imperative / Deontology	The standard is based on the notion that moral duties should be obeyed without exception. This perspective is very clear on what is good and what is bad—no middle ground.	There are clear business behaviors that are and are not ethical, so all individuals should avoid behaving unethically in business.	There are some communicative behaviors that are never ethical (e.g., deception).
Communitarianism	The standard is based on whether behavior helps to restore the social fabric of society.	Business must behave in a manner that helps the social fabric of society.	Communicative behavior must help the social fabric of society.
Cultural Relativism	The standard is an individual's cultural or legal system of values. These standards differ from culture to culture.	1) The law determines business ethics.	Our legal system and cultures/co-cultures define ethical communication.
		2) One's nationalistic culture determines what is ethical.	
		3) One's organizational culture determines what is ethical.	
Ethical Egoism	The standard is an individual's self-interest. Emphasis is on how one *should* behave, or it encourages people to look out for their own self-interests.	People in business should behave in whatever manner is most effective to achieve their self-interests.	People should communicate in whatever manner is most effective for achieving their communicative goals.
Justice	The standard is based on three principles of justice: 1) each person has a right to basic liberties; 2) everyone ought to be given the same chance to qualify for offices and jobs; and 3) when inequalities exist, a priority should be given to meeting the needs of the disadvantaged.	Business decisions should be made on how the decisions will affect all relevant stakeholders equally. However, when stakeholders' needs are in conflict, priority should be given to meeting the needs of those in subjugated stakeholder groups.	People should communicate in a manner that is consistent with a range of stakeholders.

Ethical Perspective	Basic Premises	Business Application	Communication Application
Nihilism	Ethics innately prevent individuals from creating new ideas and values that challenge the status quo, so individuals of superior intellect should disavow any attempt by others to subject them to an ethical perspective.	Smart business people should not be hampered in their behavior by any archaic or contemporary notions of good and bad business behavior.	Smart communicators know that what matters is achieving one's communicative goals, so they should not adhere to any prescribed notions of good and bad communicative behavior.
Psychological Egoism	The standard is an individual's self-interest. Emphasis is on how one *actually* behaves, or in everything we do is influenced by self-interested motives.	People in business actually behave in whatever manner is most effective to achieve their self-interests.	People actually communicate in whatever manner is most effective for achieving their communicative goals.
Social Relativism	The standard is the interests of my friends, group, or community.	People in business should behave in a manner that is consistent with the interests of their social networks and communities.	People in business should communicate in a manner that is consistent with the interests of their social networks and communities.
Subjectivism	The standard is based on an individual's personal opinion of moral judgment. For this reason, perceptions of ethics differ from person to person.	Whatever an individual in business determines is ethical for her or his behavior is ethical for that individual.	Individual communicators determine what is and is not ethical from their own individual vantage point.
Utilitarianism	The standard is the greatest good for the greatest number of people.	People in business should behave in a manner that does the greatest amount of	People should communicate in a manner that does the greatest amount

Ethical Perspective	Basic Premises	Business Application	Communication Application
		good for the greatest number of people.	of good for the greatest number of people.

The eleven philosophical traditions discussed in <u>Table 2.2 "Major Ethical Perspectives"</u> help to illustrate how varied the perspectives on ethics have been by various philosophical thinkers (Lewis & Speck, 1990). Unfortunately, there is not one clear determination for what is or what is not ethical. The rest of this chapter will focus on three contexts where ethical thought has been applied: business, human communication, and organizational communication.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The term "ethics" is a complicated one and has been defined by a wide range of scholars over the years. Ultimately, ethics is an examination of whether an individual uses "good" or "bad" means in an attempt to achieve a desired outcome that could be deemed "good" or "bad". As simplistic as this may sound, actually studying and determining whether behavior is ethical can be a daunting task.
- The ethical matrix examines the intersections of means and ends by examining four distinct categories where ethical behavior may occur. First, behavior is deemed ethical if an individual uses a good mean to achieve a good end. Second, behavior is deemed unethical if an individual uses a bad mean to achieve a bad end. Third, behavior is referred to as the Machiavellian ethic when an individual uses a bad mean to achieve a good end. Lastly, when an individual uses a good mean to achieve a bad end, the behavior is referred to as the subjective ethic.
- There are many different philosophical traditions in the study of ethics. <u>Table 2.2 "Major Ethical Perspectives"</u> above outlines eleven different ethical perspectives. This table is designed to briefly explain the philosophical perspective and then demonstrate how it can be applied in both a business context and to organizational communication specifically.

EXERCISES

1. Look at a recent copy of *Business Week, The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, Forbes Magazine*, or any other business-oriented publication. Find articles that specifically discuss ethical areas in modern business. How would you apply the definition of ethics to these articles?
2. Look at a recent copy of *Business Week, The Wall Street Journal, Fast Company, Forbes Magazine*, or other business-oriented publication. Find examples of each of the four different types of ethical possibilities described by the ethical matrix.
3. Look at the list of major ethical lapses in business discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Analyze one of the ethical lapses listed using three of the eleven philosophical perspectives on ethics. How does filtering one's ethical framework based on a specific philosophical perspective alter how you view those ethical lapses?

2.2 Business Ethics

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Identify Cherrington and Cherrington's (1992) typology of ethical lapses in business.
2. Understand how Cherrington and Cherrington's (1992) typology of ethical lapses applies to the modern workplace.

In Table 2.1 "Modern Ethical Lapses" at the beginning of this chapter, we listed a number of ethical lapses that have been perpetrated by various organizations during the first decade of the 21st Century. Business ethics has become such a hot item that there have been over 1,000 books written with the phrase "business ethics" in the title since the 21st Century began. One could easily be misled into thinking that the idea of ethical business behavior and practices is a creation of the 21st Century, but the discussion of ethical and unethical business behavior is as old as the marketplace itself. As for the formal study of business ethics, the Center for Business Ethics was founded in 1976 at Bentley College, which then held the first academic conference on the subject in 1977 (Hoffman, 1982)Hoffman, W. M. (1982). Introduction. *Journal of Business Ethics, 1*, 79–80.. The information generated at that first conference was bundled into a text titled *The Proceedings of the First National Conference on Business Ethics: Business Values and Social Justice—Compatibility or Contradiction?*, which was the first business ethics text and an international best-selling book (Hoffman, 1977)Hoffman, W. M. (1977). *The proceedings of the first national conference on business ethics: Business values and social justice—compatibility or contradiction?* Waltham, MA: Center for Business Ethics.. In 1982, *The Journal of Business Ethics* began publishing four issues per year devoted to the analysis and understanding of ethics in modern organizations. We mention this brief history in order to illustrate that the idea of ethics and ethical violations in organizations is hardly a new academic endeavor or a new corporate phenomenon. To help us more fully understand the arena of business ethics, we will examine the most common ethical lapses in organizations and then we will discuss the current state of business ethics.

Typology of Ethical Lapses

While most organizations believe that their specific ethical dilemmas are unique, J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992) found that most organizations face very similar ethical dilemmasCherrington, J. O., & Cherrington, D. J. (1992). A menu of moral issues: One week in the life of the *Wall Street Journal. Journal of Business Ethics, 11*, 255–265.. Specifically, J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington found that most organizations will face a specific list of twelve different ethical issues.

1) Taking things that do not belong to you (stealing)

Whether stealing a package of Post-It ® notes for home use or skimming millions of dollars out of a corporate account, the first major ethical hurdle many organizations have to face is theft. Sometimes the issue of theft is not clear cut. For example, is using company time for personal business theft (J.O. Cherrington & D. J. Cherrington, 1992, p. 256)? One area that has recently received attention is the use work computers for non-work/personal business, such as playing games online or chatting on Facebook.

2) Saying things that you know are not true (lying)

Gregory House, main character on the hit Fox television series House, frequently utters his basic mantra, "Everyone lies." Whether someone is lying to get a job, keep a job, or advance in a job, people often use deception as a method for enhancing occupational options. Some occupations even require deception as an integral part of the occupation (Shulman, 2007)Shulman, D. (2007). *From hire to liar: The role of deception in the workplace*. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press.. Could a spy really commit espionage without a little deception?

3) False impressions (fraud and deceit)

For the purposes of the list of 12 ethical issues, J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992) differentiate between general lying and what they refer to as "false impressions." False impressions occur when an individual purposefully represents herself or himself as something that he or she is not. The authors note, "Are you responsible for correcting others' false impressions such as not accepting unearned praise or not letting others take the blame for your mistakes? … Are you being deceitful when you dress for success or pretend to be successful so clients will have confidence in you?" (p. 256).

4) Conflict of interest and influence buying (bribes, payoffs, & kickbacks)

According to Desjardins (2009)Desjardins, J. (2009). *An introduction to business ethics* (3rd ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill., a conflict of interest occurs when an individual's personal interest in a business decision interferes with her or his professional judgment. Influence buying, on the other hand, is when an external party offers a bribe, payoff, or kickback to a decision maker in order to influence her or his decision.

5) Hiding versus divulging information

Information is one of the most important commodities in any organization. Ultimately, who has information and how they chose to disseminate that information can have very positive or negative ramifications for an organization and its stakeholders. For example, would you sell a product to a client, allowing them to believe that the version you are selling them is the latest technology, when you know a newer, better version is being released the following week? When is divulging information about your corporation "whistleblowing" and when is it "industrial espionage?"

6) Unfair advantage (cheating)

The idea of unfair advantage occurs when one person clearly has more power to control the outcome of a situation. For example, if you are dying of a disease and a business has the only cure, they hold all the cards. In essence, they have the ability to charge anything they want for their "magical pill" because the patient has no other options. Is this practice fair and ethical? Is it fair when CEOs are paid multi-million dollar bonuses when thousands of employees are being laid off? Is it fair when a CEO promotes her son, when the son is not the most qualified applicant in the pool? In all three of these situations, we see individuals taking advantage of the positions they hold.

7) Personal decadence

In the summer of 2008, the major players in the United States' auto industry flew on their private jets to Washington, DC to ask for a multi-billion dollar bailout from the U.S. Congress. When most people think of personal decadence, this type of over-the-top self-indulgent behavior comes to mind. However, decadence can also include the process of decreasing the state of oneself. For example, in the business world there are many people who work slower than necessary, turn in sloppy work, use drugs or alcohol at work, and engage in many other behaviors that clearly impact an organization's ability to perform.

8) Interpersonal abuse

While some actions within the organization, like personal decadence, impact the larger organization, other actions directed at coworkers have direct effects on personal performance. J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992) note that "physical violence, sexual harassment, emotional abuse, abuse of one's position, racism, and sexism" are all examples of interpersonal abuse occurring in modern organizations (p. 256).

9) Organizational abuse

While interpersonal abuse includes targeted action from one member of an organization toward another member of the organization, organizational abuse stems from the organization toward the organizational members. For example, "inequity in compensation, performance appraisals that destroy self-esteem, transfers or time pressures that destroy family life, terminating people through no fault of their own, encouraging loyalty and not rewarding it, and creating the myth that the organization will benevolently protect or direct an employee's career" are examples of how organizations abuse employees (J.O. Cherrington & D. J. Cherrington, 1992, p. 256–257).

10) Rule violations

Every person within a society or within an organization is governed by a long list of rules. Some of these rules come in the form or religious commandments and other rules come in the form of laws set down from the judicial or legislative system. Other rules are created for specific organizational settings and are handed down in the form of an employee manual. Are there ever legitimate reasons to break these rules? Are some rules more important than other rules? When the rules in one set of documents (workplace policies) contradicts the rules in another set of documents (religious tenants), which rules should be followed?

11) Accessory to unethical acts

An accessory to an unethical act is an individual who knows that an ethical violation has occurred by another individual. This knowledge of ethical violation could come either in the form of witnessing the ethical violation or somehow helping the individual commit the ethical violation. Ultimately, individuals who find themselves in the accessory position are faced with the ethical dilemma of whether or not to report the ethical violation.

12) Moral balance (ethical dilemmas)

The idea of "**moral balance**[8]" stems from a philosophical debate about individuals who are faced with the possibility that a good outcome of her or his behavior or decisions will lead to a secondary outcome that is bad. For example, an issue of moral balance is at stake when an organization wants to produce a new product that will save hundreds of thousands of lives (primary outcome), but will destroy the fragile ecosystem of a village and make it uninhabitable for the indigenous people who live there (secondary outcome). An inverse moral dilemma could also exist: if the company does not produce the product, the fragile ecosystem of the village will be saved (primary outcome) but hundreds of thousands of lives will not be saved by the product (secondary outcome). How do you decide which option is ethical? Unfortunately, these types of ethical decisions are often the most complicated to make.

Business Ethics Today

In the previous section, we introduced you to J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) typology of organizational ethical issues. In this section, we will examine how these different issues are played out in the modern organization. The following statics are derived from the annual Ethics & Workplace Survey conducted by Deloitte (2006Deloitte. (2006). *Business ethics and compliance in the Sarbanes-Oxley era: A survey by Deloitte and* Corporate Board Member *magazine.* Online Available at: http://www.deloitte.com, 2007Deloitte. (2007). *Leadership counts: Deloitte & Touche USA 2007 Ethics & Workplace survey results.* Online Available at: http://www.deloitte.com, 2008Deloitte. (2008). *Transparency matters: Deloitte LLP 2008 Ethics & Workplace Survey results*. Online Available at: http://www.deloitte.com, 2009Deloitte. (2009). *Social networking and reputational risk in the workplace: Deloitte LLP 2009 Ethics & Workplace Survey results*. Online Available at: http://www.deloitte.com, 2010Deloitte. (2010). *Trust in the workplace: Deloitte LLP 2010 Ethics & Workplace Survey results*. Online Available at: http://www.deloitte.com).

1) Taking things that do not belong to you (stealing)

- 30% of employees believe there is nothing unethical about taking office supplies for personal use.
- 66% of employees see no ethical problems with taking a sick day when they are not actually ill.
- 72% of individuals see no ethical problems with using company technology for personal use in the workplace.
- 4% of employees admit to misusing company finances.
- 15% of employees use social networking websites for personal reasons during work hours.

8. The philosophical debate that occurs when an individual is faced with the possibility that the outcome of her or his behavior or decisions will lead to a secondary outcome that is equally bad.

2) Saying things that you know are not true (lying)

- 13% of employees have admittedly lied about the number of hours they have worked on a time-card.

3) False impressions (fraud and deceit)

- 6% of employees have admittedly taken credit for someone else's work.

4) Conflict of interest and influence buying (bribes, payoffs, & kickbacks)

- 43% of full-time workers and 47% of part-time workers report that they make unethical workplace decisions because of financial rewards (e.g., bonus or salary increase).

5) Hiding versus divulging information

- 84% of respondents believe that openness of leadership with information contributes to an ethical workplace culture.
- 15% of employees would have no problem posting company information online if they disagreed with their employer.

6) Unfair advantage (cheating)

- 65% of individuals note that when it comes to flex-time options, leaders tend to set different rules for themselves.
- 20% of employees have admittedly treated subordinates differently due to their personal relationships and not the subordinate's performance.

7) Personal decadence

- Only 33% of employees have never seen their supervisors performing unethical behaviors.
- 24% of employees believe there is nothing unethical about coming into work hung-over.

8) Interpersonal abuse

- 25% of employees believe it is ethical to tell a racist/sexist/heterosexist/ageist joke in the workplace.
- 9% of employees have harassed a fellow employee at work.

9) Organizational abuse

- While 92% of individuals believe that having work-life balance leads to ethical behavior, 30% of employees believe that their job does not offer them enough time to achieve work-life balance.
- 28% of individuals believe their organization causes high levels of stress.
- 13% of individuals report rigid, inflexible schedules.

10) Rule violations

- 9% of individuals believe that their personal values conflict with their organization's values.
- 67% of employees do not see an ethical problem with dating a subordinate in the workplace.

11) Accessory to unethical acts

- Employees regularly see a variety of ethical violations in the workplace: personal advantage (57%), misuse of company property (51%), taking credit for someone else's work (49%), lying about worked hours (39%), interpersonal abuse (32%), and misuse of company finances (18%).
- However, when confronted with an ethical violation in the workplace, 17% of employees would do nothing about the violation, 42% would inform an immediate supervisor, 17% would call a company ethics hotline, and only 4% would go so far as to contact someone outside of the organization.

12) Moral balance (ethical dilemmas)

This category is more difficult to quantify because the balancing of decisions is very much entrenched in many of the other categories. According to the 2007 Deloitte & Touche USA LLP Ethics & Workplace Survey, workers engage in ethical behavior for five basic reasons: behavior of management (42%), behavior of direct supervisor (35%), positive reinforcement of ethical behavior (30%), compensation (29%), and behavior of peers (23%). The study also noted five basic reasons why employees engage in unethical behavior: lack of personal integrity (80%), job dissatisfaction (60%), financial rewards (44%), pressure to meet goals (41%), and ignorance of ethical codes of conduct (39%). Overall, 87% of workers surveyed believed that a company's values can promote an ethical workplace environment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) created a typology of 12 ethical lapses that are common in modern business: (1) stealing, (2) lying, (3) false impressions, (4) conflicts of interest, (5) hiding/divulging information, (6) cheating, (7) personal decadence, (8) interpersonal abuse, (9) organizational abuse, (10) rule violations, (11) accessory to unethical acts, and (12) moral balance.
- In a series of studies conducted by Deloitte Development from 2006 to 2010, the researchers found examples of all of J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) typology of ethical lapses. While some of the ethical lapses are clearly more common (e.g., 77% of participants admitted to stealing corporate time by using technology for personal uses), others did not appear to be frequent ethical lapses (e.g., 6% took credit for someone else's work, 4% misused corporate finances, etc.).

EXERCISES

1. Which of the ethical lapses in modern business described by J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992) contain communication components?
2. Of the 12 ethical lapses discussed by J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington, which one is the most systematic in your current workplace? Which one is the least systematic in your current workplace? If you were the CEO of your organization, what you would you do to combat the ethical lapses you identified as most systematic?
3. Look at a recent copy of *Business Week*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes Magazine*, or any other other business-oriented publication. Find examples of the different ethical lapses discussed by J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992).

2.3 Communication Ethics

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain Johannesen, Valde, and Whedbee's (2008) three factors for understanding ethics in human communication.
2. Understand Andersen's (2007) three audiences for communication ethics.
3. Differentiate among the three ways individuals understand ethics described by Arnett, Harden Fritz, and Bell (2009).

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Johannesen, Valde, and Whedbee (2008) note that ethical issues may arise in human communication when three factors exist: 1) when the communicative behavior "could have a significant impact on other persons;" 2) when the communicative behavior "involves conscious choice of means and ends;" and 3) when the communicative behavior "can be judged by standards of right and wrong" (p. 1). The notion that human communication ethics is multi-faceted is also noted by McCroskey (2006) who wrote that an endless debate about means and ends is not sufficient for a "viable systems for evaluating the ethics of human communication" (p. 239). Andersen (2007) also notes that "ethics is a dimension in all the communication process" (p. 132).Andersen, K. E. (2007). A conversation about communication ethics with Kenneth E. Andersen. In P. Arneson (Ed.), *Exploring communication ethics: Interviews with influential scholars in the field* (pp. 131–142). New York: Peter Lang. Andersen goes on to explain, "It [ethics] is a dimension that is relevant to all the actors in the communication process—the source or the originator, the person that initiates communication; the person who receives, interprets, hears, reads the communication; and the people who, in effect, are further agents of transmission" (p. 132). In essence, Andersen sees communication ethics as something that needs to be examined from both the source and receiver's point of view, but he also realizes that understanding ethics from a societal viewpoint is important.

The *source's* ethical choices involve her or his basic intent toward her or his receiver(s). The first individual to really write about the ethical nature of

communication from a source's perspective was Aristotle. Aristotle realized that depending on the originator of the message, a message could be either virtuous or used for mischief. Aristotle's writings on source ethics were summed up by McCroskey (2006) who noted, "The effect of a message cannot be used as the primary means of evaluating the ethical quality of an act of communication. Furthermore, the means of persuasion themselves are ethically neutral" (p. 295). Instead, "ethical judgments in rhetorical communication should be based exclusively on the intent of the source toward the audience" (p. 295). In other words, when determining whether a specific communicative interaction was ethical from a source's perspective, the goodness of the source's intent is what should be examined instead of examining the message itself.

The *receiver's* ethical choices involve how the individual decides to process the message being sent by the source. The idea of a receiver ethic starts with the notion that being a receiver of a message should be an active process and not a passive process. As Andersen (2007) notes, "So you [the receiver] have a 100% responsibility to listen, to be critical, to evaluate, to reject, to demand more information, to reject, whatever the case may be" (132). However, there is another aspect to receiver ethics that must also be considered. As noted by McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond (2003), receivers must attend to a message objectively. Quite often receivers attend to messages depending on either their initial perception of the message or their initial perception of the sender. When these initial perceptions interfere with our ability as a receiver to listen, be critical, evaluate, or reject a message, we are not ethically attending to a message.

The *larger society* is the term Andersen (2007) uses to discuss the idea of third-party individuals who are not directly involved in the communicative exchange, but nonetheless are ethically attending to messages being sent by a source to a receiver. Whether eavesdropping on a conversation at a table next to you in a restaurant or inadvertently hearing the neighbors fighting at 3AM in the morning, third-party receivers of messages also have ethical considerations. In both of these cases, the overarching ethical dilemma is what should one do with the information they are receiving. If you overhear gossip at the table next to you, is it ethical to pass on that information to others? If you hear one partner physically abusing another partner, do you have an ethical obligation to call the police? Andersen (2007) realizes that these situations call for different responses, "Now those responsibilities in every case will be unique to the situation, unique to one's ability to fulfill the role of intermediary" (p. 133).

Overall, Andersen (2007) summarizes his position by stating, "So, one begins to say that in all the activity of communication, in whatever role we may happen to be in at the moment, there is an ethical dimension" (p. 132). While clearly each of the roles described by Andersen has different ethical responsibilities, an individual's

perception of her or his ethical responsibilities created differently. Arnett, Harden Fritz, and Bell (2009) believe that an individual's ethical schemata is derived by a combination of commonsense, theories, and learningArnett, R. C., Harden Fritz, J. M., & Bell, L. M. (2009). *Communication ethics literacy: Dialogue and difference*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage..

Common Sense

The term "commonsense" is used quite readily in modern society. Whether the issues are commonsense to drive on the right side of the road or commonsense to not lie to a police officer, individuals rely quite heavily on their perceptions of commonsense. Arnett et al. (2009) define **commonsense**[9] as "the commonly understood, taken-for-granted assumptions about the way the world works and expected communicative behaviors one will meet in navigating that world in daily life" (p. 62). Unfortunately, commonsense can be historically and culturally based assumptions. Commonsense communicative behaviors of the 1300's are not the same behaviors that are perceived as commonsense today. Furthermore, what is considered commonsense can vary greatly from culture to culture. It is commonplace in many Middle Eastern cultures for woman to not speak to men that they do not know. One of our co-authors favorite examples of the problem of "commonsense" comes from the MTV television show Road Rules: The Quest. In one episode, one of the contestants, Ellen, is walking around in Marrakech, Morocco wearing very short shorts. In an Islamic country, woman wearing revealing clothing is a violation of Islamic law. Ellen was clearly violating the culture's "commonsense" dress code. To this end, some of the villagers in Marrakech took it upon themselves to correct Ellen's nonverbal behavior by throwing rocks at her. Ultimately, the "loss of agreed-upon commonsense expectations is neither good nor bad, but simply a defining reality of our time" (Arnett et al., 2009, p. 68).

Theories

Ethical theories are an abstract step above the commonsense approach to communication ethics. "A communication ethics theory, like any theory, both opens the world, permitting us to see with clarity, and simultaneously occludes our vision. A theory both illuminates and obscures" (Arnett et al., 2009, p. 70). As we saw in <u>Table 2.2 "Major Ethical Perspectives"</u>, there are many different theoretical perspectives an individual can adhere to when determining whether a communicative behavior is ethical. Each of these different theories shapes how communicative behavior is viewed and understood.

9. "The commonly understood, taken-for-granted assumptions about the way the world works and expected communicative behaviors one will meet in navigating that world in daily life" (Arnett et al., 2009, p. 62).

Learning

Arnett et al. (2009) argue that learning is the first principle of communication ethics because "we cannot trust the old 'commonsense' notions" of ethics. "If we fail to connect the loss of agreed-upon commonsense with learning, we fall prey to discounting or making fun of those different from ourselves, those with dissimilar backgrounds, experiences, and practices" (p. 68). In essence, ethical communicators must avoid perceiving their commonsense perceptions of ethics as being universal perceptions of ethics adhered to by all people. Therefore, individuals need to seek out and analyze how varying cultures perceive and understand communicative ethics. Ultimately, ethical communicators need to see that "learning and understanding different standpoints is a pragmatic communication ethics act" (p. 62).

Clearly, the study of communication ethics is simply not a black-and-white endeavor. Often there are clear-cut, easy answers to determining ethical communicative behavior. For example, while some may think lying is always unethical (this is the 9th Commandment of the Bible after all), is it always unethical to lie? Would it be ethical to lie to someone to save his or her life? While having ethical absolutes may make life easier, in today's world drawing these fabricated lines in the sand make no sense. As Arnett et al. (2009) discussed, the best way to learn how to be an ethical communicator in today's world is to explore and learn. To help with this learning process, the National Communication Association (NCA) approved a Credo for Ethical Communication in 1999. In <u>Note 2.22 "National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication"</u>, you will see a copy of the NCA credo. While more fully fleshed out in this form, most of the items discussed within the credo have been referenced earlier in this section.

National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication

Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate. Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others. We believe that unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live. Therefore we, the members of the National Communication Association, endorse and are committed to practicing the following principles of ethical communication:

- We advocate truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
- We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.
- We strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
- We promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to fulfill human potential and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and society.
- We promote communication climates of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of individual communicators.
- We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others.

For the purposes of this chapter, we are concerned with providing guidance about organizational communication ethics. Previously, the basics of the philosophical field of ethics, business ethics, and communication ethics were discussed. In the next section, we will turn our attention toward organizational communication ethics.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Johannesen, Valde, and Whedbee's (2008) noted three factors for understanding ethics in human communication: (1) when communicative behavior impacts others, (2) when communicative behavior is a conscious choice of means and ends, and (3) when communicative behavior can be judged as either right/wrong, good/bad, moral/immoral, etc.
- Andersen (2007) argues that ethical decisions about communicative behavior must analyzed at the source of the message's level of understanding and interpretation of ethical behavior., the receiver of the message's level, and the greater society's level.
- Differentiate among the three ways individuals understand ethics described by Arnett, Harden Fritz, and Bell (2009).

EXERCISES

1. Look at a recent copy of *Business Week*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes Magazine*, or another business-oriented publication. Find an example of communication ethics and then evaluate that example through each of the three levels of ethical understanding (source, receiver, & society) discussed by Andersen (2007).
2. Why do you think Arnett, Harden Fritz, and Bell (2009) argue that learning is the first principle of ethics? Why is learning more valuable than either commonsense or theories?

2.4 Organizational Communication Ethics

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain Reinsh's (1990) nine basic ethical findings in organizational communication.
2. Differentiate among the components of Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication.
3. Understand the four phases of the feminist perspective of organizational communication ethics proposed by Mattson and Buzzanell (1999).
4. Describe why Montgomery and DeCaro (2001) believe that human performance improvement can help organizations in improving organizational communication ethics.
5. Assess the implementation of an organizational communication ethics intervention using a human performance improvement model.

The preponderance of everyday problems that plague all organizations is either problems that are patently ethical or moral in nature, or they are problems in which deeply embedded ethical issues can be identified. And this proposition is ethically significant, of course, when we recall the axiom that communication is a prerequisite for the very existence of any organization. (Redding, 1996, p. 18).

W. Charles Redding published this statement in a book he wrote about organizational communication ethics shortly before his death. While Redding did not believe that organizational communication students and researchers need to become trained ethicists, he did believe that anyone studying organizational communication should have a working knowledge of the differing theoretical perspectives of ethics (as were proposed earlier in this chapter). Redding's call for increased attention to ethics includes four basic questions:

1. "What messages or other communication events are perceived by which perceivers as unethical?"
2. "Why? That is, what criteria are cited for making specific ethical evaluations?"

3. "In what respects do these criteria appear to be grounded in organizational (or other) cultures?"
4. "What are the consequences of unethical communication? What, in other words, are the relationships between unethical communication and other organizational and societal phenomena?" (Redding, 1996, p. 24).

Redding's four questions are very similar to the list Johannesen, Valde, and Whedbee (2008) provided for examining human communication as a general construct. Seeger (2001)Seeger, M. W. (2001). Ethics and communication in organizational contexts: Moving from the fringe to the center. *American Communication Journal, 5* (1), Retrieved from: <u>http://acjournal.org/holdings/vol5/iss1/special/seeger.htm</u> noted that applying ethics in the organizational communication context, "focuses on norms and guidelines of professional practice, methodologies for promoting ethical decision-making, various codes of conducts and how these function to promote discussion, informal decisions, and resolve practical ethical problems" (18). To help us achieve Seeger's concept of applied organizational communication ethics, the rest of this section will focus on Reinsh's (1990) nine basic ethical findings in organizational communication, Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication, Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) extension of Redding's Typology, and Montgomery and DeCaro's (2001) ethical performance improvement perspective.

Reinsh's Nine Basic Ethical Findings in Organizational Communication

In 1990, ReinschReinsch, N. L., Jr. (1990). Ethics research in business communication: The state of the art. *The Journal of Business Communication, 27*, 251–272. examined the state of ethics research in business communication by examining the empirical research conducted on this subject. Based on his analysis of 28 different research articles, Reinsch found nine basic areas of agreement:

1. Communication behaviors vary in moral worth, and various groups (e.g., advertising executives, general public) demonstrate a relatively high level of consensus about the moral weight of many specific practices.
2. Blatantly unethical behaviors sometimes occur in business organizations.
3. Unethical business communication can be effective in the short run.
4. A person's behavior is related to his or her ethical beliefs.

5. The concept of business communication ethics is relevant to many different aspects of business including direct mail marketing, management, and consulting.
6. The concept of business communication ethics is related to other significant concepts such as honesty and trust.
7. Persons differ in ethical values, beliefs and behaviors, and the differences may be associated with variables such as gender, age, perceptions of an employer as typical or "generous," and the values, beliefs and behaviors of one's cohorts.
8. Ethical analysis in business communication has sometimes been impressionistic; consistent, careful attention to the work of ethicists in other fields (e.g., philosophy, interpersonal communication) is desirable.
9. Business communication ethics should encompass oral communication as well as written. (p. 265)

In light of the earlier discussions in this chapter, the majority of this list is consistent with other perspectives on ethics. However, there is one major idea in this list that had not been previously discussed in this chapter. Reinsch (1990) concluded that sometimes unethical communicative behavior can be effective in the short-run. If unethical behavior was never effective, there would be no reason for anyone to engage in unethical behavior. The simple fact is, quite often unethical behavior can help people get ahead in life and in business. Reinsch noted that individuals interested in organizational communication ethics tend to agree that unethical behavior is effective in the short-run, but there is disagreement about the effectiveness of unethical behavior in the long-run. Basically, the longer someone engages in unethical communicative behavior, the greater the likelihood that others will start to notice, thus establishing clear diminishing returns to unethical behavior (to use an economics term).

Redding's Typology of Unethical Organizational Communication

As part of Redding's (1996)Redding, W. C. (1996). Ethics and the study of organizational communication: When will we wake up? In J. A. Jaksa & M. S. Pritchard (Eds.), *Responsible communication: Ethical issues in business, industry, and the professions* (pp.17–40). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. call for the field of organizational communication to "wake up" and start studying ethics, he created a basic typology of unethical organizational communication. The resulting typology of unethical organizational communication consisted of six general categories: coercive, destructive, deceptive, intrusive, secretive, and manipulative-exploitative.

Coercive

The first category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is coercive acts. He defined **coercive**[10] acts as:

...communication events or behavior reflecting abuses of power or authority resulting in (or designed to effect) unjustified invasions of autonomy. This includes: intolerance of dissent, restrictions of freedom of speech; refusal to listen; resorting to formal rules and regulations to stifle discussion or to squash complaints, and so on. (pp. 27–28)

When one looks at this list of unethical communicative behaviors, the clear pattern of supervisor abuse of power is evident. In essence, the supervisor is either preventing messages from being sent by her or his subordinates or is refusing to attend to messages that her or his subordinates are sending. Notice that this process is being done mindfully on the part of the supervisor, which goes back to the intent issue raised by Andersen (2001) and McCroskey (2006).

Destructive

The second category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is **destructive**[11] acts. He defined destructive acts as:

Communication events or behavior attack receivers' self-esteem, reputation, or deeply held feelings; reflecting indifference toward, or content for, basic values of others. This includes: insults, derogatory innuendoes, epithets, jokes (especially those based on gender, race, sex, religion, or ethnicity); put-downs; back-stabbing; character-assassination; and so on. It also includes the use of "truth" as a weapon (as in revealing confidential information to unauthorized persons, or in using alleged "openness" as a façade to conceal the launching of personal attacks. It also can include silence: failure to provide expected feedback (especially recognition of good work), so that message senders (e.g. managers) are perceived as being cold, impersonal, unfeeling, self-centered, and so on. (pp. 28–29)

When looking at Redding's explanation of destructive communicative acts, there are clearly two parts: aggressive communication and use of information. The first part of his definition focuses on how individuals can use aggressive forms of communication in an attempt to make others feel inferior. These types of communicative acts are commonly referred to as verbally aggressive acts and we will explore them in more detail in Chapter 15 "The Dark Side of Organizational Communication". The second aspect of destructive communication is about how people use information within an organization. Information is commonly seen as a

10. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior reflecting abuses of power or authority resulting in the diminishing of another person's autonomy.

11. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior that attacks a receivers' self-esteem, reputation, or deeply held feelings.

commodity in many organizations, so the hoarding of information as well as using information in manipulative manners is quite common. This category is similar to the fifth typology of business ethics created by J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington (1992). Issues related to destructive uses of information will be explored in more detail in <u>Chapter 5 "Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders"</u>.

Deceptive

The third category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is **deceptive**[12] acts. He defined deceptive acts as:

...communication events or behavior reflecting a "willful perversion of the truth in order to deceive, cheat, or defraud" (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary, 1998, s.v. "dishonesty"). This includes: evasive or deliberately misleading messages, which in turn includes equivocation (i.e., the deliberate use of ambiguity) ...; also bureaucratic-style euphemisms designed to cover up defects, to conceal embarrassing deeds, or to "prettify" unpleasant facts. (p. 30).

In this category of unethical behavior, we have non-truthful and misleading messages. The first part of this definition examines how some individuals lie in order to get what they want at work. The second part of the definition examines how some individuals within organizations use messages in order to alter a receiver's perception of reality. The messages, in this case, are not explicitly not-true, but are manipulated in a fashion to alter how receivers interpret those messages. This category encompasses the second and third categories of J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) typology of business ethics.

Intrusive

The fourth category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is **intrusive**[13] acts. He defined intrusive acts as:

...communication behavior that is characteristically initiated by message receivers. For example,...the use of hidden cameras, the tapping of telephones, and the application of computer technologies to the monitoring of employee behavior; in other words, surveillance. The fundamental issue, of course, revolves around the meaning and legitimacy of "privacy rights." (p. 31)

The issue of intrusion has become important in the 21st Century because modern technology has made intrusion into individuals' private lives very easy. Whether

12. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior reflecting a willful perversion of the truth in order to deceive, cheat, or defraud.

13. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior that are used by someone in attempt to monitor another person.

potential employers are looking at your private Facebook information prior to interviewing you or employers install software on your computer that monitors every key stroke you make, corporate "big-brother" is definitely watching you. According to a 2005 survey conducted by the American Management AssociationAMA E-Policy Institute. (2005). 2005 electronic monitoring and surveillance survey. American Management Association. Retrieved from: http://www.amanet.org, 36% of respondents had some amount of monitoring of their computer key-strokes by their organizations and 50% of respondents had some or all of their computer files monitored by their organizations. 76% of respondents noted that their workplace monitored their internet activity. In fact, 26% of the respondents indicated that their organizations had fired workers for misusing the internet and another 25% had terminated employees for e-mail misuse. Corporate intrusion does not stop with computer activity. 3% of the respondents said that all of the employees in their organization have their telephone calls recorded while 19% said that only selected job categories had their telephone calls recorded. Some companies go so far as to track their employee's physical whereabouts via global positioning systems and satellite technology in company vehicles (8%), company cell phones (5%), and employee identification cards (8%). We should mention that there are court cases within the United States that have legalized all of these processes without requiring a forewarning to employees. In the European Union, however, employees must be notified prior to monitoring, but organizations can still legally monitor their employees.

Secretive

The fifth category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is **secretive**[14] acts. He defined secretive acts as:

...various forms of nonverbal communication, especially (of course) silence and including unresponsiveness. It includes such behaviors as hoarding information (I call this "**culpable silence**[15]") and sweeping under the rug information that, if revealed, would expose wrongdoing or ineptness on the part of individuals in positions of power. (p. 32)

In essence, this category is a further break down of J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) fifth category of business ethics. However, Redding goes further than J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington by noting that even nonverbal unresponsiveness can be a form of unethical communication. For example, if the sender of the message purposefully manipulates her or his nonverbal behavior in an attempt to skew how a receiver interprets a message, then the sender of the message is preventing the receiver from completely and accurately interpreting the message. Furthermore, Redding believes that many employees engage in culpable silence, which occurs when someone purposefully prevents information from being

14. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior that is undisclosed even when disclosing the information could be in an organization's best interest.

15. When someone purposefully prevents information from being given to receivers who need the information.

given to receivers who need the information. While culpable silence is not lying in the strictest of senses, culpable silence is clearly a version of deception.

Manipulative-Exploitative

The final category of unethical organizational communication discussed by Redding (1996) is **manipulative-exploitative**[16] acts. He defined manipulative-exploitative acts as those where the source purposefully prevents the receiver from knowing the source's actual intentions behind a communicative message. A term that Redding finds closely related to these unethical acts is **demagoguery**[17]:

Of central importance is the notion that a demagogue is one who, without concern for the best interests of the audience, seeks to gain compliance by exploiting people's fears, prejudices, or areas of ignorance. Closely related to, if not a variant of, demagoguery is the utterance of messages that reflect a patronizing or condescending attitude toward the audience—an unstated assumption that audience members are dull-witted, or immature, or both. (pp. 33–34)

As you will learn in <u>Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"</u>, much of the early writing on how managers should interact with their employees centered on the clearly manipulate-exploitative organization.

Mattson and Buzzanell's Feminist Organizational Communication Ethic

In 1999, Mattson and Buzzanell used Redding's (1996) Mattson, M., & Buzzanell, P. M. (1999). Traditional and feminist organizational communication ethical analyses of messages and issues surrounding an actual job loss case. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 27*, 49–72. organizational communication ethic typology to analyze a specific case study. Through using the specific case, Mattson and Buzzanell came to believe that Redding's "system is linked to managerialist outcomes of individual and organizational effectiveness (i.e., to communicate unethically would create situations in which managers do not receive crucial information and would leave the firm vulnerable to productivity problems, strikes, and litigation)" (p. 62). Mattson and Buzzanell believe that some individuals would focus primarily on Redding's categories and not see the possible positive outcomes of some of the unethical communicative behavior. In essence, is there ever a time when deception is ethical and profitable? For this reason, Mattson and Buzzanell followed Steiner's (1997)Steiner, L. (1997). A feminist schema for analysis of ethical dilemmas. In F. L. Casmir (Ed.), *Ethics in intercultural and international communication* (pp. 59–88). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. approach to understanding feminist ethical dilemmas. Mattson and Buzzanell opted for the feminist ethical approach

16. Category of unethical acts descrbied by W. Charles Redding (1996) that describes communication events or behavior that takes place when the source purposefully prevents the receiver from knowing the source's actual intentions behind a communicative message.

17. Person who has no concern for the best interests of a receiver or group of receivers and seeks to gain compliance by exploiting people's fears, prejudices, or areas of ignorance.

because feminist ethics "differ from other ethical approaches in their vigilance toward a vision of value transformation (equitable power sharing and decision making) and instance on present community (meaning that "doing" ethics involves being a part of the envisioning and struggling)" (p. 62). We should note that the Mattson and Buzzanell perspective clearly falls in line with the critical perspective of organizational communication research discussed in Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication". Ultimately, Mattson and Buzzanell created a four phase framework for ethical analysis.

Definition of the Situation

The first phase of Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) framework for ethical analysis is the definition of the situation. Mattson and Buzzanell explain what occurs in this phase when they write "identification of problematic ethical issues in context; description of power struggles, particularly those cause by gender imbalances; attempts to silence and marginalize vulnerable individuals and groups" (p. 63). The first phase of this framework focusses specifically on ethical dilemmas and then examines how some people within the dilemma are being subjugated by those with power. One of the fundamental issues in critical theory is the innate existence of power imbalances within organizations. Therefore, finding where these imbalances exist is important for determining ethical behavior.

Values and Ideals

The second phase of Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) framework for ethical analysis is examining values and ideals. Mattson and Buzzanell explain what occurs in this phase when they write "identification of feminist values and ideals relevant to a particular case: voice, community, and fairness" (p. 63). Voice is "the ability both to construct and articulate knowledge and to make choices and act in situations" (Mattson & Buzzanell, 1999, p. 64). In essence, this perspective believes that any time an individual is forced to withhold her or his opinion, knowledge, and perspectives, her or his voice is being muted by those individuals with power, and thus creates an unethical situation.

The second value discussed by Mattson and Buzzanell is community, which recognizes that "there are diverse standpoints but common issues—commitment to multiple stakeholders, caring behaviors, and community-maintaining strategies." These commitments to others, self, values, and to the organization "challenge members to engage in authentic dialogue" (p. 65). Unethical communicative behaviors that would violate the standard of community standards include messages that "maintain boundaries, trivialize or diminish others contributions (e.g., humor, put-downs, terms of address), patronize individuals, and exclude members from participating in discussions about organizational concerns" (p. 65).

The final feminist value is that of fairness, or how the decision making process influences all stakeholders involved. According to Mattson and Buzzanell, "Decision making that does not contribute to the empowerment of marginalized persons and to the visibility of power imbalances is unethical" (p. 66).

Ethical Principle

The third phase of Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) framework for ethical analysis is applying the ethical principle. Mattson and Buzzanell explain what occurs in this phase when they write "inclusion of emotion in ethical considerations; refusal to develop or use single rules for identifying and resolving ethical dilemmas; utilization of values and ideas that empower, give voice, and emancipate people" (p. 63). According to Steiner (1997), "feminist inquiry is generally unsympathetic to rule-based ethical theories or theories that—as they usually do—exclude consideration of emotion" (p. 74). Mattson and Buzzanell argue that it is important to include individual's emotional responses when thinking about ethical dilemmas because "these responses indicate what people care about and might be willing to change" (p. 66). In the end, many aspects of organizational life are accompanied with complex emotions, which should be considered when examining the ethical nature of organizational communication.

Development of a Solution

The final phase of Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) framework for ethical analysis is developing a solution. Mattson and Buzzanell explain what occurs in this phase when they write "reanalysis of options so that those most vulnerable entail the least harm; exclusion of alternatives based on ethical principles and probable harm to major stakeholders" (p. 63). The first part of this phase is the generation of possible solutions. At this point, all solutions are taken seriously. However, once the different solutions have been proposed, the next step is to eliminate any solutions that either violate ethical principles or could cause harm to vulnerable stakeholders. The differing solutions should then be analyzed in terms of both stakeholder needs and corporate success.

While the Mattson and Buzzanell (1999) four phase framework for organizational communication ethical analysis is theoretically intriguing, we are still left with ambiguity about the difference between ethical vs. unethical behavior. On the other hand, if Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication behavior is concrete, we are still left with an absolutist perspective on ethics that may not always match the intent of the source. Unfortunately, this is the nature of ethics; there will always be ambiguity when examining and understanding ethics. The final section of this chapter proposes a brief process that can be implemented when attempting to increase ethical communication within an organization.

Montgomery and DeCaro's (2001) Ethical Performance Improvement Perspective

While the previous section introduced you to both concrete and abstract views of determining the ethicality of organizational communication, this section will examine a perspective on increasing ethical organizational communication as proposed by Montgomery and DeCaro (2001). Montgomery and DeCaro proposed that one of the best ways increasing organizational communication ethics is to use a human performance improvement approach. "Ethical problems or dilemmas have behavioral consequences. Analysis can measure and monitor the behaviors leading to the unethical act, or the act, itself. By analyzing the antecedents and consequences, they can then design an intervention to correct the behavior" (32). Often, human performance interventions related to ethics happen in hindsight: an ethical violation occurs first and then the human performance improvement experts backtrack to determine how and why the ethical violation occurred. At other times, human performance interventions related to ethics start with a code of ethics (e.g., National Communication Association's Ethical Credo in <u>Note 2.22 "National Communication Association Credo for Ethical Communication"</u> or the International Association of Business Communicators Code of Ethics in <u>Note 2.35 "International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Code of Ethics"</u>) and then follow with suggestions for action in order to ensure that the ethical codes are followed.

International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Code of Ethics

Preface

Because hundreds of thousands of business communicators worldwide engage in activities that affect the lives of millions of people, and because this power carries with it significant social responsibilities, the International Association of Business Communicators developed the Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators.

The Code is based on three different yet interrelated principles of professional communication that apply throughout the world.

These principles assume that just societies are governed by a profound respect for human rights and the rule of law; that ethics, the criteria for determining what is right and wrong, can be agreed upon by members of an organization; and, that understanding matters of taste requires sensitivity to cultural norms.

These principles are essential:

- Professional communication is legal.
- Professional communication is ethical.
- Professional communication is in good taste.

Recognizing these principles, members of IABC will:

- Engage in communication that is not only legal but also ethical and sensitive to cultural values and beliefs;
- Engage in truthful, accurate and fair communication that facilitates respect and mutual understanding;
- Adhere to the following articles of the IABC Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators.

Because conditions in the world are constantly changing, members of IABC will work to improve their individual competence and to increase the body of knowledge in the field with research and education.

Articles

1. Professional communicators uphold the credibility and dignity of their profession by practicing honest, candid and timely communication and by fostering the free flow of essential information in accord with the public interest.
2. Professional communicators disseminate accurate information and promptly correct any erroneous communication for which they may be responsible.
3. Professional communicators understand and support the principles of free speech, freedom of assembly, and access to an open marketplace of ideas and act accordingly.
4. Professional communicators are sensitive to cultural values and beliefs and engage in fair and balanced communication activities that foster and encourage mutual understanding.
5. Professional communicators refrain from taking part in any undertaking which the communicator considers to be unethical.
6. Professional communicators obey laws and public policies governing their professional activities and are sensitive to the spirit of all laws and regulations and, should any law or public policy be violated, for whatever reason, act promptly to correct the situation.
7. Professional communicators give credit for unique expressions borrowed from others and identify the sources and purposes of all information disseminated to the public.
8. Professional communicators protect confidential information and, at the same time, comply with all legal requirements for the disclosure of information affecting the welfare of others.
9. Professional communicators do not use confidential information gained as a result of professional activities for personal benefit and do not represent conflicting or competing interests without written consent of those involved.
10. Professional communicators do not accept undisclosed gifts or payments for professional services from anyone other than a client or employer.

11. Professional communicators do not guarantee results that are beyond the power of the practitioner to deliver.
12. Professional communicators are honest not only with others but also, and most importantly, with themselves as individuals; for a professional communicator seeks the truth and speaks that truth first to the self.

Source: http://www.iabc.com/about/code.htm

According to Beich, Holloway, and McGraw (2006), **human performance improvement**[18] (HPI) "is a results-based, systematic process used to identify performance problems, analyze root causes, select and design actions, manage workplace solutions, measure results, and continually improve performance within an organizations" (p. 1)Beich, E., Holloway, M., & McGraw, K. (2006). *Improving human performance: ASTD learning system—Module 3*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.. In essence, HPI is the field of study concerned with how individuals take academic information from various fields that study business and then help individuals within organizations apply those ideas in actual practice. One area that HPI professionals can be instrumental is "in identifying knowledge gaps when it comes to business ethics. Does the workforce know how the organization's code of ethics applies to them? Do they know what to do if they become aware of a violation of the code of ethics? Does the organization's code of ethics meet accepted standards? Does a code of ethics even exist?" (Rothwell, Hone, & King, 2007, pp. 180–181)Rothwell, W. J., Hohne, C. K., & King, S. B. (2007). *Human performance improvement: Building practitioner competence* (2nd ed.). Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.. In essence, human performance improvement is ideally situated within many organizations to help organizations adopt a more ethical approach to organizational communication.

According to Willmore (2004)Willmore, J. (2004). *Performance basics*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development. HPI professionals commonly take on four basic roles: analyst, intervention specialist, change manager, and evaluator. The first role an HPI professional takes on is that of **analyst**[19], which helps determine relevant gaps that exist in individuals' behavior, knowledge, and/or attitudes. When determining relevant gaps in behavior, knowledge, and/or attitudes, an HPI professional must first make sure that the analyzed gaps adhere to the organization's larger goals and values. If the identified gaps do not coincide with the organization's goals and values, the HPI professional will have a much harder time attempting to achieve buy-in later on in the improvement process. For example, if an HPI professional is working to improve organizational

18. A results-based, systematic process used to identify performance problems, analyze root causes, select and design actions, manage workplace solutions, measure results, and continually improve performance within an organizations" (Beich, Holloway, & McGraw, 2006, p. 1)

19. Role taken on by a human performance improvement specialist when he or she helps determine relevant gaps that exist in individuals' behavior, knowledge, and/or attitudes

communication ethics, the individual would start by analyzing any ethical lapses in organizational communication and where the organization should be in terms of ethical communication. In addition to determining what the knowledge and behavioral gaps are, the HPI professional needs to determine what the causes of the gaps are. For example, people in the organization communicating may be engaging in an unethical manner because they are unfamiliar with the organization's code of conduct. Another possibility is that people may be communicating unethically because the organization rewards them for success and not ethics. A last possibility is that people may communicate unethically because they do not have a predisposition towards ethical communication. Depending on which root-cause an HPI practitioner finds, the resulting intervention strategy will differ.

Once an analysis has been completed, the HPI professional slips into the second role or the **intervention specialist**[20]. In the intervention specialist role, the HPI professional determines what would be the most appropriate method for getting the organization to either reach its goal or to at least decrease a performance gap. Generally, it is important for the HPI professional to have expertise in the area of interest or to consult with subject matter experts. For example, if you are a student of organizational communication, you would be ideally situated to help an organization think through its intervention if the topic related to organizational communication. Some common types of interventions include training, the creation of employee policies and procedures, process mapping, etc. For the purpose of organizational communication ethics, the intervention may come via training in organizational communication ethics or developing an organization-wide code of organizational communication ethics.

The third role an HPI professional takes on is that of change manager. A **change manager**[21] "coordinates implementation and roll out of solutions, especially complex or big efforts that may involve multiple initiatives. A change manager also works to build buy-in and support" (Willmore, 2004, p. 20). In the interventionist role, the HPI professional determines what should be done, in the change manager role the HPI professional actually implements the intervention. One of the most important aspects of this phase is getting buy-in from the people who matter within the organization. If an HPI professional attempts to roll-out a new code of organizational communication ethics while top management does not support the new code, the intervention will never take hold and will eventually fail. For this reason, it is very important for HPI professionals to first ascertain which stakeholders must support the intervention and then get that support prior to rolling-out an intervention.

The last role an HPI professional inhabits is that of **evaluator**[22]. Interventions can be very useful, but the success of the intervention must also be determined. HPI professionals must evaluate the intervention for two reasons: to improve the

20. Role taken on by a human performance improvement specialist when he or she determines what would be the most appropriate method for getting the organization to its goal or decreasing the performance gap.

21. Role taken on by a human performance improvement specialist when he or she coordinates implementation and execution of solutions while building buy-in and support from all levels of an organizaiton's hierarchy.

22. Role taken on by a human performance improvement specialist when he or she: (1) examines if intervention is actually improving performance, and (2) demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention to the organization.

intervention and to determine organizational value. The first reason HPI professionals must evaluate an intervention is to determine whether or not the intervention is actually improving performance. For example, if you measure an organizational communication ethics intervention and find that people are just as unethical in their communication as they were before the intervention, the intervention has not worked and must be reevaluated. In this case, the data that you gather about the intervention can help the HPI professional make changes to improve the next the intervention. Often interventions are organic and change periodically in order to keep us with changing human performance. This can only be determined by evaluating interventions. The second reason HPI professionals should evaluate an intervention is to demonstrate the effectiveness of the intervention to the organization. In world that is marked by discussions of "the bottom-line," most aspects of the modern organization need to clearly demonstrate a return on investment, including how the time and money spent on an intervention actually helped the organization.

Now that the basics of Human Performance Improvement have been discussed, we can articulate a basic model for improving organizational communication ethics within an organization (Figure 2.2 "Human Performance Improvement Model"). The following model is based on both the American Society for Training and Development's (ASTD) HPI Model and the International Society for Performance Improvement's (ISPI) Human Performance Technology Model (for a description of both models, see Rothwell, 2000)Rothwell, W. J. (2000). *ASTD models for human performance improvement: Roles, competencies, and outputs* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASTD Press..

Figure 2.2   *Human Performance Improvement Model*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Reinsh's (1990) developed nine basic ethical findings in organizational communication: (1) communication behaviors vary in moral worth, (2) unethical behaviors sometimes occur in organizations, (3) unethical communication can be effective in the short run, (4) a person's behavior is related to her or his ethical beliefs, (5) communication ethics is relevant to a wide range of business activities, (6) there are many closely related concepts to ethics (e.g., honesty, trust, etc.), (7) persons differ in ethical values, beliefs and behaviors and these differences can be culturally based, (8) studying communication ethics must involving looking at how other fields discuss ethics, and (9) communication ethics is concerned with both oral and written communication.
- Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication consists of six distinct types of communicative acts: (1) coercive, abuse of power or authority; (2) destructive, behavior that attacks a receiver; (3) deceptive, behavior that is intentionally false; (4) intrusive, monitoring behavior; (5) secretive, purposefully not disclosing information; and (6) manipulative-exploitative, .
- Mattson and Buzzanell (1999) proposed that organizational communication should be examined through four basic phases. First, you should define the situation by identifying ethical issues in context. Second, examine values (voice, community, & fairness) and ideals. Third, apply the ethical principle while paying attention to a person's emotional reaction. Last, develop a solution paying special attention that vulnerable people are least effected.
- Montgomery and DeCaro's (2001) argue that human performance improvement can help organizations with improving organizational communication ethics because this perspective is designed to help organizations systemically think through change.
- The Human Performance Improvement (HPI) Model provides organizations with a specific and systematic tool for determining the effectiveness of organizational change. When applied to changing an organization's approach to ethical communication, the model can help ensure that the project is analyzed, articulated, and evaluated to ensure the best results possible for an organization.

EXERCISES

1. In today's world of social media and technological advances in human communication, are Reinsh's (1990) nine basic ethical findings in organizational communication still applicable? Why or why not?

2. Thinking about your own organization, which of Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication do you think is the most common? If you were the top leader in your organization, how would you go about stopping this specific lapse in ethical communication?

3. Look at a recent copy of *Business Week*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes Magazine*, or another business-oriented publication. Look for a discussion of an issue that has ethical overtones and then walk through Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) four phases of feminist thinking when determining a specific solution. How do you think Mattson and Buzzanell's (1999) four phases would lead you to different decisions than if you took a more traditional stance on decision making?

4. Using an organization that you belong to, think about a specific business or communication ethical dilemma your organization is facing. Walk through the Human Performance Improvement Model and think about how you could implement a change in your organization's thinking about ethics.

2.5 Chapter Exercises

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Real World Case Study

In the February 6–12, 2012, edition of the business magazine *Business Week* the editors decided on a shocking cover. The cover story for the magazine was about the merger of United and Continental Airlines. In an interesting twist, the cover of the magazine had a United Airlines plane being mounted by a Continental Airlines plane with the tag line "Let's Get it On" (http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/12_06.html). Sexual overtones of this cover shocked many readers. In the following weeks, many readers wrote into Business Week conveying their dismay at the organization's choice run this cover.

One reader put it this way, "Offensive ... displeasing ... indecent ... abominable ... obscene ... objectionable ... that's what I have to say about your Feb. 6–12 cover. You should be ashamed."Feedback: Out cover story on United-Continental merger draws some pationate reactions. (2012, February 20). *Business Week*. iPad version. Another subscriber had this to say, "Your cover page is so subtle it should have a condom over the dominant top plane (should be United) and a diaphragm shield inside the tail of the submissive bottom one (should be Continental) You will lose several subscriptions ... Who was the genius who sent this around legal without thinking?" Furthermore, Joseph T. Cirillo, VP for reporting and planning at Blyth, had this to say about the cover "Your Feb 6–12 cover page was in extremely poor taste. You made it even worse with the headline 'Let's Get It On.' Surely you could have described the business events going on between Continental and United in a better fashion, and not by showing two planes having sex with each other on the cover of an important business magazine." While there were some people who found the cover humorous, the negative reactions to the cover clearly outnumbered the positive.

1. Why do you think so many people reacted so negatively to the sexual portrayal of a merger of two major airlines? Was this move unethical or just in bad taste on the part of the editors of *Business Week*?
2. Using Andersen's (2007) three audiences f or ethics (sender, receiver, and society-at-large), analyze this cover from an ethical perspective.
3. Would this cover have received as many negative responses if it had been on the cover of a fitness magazine, comic book, etc...?

End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. Paul is preparing to deliver an address to his board of directors. He knows that if he explains the full costs of a new project, the board will block the project. However, Paul realizes that the project will have a huge return on its investment. As such, Paul decides not to disclose the actual cost of the project. Which of the types of ethics discussed in the Ethical Matrix is Paul representing?

   a. Ethical Behavior
   b. Unethical Behavior
   c. Machiavellian Ethic
   d. Subjective Ethic
   e. Rejective Ethic

2. When Maxine interacts with various stakeholders in her company, she is always very even handed and treats everyone the same. In fact, people often remark at how consistent her communicative behavior is with all people. What philosophical perspective most closely resembles Maxine's approach to communication?

   a. Communitarianism
   b. Altruism
   c. Ethical Egoism
   d. Justice
   e. Social Relativism

3. Hiro knows that his coworker is stealing from the petty cash fund at work. However, reporting this behavior to his superiors will only result in increased paperwork and decreased trust from his peers around the office. As such, Hiro decides not to tell anyone and instead just wait for his coworker to get caught. Hiro's behavior is an example of which of J.O. Cherrington and D. J. Cherrington's (1992) typology of 12 ethical lapses common in modern business?

   a. accessory to unethical acts
   b. rule violations
   c. stealing
   d. false impressions
   e. unfair advantage

4. As a CEO, Danna believes everyone under her is an idiot. As such, her primary mode of leadership involves manipulating people to do her bidding by exploiting her followers' fears, prejudices, or areas of ignorance. Which of Redding's (1996) typology of unethical organizational communication is Danna illustrating?

   a. coercive
   b. destructive
   c. deceptive
   d. intrusive
   e. manipulative-exploitative

5. Which of the three values described by Mattson and Buzzanell (1999) refers to the ability to both construct and articulate knowledge?

   a. community
   b. fairness
   c. hope
   d. voice
   e. wisdom

Answer Key

1. c
2. d
3. a
4. e
5. d

Chapter 3

Classical Theories of Organizational Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

What is Theory?

In this chapter, we are going to explore classical theories in organizational communication. Classical theories focus on organizational structure, analyzing aspects such as optimal organizational performance plans, organizational power relationships, and compartmentalizing different organizational units.Fisher, D. (2000). Communication in organizations (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Jaico. As organizational communication scholars these theories help us better appreciate, recognize, and comprehend interactions and behaviors. We will discuss how these theories work and apply to effectiveness of organizational communication.

What is theory? The word "theory" originally derives its name from the Greek word *theoria*, θεωρία, which roughly translated means contemplation or speculation. Modern understandings of the word "theory" are slightly different from the ancient Greeks, but the basic idea of contemplating an idea or speculating about why something happens is still very much in-line with the modern definition. A theory is a "group of related propositions designed to explain why events take place in a certain way."Infante, D., Rancer, A., & Womack, D. (2003). Building communication theory (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, pg. 356. Let's break this definition down into its basic parts. First, a theory is a "group of related propositions," which is a series of statements designed to be tested and discussed. Ultimately, these statements propose an explanation for why events take place and why the occur in specific fashions. For example, Sir Isaac Newton (of the claimed apple falling on his head) created the modern theory of gravity to explain why the different planets and

stars didn't go crashing into each other (very simplistic summation of his theory). While Newton's theory of gravity was pretty good, it couldn't account for everything so ultimately Albert Einstein's theory of relativity came on the stage to further our understanding of how gravity actually works. In both cases, we have two well-respected researchers attempt to understand a basic phenomenon of our physical world, gravity. Just like physicists have been trying to understand why the planets rotate and don't crash into each other, organizational scholars have attempted to create theories for how and why organizations structure themselves the way they do; why people behave the way they do in organizations; why leaders and followers interactions lead to specific outcomes, etc...

Eric Eisenberg and Lloyd Goodall wrote that "the way we talk about a problem directly influence the solutions we can articulate to address the problem. Theories of organization and communication should enhance our ability to articulate alternative ways of approaching and acting on practical issues (pg. 53)." They further noted that theories have two basic qualities: **metaphorical**[1] and **historical**[2].Einsenberg, E. M., & Goodall, H. L., Jr. (1993). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. When we say that theories are metaphorical, we mean that theories provide a linguistic means of comparing and describing organizational communication and function. As you know from English, a metaphor is a figure of speech where a word or phrase is applied to an object or action, but the word does not literally apply to the object or action. In this chapter and Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication" we'll see theories comparing organizational phenomena to machines and biological organisms. On the other hand, when we say that theories are historical, we perceive theories in terms of the period in which they were created and were popular. Theories are historical because they are often a product of what was important and prevalent during that time. In this chapter, we're going to examine three different theoretical periods commonly referred to as the classical perspective, human relations, and human resources. Each of these three groupings exist primarily as an opportunity of retrospective analysis. In other words, when we look back over the history of theoretical development in organizational communication, these three periods jump out as being uniquely different, so we ultimately group different ideas and important thought leaders together because of similarities in their theoretical approaches to organizing.

1. The notion that theories provide a linguistic means of comparing and describing organizational communication and function.

2. The notion that we perceive theories in terms of the period in which they were created and were popular.

3.1 The Classical Perspective

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand Fredrick Taylor's Scientific Management
2. Explain the Bureaucratic Theory
3. Describe Max Weber's of Authority
4. Discuss the implications of each classical perspective

To understand classical theories, a brief history of industrialization is really necessary. Industrialization, or the industrial revolution, refers to the "development and adoption of new and improved production methods that changed American and much of Europe from agrarian to industrial economies."Scott, D. L. (Ed.). (2009). Industrial revolution. *The American heritage dictionary of business terms.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, pg. 259. So, how did both Europe and American transform themselves from agrarian, or farming, based economies to industrial ones? To pinpoint a single event or invention that really created the industrial revolution is almost impossible. From approximately 1750 to 1850 a variety of innovations in agriculture, manufacturing (both iron and textiles), mining, technology, and transportation altered cultural, economic, political, and social realities. For the first time in history people stopped working on family farms or in small family owned businesses and started working for larger organizations that eventually morphed into the modern corporation. While there had been models of large organizations with massive influence, like the Catholic Church, these organizations had been very limited in number. As more and more people left the family farm or local weaver in hopes of bettering their lives and the lives of their families through employment in larger organizations, new tools and models for managing these workers had to be developed.

Perhaps, the most widely known theories of organizational communication are those during the classical period that stemmed out of the industrial revolution. The main idea of the classical perspectives of organizational communication is that organizations are similar to machines. Hence, if you have a well- built and well-managed machine, then you will have a very productive and effective organization.

The assumption is that each employee is part of a large machine, which is the organization. It one part fails then the entire machine fails.

Fredrick Taylor's Scientific Management

In 1913, Frederick Taylor published *Principles of Scientific Management* Taylor, F. (1913). *Principles of scientific management.* New York, NY: Harper. ushering in a completely new way of understanding the modern organization. Frederick Taylor was trained as an engineer and played a prominent role in the idea of scientific management. **Scientific management**[3] is a management oriented and production-centered perspective of organizational communication.Einsenberg, E. M., & Goodall, H. L., Jr. (1993). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. Taylor believed that the reason why most organizations failed was due to the fact that they lacked successful systematic management. He wrote that "the best management is true science resting upon clearly defined laws, rules, and principles, as a foundation."Taylor, F. (1913). *Principles of scientific management.* New York: Harper, pg. 19. He further noted that "under scientific management arbitrary power, arbitrary dictation ceases, and every single subject, large and small, becomes question for scientific investigation, for reduction to law (p. 211)." Taylor believed that any job could be performed better if it was done scientifically. Taylor created time and motion studies that resulted in organizational efficiency.

Working as a foreman at on for the Bethlehem Steel Works in the 1900s, Taylor observed how workers could do more with less time. He analyzed coal shoveling at the organization. He noticed several workers would bring different size shovels from home. Workers who brought small shovels could do more but it took them longer and workers who brought big shovels could do less but it was faster. He observed that the best size shovel was one that weighed about twenty pounds. Hence, he ordered the organization to provide all the workers with the same size shovel. He also provided pay incentives for workers who could shovel more coal. By making these changes, the organization was able to increase production drastically.

3. This type of organization emphasizes management oriented and production-centered perspective of organizational communication. This approach believes that organizations should be run like machines. Worker must do labor and managers must do the thinking. There is limited communication.

In order to have a more productive organization, Taylor believed that there were several steps involved. First, one must examine the job or task. Second, one needs to determine the best way to complete the job or task. Third, one must choose the most appropriate person for the task at the same time properly compensating that person. Lastly, one must be able to train the person to do the task efficiently. Taylor believed that by using these scientific steps, then organizations would have fewer misuses of human effort.

Taylor's idea of scientific management originated during the time in history when most training of workers was based on apprenticeship models. In an apprenticeship, a person would be taught and skilled by a more experienced person, who would illustrate the task so that the inexperienced person could model the behavior. Taylor believed that this was a very ineffective way of training because he felt that workers would differ in terms of tasks that were performed and the effectiveness of the tasks would be dependent on the type of training received. Taylor argued that the there should be only one way to explain the job and one way to execute the task. He did not believe that it should be left up to the expert to train apprentices on the task.

Overall, Taylor felt that employees were lazy and needed constant supervision. He posited that "the tendency of the average [employee] is toward working at a slow easy gait." In other words, he noted that this tendency is called natural soldiering, which is affected by systematic soldiering, which occurs when employees decrease their work production based on input or communications from others. According to Taylor, systematic soldiering happens when employees feel that more production will not result in more compensation. In addition, if employees are paid by the hour and wanted to increase their income, then they might demonstrate that it takes more time in order to get compensated more than they would if they exerted more effort. Because Taylor feels that employees are inherently lazy, he feels that employees also impact the rate of production.

Taylor is known for his idea of **time and motion**[4]. In other words, time and motion referred to a methods for calculating production efficiency by recording outcomes and time to produce those outcomes. Taylor believed that if each task was designed scientifically and the workers could be trained, then production could be measured by timing the labor the workers performed. It was his intention to create a work benchmark that could be quantified to improve efficiency and production outcomes. We should also mention that Taylor's ideas on time and motion were ultimately furthered by the research of Frank Gilbreth who furthered the notion of time and motion by filming workers in action in an effort to gain a better idea of physical movements.Nadworny, M. J. (1957). Frederick Taylor and Frank Gilbreth: Competition in scientific management. *Business History Review, 31*, 23–34. In the following video, you can see the work of Frank Gilbreth, along with his wife Lilian, as they attempted to use time and motion techniques to make bricklaying more effective, productive, and profitable.

(click to see video)

In this video, the original configuration of the scaffolding required a lot of bending motion on the part of the bricklayers. The bending motion not only took more time but also increase fatigue of the workers over a long day, which would make them

4. These are methods for calculating production efficiency by recording outcomes and time to produce those outcomes. A researcher can determine how long a worker needs to yield an expected result by measuring workers' movements over time.

less effective and productive. After completing the time and motion study, you see the second half of the video where the workers have actually created scaffolding for the bricks that does not involve bending over to pick up the bricks. Ultimately, this simple example clearly illustrates the impact that time and motion study techniques could have on making workers better.

Taylor felt that if organizations were run like machines, then it would be ideal, because all tasks were clear-cut and simple. At the same time, these tasks typically did not allow for flexibility, creativity, or originality. In addition, there is a clear cut distinction between managers who think and workers who labor. Thus, this perspective does not account for work motivations, relationships, and turbulence in organizations.

Another key factor about Taylor's scientific method is the style of communication. Taylor did not feel the need to build rapport among workers. Rather, he felt that managers needed to communicate in a clear-cut and candid manner. Further, employees do not need to provide input, they just need to know how to execute their jobs.

While Taylor's ideas quickly took off like wild fire, they were not without their detractors. As early as 1912, the U.S. Commission on Industrial Relations was raising skepticism about scientific management or what many were just calling *Taylorism*:

To sum up, scientific management in practice generally tends to weaken the competitive power of the individual worker and thwarts the formation of shop groups and weakens group solidarity; moreover, generally scientific management is lacking in the arrangements and machinery necessary for the actual voicing of the workers ideas and complaints and for the democratic consideration and adjustment of grievances.U. S. Commission on Industrial Relations (1912). *A government evaluation of scientific management: Final report and testimony*. Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, pg. 136.

Bureaucratic Theory

Max Weber and Henri Fayol were also two theorists known for their work in the classical perspectives to organizational communication. These two theories focuses on the structure of the organization rather than the organizational activities. Many of their ideas are around today.

Max Weber

Max Weber termed **bureaucracy**[5] as the ideals in which organizations should aim for and aspire. Weber was influenced by socialist philosophy. He developed the idea of bureaucracy when he noticed several corrupt and unethical behaviors of leaders. He felt that organizational leaderships should center on task proficiency and impersonal relationships. Even though many people associate bureaucracy with red tape and ineffective organizations, this is not the outcome of bureaucracy. According to Weber, bureaucracy should be synonymous with order, consistency, reason, and reliability. In order to aspire to these traits, organizations need to have specific rules and emphasize impersonality. He noted that bureaucratic organization much have the following characteristics:

Specialization & Division of Labor

Specific set tasks allow employees to achieve its own objective. Thus, every worker did not have to do many jobs, but an exclusive task that was assigned to that worker. This helped to alleviate multiple trainings and increase production.

Rules & Procedures

Written policies help manage and direct the organization. Managers spend a majority of their time on how these policies help to guide and function in the organization. These procedures would serve as a guide and resource for the organization.

Hierarchy of Authority

Organizations need to have a chain of command that is shaped like a pyramid. There are levels of supervisors and subordinates. Each worker will answer to their corresponding superior. This would assist in having a direct line of communication and better efficiency in the organization.

Formal Communication

5. Ideals that organizations should try to attain. It also refers to selecting authority based on criterion and standards rather than by popularity or family relation. Hence, it makes organizational decisions harder to execute but it also protects' workers from mistreatment, because there is order and structure to the communication.

All decisions, rules, regulations, and behaviors are recorded. This information and communication will be shared in terms of the chain of command. Hence, everything is documented and accounted. There is no question in what needs to be done, because it is written down.

Detailed Job Descriptions

The organization has clear and concise definitions, directions, and responsibilities of each position. Each worker is aware of their task and how to employ.

Employment Based on Expertise

The organization will assign workers in positions that would fit their competencies. Hence, workers will be placed in the organization were they can maximize production.

Impersonal Environment

Relationships need to be impersonal and separate so that workers' personal thoughts or feelings would not affect bias or decisions. Workers just need to work and they do not need to interact with others. Interpersonal relationships may jeopardize the organization's outcomes.

Weber (1947)Weber, M. (1947). *Essays on Sociology*. New York: Oxford Press, pp. 196–198. categorized three types of authority: traditional, bureaucratic, and charismatic. Traditional authority is related to the backgrounds and traditions of an environment. This leadership is usually passed down from one family member to another without little regard to who is more apt or capable. Thus, authority is given to another based on custom or tradition. Think of family owned businesses and how those businesses usually do not let outsiders infer with it unless they are related to the family.

Charismatic authority is founded on the idea that the best candidate for this position will be the one who can exert authority. This person is usually charismatic, hence the name. If this person ever leaves the position, then their authority does as well. According to Weber, charismatic leaders are ones that lead to insecure and unpredictable organization because there is a vague idea of who will replace their position.

Another type of authority is bureaucratic. Weber felt that bureaucratic was the best way to delegate authority in an organization. Bureaucratic authority is founded on set objectives and criterion. Hence, the best leaders were bureaucratic leaders because they were picked in terms of the guidelines set out for that organization's mission. Weber believed that bureaucratic authority was the ideal way to select authority because it neutralize thwarted ideas of nepotism, preferential treatment, prejudice, and discrimination. Hence, a candidate would be selected in terms of their job competency and not their linage or personality.

Table 3.1 Weber's Types of Authority

	Types of Authority		
	Traditional	**Charismatic**	**Bureaucracy**
Based on	Family lineage	Personality	Rules & actions
Specialization	None	Charisma	Technically qualified
Hierarchy	Seniority	Preferences	Authority
Leadership Succession	Family	Popularity	Most appropriate for the position
Communication	Depends	Depends	Is written and has numerous records
Viewed as	Nepotism	Partisan	Systematic

Henri Fayol

Fayol's principles of management are similar to the military because there is unity in direction, unity in command, subordination of individual interests to the general interest, and order.

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Henri FayolFayol, H. (1949). General and Industrial Management. London, England: Pitman. managed a French mining company, called Comambault, which he was able to transform from almost a bankrupt organization to a very successful one. Originally, he worked there as an engineer then moved into management, and later leadership. Similar to Weber, Fayol felt that their needed to be division of labor, hierarchy, and fair practices. Fayol believed that there were principles of management which included:

Unity of Direction

The organization should have the same objectives, one plan/goal, and one person of leadership/authority.

Unity of Command

Employees should get orders from only one person. Therefore, there would not be a chain in command. One person would be the person in charge and be responsible.

Authority

Managers have the entitlement to provide orders and obtain compliance. No other individuals in the organization have the privilege of power.

Order

The organization must have set places for workers and resources. These should be in the right place at the correct time.

Subordination of Individual Interest to the General Interests

The interest of the organization is most significant and not those of the group or individuals working for the organization.

Scalar Chain

There is a hierarchical order of authority. There is a sequence and succession to how communication is transferred from one person to the other. This is similar to horizontal communication where workers of the same level communicate with each other.

Even though Fayol's principles may appear to be strict, he was one of the first theorists to grasp the idea that having unconditional compliance with an organization may lead to problems. Hence, he also noted that each organization must determine the most favorable levels of authority.

All in all, communication in the classical perspective has two functions: **control and command**[6]. Fayol believes that organizations must limit their communication to precise and explicit words for task design and implementation. Thus, communication is not spontaneous and is more centralized in a classical organization.

Fayol also believed there were certain management activities. He felt there were five activities that are applied to the administration unit of an organization. These activities included: planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling and controlling. As explained by Fayol, planning is where managers create plans for the organization and predict future organizational needs. Next, organizing occurs when organizations employ people and materials to complete their plans. Commanding is what managers do to get the optimal output in production and efficiency. Coordinating is where managers bring together the labors of all of its employees. Last, controlling is to determine the accuracy of the

6. Organizations must limit their communication to precise and explicit words for task design and implementation. At the same time, communication is not spontaneous and is more centralized in a classical organization.

organization's efforts and its plan. Fayol's impact still has a big influence on many of today's organizations' climate, structure, and leadership.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Theories help us understand and predict communication and behaviors.
- Frederick Taylor created the idea of "scientific management", which is a management style that focuses on producing outcomes and high orientation on management.
- Max Weber felt that bureaucracy was the best way to select authority. It is based on criterion and standard for the task rather than other variables such as family relationship or popularity.
- Henri Fayol believed that there are principles of management, which include: unity of direction, unity of command, authority, order, subordination of individual interest to the general interests, scalar chain. He also felt that classical perspectives have two functions: control and command.

EXERCISES

1. In groups, determine how these classical perspectives and similar and dissimilar from each other. Create a chart or table to highlight these differences.
2. In groups, discuss the pros and cons of utilizing each classical perspective in your current occupation and/ or your dream job. Is the classical perspective effective or ineffective? Why or why not?
3. Contact someone who is currently part of or has been a part of the military. Ask them specific questions regarding the military as an organization and types of communications in the military. Do you see relationships between the military and the organizational theories presented in this chapter?
4. Divide the class into small groups, each group must select a classical organizational perspective. They will act out their role in front of the class and the class must guess which perspective is being acted.

3.2 Human Relations Theories

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

During the 1930's, it was noted that the world was in the middle of the worst economic depressions. During this period, workers started to dislike and question scientific methods and bureaucracy in organizational settings. In this section, we will introduce the human relationship approach. We will discuss the historical and cultural backgrounds of this approach.

The Great Depression, which occurred between 1929 -1940, caused many economic and social struggles for many Americans. Many governmental policies were changing, such as social security, welfare, and public improvement projects. The depression caused many families to move from drought, dry farming areas to the West Coast and from poor Southern cities to more enriched areas of the North. These families were looking for a better life. However, the increase of workers to these areas led to more competition. Moreover, it led to many types of worker abuse by corrupt and immoral managers. It was during this time, that many people had advocated for human rights, labor unions, better wages, and improved work conditions. "Fair wages" were defined NY worker output. In turn, this increased output usually lead to more injuries, illnesses, and deaths. Human rights were defined as having twelve hour work days, working six days a week, and a thirty minute break for lunch. These perspectives concerning "fair" and "human rights" were seen differently by managers and employees. The difference in perspectives caused tense and strained relationships between managers and workers.

Later World War II changed everything. There was an increase of employment in the private sector and the military. These changes resulted in a more human relations approach to communication in organizations, because there was an increase in well-educated workers. These new workers encouraged an awareness of

worker's needs, such as feeling important and appreciated as a worker and an individual. To better understand how new management ideas ultimately started to transform the face the workplace, we will first discuss a number of key ideas in the group of theories labeled under the term "human relations" followed by an analysis of two of the major theorists in this category: Elton Mayo and Kurt Lewin.

Key Ideas in Human Relations

Before we can jump right in and discuss the major theoretical thinkers that spawned the human relations movement, we first need to understand the basic characteristics of the theoretical developments in this time period. As with many theoretical movements, the notion of "human relations" is one that is drawn by researchers after the fact. Specifically, a business professor at the University of California at Berkley named Raymond E. Miles is responsible for much of the work on crystalizing the notion of "human relations."Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157.

Miles, in a famous article in the *Harvard Business Review*Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157., discussed human relations as the natural knee-jerk reaction that many management theorists (along with workers and managers as well) had to Fredrick Taylor's scientific management. Where Taylor viewed people as parts of a working machine, the human relations approach shifted the viewpoint from the task to the worker. For the first time, workers were viewed as an important part of the organization that should be viewed holistically instead of bundles of skills and aptitudes. As Miles noted, managers "were urged to create a 'sense of satisfaction' among their subordinates by showing interest in the employees' personal success and welfare."Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157.Most importantly, the goal of human relations was to make workers feel like they belonged to something bigger than themselves, and thus the worker's work was important to the overall effort of the organization.

For communication scholars, the human relations approach is important because it is the first time that two-way communication was encouraged, or communication between a worker and her or his manager was like a dialogue instead of unidirectional communication from the manager targeted at the worker. Furthermore, the human relations perspective sees communication as a tool that can be used by management to "buy" cooperation from subordinates. Robert DubinDubin, R. (1958). *The world of work.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. coined the term "**privilege pay**[7]" to refer to a tool managers can utilize with subordinates when the manager provides subordinates departmental information and allows the subordinate to engage in open communication about various departmental issues with the manager. Dubin sees this as a form of payment a manager makes in order

7. A tool managers can utilize with subordinates when the manager provides subordinates departmental information and allows the subordinate to engage in open communication about various departmental issues with the manager.

to "buy" cooperation from subordinates because the manager is having to give up some of her or his access to private information and control over subordinates because this process enables subordinates to engage in some self-direction.

In sum, the human relations perspective on organizational management notes that the world would be easier for managers if they could just make decisions and have subordinates follow those decisions. However, because employees are more productive when they are satisfied, it becomes the job of the manager to open engage with subordinates. As Miles notes, "this model suggests, the manager might do better to 'waste time' in discussing the problem with subordinates, and perhaps even to accept suggestions that he believes may be less efficient, in order to get the decision carried out." Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157, pg. 150.

Key People in Human Relations

Now that we've explore some of the theoretical underpinnings of the human relations approach to management, we're going to explore two of the most important thinkers who are seen as falling into this category: Elton Mayo and Kurt Lewin.

Elton Mayo

Elton Mayo was a Harvard Professor who had a huge interest in Federick Taylor's work. He was interested in learning about ways to increase productivity. In 1924, Elton Mayo and his protégé Fritz Roethlisberger were awarded a grant by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Science to study productivity and lighting at the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company. The Hawthorne experiments, as Elton Mayo's body of work became known as, are a series of experiments in human relations conducted between 1924 and 1932 at Western Electric Company's Hawthorne Works in Cicero, Illinois.

Illumination Study

The first study at Hawthorne Works was designed to explicitly test various lighting levels and how the lighting levels affected worker productivity. The original hypothesis of the illumination study was the as lighting increased worker productivity would increase. The opposite was also predicted, as lighting decreased, worker productivity would decrease. The original push behind the study was the electric power industry who believed that if they could demonstrate the importance of artificial lighting, organizations around the country would adopt artificial lighting in place of natural lighting to ensure worker productivity.

The research began in the fall of 1924 and continued through the spring of 1927 as three different groups of workers were put through the experiment: relay assembly workers, coil winding workers, and inspectors.Roethlisberger, F. J., & Dickson, W. J. (1939). *Management and the worker*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. After three different testing conditions were concluded, the researchers were perplexed by their findings. It did not matter if the researchers increased or decreased light in the company; the workers' productivity increased. This finding was even true when the researchers turned down the lights to wear the workers could barely see. The researchers later realized that lighting did not affect worker productivity, rather the researchers' presence had an impact. That's why, production outcomes were similar to the lighting study because workers were influenced by the attention they got by the researchers.Roethlisberger, F. J., & Dickson, W. J. (1939). *Management and the worker*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. This incident was labeled the **Hawthorne Effect**[8].

Relay Assembly Study

In order to further clarify the impact of a variety of factors on productivity, a second set of tests were designed to evaluate rest periods and work hours on productivity. The goal of this study was really to determine how fatigue impacted worker productivity. Six women operators volunteered to participate in the relay assembly study. The women were given physical examinations at the beginning of the study and then every six weeks in order to ensure that the experiment was not adversely affecting their health.

The six women were isolated in a separate room away from other Hawthorne workers where it was easier to measure experimental conditions like output and quality of work, temperature, humidity, etc... The specific task in the relay assembly test was an electromagnetic switch that consisted of 35 parts that had to be put together by hand.

The experimenters introduced a variety of changes to the workers' environment: pay rates, bonuses, lighting, shortened workdays/weeks, rest periods, etc... Surprisingly, as the test period quickly spanned from an original testing period of a couple of months to more than two years, no matter what the experimenters did, productivity increased. In fact, productivity increased over 30 percent during the first two and a half years of the study and then plateaued during the duration of the tests. The physicals the workers received every six weeks also showed that the women had improved physical health and their absenteeism decreased during the study period. Even more important, the women regularly expressed increased job satisfaction.

8. Workers behaviors were affected by the attention they receive rather than by other variables like lighting or temperature. Once workers felt like they were being noticed or recognized, it influenced their productivity. Group norms were also affected.

Once again the researchers were stumped. The researchers quickly tried to determine what was causing the increased productivity. The researchers quickly ruled out all of the manipulated conditions and settled on something considerably more intangible, employee attitudes.

Employee Interview Study

During the middle of the relay assembly studies, a group of Harvard researchers led by Elton Mayo and F. J. Roethlisberger joined the team of engineers at Hawthorne Works to add further expertise and explanation to the studies underhand. One of the most important contributions Mayo makes is during the follow-up to the illumination and relay studies when they interviewed workers at Hawthorne Works.

From 1928 to 1931 the Harvard researchers interviewed over 21,000 workers in attempt to gage worker morale and determine what job factors impacted both morale and job satisfaction. The researchers predicted, based on the illumination and relay studies, that if they could increase worker morale and satisfaction then the workers would be more efficient and productive as well. The interview study definitely posed some new challenges for the researchers. Mayo not that the "experience itself was unusual; there are few people in this world who have had the experience of finding someone intelligent, attentive, and eager to listen without interruption to all that he or she has to say."Mayo, E. (1945). *The social problems of an industrial civilization.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business School, pg. 163. To this end, Mayo trained a series of interviewers to listen and not give advice as they took descriptive notes of what was being told to them by the workers.

After the interviewing study was completed, the researchers attempted to make sense of the mounds of data they had accumulated. One interesting side effect was noted. After being interviewed by a researcher about the employee's working conditions, the employee reported increased satisfaction. Ultimately, the vary act of being asked about their working conditions made the employees more satisfied workers and more ultimately more productive. One of the interesting outcomes of this study is the practice of employee reaction surveys, which are still widely used in organizations today.

Bank Wiring Observation Study

One of the findings of the interview study was that workers had a tendency of creating an informal standard for output that was predetermined by the group but never clearly stated. These productivity standards were never really in-line with the ones communicated by either efficiency engineers or managers. To examine the

influence that informal group rules had on worker productivity, Mayo and his team created the bank wiring observation study.

Fourteen bank wiremen (nine wirers, three solderers, and two inspectors) were placed in a separate room and told to complete their individual tasks. The men in the room were putting together automatic telephone exchange components that consisted of 3,000 to 6,000 individuals terminals that had to be wired. The workers spent a lot of time on their feet. To ensure that the men were not affected by the Hawthorne effect, the researchers never let the men know they were being studied. However, a researcher named W. Lloyd Warner, a trained anthropologist with an interest in group behavior, was present in the room, but he acted like a disinterested spectator and had little direct interaction with the wiremen. In the experimental condition, pay incentives and productivity measures were removed to see how the workers would react. Over time, the workers started to artificially restrict their output and an average output level was established for the group that was below company targets. Interestingly enough, the man who was considered the most admired of the group also demonstrated the most resentment towards management and slowed his productivity the most, which led to the cascading productivity of all of the other men in the group.

The researchers ultimately concluded that the wiremen created their own productivity norms without ever verbally communicating them to each other. For the first time, the researchers clearly had evidence that within any organization there exists an informal organization that often constrains individual employee behavior. The bank wiring observation study was stopped in spring of 1932 as layoffs occurred at Hawthorne Works because of the worsening Great Depression.

Conclusion

The Hawthorne Studies and the research of Mayo and Roethlisberger reinvented how organizations think about and manager workers. Unlike Taylor's perspective, Mayo and Roethlisberger felt that interpersonal relationships were important. Moreover, they felt that society was composed on groups and not just individuals, individuals do not act independently with their own interests but are influenced by others, and most workers decisions are more emotional than rational. One cannot overstress the importance that Mayo and Roethlisberger have had on management theory and organizational academics. Overall, these studies demonstrated the importance that communication is in subordinate-supervisor interactions, the importance of peer-relationships, and the importance of informal organizations.

While the Hawthorne Studies revolutionized management theory, they were also quite problematic. For example, most of the major studies in this series consisted of

very small samples of workers (6 in the relay study; 13 in the bank wiring study), so these results are definitely suspect from a scientific vantage point. Furthermore, some people would argue that Hawthorn effects were really the result of workers who were more afraid of unemployment rather than communication relationships.Rice, B. (1982). The Hawthorne Defect: Persistence of a flawed theory. *Psychology Today, 16*(2), 70–74. Regardless of potential errors of the studies, the conclusion that Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson found was quite extraordinary. Relationships have a significant impact on the quality of organizational performance.

Kurt Lewin

Kurt Lewin was another person who explored the human relations side to organizational communication. Lewin was a refugee from Nazi Germany. He adored democracy and had a passion for applying psychology to improving the world.Tannenbaum, A. S. (1966). *Social psychology of the work organization*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, p. 86. During World War II, Lewin was at the University of Iowa. The U.S. government asked him to research ways to advise against housewives from purchasing meat, because there was such a short supply.Lewin, K. (1958). Group decision and social change. In E. F. Maccoby, T. M. Newcomb, and E. L. Hartley (Eds.), *Readings in social psychology* (pp. 197–211). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. Lewin felt that there was a huge barrier because housewives were expected to buy meat because of their families, friends, and parents, who anticipated to be served meat. Lewin hypothesized that if housewives were able to talk with other housewives about their meat buying tendencies, that they would be able to overcome this barrier. Lewin and his cohorts performed the experiments and found support for his hypothesis. Housewives who were able to talk about their meat purchasing with other housewises were ten times more likely to change their behavior.

Lewin felt like he could analyze these same principles in an organization. Lester Coch and John R.P. FrenchCoch, L., & French, J. R. P., Jr. (1948). Overcoming resistance to change. *Human Relations, 1*, 512–532. found that workers in a pajama factory were more likely to espouse new work methods if they were given the opportunity to discuss them and exercise some influence on the decisions that affected their jobs. These new findings helped organizations realize the benefits of group formation, development, and attitudes. Lewin's ideas helped influence future organizational communication theorists by emphasizing the importance of communication. Lewin helped identify the fact that workers want to have a voice and provide input in their tasks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Elton Mayo and his research associates studied how lighting effects production. They later realized that the workers were not affected by lighting rather the researchers presence.
- Kurt Lewin felt that group dynamics impacted behavioral outcomes. If workers can talk about their tasks with others it impacts the organization.
- Workers usually had a tendency of creating an informal standard for output that was never stated but also predetermined by the group.

EXERCISES

1. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the human relations approach.
2. Discuss how group dynamics impacts behavior outcomes. Is this true from your experience? How so?
3. Do you believe that group dynamics are important in an organization? Why or why not? Can you provide some specific examples?

3.3 Human Resources Theories

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define and understand the differences between human relations vs. human resources.
2. Identify key people in human resources theories.
3. Discuss and learn about motivation theories.
4. Discuss and explain Douglas McGregor's Theory Y and Theory X.
5. Analyze Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making Theory

In the previous section, you were introduced to the research of Elton Mayo and Kurt Lewin under the banner of human relations theories. In this section, we're going to further our understanding of theory in organizations by examining those theoretical perspectives that fall into the human resources camp.

The notion of human resources as a general category for a variety of management related theories was originally proposed by Raymond Miles.Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157. First and foremost, Miles' human resource theories posits that all workers are reservoirs of untapped resources. Miles believed that each and every worker comes into an organization with a variety of resources that management can tap into if they try. "These resources include not only physical skills and energy, but also creative ability and the capacity for responsible, self-directed, self-controlled behavior."Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157, pg. 150.

Under this perspective then, managers should not be focused on controlling employees or getting them to "buy-in" to decisions, which are the hallmarks of scientific management and human relations. Instead, the primary task of management should be the creation of a working environment that fosters employee creativity and risk taking in an effort to maximize and tap into the resources employees bring to the job. As such, communication in this perspective must be constant and bi-directional and participation in decision-making must

include both management and workers. Miles explains that his human resources model "recognized the untapped potential of most organizational members and advocated participation as a means of achieving direct improvement in individual and organizational performance." Miles, R. E., & Ritchie, J. B. (1971). Participative management: Quality vs. quantity. *California Management Review, 13*(4), 48–56., p. 48. To help us understand human resources, we are going to describe how human resources differ from human relations and discuss some key people in human resources.

Human Relations vs. Human Resources Theories

To understand the notions of human relations and human resources is to understand Raymond MilesMiles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157. original ideas on both concepts. Miles, as explained above, articulated a very clear theoretical perspective that was high on communication, high on tapping into employee resources, and high on employee input in decision making. These ideas were not his, but he did create a clear categorization scheme where he delineated between two groups of researchers whom he labeled human relations and human resources. While Miles believes these two groups exist, he also admits that these groups exist primarily in how managers interpret and apply various pioneers of the field of management, so the researchers who fall into the human relations camp often discuss concepts that seem to fall within Miles' own human resources framework. Table 3.2 "Human Relations vs. Human Resources" provides a list of the major differences that Miles believed existed between human relations and human resources.

Table 3.2 Human Relations vs. Human Resources

	Human Relations	**Human Resources**
Worker Needs	Workers need to belong, be liked, and be respected.	While workers need to belong, be liked, and be respected, workers also want to creatively and effectively contribute to worthwhile goals.
Worker Desires	Workers really desire to feel as though they are a useful part of the organization.	Workers really desire to exercise initiative, responsibility, and creativity, so management should allow for these.
Outcomes	If worker needs and desires are filled, they will willingly cooperate and comply with management.	Management should tap into worker capabilities and avoiding wasting untapped resources.

	Human Relations	Human Resources
Job Satisfaction	When employee needs and desires are met, they'll be more satisfied.	When employees feel that they have self-direction and control and are able to freely use their creativity, experience, and insight they will be more satisfied.
Productivity	Job satisfaction and reduced resistance to formal authority will lead to more productive workers.	When employees feel that they have self-direction and control and are able to freely use their creativity, experience, and insight they will be more productive .
Management Goal	Managers should strive to ensure that all employees feel like they are part of the team.	Managers should help employees discover hidden talents and ensure that all workers are able to fully use their range of talents to help accomplish organizational goals.
Decision Making	Management should allow employees to offer input on routine decisions and be willing to discuss these decisions, but management should keep important decisions to themselves.	Management should allow and encourage employees to freely participate in the decision making process with all types of decisions. In fact, the more important the decision is, the more the manager should seek out his employee resources in the decision making process.
Information Sharing	Information sharing is a useful tool when helping employees feel like they are part of the group.	Information sharing is vital for effective decision making and should include the full range of creativity, experience, and insight from employees.
Teamwork	Management should allow teams to exercise moderate amounts of self-direction and control.	Management should encourage teamwork and continually look for greater areas where teams can exercise more control.

Source: This table is based on Mile's models of participate leadership. Miles, R. E. (1965). Human relations or human resources? *Harvard Business Review, 43*(4), 148–157, pg. 151.

Key People in Human Resources Theories

As we see in Table 3.2 "Human Relations vs. Human Resources", there some key differences between human relations and human resources theories. These differences can be broken down into two basic categories: motivation and decision making. The rest of this section is going to both of these areas and the key people who researched these phenomena.

Motivation Theories
Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Many other theorists tried to explain the importance of the human resources approach. One of these individuals was Abraham Maslow.Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–96. He is widely known for his creation of **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**[9]. In order to get employees to work, he tried to understand what motivates people. He came up with five needs that need to be satisfied at one stage before moving on to another stage. Malsow felt that needs vary from person and person and that individuals want their need fulfilled. One must determine what is the motivational factor (Figure 3.1 "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs").

Physiological Needs. The first level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is psychological, which means that physical needs such as food and water need to be met before moving to the next level. If workers do not make enough money to buy food and water, then it will be hard for them to continue working.

Safety Needs. The second level is called safety. Workers need to be in a safe environment and know that their bodies and belongings will be protected. If workers don't feel secure, then they will find it hard to work efficiently. Think of the many occupations that are highly unsafe. According to an article on the CNN Money websiteChristie, L. (2011, August 26). America's most dangerous jobs: The 10 most dangerous jobs in America. In *CNNMoney* [website]. Retrieved from http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2011/pf/jobs/1108/gallery.dangerous_jobs/index.html, the top ten most dangerous jobs in the United States are as follows:

1. Fisherman
2. Logger
3. Airplane Pilot
4. Farmer and Rancher
5. Mining Machine Operator
6. Roofer
7. Sanitation Worker
8. Truck Driver/Deliveryman
9. Industrial Machine Repair
10. Police Officer

9. Model that suggests there are certain levels of human motivation and each level must be met before moving to the next level. Shaped like a pyramid, the model shows that human's most basic need from lowest to highest is physical, then safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

According to Maslow's basic theoretical premise, these individuals will have a harder time worrying about needs at the higher levels unless they can overcome the inherent lack of safety within these jobs.

Love, Affection, and Belongingness Needs. The third layer is called love, affection, and belongingness needs. Maslow believed that if an individual met the basic physiological and safety needs, then that individual would start attempting to achieve love, affection, and belongingness needs next, "He [or she] will hunger for affectionate relations with people in general, namely, for a place in his [or her] group, and he [or she] will strive with great intensity to achieve this goal."Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–96, pg. 381. Maslow believed that organizations would have better worker retention and satisfaction if they kept their employees in a cohesive environment. Furthermore, if a worker feels isolated or ostracized from their environment, then he or she would feel less motivated to work, which will lead to a decrease in overall productivity.

Esteem Needs. The fourth layer is called esteem, and is represented by two different sets of needs according to Maslow. First, individuals are motivated by the "desire for strength, for achievement, for adequacy, for confidence in the face of the world, and for independence and freedom."Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–96, pg. 381. Maslow goes on to discuss a second subset of esteem needs, "we have what we may call the desire for reputation or prestige (defining it as respect or esteem from other people), recognition, attention, importance or appreciation."Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–96, pg. 381–382. While Maslow originally separated these two lists from each other, they clearly have more in common than not. If employees do not feel that their input is valued at the organization, they will seek out other places of employment that will value their input, because humans have an intrinsic need to be appreciated for their efforts.

Self-Actualization Needs. The fifth layer is called self-actualization, and it is the hardest to attain. Self-actualization "refers to the desire for self-fulfillment, namely, to the tendency for [a person] to become actualized in what he [or she] is potentially. This tendency might be phrased as the desire to become more and more what one is, to become everything that one is capable of becoming." Maslow goes on to explain, "A musician must make music, an artist must paint, a poet must write, if he [or she] is to be ultimately happy. What a man [or woman] *can* be, he [or she] *must* be. This need we may call self-actualization [emphasis in original]."Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review, 50*, 370–96, pg. 382. Maslow felt that if individuals can have their needs met in order of the layers, then they would be both motivated and seek opportunities to excel.

All in all, Maslow's hierarchy of needs helps us understand how to motivate workers to strive for more in the organization. Hence, communication is very important, because we need to understand what our employees need in order to motivate them to work more proficiently and productively.

Figure 3.1 *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*

Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory

Another researcher to enter into the fray of human motivation was Frederick Herzberg. Originally trained as a clinical psychologist, over the course of Herzberg's career he switched focused and became one of the first researchers in the growing field of industrial psychology. The original notion of **Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory**[10] was that traditional perspectives on motivation, like Maslow's, only looked at one side of the coin—how to motivate people. Herzberg and his original colleaguesHerzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Snyderman, B. S. (1959). *The motivation to work.* New York, NY: Wiley. theorized that what ultimately motivated individuals to work were not necessarily the same factors that led to demotivation at work. In Herzberg's worldview, motivation on the job should lead to satisfied workers, but he theorized that satisfaction and dissatisfaction were not opposite ends of one continuum. Instead, he predicted that the factors that lead to positive job attitudes (and thus motivation) were different from the factors that lead to negative job attitudes (and thus demotivation). For the purposes of his theory, he called the factors that led to positive job attitudes **motivators**[11] and those factors that led to negative job attitudes **hygiene factors**[12]. In <u>Table 3.3 "Motivators and Hygiene Factors"</u> the basic motivators and hygiene factors are listed. Notice that the motivators are all centered around ideas that are somewhat similar to the esteem needs and self-actualization needs of Abraham Maslow. On the other hand, the hygiene factors all examine the context of work.

Table 3.3 Motivators and Hygiene Factors

Motivators	Hygiene Factors
Achievement	Policy and administration
Recognition	Micromanagement
Advancement	Relationships (Supervisor, Peers, & Subordinates)
The work itself	Job security
Responsibility	Personal life
Potential for promotion	Work conditions
Potential for personal growth	Status
Salary	

10. Similar to Maslow's Heirarachy of Needs, but focues on what motivated humans to work. He also focus on what demotivated workers to have a positve or negative job attitues.

11. The list of factors that lead to positive job attitudes according to motivation theorist Frederick Herzberg.

12. The list of factors that led to negative job attitudes according to motivation theorist Frederick Herzberg.

Upon looking at Table 3.3 "Motivators and Hygiene Factors", you may notice that Salary is centered between both motivators and hygiene factors. In *The Managerial Choice* Herzberg reversed his previous thinking that salary was purely a hygiene factor, "Although primarily a hygiene factor, it [salary] it also often takes on some of the properties of a motivator, with dynamics similar to those of recognition for achievement." Herzberg, F. (1976). *The managerial choice: To be efficient and to be human.* Homewood, IL: Dow-Jones-Irwin, pg. 71.

Decision Making
Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y

As we discussed earlier, the classical perspective felt that leadership should control and order subordinates. Then, in the human relations approach, we learned that superiors need to cultivate and support their employees. Douglas McGregorMcGregor, D. (1960). *The human side of enterprise.* New York: McGraw-Hill., a management professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the 1950s and 1960s, felt that there are two different perspectives, which he termed as **Theory X**[13] and **Theory Y**[14]. These theories were based on assumptions that managers have about their workers.

McGregor defined a Theory X manager who believes that most people do not like work. Workers are not smart or creative. People do not care about the organization, and will adequately work when there are promises for rewards and potential punishments. Moreover, Theory X manager believes that people want to have direction in order to evade responsibility.

13. This approach is similar to the scientific management approach, where workers are expected to only work. In this perspective, managers believe that workers are apathetic towards work and people need direction. In addition, managers believe that workers are not smart, do not seek advancement, and avoid responsibility.

14. This approach is similar to the human relations approach. In this perspective, managers believe that people want to succeed and they can excel if you give them the right to be creative. In addition, people want to work, seek direction, and are ambitious.

On the other hand, Theory Y managers feel that people want to do what is best for the organization and can direct themselves under the right conditions. Table 3.4 "Differences between Theory X & Theory Y" illustrates the differences between Theory X and Theory Y.

Table 3.4 Differences between Theory X & Theory Y

Theory X	Theory Y
People dislike work and find ways to avoid it	People perceive work as natural and find it enjoyable
Workers want to avoid responsibility	People want responsibility
Want direction	Prefer self-direction
Resists change	Wants to work toward organizational goals

Theory X	Theory Y
Not intelligent	Have the potential to develop & adapt
Not creative	Are intelligent
Managers must control, reward, and/or punish employees to maintain performance	Are creative
	Work conditions need to be set to achieve worker & organizational goals

Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making Theory

The last major theorist we are going to explore related to the human resources side of management theory is **Rensis Likert's Participative Decision Making (PDM) Theory**[15]. Likert originally explored the idea of how organizational leaders make decisions in his book *The Human Organization.*Likert, R. (1967). *The human organization: Its management and value.* New York: McGraw-Hill. Likert's ideas were based in the notion that supervisors with strong worker productivity tended to focus on the human aspects of subordinate problems while creating teams that emphasized high achievement. In other words, these supervisors were employee centered and believed that effective management required treating employees as humans and not just worker bees. Likert further noted that these highly productive leaders also tended to involve subordinates in the decision making process. Out of this basic understanding of productive versus unproductive management, Likert created a series of four distinct management styles.

System 1: Exploitive Authoritative. System 1, exploitative authoritative management, starts with the basic issue of trust. Under this system of management, the manager simply does not trust subordinates and has no confidence in subordinate decision making capabilities. Because of this lack of trust, all decisions are simply decided upon by people at the upper echelons of the hierarchy and then imposed on the workers. Communication under these leaders is typically unidirectional (from management to workers), and employees are motivated to comply with management dictates out of fear.

System 2: Benevolent Authoritative. System 2, benevolent authoritative management, starts with the basic notion that decision making should be situated with those in managerial positions. Because managers believe that decision making should be theirs and theirs alone, managers believe that workers will simply comply with managerial dictates because of the manager's legitimate right to make decisions. This type of management almost takes on a master-servant style relationship. As for communication, subordinates are not free to discuss decisions or any job-related

15. This model has four systems that are based on effectively functioning groups that are related throughout the organization. Hence, Likert felt that with accurate understanding of human performance in variability and contrasts, then organizations could be more productive.

matters with their superiors. Ultimately, employ motivation to comply with managerial dictates is done through a system of rewards.

System 3: Consultative. System 3, consultative management, starts with a lot more trust in employee decision making capabilities. However, the manager may either not have complete confidence in employee decision making or may have the ultimate responsibility for decisions made, so he or she does not allow workers to just make and implement decisions autonomously. Typically, the manager seeks input from workers and then uses this input to make the ultimate decision. Under consultative management, communication, decision making participation, and teamwork is fair, and employees tend to be more motivated and satisfied than the previous two styles of management. However, consultative management can be very effective if, and only if, the input process is conducted legitimately. One of the biggest mistakes some managers make is to use pseudo-consultative practices where they pretend to seek out input from subordinates even though the actual decision has already been made. Pseudo-consultative decision making is just a different flavor of benevolent authoritative management.

System 4: Participative. System 4, participative management, is built on the goal of ensuring that decision making and organizational goal attainment is widespread throughout the organizational hierarchy. In these organizations, organizational leaders have complete confidence in worker ability to make and implement decisions, so workers are constantly encouraged to be very active in the decision making process. Under participative management, communication, decision making participation, and teamwork is good, and employees tend to be motivated and satisfied.

These four different systems characterize many of the classical theories discussed in this chapter. For instance, System 1 is similar to the scientific management approach t and System 4 has characteristics from the human relations approach. Likert believed that an organization's performance is based on the systems or structures in place for the workers. Thus, Likert believed that organizations could incorporate some aspects from the scientific management approach, human relations, and human resource approach in order to maximize organizational outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Human Resources encourages an environment where employees have the ability to be creative and take risks in order to maximize outcomes.
- Human resources places an emphasis on more communication than human relations.
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs help us to understand what motivates people in organizations.
- Herzberg's theory focuses on what motivates individuals to work and he also focused on what factors lead individuals to demotivation at work.
- McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are assumptions that managers have about their employees. They differ in the type of communication involved as well as the expectations of workers.
- Rensis Likert's ideas were based on the idea that supervisors are employee centered and to treat all employeess as unique humans rather than just another worker.

EXERCISES

1. What do you think are the most important characteristics between human relations and human resources? Which do you prefer? Why?
2. Which motivation theory is more applicable in the workplace? Why?
3. Create your own hypothetical Maslow's hierarchy of needs. What would motivate you to work in an organization. Use Figure 3.1 "Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs" as a guide when creating your pyramid.

3.4 Chapter Exercises

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

McDaniel's Burger Case Study

McDaniel's Burger Restaurant is a family owned restaurant in the Southwestern part of the United States. It is located in a small town in Texas. The family has had the restaurant for three generations. People come from far and wide to eat at the restaurant, because they take pride in cooking each burger to the customer's wants and needs. The restaurant prides itself in having the most selections for meat and vegetarian burgers. In addition, they carry a wide variety of toppings, such as ordinary toppings like tomatoes, bacon, cheese, onions, lettuce, but also unique toppings like cucumbers, salsa, salad dressing, pineapple, and sprouts. Customers can decide on how they would like their burger cooked: grilled or fried. Everyone in town loves McDaniel's Burgers because they are personalized and delicious.

Lately, business has been increasing because the population has increased. The McDaniel family can longer keep up with the demand and decide to sell their business to a bigger firm, the Burger Business. Burger Business has many establishments and is used to catering to large crowds. Burger Business executives liked McDaniel's burgers but felt that it was not very efficient, because customers would have to wait a long time before their order was completed. Over time, the executives and consultants of Burger Business felt that they needed to have five different stations. The first station was for meat selection. For instance, the customer can choose their meet selection of: beef, bison, elk, chicken, veggie patty, etc. The second station was for meat preparation. The customer can choose if they want their meat fried or grilled and to what degree. The third station was for toppings on the burger. An attendant would help the customer with the toppings for their burger. The fourth station was the side bar, where customers could choose what sides such as drinks and French fries with their burger. The last station was the cashier, where customers would pay for their meal. Most of the employees of McDaniel's Burgers were already trained in all areas of operations. Hence, they could work in any station and in any order. The Burger Business executives felt that this would help with employee satisfaction because they could work in a variety of stations and they could have more flexible .

However, over time, the profits for McDaniel's Burgers were not very high. Moreover, employee retention was at an all time high. However, executives felt they could replace workers, because the task was so simple. In addition, several customers did not prefer dining in the restaurant as in the past. More customers were requesting to take home their orders. The executives were

confused because they felt they made productive and efficient changes. Initially, the executives felt that the reason customers felt negatively about the business was because there were certain stations that tended to have longer lines, such as the toppings and sides bar. Hence, they divided the toppings stations into original toppings and unique toppings. In addition, they divided the sides bar into fries and drinks. The executives also decided to get rid of toppings that customers rarely ordered such as anchovies and sauerkraut. Overall, the executives were happy with the changes they made and felt that they could open more McDaniel's Burgers in other locations.

Case Analysis Discussion Questions:

1. In the end, the Burger Business executives had an positive perspective of the future of McDaniel's Burgers. Do you agree? Why? What are some potential risks or pitfalls that the executives need to be cautious about? What could they do to motivate workers?
2. Can you identify some of the classical theories presented in this case study? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of these theories in this case study?
3. Let's pretend the Burger Business hired you as a communication consultant for McDaniel's Burgers, what information would you collect? How will this information help you predict the future outcome of this business? What would you expect the findings to be? How would you use this information to make suggestions to the executives?
4. Pretend that you are a customer of McDaniel's Burgers. How do you feel communication can be improved for the customers of McDaniel's Burgers? What would customers prefer or dislike with this establishment?
5. Pretend that you are an employee of McDaniel's Burgers. How do you feel that communication can be improved? Why is there such a high employee turnover rate? How can executives help with the employee retention rate?

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT HEAD

1. The word "theory" originally derives its name from a Greek word *theoria*, θεωρἱα, which roughly translated means:

   a. generalization
   b. affiliation
   c. contemplation
   d. harmonization
   e. actualization

2. Sara gets a job where she has to stamp letters all day. She is given no other task or opportunity to talk with others. What classical perspective best describes her job?

   a. scientific management
   b. bureaucracy
   c. Theory Y
   d. Hawthorne effect
   e. authority

3. Weber stated that the best way to select authority was:

   a. bureaucracy
   b. traditional ways
   c. charismatic
   d. b & c
   e. all of the above

4. Fayol believed that there is a hierarchical order of authority. There is a sequence and succession to how communication is transferred from on person to the other. This is known as:

   a. scalar chain
   b. subordination of individual interests to general interest
   c. order
   d. authority
   e. unity of command

5. All of the following are characteristics of the human relations approach EXCEPT:

   a. workers desire to feel as though they are useful part of the organization
   b. if workers' need are filled, they will comply
   c. when employee needs and desires are met, they are more satisfied
   d. management should tap into worker capabilities
   e. management should allow employees to offer input, but keep important decisions to themselves

ANSWER KEY

1. c
2. a
3. a
4. a
5. d

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 4

Modern Theories of Organizational Communication

Expanding Your View

Up to now, your introduction to organizational communication has been fairly straightforward. The definition of an "organization" presented in <u>Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication"</u> emphasized aspects of the workplace that you probably expected—structure, goals, personnel, etc., and the definition of "communication" featured elements that can be easily understood—source, message, channel, receiver. Then in <u>Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"</u> we explored classical theories of organizational communication that are driven by attitudes you have likely encountered on the job—your supervisor's desire for machine-like efficiency, your company's view of employees as "human resources" that must be beneficially managed.

In this chapter, however, we are going to complicate these pictures. Yet by expanding your view of "organization" and "communication," you can better understand the often bewildering and messy realities of everyday life on the job. Modern theories of organizational communication—the subject of this chapter—are driven by a recognition that "real life" in the workplace seldom conforms to such ideals as smoothly operating hierarchies and clearly transmitted messages.

For example, has your boss ever yelled at you? Irrational behavior can be difficult to square with classical theories of organization and communication. Though a message is obviously being transmitted from a source (your boss) to a receiver (you), insults generate far more mental stimulation than is necessary and, in fact, introduce inaccuracies that will likely cause you to misinterpret the message. Cursing hardly reflects the scientific management advocated by Frederick Taylor, the impersonal environment espoused by Max Weber, and the precise wording of commands favored by Henri Fayol. So by these lights, your boss's yelling is inefficient and counterproductive. Neither are curses and insults conducive to good human relations in the workplace—or to satisfying your hierarchy of needs, or giving you positive motivation and enjoyment in your job, or encouraging your involvement in workplace decisions. By all these accounts, yelling and cursing is bad management—and yet, as we will see in <u>Chapter 13 "Technology in Organizations"</u>, it occurs daily in organizations worldwide. One study estimated

that 37 percent of workers will be subjected to workplace bullying in the course of their careers. In the United States alone, that amounts to more than 56 million people.Namie, G. (2010). Workplace Bullying Institute 2010 U.S. workplace bullying survey. Retrieved April 22, 2012, from http://www.workplacebullying.org/wbiresearch/2010-wbi-national-survey

In this chapter, we will expand our view of organization and communication in ways that allow us to consider some new perspectives: Did your boss yell to assert power over you? Was this assertion of power rooted in historical prejudices or in attitudes that prevail in the surrounding society? Is aggression tied to the very nature of organizing itself? Or is aggression rooted in the culture of your particular organization, a pattern that employees past and present have established, so that yelling is way that people "make sense" of a super-competitive work environment?

Learning about modern theories of organizational communication will help us explore such questions. Before describing these theories, however, we must first revisit the assumptions that we have built up in the preceding chapters. This is because modern theories are often based on different assumptions about the nature of organizations and communication than are classical theories. We are not asking you to discard classical thinking; the theories developed by Taylor, Weber, Fayol, and scholars in the human relations and human resources traditions address real issues in the workplace and remain influential. Rather, we are asking you to build on the foundation of classical theory and now expand your view.

4.1 Rethinking the Organization

In Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication" we read fifteen representative definitions of "organization" (see Table 1.1). All fifteen contained one or more of the following words (or their variants): *system, structure, unit, collective, pattern, coordination.*

When we think of a "system" or "structure" we usually think of an object, a thing that exists independently of the people in it. People come and go, but the system endures. Yet when we think of a system as a "thing" we are thinking metaphorically. As noted in the introduction to Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication", a metaphor is not a literal description but rather a linguistic means to grasp a concept by comparing it to something from the real world. Thus, we think of time as an object in such metaphors as "time flies" and "time is money."Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. In the same way, although a system is not an actual, literal, physical object which you can hold in your hands, thinking of it that way helps you picture how a system functions.

Similarly, when you think of an "organization" you probably think of it as an object with its own existence. Most people do. A corporation, for example, is considered a "person" under United States law for purposes ranging from taxation to free speech. Clearly, however, thinking of an organization as an object is a metaphor. Nevertheless, the way that we conceptualize an "organization" has very real consequences for organizational communication theory.

Three Decisions about Theory

The assumption that an organization is an object with an independent existence—that is to say, it has an "objective" rather than "subjective" reality—is characteristic of the **postpositive**[1] (sometimes called positivist or functionalist)

1. An approach to organizational communication which holds that organizations have objective existences. Since the imperative to optimize performance governs the organization, individual mindsets ultimately are superfluous. Organizational behaviors are therefore best studied in the aggregate through empirical observations that leads to measurable results.

tradition in organizational communication scholarship. Below we will review the postpositive perspective and then, as alternatives, introduce the **interpretive**[2], **critical**[3], and **postmodern**[4] perspectives on organizations. Each approach to how we conceive of organizations involves different assumptions. For theorists, their assumptions imply three decisions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

Ontology

Our **ontology**[5] is how we think about the nature of being. Do we think of an organization as having its own existence and own behaviors that continue independently of the various managers and employees who come and go over time? Or do we believe these individuals create and continuously re-create the organization and therefore drive its behaviors? Or is our concept of the organization, and our expectations for the form it should take and what it should do, determined by larger historical and cultural forces?

Epistemology

Our **epistemology**[6] is our philosophy of how things come to be known. Do we believe that knowledge about an organization is attained by observing collective actions and measuring aggregate behaviors? Or by listening to individual members of an organization and interpreting organizational life on their terms? Or by tracing the historical and cultural forces that have shaped people's expectations for what an organization should be and the roles that managers and employees should play?

Axiology

Our **axiology**[7] is what we believe is worth knowing, a decision that involves a value judgment. Many social scientists believe that only empirical evidence, or what can be directly and impartially observed and measured, is worth knowing. Others ask whether any research is truly value-neutral or can be based on "just the facts." Does not the choice of research method influence what is found? Indeed, is not a decision to accept only what can be measured in itself a value judgment? Where some scholars strive to produce impartial knowledge, which organizational management can use to improve results, others believe such a goal implicitly supports the current system and those in power. Furthermore, where some researchers measure aggregate responses, others strive to hear organizational members on their own terms while giving voice to the powerless and thereby effecting social change.

All three issues—ontology, epistemology, and axiology—are deeply implicated in both classical and modern theories of organizational communication.

2. An approach to organizational communication which holds that organizations have subjective existences and, in fact, are constitued through their members' communication. As such, it is not enough to observe aggregate behaviors; individual mindsets must be also be interpreted.

3. An approach to organizational communication that employs theory as a framework to expose the hidden power structures in organizations and the ways that dominant interests distort meaning, thought, consciousness, and communicative action to maintain their domination by marginalizing alternative expressions.

4. An approach to organizational communication which holds that organizations come into existence as temporary combinations of interests against the threatening fluidity of larger historical and cultural discourses. As a reflection of these discourses, the organization is a "text" that can be "read" in order to trace back how its hidden power relations were formed.

5. Philosophy of how things have being. Some theorists believe an organization exists independently from how people perceive it; others believe an organization exists only in relation to the perceptions of its people or in relation to society.

Four Questions about Organizations

What is now called the postpositive (or sometimes positivist or functionalist) approach dominated organization studies through the 1970s.Redding, C., & Tompkins, P. (1988). Organizational communication—Past and future tenses. In G. Goldhaber & G. Barnett (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 5-34). Norwood, NJ: Ablex. Most scholars in the field took it for granted that organizations could, and should, be studied through scientific methods. Then in 1979, Gibson Burrell and Gareth Morgan published an influential work that proposed new paradigms for organizational studies.Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis.* London: Heinemann. They started with four basic questions about the assumptions of social science:

- Do social realities, such as organizations, have objective or subjective existence; i.e., do they exist on their own or only in people's minds?
- Can one understand these social realities through observation or must they be directly experienced?
- Is knowledge best gained by scientific methods or by participating in a social reality from the inside?
- Do people have free will or are they determined by their environments?

According to Burrell and Morgan, these issues boil down into two fundamental debates: whether social realities exist objectively or subjectively, and whether their basic state is order or conflict (what Burrell and Morgan called "regulation" or "radical change"). These two questions form the axes of a 2 × 2 matrix which we have adapted from Burrell and Morgan and show in Figure 4.1 "Approaches to Organizations: Burrell & Morgan" below.

6. Philosophy of how things are known. Some researchers believe it is sufficient to observe and measure an organization's aggregate behaviors; others believe that the mindsets and interactions of individuals must also be interpreted.

7. Philosophy of what is worth knowing. Some researchers only accept knowledge gained empirically through observation and measurement of aggregate behaviors; others believe that people's perceptions must be analyzed.

During the 1980s and beyond, scholars used Burrell and Morgan's matrix to flesh out new approaches for organizational research.For example, see Redding & Tompkins, op. cit.; Putnam, L. (1982). Paradigms for organizational communication research. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 46*, 192-206. More recently, Stanley Deetz took stock of how the field has developed since Burrell and Morgan's original analysis.Deetz, S. (2001). Conceptual foundations. In F. M. Jablinb & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 3-46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. See also Deetz, S. (1994). Representative practices and the political analysis of corporations. In B. Kovacic (Ed.), *Organizational communication: New perspectives* (pp. 209-242). Albany: State University of New York Press. He proposed a new matrix that retains the order-versus-conflict axis (what Deetz called "consensus" versus "dissensus") but substituted a new second axis. For Deetz, the two basic questions are: (1) is order or conflict the natural state of an organization; and (2) should researchers apply "knowledge to," or derive "knowledge from," an organization—that is, should they start with an existing theory and see how an organization might fit, or study an organization on its own terms? (Deetz called these the "elite/a priori" versus the "local/emergent" approach.) By adapting Deetz's two questions, we can construct the matrix shown in <u>Figure 4.2 "Approaches to Organizations: Deetz"</u> below. Though Deetz preferred the terms "normative" and "dialogic" for postpositive and postmodern, we use the latter terms because they are widely recognized among organizational communication scholars.

Figure 4.2 *Approaches to Organizations: Deetz*
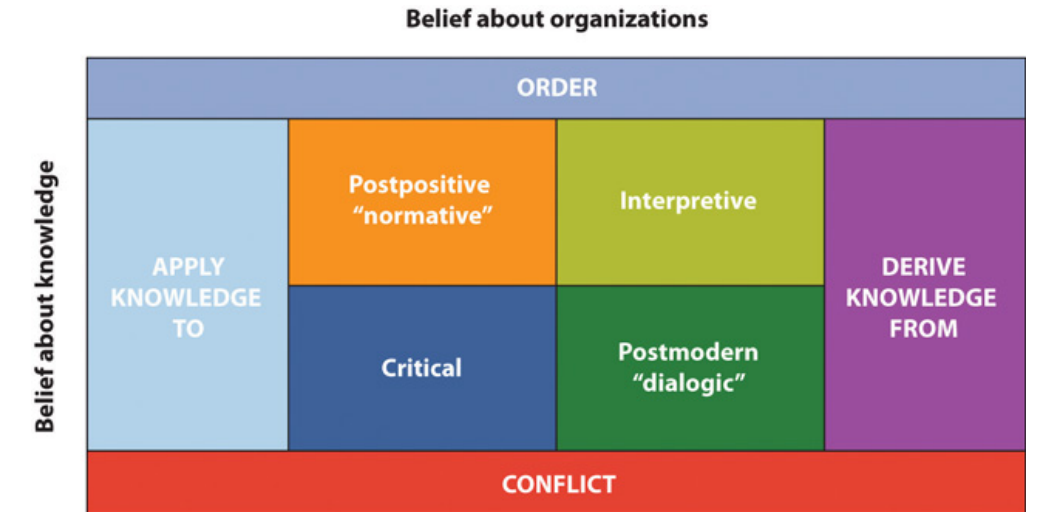
Thus, postpositive researchers believe that order is the natural state of an organization, and postpositive researchers look to fit a given organization into an existing theory of how order is produced. Interpretive researchers likewise believe that order is the natural state of an organization, but they study each organization on its own terms and how its members establish patterns of conduct. Critical researchers, on the other hand, believe that conflict is the natural state of an organization and bring existing theories about conflicts over power to their analyses of a given organization. Postmodern researchers also believe that conflict is the natural state of an organization, but they look to deconstruct the particular power relations that have emerged in a given organization.

In our view, two questions originally posed by Burrell and Morgan can be recast to provide one more helpful framework for understanding the differences between the postpositive, interpretive, critical, and postmodern approaches. Those questions are: (1) what is the nature of reality; and (2) what is the source of structure? As to the first question, Steven Corman contrasted the **realist**[8] belief "that things (including social phenomena) have a reality that is independent of their being perceived by someone," with the **relativist**[9] view that "things (especially social phenomena) exist only in relation to some point of view."Corman, S. R. (2005). Postpositivism. In S. May & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 15-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 25. As to the second question, theorists draw a distinction between **structure and agency**[10]. As Burrell and Morgan noted, some theorists believe that people are determined by their environments (structures), while others hold that people have free will (agency). Applied to an organization, the question becomes whether its structures are determined by socio-historical processes that operate outside the organization or are created through agency of its members. Again, these

8. The belief that a thing, including a social phenonemon such as an organization, has an existence independent from people's perception of it.

9. The belief that a thing, including a social phenomenon such as an organization, has an existence only in relation to some point of view.

10. The debate among theorists about whether people are determined by their environments (structure) or have free will (agency).

two questions about reality and structure can form the axes of the matrix shown in <u>Figure 4.3 "Approaches to Organizations"</u>.

Figure 4.3 *Approaches to Organizations*
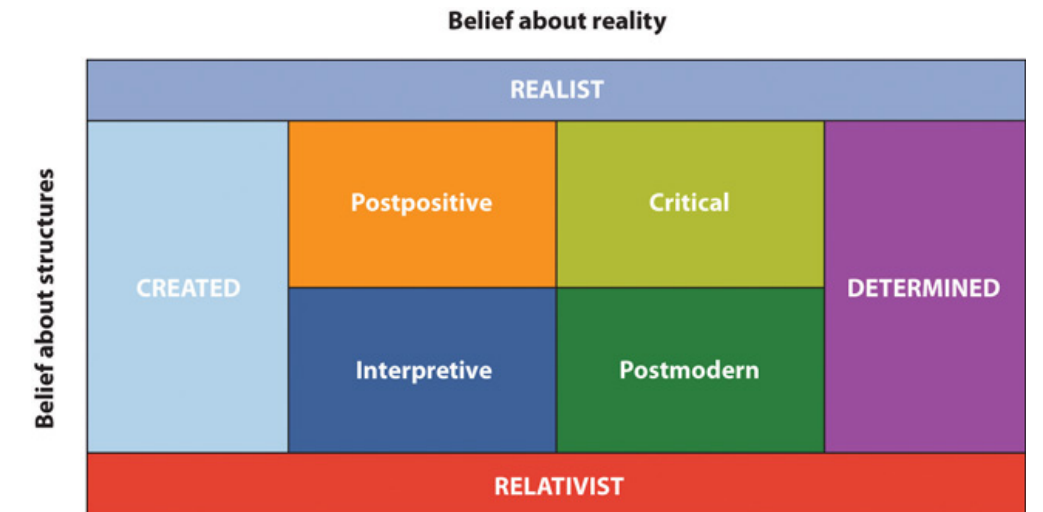
Thus, postpositive theorists believe the structures established by an organization's members literally take on a life of their own, attaining an objective reality that endures independently over time. Critical theorists also believe that organizational structures have a fixed reality, but they see these structures originating in socio-historical processes that operate outside the organization. On the other hand, interpretive theorists believe that an organization has a subjective reality and exists only in relation to the viewpoints of the people inside the organization. Postmodern theorists also believe an organization has a subjective reality, but they see this reality existing in relation to socio-historical points of view that originate outside the organization.

As we will describe at the conclusion of this section, your task is not to choose one "best" approach to organizational communication over another, but to appreciate and draw from each. Toward that end, let us now explore the respective approaches in more detail. In so doing, we will concentrate on their respective ontologies, epistemologies, and axiologies. For the moment, we are only describing the *approaches*, and not specific *theories* within each approach.

Postpositive Approach

In the classic disaster-move spoof *Airplane!*, passengers and crew start to become mysteriously ill. A doctor on board exclaims, "This woman has got to be taken to a hospital." The chief flight attendant anxiously asks, "A hospital! What is it?" To this

the doctor replies, "It's a big building with patients. But that's not important right now."Davison, J., Koch, H. W. (Producers), & Abrahams, J. Zucker, D. & Zucker, J. (Directors). (1980). *Airplane!* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount. Similarly, we will not spend much time here discussing the difference between positivism and *post*positivism. That's not important right now. Suffice it to say that, as Steven Corman explained, where positivistic scientists of the early twentieth century took the *antirealist* position that existence only mattered insofar as what meets the eye, today's postpositivists hold the *realist* belief that reality exists independently of perception.Corman, op cit.

Lex Donaldson succinctly captured this perspective by suggesting that "in any situation, to attain the best outcome, the decision-makers must choose the structure that best fits that situation . . . with the ideas of the decision-makers making no independent contribution to the explanation of the structure." In other words, since an organization can survive only if it performs well, managers are ultimately forced to choose the course of action that gets the best results. Even when managers choose lesser options, the resulting performance deficit creates its own pressure to either correct the mistake or go out of business. In the end, "the consciousness of the actors [is] superfluous" because "there will be an irresistible tendency for organization managers to choose options that conform to the situational imperative . . . with no moderation by managerial ideas."Donaldson, L. (2003). Organization theory as a positive science. In H. Tsoukas & C. Knudsen, *The Oxford handbook of organizational theory: Meta-theoretical perspectives* (pp. 39-62). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; pgs. 44-45. The same holds true when managers communicate; they are forced, in the end, to choose messages and channels that best contribute to the bottom line. In the postpositive view, then, the purpose of organizational communication is instrumental—that is, an instrument for achieving results. Accurate messages and precise instructions are therefore seen as the best guarantors of optimal performance.

Given this conception of the organization, we can see how postpositivism fits together with its own distinctive ontology (its belief in how things exist), epistemology (its belief in how things are known), and axiology (its belief in what is worth knowing). Because the organization has an independent reality, its imperatives—to survive, to get the best results—drive what people do (rather than vice versa). And because individual mindsets ultimately do not matter, then researchers learn about an organization by observing its aggregate behaviors.

Thus, for example, Frederick Taylor's classical theory of scientific management is based on the assumption that what comes out of the organization is a function of went in. This idea is expressed in popular acronym GIGO for "garbage in, garbage out." The task for managers who observe poor output is to scientifically adjust input. If so, their metaphorical well-oiled machine can work at maximum capacity.

The goal, not only for managers but for postpositive organizational theorists, is to move from description and explanation to prediction of causes and effects—which implies the ability to control effects by adjusting causes. Figure 4.4 "Goals for Postpositive Research" below illustrates this progression. In organizational research, studies undertaken from a postpositive perspective are often intended to generate knowledge that can be applied to improving management practices.

Figure 4.4 *Goals for Postpositive Research*

Even as Frederick Taylor did a century ago with his time and motion studies, those today who study organizations from a postpositive perspective see themselves as social scientists. They practice **nomothetic**[11] research methods that emphasize scientific testing of hypotheses and employ quantitative methods, such as surveys and experiments, which generate numerical data. For postpositive researchers, this is the only data worth knowing; they disfavor the **ideographic**[12] data generated by such qualitative methods as ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, journals, and diaries because postpositivists find these methods inherently subjective and unable to describe what they perceive as the objective reality of organizational communication. The ultimate goal of nomothetic research is to discover general laws that are applicable across different cases. Classical examples of the nomothetic approach to research are described in Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication", including the Hawthorne Studies of Elton Mayo and the pajama factory study of Kurt Lewin.

11. An approach to knowledge that emphasizes scientific testing of hypotheses and employs quantitative tests, such as surveys, which generate numerical data. The ultimate goal of nomothetic research is to discover laws that can be generally applied across many cases.

12. An approach to knowledge that takes each case on its own terms by considering qualitative data such as ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, journals, and diaries.

As an interesting caveat to this discussion, people who conduct what we are labeling "postpositive" research generally do not describe their work as such. Because the field of organizational communication research grew out of the social-psychological and business research of the first part of the 20th century, today's postpostive researchers follow their counterparts in fields like industrial psychology or organizational behavior and categorize themselves as social scientists. While social-scientific researchers in organizational communication do not discount what other researchers in the larger field of organizational communication are doing, they do see themselves and their research as very distinct from the work of interpretive, critical, and postmodern researchers. As Patric Spence and Colin Baker noted in their article examining the types of organizational communication research published within the field, postpositive research still accounts for almost half of the research published today.Spence, P. R., & Baker, C. R. (2007). State of the method: An examination of level of analysis,

methodology, representation and setting in current organizational communication research. *Journal of the Northwest Communication Association, 36*, 111–124.

Table 4.1 "The Postpositive Approach" summarizes our discussion about the components of the postpositive perspective on organizational communication.

Table 4.1 The Postpositive Approach

Ontology (how things exist)	Epistemology (how things are known)	Axiology (values for research)	Purpose of Org. Communication
Realism	Observation	Intervention	Instrumental
Organizations have an objective existence that is independent of the people in them. People come and go but the organization endures.	Since people ultimately must choose actions that get the best organizational results, individual mindsets do not matter. Thus, to learn about an organization it is sufficient to observe its aggregate behaviors.	Social-scientific research generates knowledge that can be used to make predictive theories and applied to management practices.	Organizational imperatives that force people to choose the most effective actions apply to communication actions. Thus, accurate and precise communications are most effective.

Interpretive Approach

Where postpositive theorists believe the organization drives what its people do, interpretive theorists believe the reverse: that people drive what their organizations do—and, in fact, what their organizations *are*. As Dennis Mumby and Robin Clair put it, "organizations exist only in so far as their members create them through discourse," with discourse being "the principal means by which organization members create a coherent social reality that frames their sense of who they are."Mumby, D. K., & Clair, R. P. (1997). Organizational discourse. In T. A. van Dijk (Ed.), *Discourse as structure and process, Vol. 2* (pp. 181-205). London: Sage; pg. 181. In other words, communication is not just one activity, among many others, that an organization "does." Rather, the organization itself is *constituted* through its members' communication; it does not exist objectively, but only in relation to its members' points of view.

This explains the ontology of interpretive theorists, their belief in how organizations have being. Their epistemology, or how these theorists believe knowledge is gained, is expressed by the word "interpretive." Recall that postpositive theorists believe the mindsets of individuals do not matter since they

are irresistibly forced choose the most effective courses of action; thus, to know an organization it is sufficient to observe its aggregate behaviors. By contrast, interpretive theorists believe that simple observation is insufficient; the mindsets of organization members must also be *interpreted*. Hence, this approach to studying organizational communication is called interpretivism. (Some theorists also use the term "social constructionism" to emphasize how social phenomena, such as organizations, are constructed through social interaction.)

But how do you interpret what is going on inside someone's mind? Many methods are used. These usually begin by collecting primary data—interviews with people at various levels of the organization, and copies of organizational documents such as mission statements, annual reports, policy manuals, internal memoranda, and the like. Researchers who engage in organizational **ethnography**[13] do fieldwork in which they may spend a year or more visiting an organization, attending weekly staff meetings, participating in rituals such as office parties and company picnics, joining in ordinary conversations around the water cooler, and then recording their observations. Techniques for analyzing these ideographic data are also varied and include discourse analysis, conversation analysis, genre analysis, rhetorical analysis, and other methods.

These analytical methods involve an examination of how organization members use language to construct a shared social reality. By interpreting how language is used (e.g., company slang, recurring phrases, common metaphors, use of active and passive voice, what arguments employees find persuasive, how people address one another, how people take turns in talking) researchers uncover the underlying assumptions within an organization that its people take for granted and may not explicitly verbalize. Interpretive researchers, then, believe that organizational communication is not merely an instrument for getting results. Rather, people in organizations communicate with each other to make sense of their workplace and negotiate their places within the organization. Though managers may believe that precise instructions maximize productivity, directives that ignore employee perceptions can be disregarded, misinterpreted, and even counterproductive.

13. The word literally means "writing the culture." Organizational ethnographers conduct fieldwork, perhaps spending a year or more to directly experience an organization through participation and observation. The goal is to describe the organizational culture in terms that are faithful its members' understandings.

The axiology of interpretive scholars is evident from their research. Where postpositive researchers do not regard organization members' individual mindsets (which cannot be directly observed or measured) as worth knowing, interpretive researchers believe these data and their interpretation are essential to understanding organizational life. Moreover, where the goal of postpositive researchers is to move from description and explanation to prediction of organizational behaviors, interpretive scholars believe that studying an organization on its own terms means producing a description and interpretation of organizational life that is faithful to its members' own understandings. Interpretive researchers can, and do, make their findings about an organization's

communication and culture available to their subjects; in turn, organizations may use this information to address negative perceptions and to change a dysfunctional company culture into a more humane one. Interpretive researchers see their role not as changing the status quo but describing it. Yet identifying the unspoken assumptions that circulate within an organization may be the first step in addressing inhumane practices.

A summary of our discussion about the interpretive approach to organizational communication is presented in Table 4.2 "The Interpretive Approach" below.

Table 4.2 The Interpretive Approach

Ontology (how things exist)	Epistemology (how things are known)	Axiology (values for research)	Purpose of Org. Communication
Relativism	Interpretation	Description	Negotiation
Organizations come into existence and are then maintained through their members' communication. Thus, organizations exist in relation to its members' points of view.	To learn about an organization, simple observation of aggregate behaviors is insufficient. The mindsets of members must also be interpreted.	Research aims to describe the organization on its members' own terms, although knowledge can be used to develop general theories and applied to management practices.	People in an organization use communication to make sense of the work environment, establish shared patterns, negotiate their own identities, and enact their roles.

Critical Approach

A generation ago you might have read a company manual that stated, "When an employee is late to work, he must report immediately to his supervisor." Today we read that sentence and, right away, notice its use of sexist language. But at the time, it was common to use the masculine pronoun as an inclusive reference for both genders. For decades, even centuries, the practice was so widely accepted as natural and self-evident that people did not question this use of the masculine pronoun. In the 1960s, for example, the mission of the starship Enterprise in the *Star Trek* television series was "to boldly go where no *man* has gone before." Not until a sequel series debuted in the late 1980s was the mission statement rephrased, "To boldly go where no *one* has gone before." Living in the twenty-first century, we now wonder how an earlier generation could have accepted sexist language without

question. Yet consider: Which of our own assumptions will someday seem "unenlightened" to our children and grandchildren?

Think of some things we take for granted about the workplace. If someone asked you who "owns" the company you work for, you would answer with the name of person who is the "owner" in a *financial* sense. It just seems natural and self-evident that the one who holds the purse strings is the owner—even though you too have a tangible stake in the company and help make its activities possible. And in a free enterprise economy, we take for granted the notion that increased profits benefit everyone. Even college students, before they enter the workforce, accept this premise. Most young people attend college to "make more money" by learning job skills which will fit them into the needs of moneymaking corporations. Therefore, as corporations and their employees all make more money, everyone wins.

These assumptions illustrate what critical theorists call the reification and **universalization**[14] of managerial interests. **Reification**[15] is the process by which something historical is made to seem natural. For example, what we call the profit motive did not always exist; it emerged under specific historical conditions as premodern feudal economies gave way to modern capitalist economies. But we have so reified the profit motive that its pursuit seems natural, normal, self-evident, and beyond questioning. This process of reification produces a "double move" by ensuring that managerial interests are considered the only legitimate interests, while simultaneously hiding the domination of those interests by making them seem perfectly natural. Thus, the interests of management are universalized and represented as identical to everyone's interests. To speak of "company interests" is, in reality, to speak of managerial interests. Such distortion becomes, from a critical perspective, the very purpose of organizational communication—that is, the operation of dominant interests to create a "false" consensus between management and employees.

14. According to critical theory, the process by which dominant interests are represented as identical to everyone's interests. Thus, to speak of "company interests" is, in reality, to speak of managerial interests.

15. According to critical theory, the process by which something historical is made to seem natural. Thus, the dominant interests within an organization appear to be natural and self-evident.

Critical theorists, like the postmodern theorists we will review below, see the organization as a created by larger forces of history and society. But unlike postmodern theorists who see the organization in constant flux within the swirling streams of those forces, critical theorists tend to see the structures of power and domination as being so reified that they constitute "a concrete, relatively fixed entity."Deetz (2001), op. cit., pg. 27. Again, this requires a decision about ontology or the nature of existence—in our case, about the nature of organizational existence.

In addition to reification and universalization, critical theorists are concerned with two more questions: how reasoning in organizations becomes grounded in "what works," and how dominant managerial interests gain the consent of subordinate

interests. Jurgen Habermas noted how the modern age has increasingly supplanted practical reasoning that seeks mutual consensus, with **technical reasoning**[16] that calculates the means and controls needed to accomplish a desired end.Habermas, J. (1971). *Knowledge and human interests* (J. Shapiro, Trans.). Boston: Beacon. Critical theorists have applied this insight to organizational life by critiquing how corporations make technical reasoning, or determination of "what works" in achieving managerial interests, appear to be the only rational approach. Practical reasoning that fosters mutual determination of organizational goals either is made to seem irrational or is even leveraged by management as another "technique" to further its own interests. Thus, ideas such as promoting worker participation are either dismissed as inefficient or used as a new means to bring workers into alignment with corporate interests. Why do workers consent to such domination? Critical theorists have looked at bureaucratic forms, at coercions and rewards, and at organizational cultures that provide no chance for alternative modes of thinking—or that cause employees to identify so completely with an organization, they internalize its goals into their sense of personal duty and job satisfaction. Such employees need not be controlled; they discipline themselves.

If, according to critical theorists' ontology, organizational structures have been reified into an objective existence, then according to their epistemology, how do these taken-for-granted structures become known? Most critical organization researchers engage in **ideology critique**[17]. These researchers bring to their subjects an existing theory and then use it as a framework to expose how a dominant ideology has operated to reify and universalize its interests. A good example is provided by Karl Marx, the originator of ideology critique. He theorized that differences between capital and labor are built into the very structure of the capitalist system and its ideology. Then he employed his theory to explain how the few (who owned capital) could not only exploit the many (who owned only their labor), but could also make their domination appear legitimate and natural. Notions of economic class differences remain an influential strand of ideology critique. Yet other bases for criticism have also become important. More recently, feminist theory offers another example of ideology critique as researchers bring theories about gender-based structures of domination and use these as frameworks to expose or "denaturalize" the patriarchal assumptions that organizations take for granted.

In addition to ideology critique, a second stream of critical scholarship has emerged that follows the theories of Jurgen Habermas about **communicative action**[18].Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action: Vol 1., Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon; Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action: Vol. 2, Lifeworld and system*. Boston: Beacon. Where critical scholars have traditionally plumbed the ways that meaning, thought and consciousness itself are distorted by dominant discourses, Habermas began in the

16. Reasoning that, according to cri+tical theory, calculates the means and controls needed to accomplish a desired end. In organizations, technical reasoning is made to seem that only rational basis for decisions. For the modern age it has largely replaced practical reasoning which seeks mutual consensus.

17. An approach to critical scholarship that employs theory to expose how dominant interests distort meaning, thought, and consciousness to simultaneously legitimize and hide their domination.

18. An approach to critical scholarship that examines how dominant interests distort communication processes to sustain their domination by foreclosing alternate expressions. But legitimate communication may be restored, it is argued, through greater democratization of the workplace.

late 1970s to explore how *communication* is distorted. He proposed that, ideally, a communicative act should satisfy four conditions: participants should have equal opportunities to speak, should be heard without preconceptions of what is "true" and "proper," and should be able to speak according to their own lived experiences. Scholars, then, can critique how organizations distort these conditions. Thus, managers have more opportunities to speak; "bottom line" considerations are a privileged form of knowledge and seen as the only rational basis for resolving issues; the organization's structure dictates, in advance, the proper relations between management and labor; and discussions of workplace concerns must take place within the context of "company" (i.e., managerial) interests. Yet Habermas's model for communicative action also suggests possibilities for a positive agenda. A number of scholars have proposed how legitimate organizational communication can be restored through democratization of the workplace.For example, see Cheney, G. (1995). Democracy in the workplace: Theory and practice from the perspective of communication. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 23*, 167-200; Deetz, S. (1992). *Democracy in the age of corporate colonization: Developments in communication and the politics of everyday life.* Albany: State University of New York Press; Harrison, T. (1994). Communication and interdependence in democratic organizations. In S. Deetz (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 17* (pp. 247-274). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

As we learned above, postpositive and interpretive theorists look for order to emerge in organizations. Postpositive researchers look for the ways that organizational imperatives for efficiency and productivity brings members into alignment; interpretive researchers look for the ways that members create, through their communication, stable communities and shared cultures. By contrast, critical theorists believe that organizations are sites where historical and societal ideologies are in conflict, and where reified structures produce dominant and subordinate discourses. Other researchers may look for surface stability, but critical theorists' axiology regards an organization's submerged voices—workers, women, people of color—as worth knowing. Critical theorists' scholarship aims to recover these marginalized voices, lay bare an organization's reified structures for all to see, reopen possibilities previously foreclosed by those structures, and replace false consensus with true consensus. Given that emancipation is their goal, critical researchers combine scholarship with activism. These qualities—the ontology, epistemology, and axiology of the critical approach to organizations—are summarized in Table 4.3 "The Critical Approach" below.

Table 4.3 The Critical Approach

Ontology (how things exist)	Epistemology (how things are known)	Axiology (values for research)	Purpose of Org. Communication
Realism	Critique	Emancipation	Distortion
The power structures of organizations have an objective existence formed by external historical and cultural forces and that is independent of the people in them.	Exposing the hidden power structures in organizations is accomplished by using general theories about oppression as a framework to analyze a particular organization.	Research aims to expose the hidden power structures in organizations so that marginalized interests can resist and previously foreclosed opportunities become possible.	Communication by the dominant interests in organizations systemically distorts meaning, thoughts, consciousness, and communicative actions so that domination seems natural and alternative expressions are foreclosed.

Postmodern Approach

Many critical theorists hold that historical and cultural forces produce power structures with fixed existences, but postmodern theorists of organizational communication take a different view. "Reality" constantly fluctuates in the ongoing contests among competing historical and cultural discourses. Humans themselves are sites of competition between these discourses so that—despite our conceit that we have autonomous identities and control our own intentions—we are products of the multiple voices which shape and condition us. As Robert Cooper and Gibson Burrell explained, postmodern theorists "analyze social life in terms of paradox and indeterminacy, thus rejecting the human agent as the center of rational control and understanding." In contrast to the modernist approach in which the "organization is viewed as a social tool and an extension of human rationality," the postmodern approach sees the "organization [as] less the expression of planned thought and calculative action and more a defensive reaction to forces extrinsic to the social body which constantly threaten the stability of organized life."Cooper, R., & Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, postmodernism, and organizational analysis: An introduction. *Organization Studies, 9*, 91-112; pg. 91. Perhaps an analogy can help. Imagine the sweep of great historical and cultural discourses as an ocean. Its constantly swirling waves and currents determine the actions and perceptions of all who sail upon it. An organization, then, is like a flotilla of ships that negotiate a temporary agreement to sail as a convoy until land is reached. Though an organization may last for decades, rather than days or weeks, in time the currents of history and society that brought it together will pull it apart. Postmodern

theorists therefore reject the notion that, as a social object, the "organization" has an objective and enduring existence.

As postmodern theories of organizational communication have developed over the past generation, several themes have emerged. First is the centrality of **discourse**[19], so that an organization is regarded as a "text" that postmodern analysts can "read." The goal in "reading" this "text" is to unravel the underlying—and hidden—historical and cultural discourses which are reflected in the organization. This focus on discourse also means that postmodern scholars view *language*, rather than thought or consciousness, as the decisive factor in the social construction of organizations. Individuals are not the bearers of meaning, but are caught in webs of meaning that language creates. Following on this idea, a second theme emerges. Organizations are said to be **de-centered**[20]; the free will of its members are not the central driving force since people are preconditioned by language. Moreover, since organizations are only clusters of temporary consensus between competing discourses, then over time theses discourses tend to produce fragility rather than unity. Different levels of organization—from executives and middle managers to office employees and field personnel—look at things according to their own experiences and interests. Their multiple voices generate varying perspectives, producing multiple social realities rather than a single organizational culture. Thus, postmodern scholars say that organizations are **fragmented**[21]. Nor is clash of voices without effect on individuals, who are shaped by the multiple discourses operating throughout the organization and surrounding society. For this reason, postmodernists say that individuals' organizational identities are **overdetermined**[22] and therefore precarious and unstable.

Given that each organization is a unique "text" that is ever fluid, a third theme in postmodern analysis is what Jean-Francois Lyotard called an "incredulity toward metanarratives."Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; pg. xxiv. In contrast to critical scholars who look at organizations through the prism of an overarching theory—such as Marx's theories about class struggle or Habermas's theories about communicative action—postmodern scholars deconstruct the "text" of an organization for what it is, without fitting it into an *a priori* theoretical framework or **metanarrative**[23]. Thus, a fourth theme in the postmodern approach to organizations is the need to **deconstruct**[24] the particular connections, within each organization, between knowledge and power. What we call organizational communication is, for postmodernists, the ongoing contest between discourses. The dominant interest works to sustain its power by ensuring that organizational knowledge is rendered on its own terms and other interpretations seem unnatural. Postmodern scholars strive to reopen taken-for-granted discourses of knowledge and power, trace their formation, and help recover the voices which have been marginalized.

19. Because postmodernists believe that language is the decisive factor in constructing societies, organizations and individuals, then discourse is the central focus of their studies.

20. Because postmodernists believe that individuals are not autonomous but are shaped by language, they hold that individual free will is not the central driving force of an organization.

21. Because postmodernists believe that organizations are temporary and fluid combinations of differing interests, they hold that the various discourses of the interests do not produce the stability of a single unified pattern but instead generate multiple social realities that lead to organizational fragility and fragmentation.

22. Because postmodernists believe that individuals are not autonomous but are sites where multiple discourses are simultaneously in conflict, then identities of people within organizations are always fluid and partial—and thus overdetermined—rather than stable and continuous.

23. Postmodernists regard with incredulity that suggestion that a single "great story," such as an overarching general theory, can provide all the answers.

24. Postmodernists believe that an organization is a "text" that can be "read." Deconstruction is the method by which analysts trace back the discourses that have formed the power relations within an organization.

In tracing out the knowledge/power connection, many postmodern organizational scholars follow the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault.See Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Pantheon; Foucault, M. (1980). *The history of sexuality* (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Pantheon; Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press. Like Foucault, these scholars are concerned with the ways that modern organizations have eliminated the need to enforce discipline through physical punishment and real-time surveillance, but have "manufactured consent" and thereby "produced" employees who willingly discipline themselves. Nevertheless, Foucault did not see power as all bad. He held that power relations, being "rooted deep in the social nexus," are inescapable; they arise from the fact of society itself and are therefore not "a supplementary structure whose radical effacement one could perhaps dream of." The goal is not to abolish power and somehow create a perfectly free society, for a "society without power relations can only be an abstraction." Rather, the goal is a more nuanced understanding that makes possible "the analysis of power relations in a given society, their historical formation, the source of their strength or fragility, the conditions which are necessary to transform some or to abolish others." Toward that end, power may be seen not only as constraint; it also enables action by marking out ranges of possibilities and channels for their realization. Postmodern scholarship lays bare the power relations within organizations, putting these relations back into play and helping marginalized voices restructure the field of action to open up previously foreclosed possibilities.Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry, 8*, 777-795; pg. 791.

For postmodernists, then, the three decisions that organizational theorists must make—about ontology (how things exist), epistemology (how things are known), and axiology (what is worth knowing)—are summarized in <u>Table 4.4 "The Postmodern Approach"</u> below.

Table 4.4 The Postmodern Approach

Ontology (how things exist)	Epistemology (how things are known)	Axiology (values for research)	Purpose of Org. Communication
Relativism	Deconstruction	Denaturalization	Contestation
Organizations come into existence as temporary combinations of interests against the	Organizations are "texts" that can be "read." The goal is to deconstruct, or trace back, the	In the ongoing contest between organizational discourses, dominant interests maintain power by ensuring	Organizational communication is a means by which the discourses of an organization's

| Ontology (how things exist)	Epistemology (how things are known)	Axiology (values for research)	Purpose of Org. Communication
threatening fluidity of larger historical and cultural discourses, so that they exist only in relation to those external forces.	historical and cultural discourses that led to the formation of a particular organization's power relations.	organizational knowledge is rendered on its own terms and made to seem natural. Research aims to "denaturalize" and thus reopen hidden power relations.	various interests are contested. In this contest, some discourses dominate and others are marginalized.

Combining Approaches

Until the 1970s, organizational research mostly proceeded from what is now called a postpositive approach. Articulating new paradigms, Stanley Deetz noted, "gave legitimacy to fundamentally different research programs and enabled the development of different criteria for the evaluation of research."Deetz (2001), op. cit., pg. 8. At the same time, however, labeling has created distinctive communities of researchers that each favor a particular paradigm and can sometimes ignore or even dismiss the work of others.

The authors of this textbook individually take different approaches to organizational communication research. Yet we believe all perspectives make valuable contributions. For example, we share a common interest in communication by members of organized religions. Jason Wrench and Narissra Punyanunt-Carter have conducted, with other colleagues, extensive surveys of religious believers to produce an aggregate statistical picture of their communication behaviors.Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., Corrigan, M.W., Wrench, J. S., & McCroskey, J. C. (2010). A quantitative analysis of political affiliation, religiosity, and religious-based communication. *Journal of Communication and Religion, 33*, 1-32; Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., Wrench, J. S., Corrigan, M. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). An examination of reliability and validity of the Religious Communication Apprehension Scale. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 37*, 1-15; Wrench, J. S., Corrigan, M. W., McCroskey, J. C., & Punyanunt-Carter, N. M. (2006). Religious fundamentalism and intercultural communication: The relationship among ethnocentrism, intercultural communication apprehension, religious fundamentalism, homonegativity, and tolerance for religious disagreements. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 35*, 23-44. By contrast, Mark Ward spent several years visiting the local churches of a religious sect, participating in their worship and rituals, observing their communication firsthand, and learning how they talk among themselves.Ward, M., Sr. (2009). Fundamentalist differences: Using ethnography of rhetoric (EOR) to analyze a community of practice. *Intercultural Communication Studies, 18*, 1-20; Ward, M., Sr. (2010). "I was saved at an early age": An

ethnography of fundamentalist speech and cultural performance. *Journal of Communication and Religion, 33*, 108-144; Ward, M., Sr. (2011). *God's voice in organizational communication: A root-metaphor analysis of fundamentalist Christian organizing.* Paper presented at National Communication Association 97th Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA, November 2011; Ward, M., Sr. (in press). Managing the anxiety and uncertainty of religious otherness: Interfaith dialogue as a problem of intercultural communication. In D. S. Brown (Ed.), *Interfaith dialogue: Listening to communication theory.* Lanham, MD: Lexington. To use Deetz's distinction cited above, Ward derives "knowledge from" insiders on their own terms, while Wrench and Punyanunt-Carter consult existing theories and apply that "knowledge to" observed behaviors. Yet we see these different approaches not as an "either/or" choice but as complementary. "Insider" research contributes detailed cases of organizational communication that, taken together with cases of other organizations, may help construct more robust general theories. On the other hand, theoretically-informed research may identify broad patterns in organizational communication that can help those doing "insider" research make sense out of hundreds of separately collected observations. <u>Figure 4.5 "Research Approaches as Complementary"</u> below provides a graphic representation of this dynamic.

Figure 4.5 *Research Approaches as Complementary*
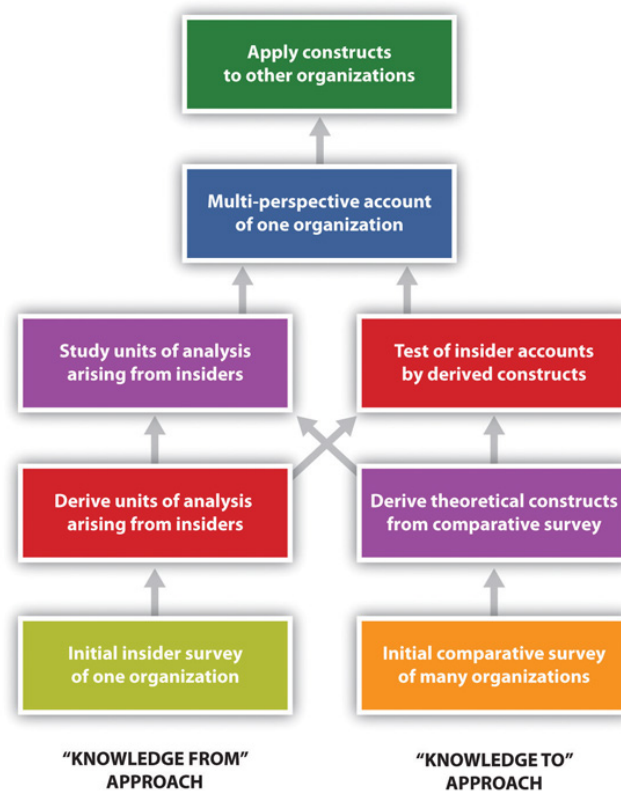
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Different conceptions of an "organization" are behind different approaches to theorizing about organizational communication. The postpositive approach holds that an organization has an objective existence; people come and go, but the organization endures. The interpretive approach holds that an organization has a subjective existence; people create and sustain it through their communication. The critical approach holds that the structures of power within an organization have a fixed existence and reflect larger historical and cultural forces. The postmodern approach also holds that the power relations within an organization reflect larger historical and cultural discourses, but that these discourses are fluid and ever changing.

- Theories of organizational communication reflect assumptions with regard to ontology (how things, including social phenomena such as organizations, have existence), epistemology (how things become known), and axiology (what is worth knowing). In the previous takeaway, the ontologies of the four approaches to theorizing about organizational communication are described. The postpositive approach holds that organizations are known through scientific inquiry and that only empirical findings are worth knowing. The interpretive approach holds that organizations are known by directly experiencing them and that individuals' perceptions (though these cannot be measured) are worth knowing. The critical approach holds that hidden power structures are exposed by applying general theories about domination and that the voices of marginalized groups are worth knowing. The postmodern approach also holds that marginalized discourses are worth knowing, but that hidden power relations are exposed by deconstructing, or tracing back, how various discourses have formed in a given organization.

EXERCISES

1. Think of the college or university that you are attending. Then imagine a prospective student asking you, "What is the best way to find out what your school is really like?" Would you advise the prospect to take a survey of current students, or to spend some time living on campus and participating in school activities? What is the reason for your advice? Could you imagine how a combination of both methods could be useful? Explain yourself.

2. We described above how most students go to college to "make more money," taking for granted that higher education is about fitting into the needs of corporations. Can you think of other ways that the corporate world has influenced college students so that you might think in ways that serve corporate interests? Why might these thoughts seem natural to you, so that you do not question them?

3. Which approach to theorizing organizational communication—postpositive, interpretive, critical, or postmodern—makes the most sense to you? Why? Explain your answer.

4.2 Rethinking Communication

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Differentiate among the three models for how communication functions—linear, interactional, and transactional—and the limitations of each model.
2. Differentiate among the seven traditions of communication theory and understand how each approaches the nature of communication and how meaning is exchanged.

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You were introduced in <u>Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication"</u> to the "SMCR" model of communication. For two good reasons, numerous textbooks in communication begin with this longstanding model. First, its components—source, message, channel, receiver—are easy to grasp. In our modern world of phones, computers, networks and mass media, we encounter the basic idea of the SMCR model on a daily basis. And so, second, the model is effective in getting students to think—often for the first time—about "communication" as more than just a reflex action, more than something that just "happens."

In this section we will consider the two questions: *how communication works* and *what communication is.* The SMCR model, for example, suggests communication works by traveling in a straight line from source to receiver. But scholars have largely moved beyond this simple **linear**[25] model and have described communication as an **interactional**[26] or, more recently, a **transactional**[27] process. Below, we will review these three models below of how communication *works.* Yet an even more basic question concerns what communication *is.* The SMCR model belongs to a body of theories that conceive of communication as information processing, an approach that is called (as we will explain below) a "cybernetic" concept of communication. Yet the cybernetic concept is not the only body of communication theories. As Robert Craig described, *seven* distinct traditions of communication theory have emerged.Craig, R. T. (1999). Communication theory as a field. *Communication Theory, 9,* 118-160. Since modern theories of organizational communication are often built on a different concept of communication than a cybernetic one, then later in this section we will review the seven approaches to answering the question: What is communication?

25. A model of communication which holds that a message travels in a straight line from its source, through a channel, and to its receiver.

26. A model of communication which holds that communication travels in a circle as a sender transmits a message and then the receiver responds with feedback; thus both parties become sender/receivers.

27. A model of communication which holds that sending and receiving of messages/feedback occurs simultaneously.

How Communication Works: Three Models

At the most basic level, the three models of how communication works—linear, interactional, and transactional—can be represented by the three graphics in <u>Figure 4.6 "Three Concepts of Communication"</u> below. The linear model originated in the 1940s, the interactional in the 1950s, and the

Figure 4.6   *Three Concepts of Communication*
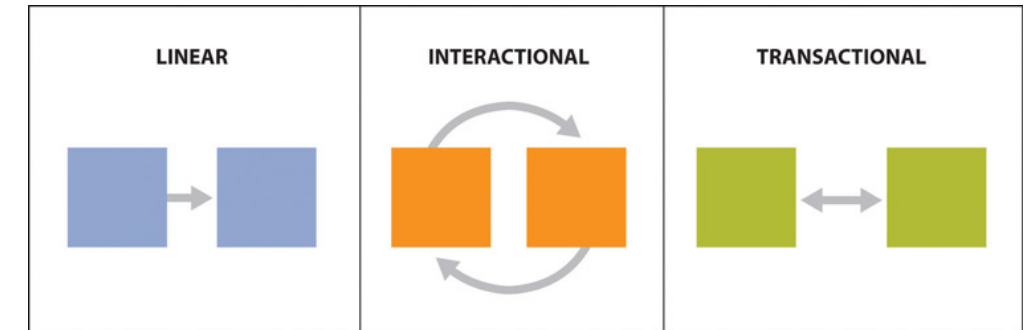
transactional in the 1970s. That the original linear model of communication remains influential is attested by its inclusion in so many introductory textbooks—including this one. But theorists have long noted its limitations: the assumptions that listeners are passive, that only one message is transmitted at a time, that communication has a beginning and an end. In fact, a source could transmit a confusing or nonsensical message, rather than a meaningful one, and the linear model would work just as well; there is no provision for gauging whether a message has been understood by its receivers. Neither is the context of a communication situation taken into account. Nevertheless, the linear model introduces helpful concepts and terms that are the basis for understanding, as we will see later, the interactional and transactional models of communication.

Linear Model

Inspired by postwar research at Bell Laboratories on telephone transmissions, Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver developed the "mathematical model" of human communication shown in <u>Figure 4.7 "Linear Model of Communication: Shannon & Weaver"</u> below.Shannon, C., & Weaver, W. (1949) *The mathematical theory of communication.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949. In their model, successful sending and receiving of a message is a function of the channel's capacity to handle signal degradation caused by static noise on the line. When applied in general to human communication, "noise" can be physical (background noises that make the message harder to hear), physiological (impairments such as hardness of hearing), semantic (difficulties in understanding choices of words), and

psychological (predispositions and prejudices that affect how the message is interpreted). As you can see in <u>Figure 4.7 "Linear Model of Communication: Shannon & Weaver"</u>, communication travels in a straight line.

Figure 4.7   Linear Model of Communication: Shannon & Weaver
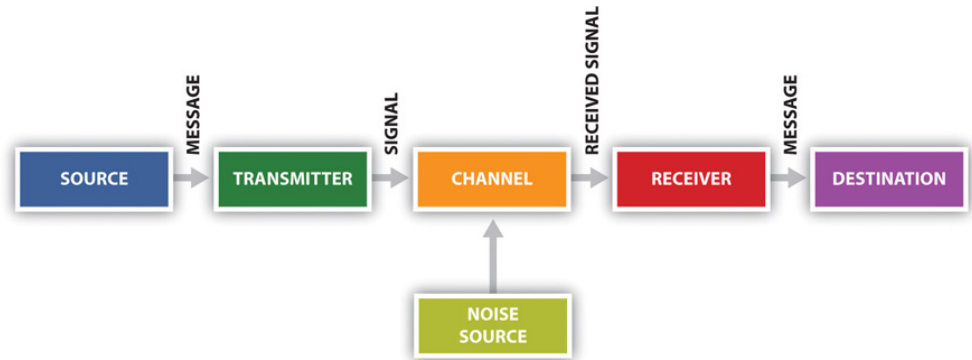
A decade after Shannon and Weaver, David Berlo adapted their concepts into the now-familiar SMCR (source, message, channel, receiver) model.Berlo, D. (1960). *The process of communication.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. This is the model we introduced in <u>Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication"</u> and have reproduced in <u>Figure 4.8 "Linear Model of Communication: Berlo"</u> below. Berlo's adaptation was "tremendously influential" in offering a more flexible and "humanized conception of Claude Shannon's model" that facilitated its application to oral, written, and electronic communication.Rogers, E. M. (2001). The department of communication at Michigan State University as a seed institution for communication study. *Communication Studies, 52*, 234-248; pg. 234. Moreover, the notion of feedback provided a means for gauging reception and understanding of the message. Yet as we will see below in the descriptions of the interactional and transactional models, subsequent theorists have attempted to show how communication is better understood as circular rather than linear, how listeners are also active participants in communication, how multiple messages may be sent simultaneously, and how context and culture impact understanding.

Figure 4.8 *Linear Model of Communication: Berlo*
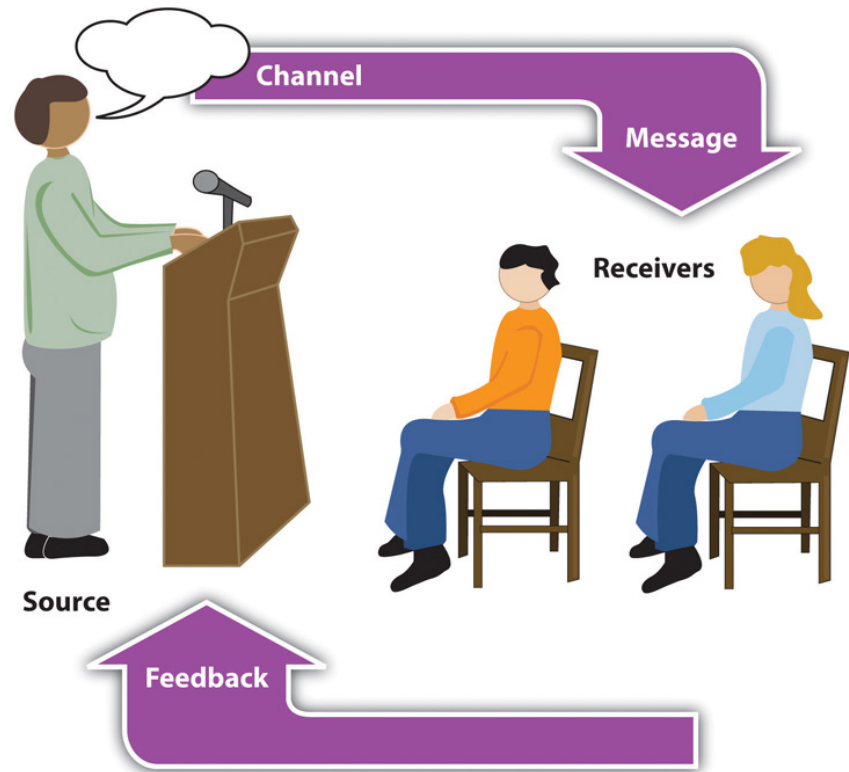
Interactional Model

Only a few years after Shannon and Weaver published their one-way linear model, Wilbur Schramm proposed an alternate model that portrayed communication as a two-way interaction.Schramm, W. (1954). How communication works. In W. Schramm (Ed.), *The process and effects of communication* (pp. 3-26). Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Writing several years before Berlo, he was the first to incorporate feedback—verbal and nonverbal—into a model of communication. The other important innovations in Schramm's interactive model, which we have adapted in Figure 4.9 "Interactional Model of Communication" below, were the additions of the communication context (the specific setting that may affect meaning) and of "fields of experience" (the frames of reference and the cultures that each participant brings to the communication).

Figure 4.9 *Interactional Model of Communication*
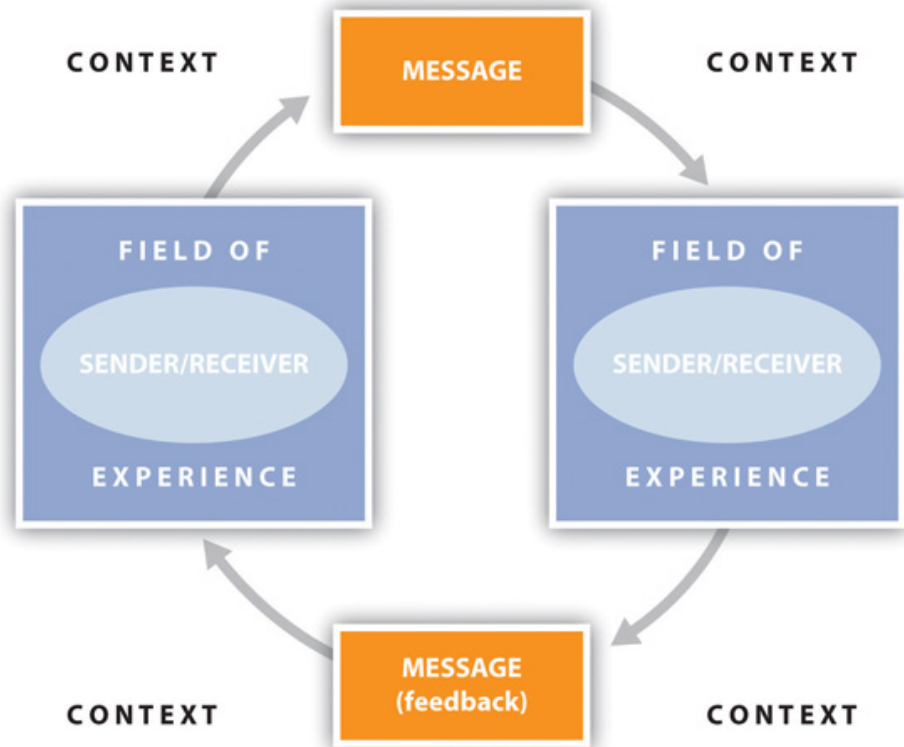
With Schramm's model, communication moves from a linear to a circular process in which participants are both senders and receivers of messages. Yet the model portrays communication like a tennis match: one participant serves up a message and the other participants then makes a return. Each waits, in turn, passively for the other. Thus, communication goes back and forth as one person (on the left of Figure 4.7 "Linear Model of Communication: Shannon & Weaver") initiates a message and waits until the other (on the right) responds. But if you think about times when you have engaged in conversation, you will recognize how the other person is *simultaneously* sending messages—often nonverbally—while you are talking. Unlike a tennis match, you do not wait passively until the "ball is in your court" before acting communicatively. To demonstrate the simultaneity of communication, we move next to a transactional model.

Transactional Model

Perhaps the first model to portray communication as a simultaneous transaction is attributed to Dean Barnlund.Barnlund, D. (1970). A transactional model of communication. In K. K. Sereno & C. D. Mortensen (Eds.), *Foundations of communication theory* (pp. 83-102). New York: Harper. Later theorists have developed

this idea of simultaneity, which is illustrated in <u>Figure 4.10 "Transactional Model for Communication"</u> below. As you can see, messages and feedback are being exchanged at the same time between communicators. And because they are engaged together in the transaction, their fields of experience overlap. Useful concepts such as noise and context can likewise be added to the model.

Figure 4.10   *Transactional Model for Communication*
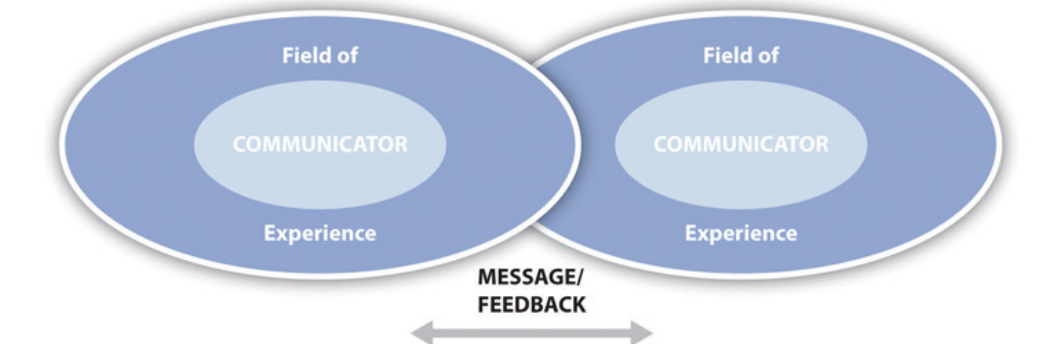
An expanded view of how communication functions can help us to better understand how *individuals* within organizations communicate. But for a firmer grip on modern theories of *organizational* communication we will now go beyond the *message*-centered, functional models described above and take a *meaning*-centered approach.

What Communication Is: Seven Traditions

You have probably heard the proverbial question: If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear, does it make a sound? Similarly, we might ask: If you send a message that the receiver does not understand, has communication taken place? This question introduces the idea of *meaning* into the equation. Let us borrow from the SMCR model one more time to explore the place of meaning in communication.

Some theorists believe (as you probably do) that the meaning of a message lies in the sender. You think up a message and transmit it, and then the receiver must decode what you mean. But other theorists believe the meaning of a message is something that the sender and receiver construct together as they interact through their communication. Still other theorists believe that meaning resides in the channel—perhaps in the signs and symbols that, over time, humans invest with implied meanings, or perhaps in the larger structures of history and culture that condition how we perceive the world. As noted at the start of this section, Craig has identified seven traditions—which are summarized in <u>Table 4.5 "Seven Traditions of Communication Theory"</u> below—in communication theory.Craig, op. cit. Each

wrestles with the question of how people derive meaning from a communication. And if we grant that communication only takes place when meaning is exchanged, then the issue of how people derive meaning is another way of putting the question: What *is* communication?

A helpful way of grasping the seven theoretical traditions is to pose a single communication scenario and then consider it from each of the seven approaches. For our purposes, we will pick a common scenario from organizational life—namely, the annual employee recognition luncheon in which awards are given to those who reach five or ten or fifteen years of service, and so on, up until retirement. During this festive event a catered lunch is served in a large room, speeches are made by key executives, long-serving employees come forward as their names are called and receive a certificate or plaque, and the luncheon concludes on a light note as employees organize a mock ceremony to give out humorous awards. For our overview of the seven traditions, let us begin with the tradition to which you have already been introduced—the cybernetic tradtion—and see how it might explain our communication scenario.

Table 4.5 Seven Traditions of Communication Theory

Theoretical Tradition	Communication theorized as...
Cybernetic	information processing
Phenomenological	experience of otherness
Sociopsychological	expression, interaction, influence
Sociocultural	(re)production of social order
Semiotic	intersubjective mediation by signs
Critical	discursive reflection
Rhetorical	practical art of discourse

Cybernetic Tradition

Theorists in the **cybernetic**[28] tradition start with the assumption that an organization is a system comprised of many interdependent parts. The annual employee recognition luncheon is a particularly good occasion to see all those parts in action:

28. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as information processing.

- The top executives who make speeches and set policies for giving awards;

- The managers who implement the policies;
- The human resources department that generated the list of employees eligible for awards and organized the luncheon;
- The corporate communications department that will send out a press release after the event;
- The accounting department that processed purchase orders and payments to the caterer;
- The information technology department that set up the audiovisual equipment for the awards ceremony;
- The maintenance department that prepared the room and will clean up afterward; and finally,
- The employees who attended the luncheon, received awards, and put on the humorous entertainment.

All of these parts depend on each other—and must communicate together—to make the annual employee recognition luncheon happen. In the cybernetic tradition, then, communication is theorized as *information processing.* But cybernetic theorists do not stop at charting information pathways. They are also interested in how a system continually makes adjustments needed to sustain itself. Indeed, the word "cybernetics" was coined from the Greek word for "steersman" by MIT scientist Norbert Wiener.Wiener, N. (1954). *The human use of human beings: Cybernetics in society* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. In devising a new antiaircraft firing system during World War II, he addressed a major problem: though existing systems could feed back information on firing trajectories, targets would pass by before human operators could make adjustments. He saw that the new system must regulate itself by acting on its own feedback, a principle Wiener then extended to human societies. Communication theorists picked up on this idea by casting the communication process as a self-regulating system in which people act on feedback, adjust their messages, gradually eliminate distortions, and arrive at intended meanings.

Adjustments are made via *feedback loops* which connect the various parts of the system into *networks.* Our example of the employee awards luncheon illustrates several of these networks in play. Top executives, who want to annually honor loyal employees, must get feedback from the human resources department for a list of who is eligible. To organize the event, the human resources department must get feedback from the maintenance department on the room setup, the IT department on audiovisual equipment, and the accounting department on the budget for the caterer. To publicize the event, the corporate communication department must get feedback from top executives on the desired tone or theme of the press release. Moreover, the system cannot survive just by feeding on itself. Inputs and resources are gathered from the surrounding environment—for example, by soliciting proposals from local caterers, and by talking to local media about possible news and

feature story angles. Through all these avenues of organizational communication, the system processes the information it needs to keep on going.

Phenomenological Tradition

Imagine yourself as a new employee who is attending the annual recognition luncheon for the first time. As you watch the first group of honorees go forward and accept their five-year service certificates, you picture yourself in their shoes and ponder, "Is this company a place I want to be in five years? Or is it a stepping stone?" Then you see the ten-year honorees and think, "Wow, ten years! If I'm still here in ten years, that means I'm committed long-term." Also, you notice that ten-year employees tend to be people who have better job titles and higher pay, so that longevity has its rewards. Finally, you see plaques handed out to retirees and say to yourself, "I can't even relate! What will my career have been like when I look back on it, someday? What do I want to be known for?" In the days after the luncheon, you run into some five- and ten-year honorees you know, tactfully engage them in conversation, and try to feel out their answers to the question, "Is it worth it to stay long enough to earn a service award?"

According to the **phenomenological**[29] tradition of communication theory, you derive meaning by directly experiencing a particular phenomenon. At the luncheon you are confronted with the phenomenon of employee loyalty and longevity, and based on this experience you weigh your perceptions. Thus, you come to know your organizational world by directly and consciously engaging in it, pondering its meaning for you, interpreting that meaning through language to define and express it, and then continually reconstructing the interpretation in light of new experiences. *Dialogue* is another important concept in the phenomenological tradition. The annual luncheon was a type of dialogue as you listened to the various speeches and presentations. Then after the event, you dialogued one-on-one with coworkers who had been honored for their long service. Through these dialogues you open yourself to the experiences of others and can integrate this into your own experience.

Sociopsychological Tradition

In Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication" you were introduced to a definition of human communication as a "process whereby one individual (or group of individuals) attempts to stimulate meaning in the mind of another individual (or group of individuals) through intentional use of verbal, nonverbal, and/or mediated messages." We offered this definition in the opening chapter because it is a good place start. For one, the definition is held by many communication theorists. For another, it accords with what most laypeople (probably including you) believe about communication and about personhood. You

29. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as dialogue and the experience of otherness.

likely see yourself as a distinct individual; your mind is your own. This is the basic assumption of **sociopsychological**[30] theories about communication, that people control their own intentions. Thus, as noted above, communication may seen as one person's *intention* to impact another person's *intention*. Such a notion is problematic, however, for many communication theorists. Where sociopsychological theorists see individuality as an objective fact, postmodern theorists hold that people's intentions are subjectively conditioned by their histories and societies. And where sociopsychological theorists believe that the meaning of a communication resides in the *individual*, sociocultural theorists (as will review below) believe that meaning arises from the *interaction.*

But for now, let us follow the sociopsychological tradition and see how it might explain the annual employee recognition luncheon. First, consider the speeches given by top executives to celebrate company values and, by implication, the loyalty these values merit from employees. One theory suggests that, psychologically, you are more likely to be persuaded if sufficiently motivated to carefully consider the arguments, and less likely if the speakers utter cliches you've heard before.Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). *Communication and persuasion: Central and peripheral routes to attitude change.* New York: Springer-Verlag. Another theory claims that opinions are best understood not as a single point on a line, but as a continuum between acceptable and unacceptable; the more that the execs pitch their arguments on company loyalty toward the edge of this continuum, the more likely they can push the boundaries of what you will accept.Sherif, M., Sherif, C., & Nebergall, R. (1965). *Attitude and attitude change: The socialjudgement-involvement approach.* Philadelphia: Saunders. Still another leading theory proposes that if the speakers can make you feel an inner conflict between self-interest and group loyalties, you will be psychologically driven to resolve the conflict rather than feel torn.Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Then there are the conversations you had with longer-tenured coworkers. One theory of interpersonal communication holds that people's personalities are structured like the layers of an onion; to elicit your coworkers' inner feelings about staying long-term with the company, you had to go beyond mere chit-chat about sports and the weather, and instead penetrate into their goals, convictions, fears, fantasies and, at the deepest level, their self-concepts.Altman, I., & Taylor, D. A. (1973). *Social penetration: The development of interpersonal relationships.* New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. Another theory claims that people experience an ongoing psychological tension between their need for being connected and need for feeling unique, and between their need for being open and need for keeping some things to themselves.Baxter, L. A., & Montgomery, B. M. (1998). A guide to dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships. In B. M. Montgomery & L. A. Baxter (Eds.), *Dialectical approaches to studying personal relationships* (pp. 1–15). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. In order to elicit coworkers' true feelings about their service

30. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communicaiton as expression as expression, interaction, and influence rooted in human psychological processes.

with the company—and to expose your own concerns—you must both navigate these tensions.

The main lesson here is that a sociopsychological view locates the meaning of communication within the mind of each individual. The company executives acted with the *intention* of promoting employee loyalty in the hope of influencing your *intention*. And when you acted on your *intention* to elicit information from long-serving coworkers, they were prompted by their own *intention* to be more, or to be less, open toward your questions. Human communicative behaviors, then, are seen as seen as rooted in human psychologies. So, if communication is defined as a process whereby one person intends to stimulate meaning in the mind of another, then the task of the researcher is to discover what stimuli elicit what responses.

Sociocultural Tradition

For the sociopsychological theorist, the meaning of a communication resides in each individual. But for the **sociocultural**[31] theorist, the meaning of a communication arises from *interaction* as people engage in discourse and socially construct what they jointly perceive to be real. George Herbert Mead, a founder of the sociocultural tradition, noted more than a century ago that—in contrast to the prevailing view that each individual is autonomous—people only develop a sense of self by being around other people. Further, since speech is the means by which people interact, then people develop their sense of self through communication. Indeed, without language—which arose because humans exist in society—there would be no thought.Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Another theorist in the sociocultural tradition, Erving Goffman, likened social interaction to a drama. Imagine yourself in an ordinary conversation and (being honest) think how you take a role (anything from clown to peacemaker) and "play to the audience" by communicating in ways that (you believe) will make you socially acceptable.Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday; Goffman, E. (1971). *Relations in public*. New York: Basic. W. Barnett Pearce and Vernon Cronen have described conversational interaction as a "coordinated management of meaning" in which people not only co-construct a social world but are, in turn, shaped by that world.Pearce, W. B., & Cronen, V. (1980). *Communication, action, and meaning*. New York: Praeger.

31. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as the production and reproduction of a social order, such as an organizational culture.

Given these assumptions, theorists in the sociocultural tradition look at the ways communication is used by people in interactions to produce—and then reproduce—stable patterns of social order. Sociocultural theorists of organizational communication, then, are interested in how organizational cultures arise as their members communicate with one another. And they would take a keen interest in the annual employee awards luncheon. First, there is the ritual aspect of the event as people on the platform speak structured sequences of words (an employee's

name is called, he or she comes forward, and the certificate is given with praise, smiles, and handshakes) that ultimately pay homage to the sacred object of the company. Second, the awards ceremony constitutes a story which fosters a "loyalty myth." As the myth is enacted, the audience learns how they too are expected to fit into the story. Then, third, the awards ceremony is a "social drama" in which awardees gain honor by their perseverance, thus showing the audience how they can likewise win approval and continue to belong.

Organizational cultures are maintained not only through public events but also in natural conversation as employees spontaneously use "insider" talk. Such talk begins to form patterns that reproduce the values and assumptions of an organization culture.Philipsen, G. (1997). A theory of speech codes. In G. Philipsen and T. L. Albrecht (Eds.), *Developing communication theories* (pp. 119–156). Albany: State University of New York Press. Over time, the patterns seem so natural that employees use the talk without thinking and take the underlying cultural assumptions for granted. For example, if people address each other with formal titles—or, alternately, if they use first names—this talk reproduces assumptions about how organization members should relate to one another. Sociocultural researchers often look for words and phrases that keep recurring in significant ways. So perhaps the employee awards luncheon featured talk about the company as a "family" (a metaphor), or praised award recipients for being "customer-oriented" (a stock phrase), or continually referred to "aggressive" growth, "aggressive" marketing, an "aggressive" strategy, and so forth (a buzzword). Chances are that, when you later spoke one-on-one with award recipients, their use of such insider language in spontaneous conversation reflected their integration into the organizational culture.

Semiotic Tradition

The old saying, "Where there's smoke, there's fire," captures the essence of the **semiotic**[32] tradition in communication theory. Semiotics is the stidy of *signs*—and a classic example, of course, is how the presence smoke is the sign of a fire. Charles Saunders Peirce, a founding theorist of semiotics, would have called smoke an *index* or a trace that points to another object.Peirce, C. S. (1958). *Charles S. Peirce: Selected writings* (P. P. Weiner, Ed.). New York: Dover. Thus, thunder is the sign of an approaching storm, a bullet hole the sign of a shooting, a footprint the sign of a prey. Other signs are *icons* or abstract representations of another object—for example, the stylized image of a pedestrian on a traffic crossing light. Yet other signs are *symbols* that have a purely arbitary relationship to another object. Again, to use traffic signs as an example, think of how a red octagon means "stop" and a yellow inverted triangle means "yield."

32. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as intersubjective mediation by signs, or the ways a sign (including a word) or symbol of a thing mediates the different thoughts that people have about the thing and thus permit meaning to be shared.

The most common symbols of all, of course, are words. Consider: the word "dog" has no inherent relation to the actual animal. Instead, as C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards famously pointed out, the word "dog" may connote a friendly pet to one person and a dangerous beast to another. To explain how words work, they proposed a *triangle of meaning.*Ogden, C. K., & Richards, I. A. (1923). *The meaning of meaning.* London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner. They theorized that meaning emerges from the interplay between a referent (in our example, a dog), a symbol (the word "dog"), and the reference (what a person thinks when he or she hears the word). As such, the meaning of "dog," whether a cute pet or dangerous animal, resides not in the word but, rather, in the mind of the person. In this way, as Robert Craig observed, semiotic theorists regard communication as a process of "intersubjective mediation by signs."Craig, op. cit. In other words, the meaning of a thing is subjective for each person. Thus, as we communicate about that thing, there is an encounter between the different meanings we each carry. The encounter is mediated by a sign—whether the sign is a word or an image—and that sign makes it possible for some meaning, at least, to be shared between communicators.

The annual employee recognition luncheon is replete with signs and symbols. In addition to the many words that are used, shared meaning is created by the symbol of the award certificates and plaques, by the printed program with elegant cursive script, by the cake and the balloons with congratulatory messages, by the round tables that were set up rather than the room's usual conference seating, by the festive centerpieces on the tables, by the company posters and slogans posted on the walls, by the formal business attire of the executives who presented the awards, and by the large company logo that is hung on the podium and printed on items ranging from table napkins to tee shirts. All of these symbols enable important meanings—about company values, about employee loyalty, about labor-management relations—to be communicated and shared by dozens of people, even though each brings his or her own subjective thoughts to the event.

Finally, the company itself becomes a symbol as it takes on a distinctive corporate image. Roland Barthes equated this kind of "second-order" symbol to mythmaking and gave the French national flag as an example.Barthes, R. (1972). *Mythologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). New York: Hill and Wang. In the same way, Apple Corporation has come to symbolize high-tech innovation, a corporate image that instills its employees with a strong sense of organizational identity. By contrast, government agencies are often seen as bureaucratic and wasteful so that administrators must work hard to imbue their employees with a countervailing image of public service. The same semiotic process is at work as the college or university you attend strives to symbolize learning (if teaching is emphasized), or discovery (if research is emphasized), or opportunity (if career training is emphasized), or advancement (if nontraditional student are emphasized).

Critical Tradition

After witnessing or hearing about the employee awards luncheon, a **critical**[33] theorist would likely ask who decided that employee loyalty would be the only value recognized and the only value which deserved a special annual celebration. The decision, of course, was made by the dominant interests who hold power in the organization. The luncheon *reifies* their interests (by establishing loyalty to the company as a taken-for-granted part of organizational life) and *universalizes* their interests (by equating management interests with "company interests" so that other interpretations seem irrational). Even though employees are expected to be loyal in order to gain approval, the company has no corresponding obligation of loyalty to the employees and may lay them off as needed. Not only is this proposition tacitly accepted—but to suggest that a second luncheon be held, to make a public accounting of the company's loyalty to its workers, would seem irrational. So would the suggestion that workers, rather than the human resources director, should plan the annual luncheon and decide what values should be recognized and what awards given. Yes, the employees are permitted by the leadership to plan a humorous "awards" segment—but that is only a parody, a way to control workers by giving them a sense of participation without any real substance.

Then, too, a critical theorist would point out how the awards luncheon, by celebrating only those employees who have served long term, actually silences the voices of traditionally marginalized workers. Historically underrepresented groups—women, persons of color, persons with disabilities, the working poor—have often lacked the access to acquire skills which would make them promotable in the corporate world. Because they are disproportionately placed in low-wage jobs, they are the first to be laid off or shunted into temporary work. Yet they do work that the company needs. Why is there no event to celebrate their contributions? Instead, the emphasis on longevity only marginalizes them further.

This all happens because the system follows an ideology that, in ways made to seem natural and inevitable, structures power relations to favor some at the expense of others. Stanley Deetz has described "managerialism" as an ideology that systematically distorts communication to produce a "discursive closure" that renders alternative views difficult to express or even think.Deetz, 1992, op. cit. The task of critical scholars is to "denaturalize" unjust ideologies and structures that are taken for granted, exposing them to resistance and discussion, and thereby reopening choices and possibilities the system had foreclosed. Thus, critical scholarship infuses research with action.

33. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as discursive reflection, or reflection on the ways that discourses create dominant and marginalized voices.

Rhetorical

For the last of the seven traditions in communication theory, we come to the oldest. More than 2,300 years ago Aristotle wrote *The Rhetoric* and gave us, as many believe, the world's first systematic treatment of human psychology.For example, Heidegger, M. (1962). *Being and Time* (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans.). San Francisco: Harper and Row; pg. 178. He lived in Athens, one of the democratic city-states of ancient Greece where citizens publicly stated their cases in the assemblies and courts. Alarmed that some used oratory for personal gain rather than public good, Aristotle examined how speakers persuaded audiences and devised a theory and method of reasoned public address.Aristotle (2006). *On rhetoric: A theory of civic discourse* (2nd ed.) (G. A. Kennedy, Trans.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Today the phrase, "That's just rhetoric," connotes hollow or self-serving words. Aristotle had the same concern about public oratory. Thus **rhetorical**[34] theory, from classical times to the present, has concerned itself with the problem of how things get done. In other words, rhetorical theorists—including those who study organizational rhetoric—examine the processes by which speaker (or *rhetor*) and listeners move toward each other and find common grounds to go forward.

Studies of organizational rhetoric distinguish between external rhetoric aimed at stakeholders outside the organization and internal rhetoric aimed at employees. Mary Hoffman and Debra Ford classified four types of external rhetoric: to create and maintain an organization's public identity, to manage issues, to manage risks, and to manage crises. Internal rhetoric, on the other hand, aims to align employees with organizational values and imperatives so they are motivated to do their jobs.Hoffman, M. F., & Ford, D. J. (2009). *Organization rhetoric: Situations and strategies.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Thus, the rhetoric of the annual employee recognition luncheon is internal, an attempt by management to find common ground with employees and persuade them to adopt company values. After the luncheon, the company will engage in external rhetoric as the corporate communications office issues a press release that, when carried by local media, will hopefully reinforce the company's image as a great workplace that inspires employee loyalty.

Rhetorical theory offers many avenues for analyzing the speeches heard at the awards luncheon. The classical theory of Aristotle, for example, holds that speakers must *invent* a persuasive argument, effectively *arrange* its points, word it an appropriate *style*, and *deliver* it in a suitable manner, while drawing on a *memory* of phrases, stories, and ideas to extemporaneously flesh out the argument for a given occasion or audience. Today we call this method the five canons of rhetoric. Yet to be compelling, arguments must be grounded in the shared *topoi* or mental topology of rhetor and audience. Thus, if everyone agrees that profit is good for both management and labor, then speeches at the awards luncheon can extol honorees for their contributions to the bottom line. But if the organization is nonprofit—like

34. A scholarly tradition that theorizes communication as the practical art of discourse and how persuasion is accomplished.

the college or university you attend—then arguments based on profitmaking would fall flat. Aristotle also theorized that artful rhetors can employ three types of proofs: logic (*logos*), emotion (*pathos*), and speaker credibility (*ethos*). Executives who spoke at the luncheon likely tried all three by stating how loyal employees are rewarded (logic), how such employees' dedication is admirable (emotion), and how management can be trusted and believed (speaker credibility).

In recent decades, scholarly interest in rhetorical theory has grown and proposals for a "new rhetoric" have gained wide acceptance. Kenneth Burke held that persuasion cannot occur without *identification*; the task of the rhetor is "consubstantiation," or a sharing of substances, with the audience.Burke, K. (1950). *A rhetoric of motives*. New York: Prentice-Hall. (Thus, company leaders could persuade employees to be loyal only if the audience felt that executives could understand and sympathize with their concerns.) Chaim Perelman contended that persuasion cannot occur without *presence*; the rhetor must highlight "elements on which the speaker wishes to center attention in order that they may occupy the foreground of the hearer's consciousness . . . against the undifferentiated mass of available elements of agreement."Perelman, C., & Olbrechts-Tyteca, L. (1969). *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press; pg. 142. (Thus, management hopes its appeal for loyalty is enhanced by staging a special yearly event.) Walter Fisher contrasted a *rational-world paradigm* of persuasion through logic with a *narrative paradigm* in which audiences are persuaded by stories that ring true with their lived experiences and the "good reasons" validated by their communities.Fisher, W. (1987). *Human communication as narration: Toward a philosophy of reason, value, and action*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press. (Thus, the awards luncheon will foster loyalty only if executives can tell a story that resonates with the lives of employees.) And contemporary rhetorical scholars are recognizing the *materiality* of rhetoric as it "not only helps to produce judgments about specific issues, it also helps to produce or constitute a social world."Jasinksi, J. (2001). *Sourcebook on rhetoric: Key concepts in contemporary rhetorical studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2001; pg. 192. (Thus, the rhetoric of the awards luncheon aims not only to persuade but, leaders hope, produce an organizational culture whose logics favor employee loyalty.)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Three models for how communication functions have been proposed: linear, interactional, and transactional. The linear model holds that a message travels in a straight line from its source, through a channel, and to its receiver. The interactional model holds that communication travels in a circle as a sender transmits a message and then the receiver responds with feedback; thus both parties become sender/receivers. The transactional model holds that sending and receiving occur simultaneously.
- Seven traditions in communication theory have been identified by Robert Craig. The cybernetic tradition theorizes communication as information processing. The phenomenological tradition theorizes communication as dialogue and the experience of otherness. The sociopsychological tradition theorizes communication as expression, interaction, and influence rooted in human psychological processes. The sociocultural tradition theorizes communication as the production and reproduction of a social order, such as an organizational culture. The semiotic tradition theorizes communication as intersubjective mediation by signs, or the ways that a sign (including a word) or symbol of a thing mediates the different thoughts that people have about the thing and thus permit meaning to be shared. The critical tradition theorizes communication as discursive reflection, or reflection on the ways that discourses create dominant and marginalized voices. The rhetorical tradition theorizes communication as the practical art of discourse and how persuasion is accomplished.

EXERCISES

1. Your class in Organizational Communication is itself a type of organization. Think about the communication that takes place in your class, whether the class is face-to-face or online. Would you say that communication between the students and the instructor is best explained as a linear, interactional, or transactional process? Explain your answer.

2. In the subsection above entitled "What Communication Is: Seven Traditions," we imagined how the annual employee awards luncheon could be explained, in turn, by each of the seven traditions. Now on your own, think of another communication scenario that occurs in organizations (perhaps in your college or university, such freshman orientation or the annual commencement ceremony) and then explain your scenario by each of the seven traditions.

4.3 Representative Modern Theories

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the basic precepts of systems theory and Karl Weick's theory of organizing and sensemaking.
2. Understand the basic precepts of Giddens's structuration theory and its applications made by Poole and McPhee to organizations.
3. Understand how, according to feminist theory, organizations are gendered and a primary site for configuration of gender roles.

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To this point, we have explored *approaches* to theorizing organizational communication rather than specific *theories*. Yet we believe that focusing first on approaches is important. To speak of "interpretive organizational theory," or "critical organization theory," or "postmodern organization theory" is not to speak of any one single theory. Rather, each is—along with the postpositive perspective—a general approach to the looking at the problem of organizational communication. Each approach is informed by its own ontology (belief about the how things exist), epistemology (belief about how things can be known), and axiology (belief about what is worth knowing). Then, out of their respective philosophical commitments of each approach emerge specific theories. In the remainder of this section we will describe important modern theories of organizational communication that have emerged from the different approaches. And by first grasping the underlying approaches and how each looks at the problem in a different way, we believe you will be better equipped to understand specific theories and "where they're coming from."

Before proceeding, though, we offer one last thought to help put matters into perspective. You have likely heard the popular catchphrase "paradigm shift." It was coined half a century ago by Thomas Kuhn.Kuhn, T. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. A historian and philosopher of science, he noted that theories which scientists generally agreed were settled could suddenly be overturned. These "scientific revolutions" were not always due to a new discovery, but to a new way of looking at the problem. The old paradigm closed off alternative approaches but, over time, some scientists became dissatisfied until momentum built for a paradigm shift. Kuhn's thesis has also been applied to the social sciences—and the domain of organizational studies provides an excellent case in point. What is now called the postpositive approach dominated the field into the 1970s, until some organizational communication researchers became interested in

the concept of organizational culture and felt constrained by the postpositive paradigm. New ways of looking at the problem were needed.

A generation or two later, organizational communication research has spawned *four* paradigms that are widely recognized by scholars. None can lay claim to being "the" dominant paradigm. Neither is the postpositive approach obsolete; if anything, it informs more research projects and more researchers than the other approaches, and retains wide influence. This is especially so since postpositive research aims at prediction, which is valued by the corporate world as a key to improved management practices. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that organizational communication research has split into four communities, each with its own paradigm. If so, we believe this is unfortunate. The specific theories described in this section illustrate the innovative work being done, on important problems of contemporary organizational life, through different approaches to organizational communication—and through blending aspects of those approaches. This should persuade us that each approach has something to contribute. Having multiple paradigms in play, as we do today, presents the field with a unique opportunity.

Postpositive Approach: Systems Theory

Systems theory[35] offers a good illustration of how organizational communication research from a postpositive perspective has continued to develop and even incorporate insights from other approaches. The story of systems theory begins in the mid 1950s when, as we saw in <u>Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"</u>, the heyday of classical management theory had passed and the human resources approach was ascendant. In 1956 the Canadian biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy first published his "general system theory" which proposed that traits found in biological systems could be applied to any system.Von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications.* New York: Braziller. A decade later, the notion of applying the theory to organizations was popularized in an influential book by Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: Wiley. The old metaphor of the organization as a machine was replaced by the metaphor of a biological organism. As a result, the conception of the organization as a closed system was replaced by that of an **open system**[36]. Where a machine operates on its own, a biological organism can only survive by interacting with and gathering inputs from its surrounding environment. Thus, compared to the input-output of a machine, the operations of a biological organism involve input-throughput-output (a concept we encountered in <u>Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication"</u>; see Figure 1.1).

Through systems theory, other princples from biology have been applied to organizations. Like an organism, an organization is not an undifferentiated

35. A theory based on the metaphor of the organization as a biological organism, so that the organization is seen as an open system that interacts with its environment in order to acquire the resources it needs to survive and grow.

36. A system that is open to its surrounding environment, as opposed to a closed system that is not. A closed system is only concerned with input and output, whereas an open system encompasses input, throughput, and output.

hodgepodge of parts but a system with a **hierarchical ordering**[37]. Further, these ordered parts are **interdependent**[38] since they rely on one another to properly function. Being interdependent, the system enjoys the property of **holism**[39] or of being greater than the sum of its parts. But since the parts of the system must work together, **feedback**[40] is required both to correct deviations and spread information that fosters growth. In addition to communication within the system, the organism requires **exchange**[41] with its environment. Unless the system exchanges outputs in order to acquire the inputs it needs to function, then the organization will feed on itself and eventually die. But because the system is open and its boundaries are **permeable**[42], the organization benefits from **negative entropy**[43]—that is, because needed resources can pass freely into the system, it can grow. Yet to handle inputs from the environment, the system needs the **requisite variety**[44] to do so. In other words, the system's complexity must be a match for the complexity of its inputs. If it does then the system will possess the trait of **equifinality**[45], which means the organization has multiple means to achieve a given goal and need not depend on only one option.

Perhaps the most influential single theory to emerge from the systems approach was proposed in the 1960s by Karl Weick and refined by him in the next three decades.Weick, K. (1969). *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley; Weick, K. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage. The theory begins with the observation that an organization's environment includes information as well as material resources. Since the late twentieth century, the information environment has grown increasingly complex. Many communication situations cannot be handled by routines and rules. Moreover, the organization and its members both shape, and are shaped by, the information environment in which they operate—a principle Weick borrowed from the interpretive approach. Because all these factors introduce what he called "equivocality," the goal of organizational communication is **equivocality reduction**[46]. To achieve the requisite variety needed to meet the challenges of a complex information environment, organization members' natural response is the *enactment* of their own internal informational culture—again, a notion taken from the interpretive approach, and yet also an aspect of the interdependency predicted by systems theory. Next, Weick proposed a concept drawn from Darwin's theory of evolution and natural selection. Though organization members have enacted an information environment, they each bring different interpretations of what that environment means. Thus, a part of the organizing process is *selection* of the best interpretations and then their *retention* to guide future enactments and selections. This collective process of **enactment, selection, and retention**[47] is, in Weick's model, called **retrospective sensemaking**[48]. Organization members muddle through complexities, perceive over time what works, and collectively reduce equivocality and make sense of their workplace. Thus, Weick has constructed a theory of organizing that is rooted in systems theory and follows a pospositive research agenda of observing and

37. The notion is system theory which states that an organization is not a mass of undifferentiated parts, but that the parts are ordered in some way.

38. The notion in systems theory that the parts of the system depend on one another in order to properly function.

39. The notion in systems theory that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

40. The name given in systems theory to internal communication that corrects deviation and spread information to help parts function better.

41. The name given in systems theory to external communication that, in exchange for outputs, acquires the inputs or resources the organization needs to grow.

42. The notion in systems theory which states that the boundaries of an organization are permeable so that exchanges can occur with the surrounding environment.

43. If an organization acquires no resources from the surrounding environment then it will feed on and eventually exhaust itself; this is called entropy. But a healthy organization that interacts with its environment can acquire resources and thus grow or experience negative entropy.

44. The notion in systems theory which states that an organization must a level of variety that is sufficient to deal with the level of complexity in its environment.

45. The ability of an organization to achieve a given goal in more than one way.

46. Because modern organizations are confronted by an increasingly complex information environment then, according to Weick's theory, they seek to reduce the amount of equivocality (uncertainty) they experience.

47. In Weick's theory, organizations respond to equivocality in their environments by enacting their own information system, selecting their best responses for reducing equivocality, and retaining them to guide future responses.

48. Name given in Weick's theory to the process of enactment, selection, and retention by which organization members make sense of their environment.

49. A theory proposed by Giddens to answer the question: Do people have free will or are they determined by their environments? He theorized that structure and agency are not a dualism but a duality. That is, people's actions produce structure but, by acting within a structure, they also perpetuate or reproduce it.

50. In structuration theory, a system is comprised not of parts (such as an organizaation's various departments) but of human practices.

51. In structuration theory, patterns of activity which have meaning for participants.

52. In structuration theory, the interrelationships between human practices.

measuring aggregate behaviors. And yet his theory usefully draws on interpretive principles about the social constructedness of collective environments.

Interpretive Approach: Structuration Theory

Weick's theory of organizing blends interpetive perspectives into a systems theory. But a key systems concept—that the parts of a system are interdependent—is given a new, interpretive twist through **structuration theory**[49] and its applications to organizational life. In traditional systems theories about organizations, the parts of the system are the various departments which have been hierarchically ordered to comprise an organization. But in structuration theory, the **system**[50] is a system of **human practices**[51], where practices are understood as patterns of activity which have meaning for participants. Thus, the organizational system is not the operations department, the marketing department, the accounting department, and so on. Rather, the organizational system is comprised of patterns of practices—from the way that sick leave is handled, to the way that purchase orders are processed, to the way that meetings are conducted. In structuration theory, then, "structure" is not used in the conventional sense of a hierarchy. Rather, **structure**[52] refers to the interrelationships between practices.

By basing notions of system and structure on practices, and defining practices as meaningful patterns, we can see how structuration theory reflects the interpretive focus on the social constructedness of human groupings. This move sprang from, as Marshall Scott Poole and Robert McPhee have related, the concerns of scholars in the 1960s who felt that the sociopsychological emphasis in communication studies did not adequately allow for communal effects. "[T]he properties of systems were most often cast as constraints on behavior that acted from outside the individuals involved," such that individuals were not seen as agents involved in constructing those systems.Poole, M. S., & McPhee, R. D. (2005). Structuration theory. In S. May & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 171–195). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 171. Then in the late 1970s and 80s, communication scholars discovered the work of British theorist Anthony Giddens.Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Giddens, A. (1984). *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge, MA: Polity. His theory of structuration resolved the structure-versus-agency debate with an innovative move. Giddens proposed that structure and agency are not "either/or" but are "both/and," or as he put it, not a dualism but a duality. In other words, people create a structure through their actions—but they also perpetuate, or **reproduce**[53], the structure by acting within it. As Giddens explained, structure is both "a medium and an outcome" of social action. Structure not only constrains action but also enables it, even as action produces and reproduces the structure—and thus, we have the process of *structuration* which gives the theory its

name. Individuals act within the structure's enablements and constraints by drawing on shared **rules**[54] to guide their actions, as well as *resources* (whether material or nonmaterial) they can employ to take action. And as the process of structuration goes forward, a system of practices evolves which guides *signification* (how things are interpreted), *legitimation* (what is deemed moral and should be done), and *domination* (how power is distributed to get those things done). Nevertheless, people are mostly unaware that their actions are grounded in, and impact upon, larger structurational process because their actions and consequences are separated in space and time.

Poole and McPhee outlined how structuration theory might be generally applied to communication studies and then, in the early 1980s, began exploring its applications to organizational communication.McPhee & Poole (1980). *A theory of structuration: The perspective of Anthony Giddens and its relevance for contemporary communication research.* Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association annual convention, New York. First, they suggested that structuration can explain the formation of an organization's climate (a concept discussed in Chapter 6 "Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization") or its "collective attitude, continually produced and reproduced by members' interactions."Poole & McPhee (1983). A structurational analysis of organizational climate. In L. L. Putnam & M. Pacanowski (Eds.), *Communication and organizations: An interpretive approach* (pp. 195–220). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; pg. 213. Climate emerges from a *concept pool* of shared terms and phrases that members use to describe the organization, culminating in a *kernel climate* as members adopt a commonly shared abstraction to capture their basic understandings of the organization, and then progressing into *particular climates* that guide members' attitudes and actions in specific situations.McPhee, R. D. (1985). Formal structure and organizational communication. In R. D. McPhee & P. Tompkins (Eds.), *Organizational communication: Traditional themes and new directions* (pp. 149–177). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Further developments in organizational structuration theory have asserted that organizational communication occurs at three *centers of structuration*: conception, implementation, and reception.McPhee, R. D. (1989). Organizational communication: A structurational exemplar. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B. J. O'Keefe & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication: Paradigm exemplars, Vol. 2* (pp. 199–212). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; McPhee, R. D., & Zaug, P. (2000). The communicative constitution of organizations: A framework for explanation. *Electronic Journal of Communication, 10*, 1–16. Though much overlap and conflict can occur, top management typically dominates conceptual communication, middle management oversees implementation, and employees receive and enact what has been decided. These communications may be classed into four *flows* that are respectively concerned with membership negotiation (who can be a member), activity coordination (what members do), self-structuring (how activities are

53. In struction theory, this refers to way that people within a system perpetuate its structure by acting within that structure.

54. Structuration theory holds that individuals act within a structure by drawing on shared rules to guide their actions and by employing resources (whether material or nonmaterial) to take action.

organized), and institutional positioning (how the organization differentiates itself from others). Meanwhile, structurational processes also operate at the individual level to drive organizational identity (a phenomenon addressed in <u>Chapter 8 "Organizational Identity and Diversity"</u>). Through an *identity-identification duality*, the more that organization members are linked with other members who share the same premises, the more they will all cultivate a like identity for themselves and, in turn, be self-actualized by relationships with likeminded individuals.Cheney, G., & Tompkins, P. K. (1987). Coming to terms with organizational identification and commitment. *Central States Speech Journal, 38*, 1–15; Scott, C. R., Corman, S. R., & Cheney, G. (1998). Development of a structurational model of identification in the organization. *Communication Theory, 8*, 298–335.

Giddens's original stucturation theory addressed processes at the societal level and the institutions that societies create and sustain. A societal institution, he observed, can accrue and channel great power as it becomes a nexus for concentrating, organizing, controlling, and then projecting resources. As mentioned above, structurational processes govern how things are interpreted, what is deemed moral and should be done, and how power is distributed to do those things. This same attention to the ways in which power operates through a system has continued to be a concern for scholars who apply structuration theory to organizations. In looking back on two decades of theory development, Poole and McPhee believed, "Structuration theory . . . has the potential to bring a critical edge to the analysis of organizational systems because it charges scholars to look for the role of power and domination in structuring processes that underlie organizations." Further, the theory "shows how organizations are created and sustained by human action and how, potentially, they can be changed."Poole, M.S., & McPhee, R. D., 2005, op. cit., pg. 180. Thus, they concluded, "We hope future researchers will take a more critical stance in developing the future of the structurational perspective."Ibid, p. 192.

Critical/Postmodern Approaches: Feminist Theory

Feminist theory[55] provides an apt subject to conclude this chapter on modern theories of organizational communication—and to conclude this section, which has highlighted ways that modern theories often blend perspectives from different approaches. First, a cohesive body of work in feminist organizational communication studies is a newer development, having emerged only since the 1990s. Second, despite its recent pedigree, feminist theorizing about organizational communication draws on diverse schools of thought which have enriched one another in innovative ways. Katherine Miller identified five distinct approaches to feminist theorizing;Miller, K. (2012). *Organizational communication: Approaches and processes* (6th ed.). Boston: Wadsworth. Marta Calas and Linda Smircich identified seven;Calas, M. B., & Smircich, L. (1996). From "the women's point of view": Feminist approaches to organization studies. In S. R. Clegg, C. Hardy & W. R. Nord

55. Not a single theory, but an approach to organizational communication scholarship that sees organizations as gendered and as sites for configuring gender roles.

(Eds.), *Handbook of organization studies* (pp. 218–257). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. and Michael Papa, Tom Daniels, and Barry Spiker recently identified eight.Papa, M. J., Daniel, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Perspectives and trends.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Feminist theorizing that specifically addresses organizational communication is generally identified with the critical approach to organizations, although Dennis Mumby also identified a postmodern strain in feminist inquiry about organizational life.Mumby, D. K. (2001). Power and politics. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 585–623). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

While feminist theorizing has generated a diverse body of research, some common themes emerge. Yet before describing these, let us review some ideas that retain a large influence on popular culture (so that you have probably heard about them) but do not represent current directions in feminist organizational communication studies. Karen Lee Ashcraft has recounted how research in the 1980s and 90s frequently focused on sex differences.Ashcraft, K. L. (2005). Feminist organizational communication studies: Engaging gender in public and private. In S. May & D. K. Mumby (Eds.), *Engaging organizational communication theory and research: Multiple perspectives* (pp. 141–169). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Women were depicted as "different" than men. Even if a "feminine style" of communication and leadership was celebrated as valuable, the notion nevertheless perpetuated a stereotype. Moreover, "feminine style" and "women's concerns" were largely equated with those of middle-class white women. Finally, the workplace was seen as neutral territory into which individuals brought their sex differences and societal prejudices; organizations were simply places where people played out gender issues imported from the outside. Two decades of feminist organizational communication scholarship has altered this picture. The workplace is no longer viewed as neutral; instead, organizations are seen as profoundly gendered institutions and a primary source of gendering (i.e., configuring gender roles) in contemporary society.

56. An opposition such as male/female, cause/effect, rational/emotional, leader/follower, win/lose, public/private. Feminist theory holds that binary thinking in organizations leads to the domination of "masculine" values such as competition over "feminine" values such as cooperation.

To explain this phenomenon, let us begin with the basic concept of "male" and "female." The concept inherently lends itself to "either/or" thinking or what scholars call a **binary**[56] mode of thought. Another binary common to Western society is the "mind/body" dualism which holds that the mind is nonmaterial and the body is physical. A tendency to think in terms of binaries, feminist scholars have shown, suffuses modern organization in ways that (as critical theory tells us) work simultaneously to make "masculine" values dominant and yet hide that domination by making it seem natural. For example, the modern bureaucratic organizations is based on hierarchical ordering—which privileges the abstract (a "masculine" value) over the personal (a "feminine" value), establishes the workplace on the basis of individual categorization rather than egalitarian cooperation, and fosters a management/labor binary.Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different*

voice: Psyhological theory and women's development. Cambridhe, MA: Harvard University Press. Hierarchy promotes linear modes of thinking and communication so that organizations extol a cause/effect binary as the only rational way to make decisions, rather than a holistic approach.Buzzanell, P. M. (1994). Gaining a voice: Feminist organizational communication theorizing. *Management Communication Quarterly, 7*, 339–383. Indeed, the rational/emotional binary is another mode of thought that gives a "masculine" gendering to organizations.Mumby, D. K., & Putnam, L. L. (1992). The politics of emotion: A critical reading. *Academy of Management Review, 17*, 465–486. Likewise, the leader/follower binary, which is inherent to hierarchy, is patriarchal and fosters a dependency that "feminizes" workers.Ferguson, K. (1984). *The feminist case against bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. Conflict management is another area where "masculine" values reign; even when individuals agree to set aside the win/lose binary, settling their differences through negotiation privileges the skill of bargaining.Putnam, L. L., & Kolb, D. M. (2000). Rethinking negotiation: Feminist views of communication and exchange. In P. M. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 76–104). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Modern organizations even configure female bodies according to masculine values, as a woman's "professional body" is expected to be trim and thus show discipline.Tretheway, A. (1999). Disciplined bodies: Women's embodied identities at work. *Organization Studies, 20*, 423–450; Tretheway, A. (2000). Revisioning control: A feminist critique of disciplined bodies. In P. M. Buzzanell (Ed.), *Rethinking organizational and managerial communication from feminist perspectives* (pp. 107–127). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Tretheway, A., Scott, C., & LeGreco, M. (2006). Constructing embodied organizational identities: Commodifying, securing, and servicing professional bodies. In B. Dow & J. T. Wood (Eds.), *Handbook of gender and communication* (pp. 123–141). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Finally, Weber's ideal of the impersonal-but-fair bureaucracy ideal (see Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication") is alive today in the public/private binary that governs most organizations. That "masculine" values are the standard is ensured by the rule that public workplace performance takes precedence of private concerns.Ashcraft, 2005, op. cit.

The connections between feminist theory and critical theory are clear. Today, a growing body of feminist research employs fieldwork and ideology critique to show how organizations reify and universalize "masculine" values. Recently, other feminist scholars have demonstrated how a postmodern approach to organizations can inform research by deconstructing how discourses of domination—such as male domination—have formed over time. An example is Ashcraft and Mumby's study of airline pilots, a profession in which white males predominate. They documented how early aviators were romanticized as daredevils but, when the prospect of commercial aviation arose, celebrated "lady" pilots made aviation seem less intimidating. Then as commercial flights became a reality and the public worried about safety and reliability, the industry promoted the image of the fatherly (white)

professional pilot in a crisp naval-style uniform.Ashcraft, K. L., & Mumby, D. K. (2004). *Reworking gender: A feminist communicology of organization*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Their project also explores issue of race and, as such, illustrates how in recent years the feminist approach to organizational communication has begun to encompass issues of race, class, sexuality, and ability.

As our look at systems theory, structuration theory and feminist theory affirms, modern theories of organizational communication are diverse. In addition, they afford opportunities for innovative, as well as blended, approaches to explaining problems of organizational life in the twenty-first century.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Systems theory is based on the metaphor of the organization as a biological organization. Its parts, though hierarchically ordered, are interdependent and the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Feedback between parts spreads needed information. But an organization is as an open system with permeable boundaries, engaging in exchange with its environment to gather resources required for growth. Because its environment is complex, the organization must have the requisite variety to deal with that complexity. This is aided through equifinality or the ability to take multiple paths for achieving the same goal. Karl Weick's theory of organizing holds that *information* is part of an organization's environment. Since the information is increasingly complex, a goal of organizational communication is *equivocality reduction* through processes of *sensemaking*.

- Structuration theory provides a new answer to the question: Do people have free will or are they determined by their environments? Anthony Giddens theorized that structure and agency are not a dualism but a duality. That is, people's actions produce structure but, by acting within a structure, they also perpetuate or reproduce it. This is called *structuration*. Thus, structure is both an outcome of, and a medium for, social action. For Giddens, a system is comprised human practices that have meaningful patterns for participants. Poole and McPhee, and subsequent scholars, have applied the theory of structuration to explain the processes of organizational climate, organizational communication, and organizational identity.

- Feminist scholarship on organizational communication encompasses a diversity of approaches and theories. However, they share a conception of the modern organization as being gendered (rather than a neutral site where sex differences and societal prejudices play out) and as a primary site in the modern world for configuring gender roles. The male/female distinction reflects a binary mode of thought that suffuses organizations. Other binaries found in organizations include cause/effect, rational/emotional, leader/ follower, win/lose, and public/private. Bureaucratic hierarchy "feminizes" workers by making them dependent, while basing organizational life on individual categorization rather than egalitarian cooperation.

EXERCISES

1. Where classical theory is based on the metaphor of the organization as a machine, systems theory is based on the metaphor of the organization as a biological organism. Make a list of other possible metaphors that might be used and explain how each one can help us understand the ways that an organization works.

2. In developing a theory of organizational structuration, Robert McPhee proposed that communication occurs in four flows: membership negotiation (who can be a member), activity coordination (what members do), self-structuring (how activities are organized), and institutional positioning (how the organization differentiates itself from others). Think of an organization to which you belong and then make a list of the types of communication that occur within each of the four flows. Can you identify any patterns or structures in these communication practices? Do these structures help people in the organization get their messages across and be understood? Or do they limit what people can say? Or both?

3. Again, think of an organization to which you belong. Name some examples of binary thinking (e.g., cause/effect, rational/emotional, leader/follower, win/lose, public/private) you have observed. How does this binary thinking affect what you have experienced in the organization? Does this type of thinking tend to make "masculine" values (e.g., competition, individualism, being rational, showing no emotion, taking action) more favored than "feminine" values (e.g., cooperation, integration).

4.4 Chapter Exercises

Real World Case Study

The Walt Disney Company and its theme parks have drawn the interest of organization and management scholars for decades. Books and articles praising Disney management began appearing in the 1960s. The runaway 1982 bestseller, *In Search of Excellence* by Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman, remains in print and lauds the Disney organization as a "best example" of customer service and employee relations.Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H., Jr. (1982). *In search of excellence: Lessons from America's best companies*. New York: Harper & Row. The high profile of the Disney theme parks in U.S. and global culture have prompted studies not only by industrial psychologists and management scientists, but by scholars who take interpretive, critical, and postmodern approaches to organizational communication.For example, see Boje, D. M. (1995). Stories of the story-telling organization: A postmodern analysis of Disney as "Tamara-land." *Academy of Management Review, 38*, 997–1035; Van Maanen, J. (1991). The smile factory: Work at Disneyland. In P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. R. Lewis, C. C. Lundberg & J. Martin (Eds.), *Reframing organizational culture* (pp. 58–76). Newbury Park, CA: Sage; Van Maanen, J. (1992). Displacing Disney: Some notes on the flow of organizational culture. *Qualitative Sociology, 15*, 5–25; Van Maanen, J., & Kunda, G. (1989). Real feelings: Emotional expression and organizational culture. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 11*, 43–103.

One innovative study, though conducted some 30 years ago, reads like today's news. The Disneyland theme park in California was dealing with the economic effects of a recent recession. Since the park was founded in 1955, management had succeeded in building up an unusually close-knit organizational culture. So a 1984 strike by park employees, protesting a management proposal to freeze wages and reduce benefits, made national headlines. Two organizational communication researchers, Ruth Smith and Eric Eisenberg, decided to investigate these labor troubles by taking an interpretive approach to the Disney organizational culture.Smith, R. C., & Eisenberg, E. M. (1987). Conflict at Disneyland: A root-metaphor analysis. *Communication Monographs, 54*, 367-380. They interviewed managers from several departments, reviewed company documents, and found that management carefully cultivated the metaphor of Disneyland as a "drama" or "show." Customers were "guests" and employees, as the "cast," were expected to play their "roles" by talking in approved phrases that followed the "script." Dress codes and grooming requirements were called "costuming." The park's "on-stage" and "back-stage" areas were clearly delineated.

Then Smith and Eisenberg interviewed striking workers and were surprised by what they discovered. The company founder, Walt Disney, had died in 1966. His successors worked diligently to carry on his legacy so that the show might go on. In fact, according to Smith and Eisenberg, management was so successful in cultivating this idea that the park employees also took satisfaction in being caretakers of the Disney legacy. And with Disneyland's emphasis on family entertainment, park employees began to see their workplace as a "family." When management was compelled by the recession to emphasize the bottom line, employees believed the company was forsaking the Disney legacy and violating the spirit of the "Disney family." Management responded by suggesting that families go through hard times, but to no avail. The strike lasted 22 days, the union went public with its concerns, management implemented a separate wage scale for new employees, and the organizational culture was profoundly changed.

1. Smith and Eisenberg took an interpretive approach for their research on the organizational culture of Disneyland by analyzing company documents and interviewing managers and employees. If you were a postpositive researcher, how might you have conducted surveys of Disneyland employees to supplement the interviews? Would such knowledge of aggregate responses, alone, have helped you understand the Disneyland culture? Or would you have needed to interpret the mindsets of individual managers and employees? In other words, could nomothetic research by itself have sufficed or was ideographic research essential?

2. If you had worked with Smith and Eisenberg, how might you have extended their study through ethnographic fieldwork? What Disneyland management and employee activities and rituals might you have observed and participated in? Smith and Eisenberg analyzed the metaphors that managers and employees used in their interviews; managers emphasized a "drama" metaphor, while employees also added a "family" metaphor. How might ethnographic fieldwork—as you participated in and directly experienced Disneyland culture for yourself—have extended the findings?

3. What might a critical organizational communication scholar have said about the culture that Smith and Eisenberg found at Disneyland? Many organization and management scholars have praised the Disney company. But a critical scholar might ask: Did management use its "show" discourse to reify and universalize its interests? Was this discourse a kind of *technical reasoning* to gain a desired managerial goal and make *practical reasoning* toward mutual consent seem irrational? Did the discourse distort employees' consciousness to favor management? Did it distort communication so that all communicative action took place on managerial terms? And as a postmodern scholar might have asked, did the discourse "manufacture consent" so that workers willingly disciplined themselves? What do you think?

4. Re-read the description in the case of the "show" discourse that governed the organizational culture at Disneyland. Then re-read the discussion in this chapter about the seven traditions in communication theory: cybernetic, phenomenological, sociopsychological, sociocultural, semiotic, critical, and rhetorical. Now try to explain the "show" discourse according to each tradition.

5. Karl Weick's system theory holds that people collectively "make sense" of their workplace by enacting responses to its complexities, selecting the best responses, and retaining those responses to guide future enactments and selections. Try to interpret the Disneyland "show" culture that Eisenberg and Smith discovered through this framework.

6. Anthony Giddens's structuration theory holds that even as people create a structure, they simultaneously perpetuate or reproduce the structure by acting within what the structure enables and what it constrains. Try to explain our case study through this framework. Robert McPhee's application of structuration theory to organizations holds that structuration occurs differently at the executive, middle management, and employee levels. Does this help explain why Disneyland employees went on strike?

7. What might a feminist organizational communication scholar have said about the culture that Smith and Eisenberg discovered at Disneyland? Does their description suggest that the organization was gendered? Do you see any evidence of binary thinking in the Disneyland culture that Smith and Eisenberg's describe?

End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. In <u>Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication"</u> we learned that theorists must make decisions about ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Select the answer below that gives the definitions of these three terms in the order of ontology, epistemology, and axiology.

   a. how things are known; what is worth knowing; how things exist
   b. what is worth knowing; how things exist; how things are known
   c. how things exist; what is worth knowing; how things are known
   d. how things exist; how things are known; what is worth knowing
   e. what is worth knowing; how things are known; how things exist

2. The belief that a social phenomenon (such as an organization) has a subjective existence, and that it naturally tends toward order, are characteristic of which approach to organizations?

   a. Postpositive
   b. Interpretive
   c. Critical
   d. Postmodern
   e. Feminist

3. The belief that a social phenomenon (such as an organization) is known by applying prior theoretical knowledge to the phenomenon, and that it naturally tends toward conflict, is characteristic of which approach to organizations?

   a. Postpositive
   b. Interpretive
   c. Critical
   d. Postmodern
   e. Functionalist

4. The belief that a social phenomenon (such as an organization) exists independent of human perception, and that its structures

are created through human agency, is characteristic of which approach to organizations?

a. Postpositive
b. Interpretive
c. Critical
d. Postmodern
e. Social constructionist

5. Which model depicts communication as a process by which communicators send messages/feedback simultaneously to one another?

a. Sociopsychological
b. Sociocultural
c. Linear
d. Interactional
e. Transactional

Answer Key

1. D
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. E

Chapter 5

Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Communication Structure

As discussed in Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication", one of the fundamental parts of an organization is the presence of a hierarchy. Since the 1950s, researchers have been very interested in how information is passed around the various levels of an organization's hierarchy. How information is passed around an organization is commonly referred to as "communication structure," and there are three dominant perspectives: channels, perceived networks, and observable networks.Papa, M. J., Daniels, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Perspectives and trends*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. The channels perspective sees messages as concrete objects that can be passed along clearly established channels of communication within an organization. Koehler, J. W., Anatol, K. W. E., & Applbaum, R. L. (1981). *Organizational communication: Behavioral perspectives* (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. In essence, the channels perspective focuses on how the message moves along the channels of communication and not on the relationship between the sender and the receiver. Under this perspective, the receiver becomes a passive individual in the communication process. In Chapter 1 "Introduction to Organizational Communication", we mentioned Redding's 10 postulates of organizational communication.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research*. New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. One of his postulates explains that the message received, not the one sent, is the one that a receiver will ultimately act upon in an organization. This channels perspective violates this basic tenant of organizational communication.

The second prominent perspective of organizational communication structure discussed is the perceived network perspective. Papa, M. J., Daniels, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Perspectives and trends*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. One way that some scholars have attempted to ascertain how communication is transmitted within an organization is to ask organizational members. In essence,

this method involves interviewing organizational members and asking them who they talk to and how they pass on information to their coworkers. According to Steven R. Corman and Craig R. Scott, perceived networks are innately flawed:

This formulation denies the existence of a network of communication, suggesting instead that the network is a structure of perceived communication relationships. It is a kind of latent knowledge that guides members' manifest communication behavior. We believe members' reports of communication reflect this knowledge, not their recollections of specific communication episodes [emphasis in original]. Corman, S. R., & Scott, C. R. (1994). Perceived networks, activity foci, and observable communication in social collectives. *Communication Theory, 4*, 171–190, pg. 174.

Corman and Scott's argument against the use of perceived networks is twofold. First, Corman and Scott argue that when researchers ask participants about their communication networks, the participants respond by thinking of who they should be communicating with not necessarily who they actually communicate with at all. Second, the perceptions that participants have about their communicative networks is more a generalized understanding of how they communicate and not how they actually communicate during specific communicative episodes. In other words, people often believe that they utilize specific channels of communication within the organization, whereas in reality, they are communicating in a completely different way.

The third prominent perspective of organizational communication structure is the observable network perspective. Papa, M. J., Daniels, T. D., & Spiker, B. K. (2008). *Organizational communication: Perspectives and trends*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Another way that scholars can examine how communication actually happens within an organization is to literally watch it happen. While actually watching how communication occurs within an organization provides the most accurate information, the research process is very time consuming. When actually observing an organization's communication network, you cannot hope to get all of the necessary information in a short period of time. For this reason, data collection in this type of research is very laborious. Furthermore, a researcher's ability to observe actual communication networks is only as good as the researcher's access to those communication networks. People who talk outside of work or in inaccessible areas of the organization (like the bathroom) can lead to an incomplete picture of the actual communication networks within the organization.

Overall, watching how people interact within an organization and how information is transmitted within an organization is a very difficult task. Furthermore, how researchers and organizations view communication networks also differs. Corman and Scott noted, "we believe ... there is no network of communication in the sense

analogous to a network of computers or telephones or television stations. Instead, the network is an abstract structure of perceived communication relationships that functions as a set of rules and resources actors draw upon in accomplishing communication behavior" [emphasis in original].Corman, S. R., & Scott, C. R. (1994). Perceived networks, activity foci, and observable communication in social collectives. *Communication Theory, 4*, 171–190, pg. 181. Ultimately, this abstract structure can be broken down into two basic parts: formal communication networks and informal communication networks. The rest of this chapter is going to examine formal and informal communication networks.

5.1 Formal Communication Networks

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain Weber's (1930) beliefs on downward communication.
2. Understand Katz and Kahn's (1966) typology of downward communication.
3. Clarify Hirokawa's (1979) two problems associated with downward communication.
4. Be able to explain Hirokawa's (1979) four functions of upward communication.
5. Understand Katz and Kahn's (1966) typology of upward communication.
6. Explain the importance of employee silence and organizational dissent.
7. Explain Fayol's (1916/1949) perspective on horizontal/lateral communication.
8. Understand Hirokawa's (1979) four functions of horizontal/lateral communication.
9. Analyze Charles and Marschan-Piekkari's (2002) five organizational behaviors to increase the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication in multinational corporations.

The word "formal" describes adherence to a set of conventional requirements of behavior. **Formal communication**[1] then consists of the rules and norms established by an organization for communicative behavior. A **communication rule**[2] is a standard or directive governing how communication occurs within an organization. Communication rules are explicitly stated and may be found in your organization's policies and procedures manual. For example, maybe your organization has very strict policies established for what happens in case of an emergency. One of the authors of this book worked in a hospital that had very explicit communication rules if someone was accidentally stuck by a needle. First, the individual was required to immediately go to the emergency room for testing and the initiation of preventative pharmaceutical measures. Second, the head of the hospital's risk management office was to be contacted. The risk management head would then investigate the matter and submit a formal report of all accidents to the

1. Organizational communication that exists within the rules and norms established by an organization.

2. A standard or directive governing how communication occurs within an organization.

CEO of the hospital on a monthly basis. These steps were not perceived as optional at all and were clearly written in the employee handbook.

Communication norms[3], on the other hand, are standards or patterns of communication regarded as typical. Where communication rules are explicitly discussed within an organization, communication norms are only learned through active observation of communicative behavior within the organization. In fact, one of the most common ways to learn a communicative norm in an organization is to accidentally violate the norm. For example, in the same hospital discussed above, the head of risk management had to formally communicate to the CEO on a monthly basis any accidents that had occurred. However, the head of risk management would also send the CEO an e-mail as soon as she had an incident report just to keep him updated more frequently. When the head of risk management went on a two month leave of absence, one of her subordinates took over the position. The subordinate followed the guidelines as set forth in the policies and procedures manual to the letter. However, the CEO got very angry when at the end of the month he received his formal briefing of accidents because he hadn't been kept up-to-date throughout the month. In this case, the subordinate had followed the formal communication rules of the organization but had violated what had become a formal communication norm.

Obviously, understanding how formal communication functions within an organization is very important, which is why a considerable amount of the early research on organizational communication examined formal communication. To help us further understand formal communication in the organization, we're going to look at it by examining the three directions communication happens within an organization: downward, upward, horizontal/lateral.

Downward Communication

3. Standards or patterns of communication regarded as typical within an organization.

4. Messages that start at the top of the hierarchy and are transmitted down the hierarchy to the lowest rungs of the hierarchy.

5. The ability to force people to obey regardless of their resistance.

6. When an individual's orders are voluntarily obeyed by those receiving them.

Downward communication[4] consists of messages that start at the top of the hierarchy and are transmitted down the hierarchy to the lowest rungs of the hierarchy. Downward communication can be considered a top-to-bottom approach for organizational communication. The earliest thinker in the area of downward communication was Max Weber.Weber, M. (1930). *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.* London: Allen & Unwin. Weber believed that there were two ways to get employees to follow one's directives: power and authority. Weber defined **power**[5] as the ability to force people to obey regardless of their resistance, whereas **authority**[6] occurs when orders are voluntarily obeyed by those receiving them. Weber argued that individuals in authority based organizations were more likely to perceive directives as legitimate.Gerth, H. H., Mills, C. W. (Eds.). (1948). *From Max Weber: Essays in sociology.* London: Routledge. While this process sounds simplistic, individuals in management positions have often had to determine how to

communicate with employees. Randy Hirokawa noted that there are two general types of downward communication in modern organizations:

(1) information concerning the current/future status of specific aspects of the organization, new organizational policies, recent administrative decisions, and recent changes in the standard-operating-procedures; and (2) information of a task-related nature which generally provide subordinates with the technical know-how to accomplish their tasks or assignments with greater efficiency and productivity. Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 84.

While Hirokawa's two-prong approach to downward communication is fairly consistent with the type of communication that occurs in modern organizations, this type of communication was not always present.

History of Downward Communication

C. J. Dover traced the history of downward communication through the utilization of employee publications. Dover's research ultimately identified three distinct eras: entertainment, information, and interpretation and persuasion.Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172.

The Era of Entertainment

The first era of downward communication noted by C. J. Dover was the era of entertainment, which he defined as the period prior to World War II. Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172. In addition to basic directives, most of the communication during the Era of Entertainment was primarily fluff material, "company publications thus dealt largely with choice items of gossip, social chit-chat about employees, notices of birthdays and anniversaries, jokes, notices of local recreation and entertainment opportunities, etc."Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172, p. 168. When one looks at this list of information communicated downward, the obvious lack of information about the state of the organization itself is glaring. However, "there were occasional exhortations to lead clean, moral, and thrifty lives, some attacks on the evils of 'demon rum,' some attacks on the 'bolsheviks,' [sic] and some printed resistance to early attempts at unionization."Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172, p. 168.

Era of Information

The second era of downward communication discussed by C. J. Dover was the era of information, which occurred during the 1940s. Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172. Two competing forces ultimately changed the face of employee communication during the 1940s. First, businesses were forced to produce more with less as a result of the U.S. entry into World War II after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As businesses found themselves with less overhead capital, the printing of company publications with trivial, entertaining information became a non-necessity. Second, research in the social sciences started to ascertain that informed employees were more productive employees. Ultimately, this second issue won out and employee publications started to focus more on information about the organization and less on the entertainment value of the publications. In fact, the number of employee publications tripled from 1940 (2,000) to 1950 (6,000). Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172. These new publications were very different from their pre-WWII precursors, "The new emphasis in content was on informing employees about the company—its plans, operations, and policies. Typical of this new material were reports on company growth, and expansion, the outlook for the business and the industry, company financial reports, and information on productivity, costs, and employee benefit plans" [emphasis in original]. Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172, p. 169.

Era of Interpretation and Persuasion

The third era of downward communication discussed by C. J. Dover was the era of interpretation and persuasion, which occurred during the 1950s. Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172. During the 1950s employee publications maintained their entertainment and information aspects, but added an organization's perspective on information in an attempt to interpret the information and persuade the employee's to the organization's interpretation. Dover had this to say about interpretation and persuasion:

The "Era of Interpretation and Persuasion" adds new features [to employee publications]. Prominent among these are (a) interpretation—i.e., emphasizing or explaining the significance of the facts in terms of employee or reader interest, and (b) persuasion—i.e., urging employees or readers, on the basis of the facts as they have been interpreted, to take specific action or to accept management's honest ideas and opinions [emphasis in original].Dover, C. J. (1959). The three eras of management communication. *Journal of Communication, 9*, 168–172, pg. 170.

Managers to this day still attempt to communicate to their employees using interpretative and persuasive strategies. The rest of this section is going to examine types of downward communication, problems with downward communication, and effective methods for downward communication.

Types of Downward Communication

While there are numerous typologies examining the various types of messages transmitted down a hierarchy from management, the most commonly cited typology was created by Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Katz and Kahn's typology breaks downward communication into five distinct types: job instructions, job rationales, procedures and practices, feedback, and indoctrination.

Job Instructions

The first type of message that management commonly communicates to employees are **job instructions**[7], or how management wants an employee to perform her or his job. Often this type of downward communication occurs through training. Depending on the difficulty of the job, communicating to an employee how to perform her or his job could take days, months, or years. Some organizations will even send employees outside of the organization for more specialized training.

Job Rationales

The second type of messages Katz and Kahn identified as commonly communicated downward in an organization are job rationales.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. A **job rationale**[8] is a basic statement of the purpose of a specific job and how that job relates to the overarching goal of the organization. Every job should help the organization achieve its goals, so understanding how one's position fits into the larger scheme of the organization is very important. Furthermore, the job rationale will also illustrate how a single job relates to other jobs within the organizational hierarchy.

Procedures & Practices

The third type of messages Katz and Kahn identified as commonly communicated downward in an organization are procedures and practices.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Procedures and practices typically come in the form of an employee manual or handbook when you start working within an organization. **Procedures**[9] are sequences of steps to be followed in a given situation. For example, in an organization, there may be procedures in place for reporting sexual harassment or

7. Explanations from management relating to how they want an employee to perform her or his job.

8. A basic statement of the purpose of a specific job and how that job relates to the overarching goal of the organization.

9. Sequences of steps to be followed in a given situation.

procedures for hiring new members. **Practices**[10], on the other hand, are behaviors people should do habitually. For example, maybe you are required to punch in and out using a time-clock or you are not allowed to wear open toed shoes. There are procedures and practices related to policies (courses of action taken in the organization), rules (standards or directives governing behavior), and benefits (payment and entitlements one receives with the job).

Feedback

The fourth type of message Katz and Kahn identified as commonly communicated downward in an organization is feedback. Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Providing feedback to one's subordinates is a very important feature of any supervisory position.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research.* New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. Employees can only grow and become more proficient with their jobs if they are receiving feedback from those above them. This feedback needs to contain both positive and negative feedback. **Positive feedback**[11] occurs when a supervisor explains to a subordinate what he or she is doing well, whereas **negative feedback**[12] occurs when a supervisor explains to a subordinate areas that need improvement. Furthermore, feedback should not only occur in formal review sessions often referred to as "summative feedback." Instead, supervisors should utilize formative feedback, or periodic feedback designed to help an employee grow and develop within the organization.

Employee Indoctrination

The last type of downward communication discussed by Katz and Kahn is employee indoctrination.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. **Indoctrination**[13] is the process of instilling an employee with a partisan or ideological point of view. Specifically, organizations use indoctrination messages in order to help new members adopt ideological stances related to the organization's culture and goals. The ultimate goal of organizational indoctrination is organizational identification, or "the extent to which that person's self-concept includes the same characteristics he or she perceives to be distinctive, central, and enduring to the organization."Beyer, J. M., Hannah, D. R., & Milton, L. P. (2000). Ties that bind: Culture and attachments in organizations. In N. M. Ashkanasy, C. P. M. Wilderom, & M. F. Peterson (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational culture & climate* (pp. 323–338). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pg. 333. We'll examine employee indoctrination in more detail in <u>Chapter 12 "Entering, Socializing, and Disengaging"</u>.

10. Behaviors people should do habitually.

11. Feedback to an employee that occurs when a supervisor explains to the subordinate what he or she is doing well.

12. Feedback to an employee that occurs when a supervisor explains to a subordinate areas that need improvement.

13. The process of instilling an employee with a partisan or ideological point of view.

Katz and Kahn's typology of downward communication is very useful to remember when examining how communication in an organization is conducted. Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Often, managers may be competent at one or two of the types of downward communication but not as competent in the other three. When this is the case, managers need training in how to become effective downward communicators. Furthermore, managers must also think of the most appropriate communication channels to use when sending downward messages. An article in Management Report in 2004 titled "Downward Communication" listed a wide range of possibilities for communicating information downward: staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, internal newsletters, employee information sheets, bulletin boards, employee handbooks, and e-mail.Downward communications. (2004, August). *Management Report, 27*(8), 6–7. While all of these are options for downward communication, not all of them appropriate for every communication situation. For example, you probably don't want to chastise an employee's tardiness in a company newsletter, on a bulletin board, or during a staff meeting, however this form of downward communication could be appropriately sent during a one-on-one meeting, through employee information sheets, or in an e-mail. Ultimately, managers must be competent in how they communicate down the hierarchy to their subordinates. Now that we've looked at the types of messages sent down the hierarchy and the different mediums a manager could use to send messages down the hierarchy, let's examine some of the problems with downward communication.

Problems with Downward Communication

Downward communication is an extremely important part of any organization. However, Randy Hirokawa noted that there are two primary problems associated with downward communication: accuracy and adequacy.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. **Accuracy of information**[14] refers to how truthful a message is that has been received. There are two primary ways that the accuracy of a message can be distorted. First, some messages are simply based on inaccurate information. For example, a manager who hears a false rumor and then passes the rumor on to her or his subordinates has passed on inaccurate information. Obviously, when the truth of the rumor is learned by subordinates, the manager's credibility is going to be negatively impacted because her or his subordinates will perceive the manager as not being a trustworthy source of information. The second way messages can contain inaccurate information is as a result of multiple people in the communication chain, or as W. Charles Redding calls it serial transmission.Redding, W. C. (1966). The empirical study of human communication in business and industry. In P. E. Reid (Ed.), *The frontiers in experimental speech-communication research* (pp. 47–81). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press. As we know from playing the telephone game in school, when A communicates to B and B communicates to C and C communicates to D, the chances

14. How truthful a message is that has been received.

of the message becoming distorted with each passing person becomes more likely. Even in the case of serial transmission of information (A→ B → C → D) managers who are caught communicating inaccurate information can expect to have employees question their credibility. Another ramification of passing on inaccurate information is that some subordinates will start to question how connected their supervisor is to the organizational hierarchy. Basically, if my supervisor is passing on inaccurate information, then clearly he or she doesn't really know what's going on at all.

A second problem associated with downward communication refers to the adequacy of the information being communicated. **Adequacy of information**[15] refers to whether or not the information being communicated is sufficient to satisfy a requirement or need for information in the workplace. When discussing adequacy, there are two possible extremes that managers could swing to: communication underload and communication overload. **Communication underload**[16] occurs when subordinates are not provided enough information to complete their jobs. Communication underload can come in the form of inadequate on-the-job training, limited feedback from one's supervisor, or insufficient information on policies and procedures in the organization. Often communication underload is completely accidental and occurs as an inadvertent omission. In this case, supervisors themselves may have too many things going on and information is accidentally not passed on to their subordinates in a timely fashion or at all. Other times communication underload can occur because a supervisor feels the need to hoard information in an effort to secure her or his power base. Individuals often see information as power and transmitting that information to another person as a loss of power.Huseman, R., Lahiff, J., & Wells, R. (1974). Communication thermoclines: Toward a process of identification. *Personnel Journal, 53*, 124–135. When information hoarding occurs, subordinates may be given just enough information to not make their supervisor look bad, but not enough information to truly excel at their jobs. For obvious reasons, information hoarding can be a very large problem in organizations.

15. Whether or not the information being communicated is sufficient to satisfy a requirement or need for information in the workplace.

16. When workers are not provided enough information to complete their jobs.

17. When workers are provided too much information to complete their jobs.

The second problem associated with adequacy of information involves **communication overload**[17], or when subordinates are provided too much information to complete their jobs. In an ideal work environment, supervisors will function as gatekeepers of information and make sure that adequate information is passed on to a subordinate to help the subordinate excel in her or his job. Unfortunately, some supervisors do not know how to function as gatekeepers, so they pass along any information they receive to their subordinates without filtering information that is not useful for their subordinates. Eventually, subordinates can become so overwhelmed with the number of messages that are being received, that they spend much of their work day simply shifting through information, which decreases their ability to be productive.Anderson, J., & Level, D. A. (1980). The

impact of certain types of downward communication on job performance. *The Journal of Business Communication, 17*, 51–59. Other individuals when faced with communication overload simply start ignoring all of the information coming in because it's simpler to just ignore information than to shift through it all. Communication overload is generally a product of channel capacity or an individual's limits to receiving information.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research.* New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. Some information is easy for an individual process, but other information involves considerable more effort on the part of the receiver. The more technical and complex the information, the smaller an individual's channel capacity for handing the information will be.

In addition to Randy Hirokawa's two primary problems associated with downward communication, we believe there is a third problem with downward communication: utility.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. Utility involves whether or not the information provided is actually useful. Often information that is transmitted to an individual within an organization is completely useless to that individual. For example, one of the coauthors of this book was paid to go to a meeting about new computer software the organization wasn't planning on purchasing. In this instance, the subordinate (our coauthor) was actually sent for training on a software package that the subordinate would never see and never use. In this case, our coauthor not only wasted time going to this meeting, the organization paid our coauthor to actually go to this meeting and the organization paid the person making the presentation. In essence, both time and money were wasted on information that had no utility to either the individual employee or the organization.

Effective Methods for Downward Communication

So now that we've looked at some of the problems organizations face with downward communication, let's examine some best practices for downward communication. First, individuals who are engaged in downward communication need to make sure that the information they are passing on to those below them is first, and foremost, accurate. If this means spending a little extra time verifying information, then verify the information. A supervisor may have to spend a couple of extra minutes verifying information, but this is a better trade-off than having to rebuild one's credibility.

Second, make sure that the amount of information you are passing along to your subordinates is adequate and can be utilized. To ensure that you are avoiding communication underload and communication overload, you should do two things: filter and ask. The first thing to ensure your subordinates are receiving adequate

information is filter out information that isn't necessary for your subordinates. Filtering out information for one's subordinates is not an easy task. One easy way to help filter information is to ask yourself, "will this information help my subordinates personally or professionally." Some information could help your subordinates personally—workshops on avoiding stress, time management, or conflict management. While other information can help your subordinates professionally: information related to job duties, information on career advancement, and information related to organizational policies and procedures. In addition to attempting to filter information for your subordinates, you can always ask your subordinates if they feel they are getting enough information. Often subordinates will be the first to tell you when they feel under or over informed.

The third best practice in downward communication involves the source of the message. Obviously, the source of the message has a strong impact on how people interpret the importance of the message itself. For example, messages received from the CEO of organization will receive more weight than a message from a mid-level manager. For this reason, important messages should come from the top of the hierarchy and be transmitted as directly as possible to the employees to avoid serial transmission.

The fourth best practice in downward communication involves the type of communication channels utilized for the downward transmission of a message. By communication channels, we are referring to the traditional notion of communication channels commonly held in organizations. When encoding a message for transmission through the organizational hierarchy, one needs to think about the most expedient method for delivering the message itself. As previously discussed, the more individuals a message is transmitted through will increase the likelihood that the message itself will become distorted.

The fifth best practice in downward communication involves mindfully picking the communicative medium utilized for downward communication. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Katz and Kahn's typology of downward communication consists of five different types: job instructions, job rationales, procedures and practices, feedback, and indoctrination.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. When encoding various messages related to these five types of downward communication, managers need to realize that the same communicative medium may not be the most effective tool for every message communicated. There are a variety of different types of communicative mediums that could be utilized: staff meetings, one-on-one meetings, internal newsletters, employee information sheets, bulletin boards, employee handbooks, e-mail, employee social networking sites, etc... In fact, if a piece of information is extremely important, communicating the information through multiple mediums may also be important. One of our coauthors had a former student named Chad who

worked for a large discount chain as a front-line customer services representative in the technology department. Chad found out one day that he had violated a new rule set forth by the organization that he didn't know existed. When he asked his manager about the new policy, Chad was told that the he should have received an e-mail about the new rule in his employee e-mail account. To make this situation even more problematic, Chad didn't even know that he had an employee e-mail account. Chad discovered that the corporation had an intranet and all employees were supposed to check their e-mail prior to clocking-in for work. Chad asked some of his coworkers if they knew about employee e-mail accounts and found that no one apparently knew about the e-mail accounts. This example illustrates what can happen when organizations only utilize one communicative medium for important downward messages.

The story about Chad also illustrates our final recommendation for best practices in downward communication, checking for understanding. The message received, not the one sent, is the one that a receiver will ultimately act upon in an organization.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research*. New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. Or as in the case of Chad, the lack of message reception is also a problem. It's one thing to tell someone something, and completely different to have communicated with someone. Telling is a sender centered communicative strategy because the sender encodes a message and transmits the message.Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & McCroskey, L. L. (2005). *Organizational communication for survival: Making work, work* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. However, the sender does not make sure that a receiver actually receives the message or correctly interprets the message itself. Furthermore, the meaning of a message is one that is determined by the receiver not by the sender. Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research*. New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. In the case of telling, the receiver is completely taken out of the communication process, so the chance of misunderstandings and missed communication increases dramatically. For this reason, we recommend that downward communication be followed up by some kind of interaction with the individuals being sent a message to ensure that the message is being received and interpreted in a manner consistent with the sender's original intent. To ascertain message reception and interpretation, supervisors need to encourage their subordinates to participate in upward communication.

Upward Communication

18. Messages that start at the bottom of the hierarchy and are transmitted up the hierarchy to the highest rungs of the hierarchy.

Upward communication[18] consists of messages that start at the bottom of the hierarchy and are transmitted up the hierarchy to the highest rungs of the hierarchy. Upward communication can be considered a bottom-up approach to organizational communication. Randy Hirokawa noted that upward communication

serves four very important functions in the modern organization.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. First, upward communication allows management to ascertain the success of previously relayed downward communication. Second, upward communication allows individuals at the bottom of the hierarchy to have a voice in policies and procedures. Hirokawa clarifies, "Perhaps even more importantly, upward communication, because it allows subordinates to participate in the decision-making process, also facilitates the acceptance of those decisions which they had a part in making." Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 86. Third, upward communication allows subordinates to voice suggestions and opinions to make the working environment better. As Elton Mayo discovered during the employee interview program as part of the Hawthorne Works Studies, employees have a lot to say about their working conditions and how to make the organization more efficient.Mayo, E. (1933). *The human problems of an industrial civilization*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Furthermore, simply asking employees for their suggestions and opinions was found to increase job satisfaction. Lastly, upward communication allows management to test how employees will react to new policies and procedures. Often before radical changes are made to an organization, management will try to use focus groups of subordinates to gage their reactions to impending changes. These reactions can then be used in the framing of the communicative messages about the impending changes to the entire organization.

As a side note, we feel it is important to also stress research examining sex differences in upward communication.Stewart, L. P., Stewart, A. D., Friedley, S. A., & Cooper, P. J. (1996). *Communication between the sexes: Sex differences and sex-role stereotypes* (2nd ed.). Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick. The researchers noted females who provide more upward communication are more likely to advance and be promoted than those females who did not. As such, in a world where women are still under-promoted in many organizations, mastering upward communication can be very important for female workers. Now that we've examined some of the basic reasons for upward communication in organizations, we're going to examine the types of upward communication in organizations, problems with upward communication in organizations, and effective methods for upward communication.

Types of Upward Communication

While there are numerous typologies examining the various types of messages transmitted up a hierarchy, the most commonly cited typology was created by Katz and Kahn.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New

York: John Wiley & Sons. Katz and Kahn's typology breaks upward communication into four distinct types: information about the subordinate her/himself, information about coworkers and their problems, information about organizational policies and procedures, and information about the task at hand. Dennis Tourish and Paul Robson argue that a fifth form of upward communication needs to be included in this list: critical upward communication.Tourish, D., & Robson, P. (2006). Sensemaking and the distortion of critical upward communication in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*, 711–730.

Information about the Subordinate

The first form of upward communication discussed by Katz and Kahn involves information about the subordinate her or himself.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Information that can be communicated upwardly about oneself typically falls into one of two categories: personal information and professional information. Personal information that can be communicated upwardly involves information that is more intimate in nature. For example, you can talk to your supervisor about your friends and families, hobbies, psychological/medical problems, etc.... This information helps subordinates establish a more understanding relationship with their supervisors. Professional information that can be communicated upwardly involves issues related to job performance or problems related to work. For example, maybe you're having a great quarter and want to communicate this to your supervisor. On the other hand, maybe you're really having problem with one specific facet of your job and you need help or more time. Perhaps you're supposed to write a report, but the report keeps getting pushed further and further down your priority list as new projects come your way.

Information about Coworkers and their Problems

The second form of upward communication discussed by Katz and Kahn involves information about coworkers and their problems.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations.* New York: John Wiley & Sons. Often managers are completely removed from what is actually going on with their subordinates because the managers' attentions are not completely focused on their subordinates. Despite what subordinates often think, managers have their own workloads that must be taken care of in addition to their managerial duties. For this reason, managers are often simply unaware of what is going on with their subordinates. In order to combat this lack of clarity, managers often rely on subordinates to report problems. One of our coauthors worked for a medical school overseeing medical students, interns, residents, and teaching faculty. One of the medical interns was actually showing up to work intoxicated. The only reason our coauthor found out about this was when one of the teaching faculty called to report the problem. While it was our

coauthor's job to oversee situations like these, if our coauthor had never been told there was a problem, the problem would have continued and could have led to serious consequences both medically and legally. Another facet of this problem occurs when subordinates are not able to complete their job duties. People can become very adept at hiding what they don't know and can't do when necessary. While others will only actively work when they are under immediate supervision, however once the supervision leaves, the individuals stop working. The only way a supervisor can have any chance of finding out about either one of these situations is to rely on other subordinates to report what's happening. While children are taught that tattle-telling is a horrible thing, often telling a supervisor what a coworker is or is not doing is extremely important. Whether the coworker simply needs more training or needs to be reprimanded, the only way a supervisor can correct behavior is if he or she knows about the problem in the first place. To help with this process, many organizations have actually initiated anonymous complaint/report phone lines. Individuals who see someone behaving in a dangerous or unethical manner can anonymously call the phone line and leave a message about the problem, and the organization can then start its own internal investigation.

Organizational Procedures & Practices

The third form of upward communication discussed by Katz and Kahn involves information about organizational procedures and practices.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. As previously discussed in this chapter, procedures are sequence of steps to be followed in a given situation, whereas practices are behaviors people should do habitually. Within any organization there are procedures and practices related to policies (courses of action taken in the organization), rules (standards or directives governing behavior), and benefits (payment and entitlements one receives with the job). Upward communication about procedures and practices can help management see where policies, rules, and benefits can be more influential or stream-lined. Often, management creates procedures and practices for how things ought to be accomplished without ever having to implement the procedure or practice themselves. The only way management can know if the procedures and practices are causing unneeded stress or loss of resources is if the people who have to enact those procedures and practices explain the problem.

Task at Hand

The last form of upward communication discussed by Katz and Kahn involves information about the task at hand.Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. This last form of upward communication is specifically directed to communicate information to management that helps an individual complete her or his job. Types of messages that could fall

into this category include asking for more information, asking to have a task clarified, asking for additional resources to complete the task, keeping a supervisor informed of a time table for completion, explaining the current status of a project, etc.… All of these different types of messages enable the subordinate to either ask questions about the task or inform their supervisor about the task. While communicating information about oneself is probably most important during the initial stages of relationship development with one's supervisor, communicating information about tasks to one's supervisor is the most common form of upward communication and the most important over time.

Critical Upward Communication

In addition to the four forms of upward communication discussed already, Tourish and Robson argue that a 5th form of upward communication needs to be included in this list: critical upward communication.Tourish, D., & Robson, P. (2006). Sensemaking and the distortion of critical upward communication in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*, 711–730. Critical upward communication is "feedback that is critical of organizational goals and management behavior." Tourish, D., & Robson, P. (2006). Sensemaking and the distortion of critical upward communication in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*, 711–730, pg. 711. (p. 711). Critical upward communication has been discussed under many different terms, "employee voice, issue selling, whistle-blowing, championing, dissent and boat rocking." Tourish, D., & Robson, P. (2006). Sensemaking and the distortion of critical upward communication in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*, 711–730, pg. 712. Everyday individuals in organizations around the world make decisions about whether to communicate critically about organizational goals and management behavior. To help us understand upward communication, let's briefly examine two communication related variables: employee silence and organizational dissent.

Employee Silence

A lot of the focus in communication research is on talking, but Richard Johannesen explained that researchers needed to start understanding the vital role that silence can play in human communication within a variety of contexts.Johannesen, R. L. (1974). The functions of silence: A plea for communication research. *Western Speech, 38*, 25–35. The first researchers to examine the impact silence can have in the workplace in the organizational literature were Elizabeth Morrison and Frances Milliken.Morrison, E., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy Of Management Review, 25*, 706–725. doi:10.5465/AMR.2000.3707697 **Employee silence**[19] is fundamentally understood as a communication phenomenon where employees intentionally or unintentionally withhold information that might be useful to a leader or her or his

19. When employees intentionally or unintentionally withhold information that might be useful to a leader or her or his organization.

organization. Johnson, M. (Producer). (2008, March 17). *Employee silence on critical work issues: Interview with Subra Tangirala* [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from http://www.obweb.org/podcasts/MikeJohnson/SubraTangirala_20080317_mh.mp3 Morrison and Milliken argued that employees remain silent because of their manager's behavior with regards to upward communication. Specifically, "silence is an outcome that owes its origins to (1) managers' fear of negative feedback and (2) a set of implicit beliefs often held by managers." Morrison, E., & Milliken, F. J. (2000). Organizational silence: A barrier to change and development in a pluralistic world. *Academy Of Management Review, 25*, 706–725, pg. 705. doi:10.5465/AMR.2000.3707697 Imagine you're working in a pizza shop and you try to explain to your manager that simply rearranging some of the ingredients would actually make putting the pizza together faster. If the manager shoots you down or gives you dirty looks at the suggestion, you will be less likely to offer advice in the future.

There are three common forms of employee silence: acquiescent silence, defensive silence, and prosocial silence. Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I C. (2003). Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidimensional constructs. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*, 1359–1392. First, **acquiescent silence**[20] occurs because employees are disengaged in the workplace and feel they simply cannot make difference. As such, they withhold information or simply do not bother offering suggestions because they believe that it is impossible to make a real difference in their organization. Second, **defensive silence**[21] occurs as a form of self-protection for employees. If an employee believes that speaking up will put her or him at risk, then that employee will be less likely speak up. These people withhold information or omit facts because they fear some kind of organizational retaliation. Lastly, **prosocial silence**[22] occurs because employees want to appear cooperative and/or altruistic in the workplace. Organizations where conflict is discouraged or avoid can lead people to withhold information to appear cooperative or protect "proprietary knowledge to benefit the organization." Van Dyne, L., Ang, S., & Botero, I C. (2003). Conceptualizing employee silence and employee voice as multidimensional constructs. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*, 1359–1392, pg. 1363.

In a study examining employee silence in the workplace, Surahmaniam Tangirala and Rangaraj Ramanujam found that employees who were "silenced" in the workplace perceived their working environments as unjust, they did not identify with their organizations, and they did not professionally committed to their organizations. Tangirala, S., & Ramanujam, R. (2008). Employee silence on critical work issues: The cross level effects of procedural justice climate. *Personnel Psychology, 61*, 37–68. In another study by Jason Wrench, he operationalized a set of theoretical items originally proposed by Morrison and Milliken into a research measure. Wrench, J. S. (2012). *The effect of office politics on employee silence and dissent*. Manuscript in Preparation. In Wrench's study, he set out to examine the relationship between organizational politics and various other organizational

20. Form of employee silence that occurs when employees are disengaged in the workplace and feel they simply cannot make difference.

21. Form of employee silence that occurs when an employee believes that speaking up will put her or him at risk, so the employee opts to not speak out.

22. Form of employee silence that occurs because employees want to appear cooperative and/or altruistic in the workplace.

constructs. Specifically related to employee silence, Wrench found that acquiescent and defensive silence negatively related to employee motivation and job satisfaction. Conversely, prosocial silence positively related to employee motivation and job satisfaction. Overall, this study demonstrates the impact that silence can have on an individual's happiness in the workplace.

While employee silence has received a lot of traction in academic circles since 2000, there are definitely a number myths about employee silence that have developed: Detert, J. R., Burris, E. R., & Harrison, D. A. (2010). Debunking four myths about employee silence. *Harvard Business Review, 88*, 26.

1. Myth: "Women and nonprofessional employees withhold more information than men and professional staffers because they are more concerned about consequences or more likely to see speaking up as futile." Reality: Research has found no evidence that any of this is true. In fact, the studies that have examined gender differences have turned up no evidence to support that women and men utilize silence in the workplace to differing degrees. Furthermore, neither education nor income is also a good predictor of who will be silent.

2. Myth: "If my employees are talking openly to me, they're not holding back." Reality: Research has found that 42% of people admit to purposefully withholding information when there is nothing to gain or something to lose by divulging that information.Detert, J. R., Burris, E. R., & Harrison, D. A. (2010). Debunking four myths about employee silence. *Harvard Business Review, 88*, 26. As such, people may be talking but they may not be actually giving management a complete picture.

3. Myth: "If employees aren't speaking up, it's because they don't feel safe doing so, despite all my efforts." While there are many employees who will remain silent out of fear, 25% of employees withhold information simply to avoiding wasting time.Detert, J. R., Burris, E. R., & Harrison, D. A. (2010). Debunking four myths about employee silence. *Harvard Business Review, 88*, 26. Unfortunately, when employees make decisions on what is useful or non-useful information, those decisions may not be completely informed or accurate.

4. Myth: "The only issues employees are scared to raise involve serious allegations about illegal or unethical activities." Reality: Obviously, whistleblowing, the act of disclosing about an illegal or unethical activity, can definitely make people a little anxious. However, 20% of employees admit that "fear of consequences has led them to withhold suggestions for addressing ordinary problems and making improvements. Such silence on day-today issues keeps managers from getting information they need to prevent bigger problems."Detert, J.

R., Burris, E. R., & Harrison, D. A. (2010). Debunking four myths about employee silence. *Harvard Business Review, 88*, 26.

Overall, employee silence is a stifling behavior that has numerous negative effects on how people communicate and interact within the workplace. Let's switch our attention to the other end of the communication spectrum and discuss how employees articulate dissent within the workplace.

Organizational Dissent

Jeffrey Kassing proposed a model for what he coined "organizational dissent" as having two basic processes: (1) individual employee feels apart from her or his organization, and (2) the employee expresses disagreement about some aspect of her or his organization's philosophy or behavior.Kassing, J. W. (1997). Articulating, antagonizing, and displacing: A model of employee dissent. *Communication Research, 48*, 311–332. The second of these processes is similar to Tourish and Robson notion of critical upward communication.Tourish, D., & Robson, P. (2006). Sensemaking and the distortion of critical upward communication in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 43*, 711–730. Kassing believed that dissent is a "subset of employee voice that entails the expression of disagreement or contradictory opinions in the workplace." Kassing, J. W. (1998). Development and validation of the Organizational Dissent Scale. *Management Communication Quarterly, 12*, 183–229, pg. 184. Ultimately, the concept of organizational dissent stems out of the basic American value of freedom-of-speech where it is promoted that good citizens should be able to express their disagreement. However, in the organizational realm, employees must carefully decide whether expressing disagreement is worth the possible ramifications of disagreeing, "employees assess available strategies for expressing dissent in response to individual, relational, and organizational influences and that they actually express dissent after considering whether they will be perceived as adversarial or constructive as well as the likelihood that they will be retaliated against."Kassing, J. W. (1998). Development and validation of the Organizational Dissent Scale. *Management Communication Quarterly, 12*, 183–229, pg. 191. Ultimately, Kassing argued that there are three primary types of organizational dissent: articulated/upward, latent/lateral, and displaced.Kassing, J. W. (2011). *Key Themes in Organizational Communication Series: Dissent in organizations*. Malden, MA: Polity. Note 5.26 "Organizational Dissent Scale" contains the scale created by Kassing to measure employee dissent.

Organizational Dissent Scale

Read the following questions and select the answer that corresponds with how you communicate in your workplace. Do not be concerned if some of the items appear similar. Please use the scale below to rate the degree to which each statement applies to you:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____I am hesitant to raise questions or contradictory opinions in my organization.
2. _____I speak with my supervisor or someone in management when I question workplace decisions.
3. _____I make suggestions to management or my supervisor about correcting inefficiency in my organization.
4. _____I do not express my disagreement to management.
5. _____I tell management when I believe employees are being treated unfairly.
6. _____I bring my criticism about organizational changes that aren't working to my supervisor or someone in management.
7. _____I don't tell my supervisor when I disagree with workplace decisions.
8. _____I'm hesitant to question workplace policies.
9. _____I do not question management.
10. _____I complain about things in my organization with other employees.
11. _____I join in when other employees complain about organizational changes.
12. _____I share my criticism of this organization openly.
13. _____I hardly ever complain to my coworkers about workplace problems.
14. _____I let other employees know how I feel about the way things are done around here.
15. _____I do not criticize my organization in front of other employees.
16. _____I criticize inefficiency in this organization in front of everyone.

17. _____I make certain everyone knows when I'm unhappy with work policies.
18. _____I speak freely with my coworkers about troubling workplace issues.

SCORING: To compute your scores follow the instructions below:

1. Articulated Dissent

    Step One: Add scores for items 2, 3, 5, & 6

    Step Two: Add scores for items 1, 4, 7, 8, & 9

    Step Three: Add 30 to Step One.

    Step Four: Subtract the score for Step two from the score for Step Three.

2. Latent Dissent

    Step One: Add scores for items 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, & 18

    Step Two: Add scores for items 13 & 15

    Step Three: Add 12 to Step Two.

    Step Four: Subtract the score for Step two from the score for Step Three.

Interpreting Your Score

For articulated dissent, scores should be between 9 and 45. If your score is above 32, you are considered to engage in high amounts of articulated dissent. If your score is below 32, you're considered to engage in minimal amounts of articulated dissent.

For latent dissent, scores should be between 9 and 45. If your score is above 25, you are considered to engage in high amounts of latent dissent. If your score is below 25, you're considered to engage in minimal amounts of latent dissent.

Source: Kassing, J. W. (2000). Investigating the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship quality and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports, 17*, 58–70.

Articulated/upward dissent[23] "involves expressing dissent within organizations to audiences that can effectively influence organizational adjustment and occurs when employees believe they will be perceived as constructive and that their dissent will not lead to retaliation."Kassing, J. W. (1998). Development and validation of the Organizational Dissent Scale. *Management Communication Quarterly, 12*, 183–229, pgs. 191–192. Kassing further noted that there are five different types of dissent strategies subordinates can employ: direct-factual appeal, solution presentation, repetition, circumvention, and threatening resignation.Kassing, J. W. (2002). Speaking up: Identifying employees' upward dissent strategies. *Management Communication Quarterly, 16*, 187–209. The first articulated dissent strategy is direct-factual appeal, which is when "people provide factual information based on their own work experience and their understanding of company policies and practices when they express their disagreement to their supervisors."Kassing, J. W. (2005). Speaking up competently: A comparison of perceived competence in upward dissent strategies. *Communication Research Reports, 22*, 227–234, pg. 233. The second articulated dissent strategy is solution presentation, which is when a subordinate offers a solution to a workplace problem while raising concerns about the problem itself. The third articulated dissent strategy is repetition, or when a subordinate keeps raising the same issue over and over again over a period of time. The idea behind repetition is that if the problem is brought up over and over again, the supervisor may be more inclined to eventually do something about the problem. The fourth articulated dissent strategy is circumvention, which is when a subordinate goes around her or his immediate supervisor to someone higher up the hierarchy in an attempt to get some kind of action taken. While circumventing one's immediate supervisor can be very dangerous, there are often times when it is necessary. For example, many organizations have procedures for the reporting sexual harassment. The most common first step in sexual harassment procedures is to report any harassing behavior to your immediate supervisor, but what if your immediate supervisor is the one harassing you? Many organizations realize that supervisor harassment can be a problem, so they actually designate someone within the organization as the "go to" person for incidents of harassment. In these cases, individuals lower on the hierarchy are able to circumvent their supervisors and report the harassment to someone higher on the hierarchy. The last articulated dissent strategy is to threaten resignation. This dissent strategy is fairly simple: do what I want or I quit. Of course, this dissent strategy is only effective if the person dissenting is actually ready to resign. Never use threatening resignation as a bluffing tactic because your supervisor may just decide to call your bluff.

23. Form of organizational dissent involving the expression of dissent to one's leaders up the formal chain of the hierarchy.

The second type of organizational dissent, **latent/lateral dissent**[24], consists of communicative behaviors "that involves complaining to coworkers and voicing criticism openly within organizations."Kassing, J. W. (1998). Development and validation of the Organizational Dissent Scale. *Management Communication Quarterly, 12*, 183–229, pg. 211. Kassing labeled this form of dissent "latent dissent" because the term "suggests that dissent readily exists but is not always observable and that dissent becomes observable when certain conditions exists (i.e., when frustration mounts)."Kassing, J. W. (1998). Development and validation of the Organizational Dissent Scale. *Management Communication Quarterly, 12*, 183–229, pg. 211. This form of organizational dissent is actually a form of horizontal or lateral organizational communication, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

24. Form of organizational dissent consisting of communicative behaviors include complaining to coworkers and voicing criticism openly to others on the same level of the organizational hierarchy.

Current Research—Kassing

Investigating the Relationship between Superior-Subordinate

Relationship Quality and Employee Dissent

By. Jeffrey W. Kassing (2000)Kassing, J. W. (2000). Investigating the relationship between superior-subordinate relationship quality and employee dissent. *Communication Research Reports, 17*, 58–70.

In this study, Kassing set out to examine the relationship between subordinate-supervisor relationship quality and subordinate utilization of articulated and latent dissent. He recruited 232 employees who worked in various organizations throughout the state of Arizona. His sample consisted of 113 females (56%) and 99 males (43%) with 1% not responding to the question regarding biological sex. The mean age of the participants was 37.08 and the average length of time on their current job was 5.72 years. The study contained individuals at various levels of organizational hierarchies: 6% held top management positions, 30% held management positions, 57% held non-management positions, and 6% held other organizational positions.

In this study, Kassing had two basic hypotheses he wanted to test:

H1: Subordinates who perceive having high-quality relationships with their supervisors will report using significantly more articulated dissent than subordinates who perceive having low-quality relationships with their supervisors.

H2: Subordinates who perceive having low-quality relationships with their supervisors will report using significantly more latent dissent than subordinates who perceive having high-quality relationships with their supervisors.

To test these two hypotheses, Kassing used his measure of organizational dissent along with a measure of subordinate-supervisor relationship quality. Using the measure of subordinate-supervisor relationship quality, Kassing created two groups by taking those who scored above the median (indicating

high relationship quality) and those who scored below the median (indicating low relationship quality). Kassing then examined if these two groups differed in their use of articulated and latent dissent.

The results for the first hypothesis indicated that those individuals who reported having high relationship quality with their supervisors were more likely to engage in articulated dissent than those who reported having low relationship quality with their supervisors. Ultimately, the first hypothesis was supported by the results.

The results for the second hypothesis indicated that those individuals who reported having low relationship quality with their supervisors were more likely to engage in latent dissent than those who reported having high relationship quality with their supervisors. Ultimately, the second hypothesis was supported by the results.

Based on the results from this study, we learn that the quality of relationship an individual has with her or his immediate supervisor has a direct impact on both articulated and latent organizational dissent.

The final type of dissent is referred to as **displaced dissent**[25] and occurs outside of the confines of the organization itself. When an employee feels that dissent in the workplace could be harmful, he or she will often express dissent to friends and family members. Ultimately, whether an individual decides to express dissent within the organization (upward or lateral) depends on how he or she views the risks of doing so. If someone fears retaliation, bullying, or ostracism because of dissent, he or she will be less likely to engage in dissent within the workplace.Waldron, V. R., & Kassing, J. W. (2011). *Managing risk in communication encounters: Strategies for the workplace.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Research has also shown a relationship between employee silence and organizational dissent.Wrench, J. S. (2012). *The effect of office politics on employee silence and dissent.* Manuscript in Preparation. Specifically related to employee silence, Wrench found that acquiescent and defensive silence negatively related to articulated dissent and positively related to latent dissent. Conversely, prosocial silence positively related to articulated dissent and negatively related to latent dissent. Overall, this research demonstrates that there is a clear relationship between the use of silence within an organization and the way an employee expresses her or his dissent.

25. Form of organizational dissent that occurs when an employee feels that dissent in the workplace could be harmful, so he or she express dissent to friends and family members outside the boundaries of the organization.

Problems with Upward Communication

Randy Hirokawa noted that there are two primary problems associated with upward communication: distortion and filtering.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. Researchers have found that 85 percent of individuals had on at least one occasion "felt unable to raise an issue or concern to their bosses even though they felt that the issue was important."Milliken, F., Morrison, E., & Hewlin, P. (2003). An exploratory study of employee silence: Issues that employees don't communicate upward and why. *Journal of Management Studies, 40*, 1453–1476, pg. 1459. In essence, subordinates purposefully do not communicate information to their supervisors, which ultimately distorts the overall picture a supervisor has of what is going on in the workplace. The first study conducted on the issue of upward distortion was Glen Mellinger's ground breaking study on the subject.Mellinger, G. D. (1956). Interpersonal trust as a factor in communication. *Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, 52*, 304–309. Fredric Jablin summarized Mellinger's findings in this manner:

Results of this early inquiry into message distortion revealed that when Individual A does not trust Individual B, Individual A will conceal his/her feelings when communicating to B about a particular issue. Moreover, concealment of Individual A's true feelings was found to be often associated with evasive, compliant, or aggressive communicative behavior on his/her part and with under- or overestimation of agreement on the issue by individual B. Jablin, F. M. (1979). Superior-subordinate communication: The state of the art. *Psychological Bulletin, 86*, 1201–1222, pgs. 1204–1205.

In essence, when a subordinate is not forthcoming with her or his thoughts on an issue, a supervisor often guesses what her or his subordinates think about the specific issue.

Now that we've examined Randy Hirokawa's first problem associated with upward communication (distortion),Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. we need focus on the "three possible culprits" of failure in upward communication: trust, influence, and mobility.Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A., III. (1974). Failures in upward communication in organizations: Three possible culprits. *Academy of Management Journal, 17*, 205–215. The first reason why upward distortion may happen is because a subordinate doesn't trust her or his supervisor. If a subordinate does not perceive her or his supervisor as trustworthy, the subordinate is simply more likely to avoid telling the supervisor anything other than absolutely necessary information. The

second reason why upward distortion may occur is a result of subordinate perceptions of supervisor influence over subordinate's future. Subordinates who perceive a supervisor as having a great effect on their futures could react in two totally different ways. Some subordinates will be very open with communication in an effort to build a stronger relationship with their supervisor, whereas other subordinates will actually go along with whatever a supervisor wants even if the subordinate thinks it's a bad idea. In one case a subordinate could end up over communicating, while in the other case a subordinate ends up under communicating, either way you end up with upward distortion. The third reason for upward distortion relates to an individual's desire to move up within the hierarchy. It's one thing for a supervisor to have influence over your career path, and a completely different thing to either care or not care about mobility.

In one study the researchers examined four different organizations to see the effect of trust, influence, and mobility had on the quantity of upward communication.Roberts, K. H., & O'Reilly, C. A., III. (1974). Failures in upward communication in organizations: Three possible culprits. *Academy of Management Journal, 17*, 205–215. They found that trust and influence both positively related to the quantity of upward communication, and mobility did not really play a factor in the quantity of upward communication. This study was later replicated finding the same results.Blalack, R. O. (1986). The impact of trust and perceived superior influence on upward communication: A further test. *American Business Review, 3*, 62–66. In essence, people who trust their supervisors and perceive their supervisors as influencing their careers engage in more upward communication.

> ## Communicating Ethically
>
> From a subordinate's perspective, is upward distortion ever an ethical communicative practice? Often supervisors will want information from a subordinate that could harm the subordinate or her or his coworkers, so determining whether one should distort information or not can be a hard thing to decide. For example, what if your supervisor asks you about one of your coworker's recent performance and your coworker's performance was subpar? Do you tell your supervisor the truth knowing that the coworker could be reprimanded or fired, or do you distort the facts in an effort to "save" your coworker? People in organizations often distort information to help themselves or their peers, but is it ever ethical?
>
> On the other hand, what if your supervisor asked you about her or his performance, which has been problematic; do you tell him the truth? Obviously, saying that communication distortion is always unethical would be easy to say, but is that really the case? Can communication distortion be ethical?

The second problem Randy Hirokawa noted with upward communication relates to filtering. Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. Organizations today often suffer from what they termed info-glut or data smog, which is to say that organizations have a problem with communication overload.Edmunds, A., & Morris, A. (2000). The problem of information overload in business organizations: A review of the literature. *International Journal of Information Management, 20*, 17–28. Just as we discussed earlier in this chapter that downward communication can lead to communication overload, so can receiving too much information from one's subordinates. Ultimately, there is a fine line between the necessity of ensuring honest upward communication and receiving too much upward communication. Supervisors must learn how to filter out information from all directions that isn't necessary, but this is a skill that takes time and energy to learn. At the same time, subordinates also need to learn what information is necessary for their supervisors to have and what information is not necessary.

Effective Methods for Upward Communication

While there is no magic bullet for improving upward communication within an organization, we do believe there are four best practices that all supervisors should

engage in: establish trust, use multiple mediums, show utility, and decrease barriers. First, and definitely the most important best practice for ensuring quality upward communication, is establishing a trusting relationship with one's subordinates. As discussed above, trust clearly leads to an increase in upward communication from one's subordinates.Roberts, K. H., &O'Reilly, C. A., III. (1974). Failures in upward communication in organizations: Three possible culprits. *Academy of Management Journal, 17*, 205–215.'Blalack, R. O. (1986). The impact of trust and perceived superior influence on upward communication: A further test. *American Business Review, 3*, 62–66. When subordinates trust their supervisors they are more likely to engage in two-way communication that is honest and productive.

Second, Hirokawa recommends that managers utilize multiple strategies when soliciting upward communication.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. Supervisors should use a variety of strategies for increasing upward communication: routine discussion meetings, supervisor's appraisals of individual employees, manager's appraisals of individual supervisors, attitude surveys, employee suggestion programs, grievance procedures, open-door policies, and exit interviews.Upward communication. (2004, October). *Management Report, 27*(10), 2–4. All of these different strategies can definitely help increase upward communication. However, all of the strategies may not be the most beneficial for all types of information a supervisor needs, so a supervisor should think critically before implementing one strategy over another.

The third best practice for increasing upward communication is to clearly show that subordinate input is taken seriously. Too often people become discouraged when their feedback is given and the feedback is never acknowledged or nothing is done with the feedback. Obviously, not all ideas subordinates have can be legitimately implemented, however we do recommend establishing a method for responding to all ideas. For example, if you have an employee suggestion program, you may also want to implement a response to employee suggestions section in the organization newsletter. When employee suggestions cannot be implemented for legitimate reasons, simply explaining why the suggestions cannot be implemented is the best way to make employees feel that their ideas were taken seriously even if not implemented. Furthermore, when you implement an employee's suggestion, make sure to communicate to everyone that this has occurred because it will increase the likelihood of future upward communication by all employees.Upward communication. (2004, October). *Management Report, 27*(10), 2–4.

Lastly, Hirokawa also recommends decreasing physical barriers between superiors and subordinates in an effort to increase interaction.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. Based on research in

Japanese organizations, Hirokawa argued that Japanese managers have more effective upward communication with their subordinates because the managers spend more time on the workshop floor directly interacting with their subordinates.Hirokawa, R. A. (1981). Improving intra-organizational communication: A lesson from Japanese management. *Communication Quarterly, 30*, 35–40. The idea of decreasing barriers is nothing new in the United States because Bill Hewlett and David Packard created a management strategy in the 1940s simply titled Management by Walking Around (MBWA). MBWA is an easy way for management to increase interaction with their subordinates and ward off potential organizational problems.Pace, A. (2008, August). Leaving the corner office. *Training + Development, 62*(8), p. 16. Too often managers are over taxed with many duties, and overseeing people is just one of many things managers have to accomplish during a workday. However, the only way to really establish a trusting relationship with one's subordinates is through consistent face-to-face interaction. However, there are three conditions necessary for MBWA.Pace, A. (2008, August). Leaving the corner office. *Training + Development, 62*(8), p. 16. First, managers need to interact with each subordinate and be prepared for honest feedback. During these interactions, managers can learn about potential problems and about what individual subordinates are doing. Second, managers should encourage dialogue about non-work topics. If a manager sticks strictly to work topics, subordinates may perceive her or him as distant and non-communicative. Lastly, managers should not be critical of subordinates while engaging in MBWA. The goal of MBWA is to encourage subordinates to open up and communicate. If a manager is constantly criticizing people during her or his treks out of the office, people will start to dread seeing the manager of the office and will be more likely engage in upward distortion.

Horizontal/Lateral Communication

Horizontal or lateral communication[26] consists of messages that are transmitted to other individuals on the same rung of the organizational hierarchy. In essence, horizontal or lateral communication occurs when individuals who have roughly the same status interact with one another in an organization. Occasionally, these lines of communication are firmly established within the organizational hierarchy chart, but typically these lines of communication are not part of the traditional hierarchical chart. As discussed in <u>Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication"</u>, one of the earliest theorists on the nature of horizontal/lateral communication was a French mining engineer named Henri Fayol. Fayol published his treatise on administration in 1916 called *Administration Industrielle et Générale,*Fayol, H. (1949). *General and industrial management* (C. Storrs, Trans.). London: Pitman. (Reprinted from *Administration industrielle et générale*, 1916) but did not reach English readers until 1949 when the text was translated by Constance Storrs as *General and Industrial Management.* Fayol had lots of ideas on how organizations should function, but his ideas on horizontal communication are what

26. Messages that are transmitted to other individuals on the same rung of the organizational hierarchy.

we are interested here. Fayol believed that communication within an organization should travel up and down very clear channels of communication. In Figure 5.1 "Scalar Chain", we see an example of an organizational hierarchy with one head administrator, two supervisors, and six subordinates. Three of the subordinates work directly under Supervisor A and three work directly under Supervisor B. According to Fayol, if subordinate #3a working under Supervisor A needs to communicate something to subordinate #1b working under Supervisor B, the message would have to go up the hierarchy and then back down the hierarchy. In this case, Subordinate 3a, would communicate the message to Supervisor A who would then communicate the message to the head administrator. The head administrator would then communicate the message to Supervisor B, who would finally communicate the message to Subordinate 1b. However, Fayol did believe that an alternate chain of communication is necessary during periods of crisis. When information needed to get to someone quickly because of a crisis, Fayol created a mechanism that would temporarily bridge two individuals on the same level of the hierarchy. Figure 5.2 "Fayol's Bridge" illustrates how the Fayol Bridge would work. During a crisis, Subordinate 3a would communicate to Supervisor A the importance of getting the information to Subordinate 1b quickly. If Supervisor A believes that the speed at which Subordinate 1b receives the information is important, then Supervisor A will give permission to Subordinate 3a to transmit that information directly to Subordinate 1b.

Figure 5.1   *Scalar Chain*

Figure 5.2   *Fayol's Bridge*

The idea of hierarchical control over messages was very commonplace all the way through the 1950s:

Although communication between departments on the same level occurs, theoretically it is not supposed to be direct. Reports, desires for services, or criticisms that one department has of another are supposed to be sent up the line until they reach an executive who heads the organizations involved. They are then held, revised, or sent directly down the line to the appropriate officials and departments. The reason for this circuitous route is to inform higher officials of things occurring below them. Miller, D. C., & Form, W. H. (1951). *Industrial sociology*. New York: Harper, pg. 158.

When one reads this quotation from Miller and Form, one is led to believe that vertical (upward & downward) communication is the most common channel of communication in organizations, and it should be.Simpson, R. L. (1959). Vertical and horizontal communication in formal organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 4*, 188–196. However, the type of organization is the ultimate determinator of whether there is primarily vertical communication or horizontal communication occurring. Simpson, R. L. (1959). Vertical and horizontal communication in formal organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 4*, 188–196.

By the 1960s and 1970s, researchers began to realize that the idea of primarily vertical oriented communication was highly unrealistic and not necessarily beneficial to organizations. Furthermore, horizontal/lateral communication actually enabled lower level supervisors to engage in automatic horizontal/lateral communication. By automatic, Joseph Massie was referring to "habitual, routine, and spontaneous reaction of managers to a problem situation."Massie, J. L. (1960). Automatic horizontal communication in management. *Journal of the Academy of Management, 3*, 87–91, pg. 88. Ultimately, enabling lower level managers to decide courses of action on some decisions relieved high level administrators "not only from making some decisions but also from consciously structuring the decision-making pattern for lower level managers."Massie, J. L. (1960). Automatic horizontal communication in management. *Journal of the Academy of Management, 3*, 87–91, pg. 88. This process of allowing individuals at various levels of the hierarchy to participate in decision-making and implementing courses of action is called decentralization because the decision-making is disbursed through the organization instead of being centered at the top of the hierarchy.Child, J. (2005). *Organization: Contemporary principles and practice.* London: Blackwell.'Hilmer, F. G., & Donaldson, L. (1996). *Management redeemed: Debunking the fads that undermine our corporations.* New York: Free Press. Furthermore, decentralization of decision-making greatly reduces the problems associated with serial transmission of messages. Earlier in this chapter we discussed how serial transmission of messages leads to all kinds of problems, and the more rungs up and down a hierarchy a message must travel, the greater the chance of the message distortion.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research.* New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc. Now that we have examined the basic perspectives on horizontal/lateral communication, we can examine the types of horizontal/lateral communication, problems with horizontal/lateral communication, and effective methods for horizontal/lateral communication.

Types of Horizontal/Lateral Communication

According to Randy Hirokawa there are four functions to horizontal communication: task coordination, problem solving, sharing of information, and

conflict resolution.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. The function of horizontal/lateral communication is to help organizational members coordinate tasks to help the system achieve its goals. Often people in different departments are completely unaware of how their department impacts another department's ability to function. When different departments are brought together and shown how each department helps the organization strive for its goals, departments are able to ascertain how they can actually help each other more effectively.

The second function of horizontal/lateral communication is to allow organizational members to solve problems. The basic process of "brain storming" is always more effective when you have numerous departments thinking about how to solve specific problems. For example, if your entire organization is having problems with recycling, it wouldn't be beneficial if only members from one department got together to talk about the problem. When there are system-wide problems facing an organization, the organization needs system wide solutions.

The third function of horizontal/lateral communication is the sharing of information among organizational members. As we've already mentioned in this chapter, there are numerous reasons why individuals may be reluctant to share information, but when people hoard information the overall organization suffers. The need for sharing can be explained in this way, "it is through the sharing of information that organizational members become aware of the activities of the organization and their collegues [sic]." Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 89.

The final function of horizontal/lateral communication is conflict resolution. When individuals are in conflict with each other, the easiest way to solve the conflict is through direct interaction. Often simple conflicts are a result of misunderstandings that can become exacerbated if not handled quickly and efficiently. For this reason, "in the presence of conflict between organizational members within a department or section, the ability to discuss the matter of concern can often lead to a resolution of the conflict." Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 89. If an organization opts to utilize Fayol's (1916) ideas of horizontal communication, "one would have to go half-way around the organizational hierarchy to get a message to a collegue [sic] if one were to remove horizontal channels."Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 89. As always, the more direct the path of communication is the more likely the message will remain uncorrupted.

Problems with Horizontal/Lateral Communication

As with both vertical types of communication, horizontal/lateral communication is not without its own share of problems. In fact, Valerie McClelland and Richard Wilmot reported a study conducted by the consulting group Wilmot Associates in which "more than 60% of employees in a variety of organizations say that lateral communication is ineffective.McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. More specifically, about 45% say communication between peers within departments is inadequate, and 70% claim that communication between departments must improve" McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38, pg. 32. In fact, the literature has shown us that there are four basic issues that negatively effect on horizontal/lateral communication within an organization: lack of rewards, competition, intra-organizational conflicts, and lack of lateral understanding.

No Reward Structure

The first issue that can negatively affect horizontal/lateral communication within an organization occurs as result of no reward structure for horizontal/lateral communication. Classical theories of organizational communication didn't even recognize horizontal/lateral communication as an important function yet alone something that should be openly encouraged.Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95. People who work in organizations are often given numerous tasks, and behaviors that are not rewarded by the organization are simply ignored and seen as nonessential. For this reason, many organizations have a serious lack in both quantity and quality of horizontal/lateral communication.

Inter-Departmental Competition

The second issue that can negatively impact horizontal/lateral communication occurs as a result of inter-departmental competition. Both Hirokawa and McClelland and Wilmot note that many organizations purposefully pit different departments against each other. Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95.'McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. When departments are forced to compete with each other, there should be no surprise that hoarding information becomes a common phenomenon. Hirokawa noted that this desire for interdepartmental competition is a uniquely American concept. In his analysis comparing American versus Japanese organizations, this sense of competition often

"causes [organizational members] to hoard information, rather than sharing it with their collegues [sic]."Hirokawa, R. A. (1981). Improving intra-organizational communication: A lesson from Japanese management. *Communication Quarterly, 30*, 35–40, pg. 90. (p. 90). Japanese organizations, on the other hand, foster a sense of collaboration, which actually leads to an increase in both the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication.

Intra-Organizational Conflicts

The third issue that can negatively impact horizontal/lateral communication arises from intra-organizational conflicts. "Any time that individuals from different departments within an organization interact, there is always a potential for conflict." Hirokawa, R. Y. (1979). Communication and the managerial function: Some suggestions for improving organizational communication. *Communication, 8*, 83–95, pg. 90. The most common reason for interdepartmental conflict is a perception of incompatible goals. If the software development department wants to take time to get the kinks out of a new product, but the marketing department wants to get the product in customers' hands immediately, you're going to end up with conflict. When people perceive conflict as an innately negative endeavor, they are more likely to resist any contact that could lead to a conflict. We will discuss the process of conflict in much greater detail in Chapter 13 "Technology in Organizations".

Inadequate Lateral Understanding

The final issue that can negatively impact horizontal/lateral communication occurs as a result of inadequate lateral understanding.McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. Lateral understanding is the degree to which individuals within an organization understand the purpose and functions of what individuals do in various departments throughout the organization. Employees often end up wasting very valuable time trying to figure out who does what in an organization when a problem arises. As McClelland and Wilmot wrote, "employees don't understand the goals, responsibilities and capabilities of other departments . . . this is evident even at senior levels." McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38, pg. 33. There are three major outcomes related to inadequate lateral understanding: waste of time, work overlapping, and poor decision making. First, People ultimately waste a lot of time attempting to determine who they should be contacting in the first place. Second, you may end up with two employees in two departments basically performing the exact same task without realizing that someone else is completing the task. Lastly, managers will often make decisions that negatively impact other departments without even knowing this has occurred.

Effective Methods for Horizontal/Lateral Communication

In an attempt to help organizations communicative more effectively, McClelland and Wilmot devised a series of seven best practices that organizations should adopt to improve horizontal/lateral communication: develop lateral understanding, flexible chain of command, share clear and consistent direction, set the example, institute lateral teams, ensure accountability to departments and organization, make training available, and develop dialogue between shifts and locations.McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. The first way to improve horizontal/lateral communication is to increase lateral understanding. As previously discussed, when people don't understand what other parts of the organization are doing, you end up with people wasting time and resources, duplicating work, and/or making decisions that negatively impact other departments. Lateral understanding should become a priority for all individuals within an organization from the very top to the very bottom. In fact, holding "a forum in which to provide supervisors with an understanding of the opportunities, challenges, goals and structures of their area of responsibility."McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38, pg. 36. Only when people start learning about the opportunities, challenges, goals, and structures of other departments can they see how to improve horizontal/lateral communication.

McClelland and Wilmot's second suggestion for increasing the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication is to establish a flexible chain of command.McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. When organizational members are forced to adhere to rigid lines of communication, the likelihood of productive horizontal/lateral communication is decreased. Only when top administrators realize that Fayol's scalar chain isn't effective will they stop feeling the need to micromanage information flow at all levels of the organization.Fayol, H. (1949). *General and industrial management* (C. Storrs, Trans.). London: Pitman. (Reprinted from *Administration industrielle et générale*, 1916)

The third best practice for increasing the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication is to ensure that clear and consistent messages are delivered downward. When all of the supervisors are on the same page, the chance of mixed or conflicting messages getting sent down the hierarchy is greatly reduced. Furthermore, when all subordinates within an organization receive the message simultaneously, supervisors prevent the appearance of senior administration favoring one department over another. Furthermore, systematic downward communication decreases the likelihood of mixed messages, and even though "an inconsistent message is unintentional, it can be destructive to relationships between employees and management."McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990).

Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38, pg. 36. Therefore, ensuring effective horizontal/lateral communication among supervisors and coordinating downward messages can help to foster relationships between employees and management.

The fourth best practice for increasing the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication is for senior administration and supervisors to set the example. If an organization wants to increase the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication, then all members of the organization should be actively engaged in horizontal/lateral communication. When people on the lower rungs of the hierarchy witness effective horizontal/lateral communication among those individuals above them in the hierarchy, they are more likely to participate in horizontal/lateral communication as well. Ultimately, the only way to ensure organization wide effective horizontal/lateral communication is to start it at the top and expect it to occur throughout the entire organization.

Another way to increase horizontal/lateral communication in organizations is to establish lateral teams. The establishment of teams that include individuals from various departments can help initiate contact and understanding between various members of the organization. However, McClelland and Wilmot do recommend that these teams actually have some level of individual autonomy to make decisions and then be held accountable for creating tangible results.McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38. When teams are allowed to participate in the decision-making process and follow through with those decisions, team members end up taking a considerable amount of ownership of their decisions. Furthermore, the more an organization utilizes lateral teams, the more adept an organization becomes at foreseeing possible problems and warding them off before they are problems.

Another important practice for improving the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication is to hold everyone accountable to the organization. "When managers are accountable for decisions that adversely affect others, they're more likely to work together on changes and solve problems jointly At the same time, all departments should also be held accountable for making sure that they are helping the organization's goals. The only way for departments to demonstrate they are helping the organization's goals is to demonstrate how they fit into the larger piece of the puzzle, which requires them to know what the larger puzzle actually looks like.

McClelland and Wilmot also recommend providing training for new organizational members and existing organizational members in effective horizontal/lateral communication, decision-making, and teamwork. For many individuals, the

thought of actually interacting with individuals in other departments is a completely new concept, so training becomes very important. "Many employees reveal a lack of understand about how to work with others constructively without putting co-workers on the defensive. Through continual involvement and interaction, they'll be sensitized to the value of interpersonal communication and internal networking."McClelland, V. A., & Wimot, R. E. (1990). Improve lateral communication. *Personnel Journal, 69*, 32–38, pg. 38.

The final best practice for increasing the quality and quantity of horizontal communication in the workplace is to develop dialogue between shifts and locations. Let's handle both of these topics separately. First, increasing communication between members of different shifts is extremely important because it allows people to get a greater grasp of what is occurring. When people do not communicate during shift changes, the people starting their shifts waste time determining what needs to be accomplished during their shift. Fundamentally, increased communication during shift changes leads to a decrease in mistakes and an increase in efficiency.

Up to this point, most of our discussion of horizontal communication has really been framed for individuals who all work within one compound of an organization. However, in today's global environment, many people are constantly having to interact with people in other time zones or different countries that all belong to the same organization. Often multinational corporations will even have individuals within the same department on different continents. Because of the unique nature of multinational corporations, they have their own set of concerns relating to horizontal/lateral communication. One of the strongest benefits of the multinational corporation is its ability to rely on expertise and information from across the various subsidiaries of the multinational corporation.Charles, M., & Marschan-Piekkari, R. (2002). Language training for enhanced horizontal communication: A challenge for MNCs. *Business Communication Quarterly, 65*, 9–29. There are five distinct organizational behaviors to increase the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication in multinational corporations:

1. Conducting a linguistic audit (helps the organization know where potential language problems are);
2. Making specific comprehension proficiency a priority (often the ability to understand a language is more important in business than being able to speak or write in that language)
3. Encouraging staff to understand and negotiate Global Englishes (English may be the general language of modern business, but there are multiple variations people should be aware of);

4. Include native English speakers in communication training (native English speakers need to be trained to limit their vocabularies and grammatical structures, speak slowly and clearly; and

5. Avoid cultural idioms when interacting with non-native English speakers), and making language and communication a corporate level function (letting individual subsidiaries decide language and communication training can backfire, so they should be seen as part of the corporate level).Charles, M., & Marschan-Piekkari, R. (2002). Language training for enhanced horizontal communication: A challenge for MNCs. *Business Communication Quarterly, 65*, 9–29.

In this section we have examined the world of formal communication networks in organizations. Specifically, we have examined the roles, problems, and best practices for downward, upward, and horizontal/lateral communication. In the next section, we are going to shift our attention to informal communication networks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Max Weber (1930) believed organizations had two ways to get employees to follow one's directives: power and authority. Power is the ability to force people to obey regardless of their resistance, whereas authority occurs when orders are voluntarily obeyed by those receiving them. Weber argued that individuals in authority-based organizations were more likely to perceive directives as legitimate.
- Katz and Kahn (1966) created a typology of downward communication that consisted of five distinct types of downward communication: job instructions, job rationales, procedures and practices, feedback, and indoctrination.
- Hirokawa (1979) noted that there are two primary problems associated with downward communication: accuracy (how truthful a message is that has been received) and adequacy (whether or not the information being communicated is sufficient to satisfy a requirement or need for information in the workplace).
- Hirokawa (1979) believed there are four functions of upward communication: (1) allows management to ascertain the success of previously relayed downward communication; (2) allows individuals at the bottom of the hierarchy to have a voice in policies and procedures; (3) allows subordinates to voice suggestions and opinions to make the working environment better; and (4) allows management to test how employees will react to new policies and procedures.
- Katz and Kahn (1966) created a typology for upward communication consisting of four distinct types: (1) information about the subordinate her/himself, (2) information about coworkers and their problems, (3) information about organizational policies and procedures, and (4) information about the task.
- Tourish and Robson (2006) argued that Katz and Kahn's (1966) typology for upward communication was incomplete and argued for a fifth one they called critical upward communication, which consists of communicative behaviors that are critical of management behavior. Two common forms of critical upward communication studied in communication are employee silence (when an employee intentionally or unintentionally withhold information that might be useful to a leader or her or his organization) and organizational dissent (when an employee expresses her disagreement with management behavior).
- Henri Fayol's (1916/1949) believed that organizations needed to have a very strict organizational hierarchy where all information flowed up and down appropriate channels. During a crisis situation, a lower employee could ask her or his immediate supervisor to communicate information to another lower employee located on the same rung of the

hierarchy. Only if the lower-level employee's supervisor agreed with the urgency, would that lower-level employee be allowed to interact with someone else on the same rung of the hierarchy.

- Hirokawa (1979) noted four functions to horizontal communication: task coordination, problem solving, sharing of information, and conflict resolution. The function of horizontal/lateral communication is to help organizational members coordinate tasks to help the system achieve its goals.
- Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002) recommend five distinct organizational behaviors to increase the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication in multinational corporations: (1) conduct a linguistic audit (helps the organization know where potential language problems are), (2) make specific comprehension proficiency a priority (often the ability to understand a language is more important in business than being able to speak or write in that language), (3) encourage staff to understand and negotiate Global Englishes (English may be the general language of modern business, but there are multiple variations people should be aware of), (4) include native English speakers in communication training (native English speakers need to be trained to limit their vocabularies and grammatical structures, speak slowly and clearly, and avoid cultural idioms when interacting with non-native English speakers), and (5) make language and communication a corporate level function (letting individual subsidiaries decide language and communication training can backfire, so they should be seen as part of the corporate level).

EXERCISES

1. Using Katz and Kahn (1966) typology of downward communication (job instructions, job rationales, procedures and practices, feedback, & indoctrination), how would you describe the state of downward communication within your own organization?

2. Using Katz and Kahn (1966) typology of upward communication (information about the subordinate her/himself, information about coworkers and their problems, information about organizational policies and procedures, & information about the task), how would you characterize the state of upward communication within your own organization?

3. Think of a time in your own work history where you've engaged in the three types of dissent discussed by Jeffrey Kassing (articulated, latent, & displaced). Why did you opt to use that specific type of dissent in that communicative context?

4. Charles and Marschan-Piekkari (2002) recommend five distinct organizational behaviors to increase the quality and quantity of horizontal/lateral communication in multinational corporations. Do you think Charles and Marschan-Piekkari's ideas hold true with the revolution of social media in the workplace?

5.2 Informal Communication Networks

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand Mishra's (1990) eight reasons for the existence of grapevines in organizations.
2. Differentiate among Davis's (1969) four informal communication networks.
3. Explain the relationship between social capital and communication networks.
4. Understand Brass's (1995) typology for the measurement of ties.
5. Understand Brass's (1995) typology for the measures assigned to individual actors.
6. Understand Brass's (1995) typology for the measures assigned to networks.

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In the previous section of this book, we examined the three types of formal communication networks that exist within organizations (downward, upward, & horizontal/lateral). While formal communication networks are very important for the day-to-day functioning of any organization, there exists another set of communication networks that also dramatically impacts the day-to-day functioning of any organization. This second set of communication networks are called **informal communication**[27] networks, or communication networks that do not exist within the structure of the organizational hierarchy. Early research in organizational communication didn't even acknowledge the existence or the importance of these informal networks. However, the Hawthorne Studies suggested that a great deal of what happens within an organization is a result of informal communication networks. Often informal communication networks have been referred to as "grapevine communication" or "water cooler communication."

The term "grapevine" was originally coined during the Civil War because the telegraph lines used by Army intelligence were strung through trees and the wires often resembled grapevines. According to Mishra, "The messages that came over these lines were often so confusing or inaccurate that soon any rumor was said to

27. Organizational communication that occurs outside the the structure of the formal organizational hierarchy.

come from the grapevine."Mishra, J. (1990). Managing the grapevine. *Public Personnel Management, 19*, 213–228, pg. 214. Today organizational grapevines are a standard part of anyone's organizational life. In fact, researchers estimate that 70 percent of all communication that occurs within an organization occurs in informal communication networks.DeMare, G. (1989). Communicating: The key to establishing good working relationships. *Price Waterhouse Review, 33*, 30–37. In essence, the bulk of actual communicative behavior within an organization does not go according to the prescribed lines of communication desired by upper management. Furthermore, researchers found that many managers were surprisingly unaware of the informal communication networks that existed within their organizations.Crampton, S. M., Hodge, J. W., & Mishra, J. M. (1998). The informal communication network: Factors influencing grapevine activity. *Public Personnel Management, 27*, 569–584. Only 70 percent of top-level managers, 81 percent of middle level managers, and 92 percent of lower level managers were even aware that a grapevine existed within their organizations. We should also note that research has found that informal communication networks are just as likely to exist among management as among subordinates. In fact, "Bosses who chose not to pay attention to the grapevine have 50% less credible information than those who do" Mishra, J. (1990). Managing the grapevine. *Public Personnel Management, 19*, 213–228, pg. 215. Furthermore, there are eight reasons why grapevine communication exists in organizations:

1. Grapevines are faster than formal communication networks and can easily bypass individuals without restraint.
2. Grapevines can carry useful information quickly throughout an organization.
3. Grapevines can supplement information being disseminated through formal communication networks.
4. Grapevines provide outlets for individual's imaginations and apprehensions.
5. Grapevines satisfy individuals' need to know what is actually going on within an organization.
6. Grapevines help people feel a sense of belonging within the organization.
7. Grapevines serve as early warning systems for organizational crises and to think through what they will do if the crises actually occur.
8. Grapevines help to build teamwork, motivate people, and create corporate identity. Mishra, J. (1990). Managing the grapevine. *Public Personnel Management, 19*, 213–228, extrapolated from pg. 215.

While grapevines are clearly beneficial to organizations and their members, there are obvious problems with informal communication networks. The biggest problem stems out of the unreliability of information being transmitted in informal

communication networks. We should mention that research has found that information transmitted through informal communication networks tends to be 75 to 95 percent accurate.Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272. Unfortunately, the 5 to 25 percent of the time the informal communication network contains false information is highly problematic for organizations.

Now that we've examined the nature of informal communication networks and the reasons for informal communication networks, we need to switch gears and look at the types of informal communication networks.

Types of Informal Communication Networks

In this section, we're going to discuss how informal communication networks pass information along from person-to-person. Keith Davis found four basic types of informal communication networks: single strand, gossip, probability, and cluster.Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272.

Figure 5.3   *Informal Communication Networks*

The first type of informal communication network described by Davis was the single strand communication network (Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"a).Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272. In a **single strand network**[28], the process of communication is very linear and information travels from one person to the next person. The best way to think of this type of informal communication network is like a relay race. But instead of passing a baton between runners, some type of information is passed from person to person. This communication network represents the traditional notions of serialized transmission.Redding, W. C. (1972). *Communication with the organization: An interpretive review of theory and research*. New York: Industrial Communication Council, Inc.

The second type of informal communication network Davis discussed was the **gossip communication network**[29] (Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"b).Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272. In a gossip network, you have one individual who serves as the source of the message who transmits the message to a number of people directly.

28. Type of informal communication network where information travels from one person to the next person.

29. Type of informal communication networkwhere one individual who serves as the source of the message who transmits the message to a number of people directly.

The third type of informal communication described by Davis is referred to as the **probability communication network**[30] (Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"c).Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272. In a probability communication network, you have one individual as the primary source of the message who randomly selects people within her or his communication network to communicate the message. These secondary people then randomly pick other people in the communication network to pass along the message. Think of this type of informal communication network as really annoying internet spam. In the case of internet Spam, someone creates the e-mail, and then sends it to random people who then feel the need to forward it to other people, and so on and so on. There is no way for the source of the message to truly track where the message has been sent after the message is communicated because the transmission is random.

The final form of informal communication network described by Davis is the **cluster network**[31] (Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"d).Davis, K. (1969). Grapevine communication among lower and middle managers. *Personnel Journal, 48*, 269–272. Cluster networks are considerably more systematic than probability networks. In the case of a cluster network, the source of the message chooses a number of pre-selected people with whom to communicate a message. The secondary people then pass on the message to a group of people who have also been pre-selected to receive the message. This type of network is the origin of the telephone tree. In a telephone tree, one person calls two people. Those two people then are expected to call three other people. Those three people are then also expected to call three other people. Before you know it, everyone who is on the telephone tree has received the message.

30. Type of informal communication network where one individual serves as the primary source of the message who randomly selects people within her or his communication network to communicate the message, and then these secondary people randomly pick other people in the communication network to pass along the message.

31. Type of informal communication network where the source of the message chooses a number of pre-selected people with whom to communicate a message, and then the secondary people then pass on the message to a group of people who have also been pre-selected to receive the message.

Researcher Profile—Everett M. Rogers (1931–2004)

Everett M. Rogers is generally viewed in the field of communication studies as the father of information diffusion. Rogers grew up in Caroll, Iowa, and ultimately earned his Ph.D. in sociology and statistics from Iowa State University in 1957. Over the course of his academic career, Rogers taught at numerous universities both within the United States and abroad including: Ohio State University, Michigan State University, National University of Columbia, and Universite de Paris.

In 1962, Rogers published the first edition of his book *The Diffusion of Innovations* where he described how, why, and at what rate new ideas and technology spread through social groups. One of the social groups Rogers specifically examined was organizations. Through his analysis, Rogers proposed that there were five types of individuals involved with the diffusion of innovations: innovators (2.5%), early adopters (13.5%), early majority (34%), late majority (34%) and laggards (16%). Innovators were people who created new ideas and technology or brought the new ideas and technology to the social group. Early adopters were those people who quickly latched on to the new innovations. The early majority were those individuals who comprised the first massive wave of people adopting a new innovation. The late majority were those individuals who waited a little longer than the early majority. Lastly, Laggards were those individuals who really put off adopting the new innovation, and some laggards simply never would adopt the new idea or technology.

One area that diffusion of innovations has been particularly utilized has been in the field of health communication. Specifically, health communication researchers have examined how health related mediated messages get transmitted between individuals within a social network, which ultimately has been shown to lead to social change (Smith, 2004). Hornik (2004) summarized that diffusion of innovations ultimately examines four basic questions:

1. What is the process of invention and adaptation of technologies or ideas subject to diffusion?
2. Why do some people (or collectivities) adopt before others?
3. What is the process that people go through as they adopt?

    ◦ What are the stages they go through?
    ◦ What influences them at each stage (sources)?

4. What are the consequences with regard to social welfare (growth and equity) given particular policies about, or patterns of, diffusion? (p. 143)

As a diffusion scholar, Rogers was very aware of network analysis and during his tenure at Michigan State University (1964–1973) he actively included information on network analysis in his courses and seminars on diffusion. Furthermore, Rogers created the first undergraduate course in organizational communication in 1966, which is considered to be the first such course on the undergraduate level in the world (Susskind, Schwartz, Richards, & Johnson, 2005).

In 1981, Rogers with his former student Larry Kincaid published the seminal work on communication network analysis titled *Communication Networks: Toward New Paradigm for Research*. In this book, Rogers and Kincaid argue:

Communication network analysis is a method of research for identifying the communication structure in a system, in which relational data about communication flows are analyzed by using some type of interpersonal relationship as the unit of analysis. This distinctive emphasis of network analysis upon communication links, rather than on isolated individuals, as units of analysis, enables the researcher to explore the influence of other individuals on human behavior. (p. xi)

Ultimately, Rogers and Kincaid's book ushered in the modern era of communication network analysis within the field of communication studies as well as the fields of business and sociology.

References

Hornik, R. (2004). Some reflections on diffusion theory and the role of Everett Rogers. *Journal of Health Communication, 9*, 143–148.

Rogers, E. M. (1962). *Diffusion of innovations.* New York: The Free Press.

Rogers, E. M., & Kincaid, L. (1981). *Communication networks: Toward new paradigm for research.* New York: Free Press.

Smith, W. (2004). Ev Rogers: Helping to build a modern synthesis of social change. *Journal of Health Communication, 9*, 139–142.

Susskind, A. M., Schwartz, D. F., Richards, W. D., & Johnson, J. D. (2005). Evolution and diffusion of the Michigan State University tradition of organizational communication network research. *Communication Studies, 56*, 397–418.

Analyzing Communication Networks

The last part of this chapter is going to examine how researchers observe both formal and informal communication networks. Peter Monge and Noshir ContractorMonge, P. R., & Contractor, N. (2003). *Theories of networks.* New York: Oxford University Press. define communication networks as "the patterns of contact between communication partners that are created by transmitting and exchanging messages through time and space."Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. (2003). *Theories of networks.* New York: Oxford University Press, pg. 440. Of course these networks can range in size from interpersonal interactions to global networks.Harris, T. E., & Nelson, M. D. (2008). *Applied organizational communication: Theory and practice in a global environment* (3rd ed.). New York: Lawrence Erlbaum. When attempting to study communication networks within organizations, researchers complete what is called a network analysis. Monge and Contractor discussed the science of network analysis, "network analysts often identify the entities as people who belong to one or more organizations and to which are applied one or more communication relations, such as 'provides information to,' 'gets information from,' and 'communicates with.' It is also common to use work groups, divisions, and entire organizations as the set of entities."Monge, P. R., & Contractor, N. (2003). *Theories of networks.* New York: Oxford University Press, pg. 441. In essence, network analysis is a process whereby researchers attempt to determine both the formal and informal communication networks that exist within an organization and between the organization and its external environment. Ultimately, there are four types of communicative activities that occur within networks: exchange of affect (liking, friendship), exchange of influence and power, exchange of information, and exchange of goods and services.Tichy, N. M., Tushman, M. L., & Fombrun, C. (1979). Social network analysis for organizations. *The Academy of Management Review, 4*, 507–519.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in the analysis of organizational communication networks as a result of sociological construct social capital. Social capital is a term that dates back to 1916 when L. J. Hanifan used the term to discuss

the importance of rural communities' involvement in schools in West Virginia.Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster. The first modern definition of "**social capital**[32]" is attributed to Pierre Bourdieu who defined it as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition."Bourdieu, P. (1980). Le capital social: Notes provisoires. *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Socials, 31*, 2–3, pg. 2. However, it wasn't until James Coleman study examining how social capital leads to human capital that the study of social capital became common place.Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology, 94*(supplement), S95–S120.'Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology. *Annual Review of Sociology, 24*, 1–24. Coleman defined "social capital" as "a variety of entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain action of actors—whether persons or corporate actors—within the structure."Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology, 94*(supplement), S95–S120, pg. S98. In essence, social capital as a concept is innately about the creation and utilization of communication networks to obtain specific goals. Social networking websites are often designed to help people organize their social networks in a much faster way. Business oriented social networking sites (SNSs) like LinkedIn help people gain and manage their social networks, and thus their social capital, more efficiently.

The rest of this section is going to examine the commonly discussed aspects of communication networks. Specifically, we are going to examine the three categories created by Daniel J. Brass for analyzing communication networks: measurement of ties, measures assigned to individual actors, and measures assigned to networks.Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press.

Measurement of Ties

The first category involves the typical communication network measures of ties. The word "**ties**[33]" here refers to the linkages between people. When we talk about "**links**[34]" in network analysis we are talking about the communicative relationship between two people. Specifically, Brass notes that there are seven commonly utilized measures of ties: indirect links, frequency, stability, multiplexity, strength, direction, and symmetry.

32. The creation and utilization of communication networks to obtain specific goals.

33. The linkages between people in a communication network.

34. The communicative relationship between two people in a communication network.

Indirect Links

If we reexamine Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks", the last two informal communication networks (probability and cluster) contain indirect links. In the case of probability communication networks, we see A only communicating with E and C, and all of the people in the network receive the message from someone else. While A does not communicate with D directly, there is an indirect link that goes from D → I → E → A. The same is also true in the cluster sample where A only communicates to B and F, but everyone else in the network then receives the message from B or F.

Frequency

The second measure of ties examines the existence of the frequency of communication between individuals within a network, which is a numerical indicator of the quantity of communication that exists between two individuals. In most organizations, there are some people you communicate with multiple times a day and others you see only once a year.

Stability

When researchers examine the stability of communication networks, they are interested in how long a specific link has existed. Some links may exist for decades, while other may exist for only a few hours. For example, maybe you have colleagues around the country that you are constantly in contact with, but then you have other colleagues you only meet for a few minutes one time in a meeting. While you may have established a link with the person in the meeting, this link was quick and not considered stable.

Multiplexity

The concept of multiplexity refers to the number of links individuals have to one another. In essence, people within an organization can have multiple links to each other as a result of different relationships both within the organization and within the environment. For example, maybe you have a colleague you work with, you go to the same church, and your kids go to school together. In this case, you are linked through multiple relationships.

Strength

The strength of a link refers to the "amount of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, or reciprocal services (frequency or multiplexity often used as measure of strength of tie)."Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources

management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press, pg. 44. Some links within a communication network are just bound to be stronger than other links. Maybe you and a colleague are good friends and go shopping together, go to the theatre together, and take trips together. Obviously, if you are spending more time with and establishing multiple links with an individual, that link is going to be stronger than one you have with someone you never see outside of work.

Direction

The concept of direction is very similar to the process of vertical communication. In essence, does communication flow one-way? For example, maybe the CEO of your organization is allowed to communicate with you, but you are not allowed to communicate directly with the CEO.

Symmetry

The opposite of direction is symmetry, which examines whether or not communication links are open and messages are able to go bi-directionally. In essence, symmetry inspects whether communication is one-sided or whether both parties are actively involved in the communication.

Measures Assigned to Individual Actors

The second category involves the typical social network measures assigned to individual **actors**[35]. The term "actor" here is not meant in the theatre sense of the word. Instead, "actor" is used to represent an individual participating in a communication network. Brass identified seven different types of measures commonly assigned to individual actors in communication networks: degree, range, closeness, betweenness, centrality, prestige, and roles.

Degree

The topic of degree in network analysis refers to the "number of direct links with other actors."Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press, pg. 45. Some individuals will have many links and others will have very few links. Typically, links are discussed by examining the number of in-degree links and the number of out-degree links. In-degree links examine the number of links directed towards an actor from other actors. In other words, in-degree links are "in-coming links" and can help researchers ascertain the number of sources of information an actor has. Out-degree links, on the other hand, involve the number of links where a specific actor

35. Term used in social networking research to refer to an individual participating in a communication network.

communicates information to other actors. These are also referred to as "out-going links" because information is flowing away from the actor to other actors in her or his network.

Range

Range refers to the diversity of links an individual has within her or his communication network. This diversity can refer to dissimilar groups of individuals or individuals on different levels of the hierarchy. In a multinational firm, developing links around the globe can be very beneficial for an individual. In fact, having diverse links in one's communication network can help one receive the best possible information because the more homogenous one's links are, the greater likelihood that the information one receives will be identical.

Closeness

The term closeness refers to the number of links within a communication network it takes for an individual to communicate with her or his entire network. In essence, how easily can an individual actor reach everyone in her or his network? Brass explains how closeness is analyzed by network analysts, "Usually [closeness is] measured by averaging the path distances (direct and indirect links) to all others. A direct link is counted as 1, indirect links receive proportionately less weight."Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press, pg. 45. For example, in the communication networks exhibited in <u>Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"</u>, the gossip network is much closer than the single strand network. In the gossip network, Person A can communicate directly with everyone in her or his network, whereas in the single strand network, communication from Person A to Person D takes two extra steps (through Person B and Person C).

Betweenness

Betweenness is the "extent to which an actor mediates, or falls between any other two actors on the shortest path between those two actors."Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press, pg. 45. In essence, is the shortest path between two individuals directly through you? For example, maybe you're the administrative assistant for a CEO. Everyone knows that the only way to get to the CEO is to go through you. In this case, by being in the position of administrative assistant, you function as the between point between the CEO and other people in the organization.

Centrality

Centrality refers to the extent to which an individual is at the core of one's communication network. If you examine <u>Figure 5.3 "Informal Communication Networks"</u> again, Person A is clearly the central figure in each of the forms of informal communication networks. However, Person A is clearly more centrally located in the gossip communication network than the other three because in the gossip network all of the links are out-degree from Person A.

Prestige

The concept of "prestige" in network analysis is a little ambiguous and harder to map because it refers to the reasons people want to be a part of an actor's communication network. In essence, the more people want to be part of your communication network, the higher your prestige is within the network itself.

Roles

Within any communication network, there are a number of roles that people may exhibit within the network. Roles in this sense refer to specific behaviors people exhibit within a communication network. Research in network analysis has found a number of different types of role that are common within organizations: stars, liaisons, bridges, gatekeepers, and isolates.

Stars. The concept of stars existing within a communication network stemmed from the research by Thomas J. Allen and Stephen I. Cohen who found that some individuals just standout and have more communication links than other people.Allen, T. J., & Cohen, S. I. (1969). Information flow in research and development laboratories. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 14*, 12–19. Michael L. Tushman and Thomas J. Scanlan examined how stars function in communication networks.Tushman, M. L., & Scanlan, T. J. (1981a). Characteristics and external orientations of boundary spanning individuals. *The Academy of Management Journal, 24*, 83–89. One of the primary functions of stars is the ability to cross organizational boundaries in their links. Tushman and Scanlan noted that "boundary spanning individuals are those who are internal communication stars (that is, they are frequently consulted on work related matters) and who have substantial communication with areas outside their unit."Tushman, M. L., & Scanlan, T. J. (1981a). Characteristics and external orientations of boundary spanning individuals. *The Academy of Management Journal, 24*, 83–89, pg. 84. Ultimately, Tushman and Scanlan realized that there were two types of stars in communication networks: internal stars and external stars.Tushman, M. L., & Scanlan, T. J. (1981b). Boundary spanning individuals: Their role in information transfer and their antecedents. *The Academy of Management Journal, 24*, 289–305. Internal stars are individuals who

develop competence in a specific internal unit and are able to gain and disseminate information within their communication network. Internal stars are also referred to as opinion leaders, because they are seen as the go-to people for information and problem solving. External stars, on the other hand, develop competence in an area external to the organization and are able to receive and disseminate information within their communication network outside of the organization itself. External stars are also referred to as cosmopolites because they have stronger ties to the external environment, and cosmopolites bring in information to the organization from the external environment. The last type of star identified by Tushman and Scanlan are individuals who engage in informational boundary spanning, which are both internal and external stars who can bridge the gap between their communication network and other communication networks who could utilize their information.Tushman, M. L., & Scanlan, T. J. (1981b). Boundary spanning individuals: Their role in information transfer and their antecedents. *The Academy of Management Journal, 24*, 289–305.

Liaisons. According to Everett M. Rogers, a liaison is "an individual who links two or more cliques in a system, but who is not a member of any clique."Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: The Free Press, pg. 111. (p. 111). Rogers uses the word "clique" to refer to communication networks in this definition. In essence, a liaison is an individual who does not belong to two communication networks, but is the between person in the middle of the two networks.

Bridges. Bridges, on the other hand, are individuals who link two or more communication networks together and is a member of the two communication networks. In essence, a bridge is someone who belongs to two groups and is able to send and receive information along between those two groups.

Gatekeepers. A gatekeeper is an individual who has the ability to filter information from the external environment to internal communication networks or filter information that is passed from one communication network to another communication network.Tushman, M. L. (1977). Special boundary roles in the innovation process. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 22*, 587–605. Because gatekeepers have the task of determining what information is delivered within the organization, they play a very important role in the day-to-day functioning of the organization. If gatekeepers let in too much information, the organization will suffer from communication overload. On the other hand, if the gatekeepers filter out too much information, the organization will suffer from communication underload.

Isolates. The last role that people exhibit in communication networks are isolates. Isolates are individuals who have withdrawn themselves from the communication networks.Tichy, N. M., Tushman, M. L., & Fombrun, C. (1979). Social network analysis for organizations. *The Academy of Management Review, 4*, 507–519. These are individuals who typically have very few links if any at all. One of our coauthors worked for an organization that was located six hours away. Our coauthor would go for weeks without having any kind of direct contact with the organization. Many members of this organization didn't even know that our coauthor had been hired and was working for the organization. In this case, our coauthor was clearly isolated from the communication network within the organization.

Measures Assigned to Networks

The final category discussed by Brass involves the typical social network measures used to describe networks.Brass, D. J. (1995). A social network perspective on human resources management. In G. R. Ferris (Ed.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (vol. 13, pp. 39–79). Greenwixh, CT: JAI Press. The previous two classifications of measures looked at more micro-level aspects of communication networks, whereas this section is going to examine nine measures used to describe networks on a macro-level: size, inclusiveness, component, reachability, connectedness, density, centralization, symmetry, and transitivity.

Size

The size of a communication network relates to the total number of actors within a network. Some communication networks are small involving only a handful of actors, whereas other networks are very large containing hundreds of actors.

Inclusiveness

The issue of inclusiveness is related to the total number of possible actors within a communication network minus the number of isolates. The more isolates a communication network has, the less inclusive the network is.

Component

A component within a communication network is the largest subset of actors or groups of actors who contain multiple links. In essence, is there one group of actors within the communication network that are clearly more linked to each other than any other actors or subsets of the larger communication network? Often, these components will actually have no links outside of the group of actors. Sometimes people refer to components as the "in-crowd" because the people within the "in-crowd" typically do not allow outsiders access to the component clearly

establishing who is and who is not within the group. When referring to groups of individuals who are highly linked within an organization, we call these groups "nodes." An organization's total communication network will consist of a variety of nodes.

Reachability

Reachability refers to the average number of links it takes to link any two individuals within a communication network. Reachability is measured by examining both direct and indirect ties.

Connectedness

Connectedness is similar to reachability, but instead of evaluating individual actors we are evaluating groups of actors or nodes. Connectedness, then, is the degree to which all of the nodes in a communication network are reachable, and is usually determined by comparing the number of nodes that are clearly reachable with the number of nodes that are not.

Density

Within any communication network, most people are linked (either in or out-degree) to others within the network, but are not linked to every possible person within the communication network. Density refers to the number of links that exists within a communication network as compared to the total number of links possible within a communication network.

Centralization

The idea of centrality starts with realizing that most organizational communication networks have one star who is the most linked person within the organization. Centralization then is comparing that individual star to the rest of the people within the communication network. In highly centralized communication networks, the average person and the star's number of links will be very similar. In highly decentralized communication networks, most people contain only a few links and no one comes close to the number of links that the central star has.

Symmetry

Earlier we discussed the notions of "symmetry" and "direction" in conjunction with looking at the typical social network measures of ties. Symmetry on the network level compares the number of symmetry ties with the number of direction ties. The

more bi-directional or symmetrical ties that exist within a communication network, the more symmetrical the communication network is. On the other hand, the more uni-directional or direction ties that exist within a communication network, the less symmetrical the communication network is.

Transitivity

The concept of transitivity in communication networks refers to indirect relationships between three people. For example, if A communicates a message to B and then B communicates the message to C, the three individuals are considered transitive. In essence, A and B are directly linked, B and C are directly linked, and A and C are indirectly linked through B. The concept of transitivity then "is the number of transitive triples divided by the number of potential transitive triples" within a communication network (Brass, 1995, p. 44).

Current Research—Papa & Papa

Communication Network Patterns and the Re-invention of New Technology

By Wendy H. Papa and Michael J. Papa (1992)Papa, W. H., & Papa, M. J. (1992). Communication network patterns and the re-invention of new technology. *The Journal of Business Communication, 29*, 41–61.

In this study, Papa and Papa (1992) wanted to examine how communication networks impact on re-invention, or a user's likelihood of changing or modifying a new innovation during the innovation's period of adoption. For this study, the researchers used an insurance office in New Jersey because the office planned on introducing a new computer system. There were 137 participants who worked in the office ranging in age from 23 to 44. The sample consisted of 64 females and 73 males. Furthermore, the organization consisted of 13 departments and included five unique hierarchical levels.

In this study, Papa and Papa had three basic hypotheses to test:

H1: A positive linear relationship exists between the activity level of an employee's network (as measured by interaction frequency and network size) and the speed with which that employee implements a re-invention.

H2: A negative linear relationship exists between the integrativeness of an employee's network and the speed with which that employee implements a re-invention.

H3: A positive linear relationship exists between the diversity of an employee's network and the speed with which that employee implements a re-invention.

To collect their data, Papa and Papa trained the employees within the insurance company in making accurate assessments about interactions related to the new computer system. The participants then kept a diary of their interactions related to the new computer system over the course of 5 weeks.

> The results for the three hypotheses found that an individual's network diversity and network integrativeness positively related to an individual's adoption of a re-invention, but network size and interaction frequency did not.
>
> Furthermore, the individual who initiated the re-invention (or re-inventor) had a more diverse communication network, a larger communication network, greater frequency of interaction, and less integrative than the average worker within the organization.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have examined a number of very important concepts related to organizational communication. Specifically, we started the chapter by examining the three types of formal communication networks that exist in organizations (upward, downward, and horizontal/lateral). We then switched gears and looked at informal communication networks specifically examining communication grapevines and rumors. The last part of this chapter contained a brief overview of the field of communication network analysis. We examined the historical roots of network analysis, the place of social capital, and how communication networks are measured by organizational scholars. In the next chapter, we will continue to examine communication within an organization by exploring leadership.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mishra (1990) noted eight reasons why grapevine communication exists in organizations: (1) grapevines are faster and can bypass people, (2) grapevines care useful information quickly, (3) grapevines supplement formal communication networks, (4) grapevines provide outlets for individual's imaginations and apprehensions, (5) grapevines help people know what is actually occurring, (6) grapevines make people feel like they belong, (7) grapevines are early warning signs for looming crises, and (8) grapevines help to build teamwork, motivate people, and create corporate identity..
- Davis (1969) proposed four basic types of informal communication networks: single strand (one person tells one other person), gossip (one person tells many people directly), probability (one person tells a few people, who turn around and tell more people), and cluster (similar to a telephone tree—one person tells her or his designated network, who then tell their designated networks).
- An individual who has a strong and diverse social network will be able to tap into that social network faster in an effort to achieve specific goals. When people tap into their social networks to help them complete tasks, they are using their social capital.
- Brass (1995) noted commonly utilized measures of ties: indirect links, frequency, stability, multiplexity, strength, direction, and symmetry.
- Brass (1995) identified seven commonly assigned measures to individual actors in communication networks: degree, range, closeness, betweenness, centrality, prestige, and roles.
- Brass (1995) examined nine measures used to describe networks on a macro-level: size, inclusiveness, component, reachability, connectedness, density, centralization, symmetry, and transitivity.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a time when you've tuned in to the grapevine at your workplace. How accurate was the information you received? Would you still trust the grapevine in your workplace today? Has social media made grapevine communication better or worse?

2. Do an analysis of your own social capital. The Canadian Government put together a document describing how to analyze one's social capital (http://www.horizons.gc.ca/doclib/Measurement_E.pdf). Use one of the 15 different methods for analyzing social capital described in this document (Appendix 1–15) to analyze your own social capital.

3. Conduct a simple network analysis of an organization you belong to currently. If your organization is very large, you may want to only analyze one division of the organization.

5.3 Chapter Exercises

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Bluewolf, an information technology (IT) consulting firm in New York, grew from two individuals to over 200 individuals in just seven years. In 2008, the organization made approximately $31 million in revenues. During the process of hiring new individuals, the company founders Michael Kirven, 38, and Eric Berridge, 39, didn't really worry about vacation policies. The unofficial vacation policy now states that individuals can take vacations anytime they want for as long as they want as long as the individual's objectives are being met. In fact, most people in the organization take 3–4 weeks of vacation a year because too much more than that would make completing objectives very difficult.

Bluewolf didn't stop with just their non-vacation policy, the organization openly encourages a highly interactive and communicative environment. Employees working on teams will often take team trips to the gym or volunteer in community causes.

As a result of its unique structure, the organization estimates that it saves $250,000 a year because no one is having to watch time-cards and vacation days. Furthermore, the turnover rate in the organization is very small.

1. Do you think Bluewolf's organizational structure could be effective in other types of organizations? If so, in what types of organizations do you think this organizational structure would be the most effective?
2. How do you think the lack of a formal vacation policy increases effective communication at Bluewolf?
3. Do you see any communicative problems that may arise out of the organizational structure created by Bluewolf?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Starcom MediaVest Group has come to the realization that many employees are spending a considerable amount of time during each workday on various social networking websites (e.g., myspace, facebook, friendster, linkedin, etc.). In fact, research has found that 20 percent of today's employees are actively engaging in a social network website during the business day. Senior executives at Starcom MediaVest decided to stop fighting the losing war against social networking and join the social networking phenomenon.

Starcom MediaVest Group ultimately decided to create their own social networking website specifically for their employees. The website creators even looked to popular social networking websites like myspace and facebook when creating Starcom MediaVest's site. For example, if you're looking for someone who has specific knowledge on advertising opportunities in South-East Asia, you just have to type the information into the websites search engine. The search engine then shows the individual searching as a pushpin in the center of a bull's eye with surrounding pushpins indicating people around the world in the Starcom MediaVest Group family who have the expertise you're looking for.

1. How do you think social networking sites are changing the dynamics of horizontal communication within the organization?
2. Do you think organizations should limit employee access to social networking websites during the business day?
3. What do you think some of the downsides are for an organization having its own social networking website?

REAL WORLD CASE STUDY

Weekends are supposed to be a time when individuals can relax and not think about what's going on at work. However, with the invention of e-mail, text messaging, and other forms of interactive technologies, our ability to escape to our homes for a work-free weekend is becoming harder and harder to do. To combat this problem, PricewaterhouseCoopers started discouraging employees from e-mailing individuals on the weekends.

If an employee of PricewaterhouseCoopers attempts to send an e-mail on Saturday or Sunday, they are greeted with the following pop-up message "It's the weekend. Help reduce weekend e-mail overload for both you and your colleagues by working offline." Senior executives at PricewaterhouseCoopers argue that sending e-mail during the weekend makes other individuals feel obligated to respond during the weekend. Instead, employees are encouraged to write their e-mails during the weekend but wait until Monday morning to actually send the e-mails.

1. The pop-up message is a form of downward communication related to communication flow. Do you think this is an effective way to prevent weekend e-mails?
2. Do you think people are obligated to respond to e-mails they receive during the weekend?
3. With the invention of new technology, has the idea of the workless weekend disappeared forever?

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT HEAD

1. When Jerry first started working for Capital Bank, he was told that every Friday was casual Friday. The first week he worked for the organization he wore jeans to work only to find out that everyone else was wearing khaki pants and a Capital Bank polo shirt tucked in. What aspect of formal communication did Jerry face in this example?

   a. communication rule
   b. communication norms
   c. communication overtures
   d. communication overload
   e. communication underload

2. Which of Dover's (1959) three eras of the history of downward communication was concerned with notices of birthdays and anniversaries, jokes, notices of local recreation and entertainment opportunities?

   a. era of entertainment
   b. era of information
   c. era of interpretation
   d. era of persuasion
   e. era of reticence

3. Katherine is very unhappy with her organization's stance on a new international advertising campaign. She finds the campaign racist but she feels that if she says anything at work people may retaliate against her. Instead, she anonymously blogs about her uneasiness on a website for marketing professionals. According to Jeffrey Kassing, Katherine is exhibiting what type of organizational dissent?

   a. articulated
   b. latent
   c. displaced
   d. mediated
   e. whistleblowing

4. What are communication networks that exist outside the formal hierarchy of an organization?

   a. formal
   b. informal
   c. mediated
   d. social
   e. capitalized

5. Kalina is on the Board of Directors of Children International, a large nonprofit trying to alleviate worldwide hunger. Kalina is also a member of the American Farmer's Association. In her two roles, Kalina is often discussing how the two organizations can help each other. According to Rogers (1995), what critical role is Kalina playing in her communication network?

   a. liaison
   b. gatekeeper
   c. cosmopolitan
   d. isolate
   e. bridge

ANSWER KEY

1. b
2. a
3. c
4. b
5. e

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 6

Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.1 Psychological Life of Organizations

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.2 From Climate to Culture: A History of Research

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.3 Components of Organizational Culture

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.4 The Process of Organizational Culture

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.5 Analyzing Climate and Culture

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.6 Outcomes of Organizational Climate and Culture

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

6.7 Globalization

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 7

Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives

What is Leadership?

"Leadership" is probably the single most discussed topic in business literature today. An effective leader can inspire an organization to produce better quality products, ensure first-rate service to its customers, and make amazing profits for its stockholders. An ineffective leader, on the other hand, can not only negatively impact products, services, and profits, but ineffective leaders can also bring down an organization to the point of ruin. There should be no surprise that organizational leaders are very important and leave a lasting legacy not just on the companies they run but also on society as a whole. Table 7.1 "Management vs. Leadership" contains a list of some important business leaders (you may or may not have heard of) from the 20th and 21st Centuries along with a brief description of what they accomplished. This amazing list of business leaders run the gamut from the small-town entrepreneur to people taking the helm at large international organizations. All of them are leaders, but their organizations vary greatly in what they deliver and their general purpose (both for-profit and non-profits).

Table 7.1 Management vs. Leadership

Name	Company	Accomplishment(s)
Jeff Bezos	Amazon.com	Revolutionized how people buy products using the internet and then spurred a secondary revolution in the use of electronic books with the Amazon Kindle.
Steve Case	America Online	Founded Quantum Computer Services (eventually America Online), which became the largest online service in the world. His leadership and championing of a flat-rate fee for internet subscribers ultimately made the internet accessible for the masses.
Cynthia Carroll	Anglo American	After becoming CEO of Anglo American in 2007, a large international energy company based out of London, Carroll became very concerned over the number of fatalities in its South African mining facility. After another fatality, she shut the mining operation down for indefinitely shut down the operation and invited all relevant stakeholders to the table to discuss mining safety. Her leadership ultimately led to a complete

Name	Company	Accomplishment(s)
		retraining of mine workers and a revolution in mining safety in South Africa. Her leadership on the topic led to a 62% reduction in fatalities within her own company in just five years.
Joan Ganz Cooney	Sesame Workshop	Founded the Children's Television Workshop (now Sesame Workshop) and invited the collaboration of Jim Henson. Today, there are 145 Sesame Workshop locations around the world creating unique and culturally specific programs for young children. Sesame Street has won 118 Emmys, more than any other show in history, and 8 Grammys over the years.
Ruth Fertel	Ruth's Hospitality Group	After taking out a second mortgage on her home to purchase a local New Orleans' steak house in 1965 she named Ruth's Chris Steak House, she grew the chain to more than 75 locations around the world. Now the company has multiple restaurant chains and is publicly traded on the stock market.
Ruth Handler	Mattel & Nearly Me	Cofounder of the giant children's toy empire Mattel. Her most lasting legacy is probably the creation of the Barbie and Ken dolls. After retiring from Mattel, she heads the Nearly Me company, which sold prosthetic devices for victims of breast cancer.
Hu Maoyuan	SAIC Motor Corporation	Maoyuan is the CEO of the SAIC Motor Corporation, the largest state-run automotive manufacturer in China. Historically, the organization has used partnerships with other automotive giants (e.g., GM, Volkswagon, etc.) to fuel its automotive needs. Under Maoyuan's leadership he is now trying to be an exporter of Chinese engineered and built cars around the world.
Howard Schultz	Starbucks	After buying out the founders of Starbucks Coffee, Tea, and Spice, he created the niche industry of corner coffee shops. In an era when coffee consumption and sales were in a decline, Schultz created the largest coffee company and revolutionized how people socialized in society.

While the above list of diverse leaders is interesting, examining what others have done (and are doing) is not necessarily the best way to help us understand what "leadership" actually is. However, before we can explain what "leadership" is, we need to differentiate between two terms that are often confused for each other: management and leadership.

Management

When one hears the word "management," there is an immediate corporatization of the concept that tends to accompany the term. However, management (the noun) or managing (the verb) are very important parts of any organization. With the rise

of the modern corporation during the industrial revolution, there was a decent amount of research examining how one should manage. For our purposes, we define the term **manage**[1] as the communicative process where an individual or group of individuals helps those below them in an organizational hierarchical structure accomplish the organization's goals. Notice that the term is communication focused and active. Meaning that managing is something that is active and ongoing. Therefore, **management**[2] would refer to those individuals who use communication to help an organization achieve its goals through the proper utilization organizational resources (e.g., employees, facilities, etc...). Theodore Levitt describes management thusly:

Management consists of the rational assessment of a situation and the systematic selection of goals and purposes (what is to be done?); the systematic development of strategies to achieve these goals; the marshaling of the required resources; the rational design, organization, direction, and control of the activities required to attain the selected purposes; and, finally, the motivating and rewarding of people to do the work.Levitt, T. (1976). Management and the post industrial society. *The Public Interest, summer*, 69-103, pg. 72.

Notice that management is focused on the day-to-day accomplishing of an organization's goals. Furthermore, management must rally their employees to accomplish these goals through motivation, rewards, and/or punishments. Lastly, management must ensure that they have the necessary resources to enable their employees to accomplish the organization's goals.

Leadership

Where management is focused on accomplishing the organization's goals, leadership is ultimately envisioning and articulating those goals to everyone. Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson define leadership from a communication perspective in this fashion, "**Leadership**[3] is human (symbolic) communication, which modifies the attitudes and behaviors of others in order to meet shared group goals and needs."Hackman, M. S., & Johnson, C. E. (2009). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (5th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland, pg. 11. From this perspective, leadership is less about simply getting goals accomplished, but rather about influencing the attitudes and behaviors necessary to meet the organization's goals and needs.

Management vs. Leadership

So, how do we distinguish between management and leadership. One of the first researchers to really distinguish between management and leadership was

1. The communicative process where an individual or group of individuals helps those below them in an organizational hierarchical structure accomplish the organization's goals.

2. Those individuals who use communication to help an organization achieve its goals through the proper utilization of the organization's resources (e.g., employees, facilities, etc...).

3. The modification of attitudes, beleifs, and values of a group in order to further an organization's goals, mission, and vision.

Abraham Zaleznik who wrote that organizations often are caught between two conflicting needs: "one, for managers to maintain the balance of operations, and one for leaders to create new approaches and imagine new areas to explore."Zaleznik, A. (1977). Managers and leaders: Are they different? *Harvard Business Review, 55*(3), 67-78, pg. 67. Notice that Zaleznik argues that management is about maintaining the path of the organization and about handling the day-to-day operations of the organization. Leadership, on the other hand, is about creativity, innovation, and vision for the organization. Look back at the list of leaders profiled in Table 7.1 "Management vs. Leadership", all of these leaders had a clearly vision for their organization that was articulated to their followers. If these followers hadn't been persuaded by their leader, none of these leaders' accomplishments would be known today. While leaders often get the bulk of notoriety, we would be remiss to remind you that every effective leader has a team of managers and employees that help the leader accomplish the organization's goals. As such, leadership and management are symbiotic and both are highly necessary for an organization to accomplish its basic goals.

In a study by Shamus-Ur-Rehman ToorToor, S. U. R. (2011). Differentiating leadership from management: An empirical investigation of leaders and managers. *Leadership and Management in Engineering, 11*, 310-320., the researcher set out to empirically investigate the difference between leadership and management by asking 49 leaders and senior executives in the construction industry in Singapore to differentiate between the concepts of leadership and management. Overall, four clear difference themes emerged in his research: definition, conceptual, functional, and behavioral.

Definitional Differences

The first differences noted in this research are what Toor called "definitional differences." In essence, while there is no clearly agreed upon definition for the term "leadership," Toor noted that management was "described by fundamental functions that include planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational resources."Toor, S. U. R. (2011). Differentiating leadership from management: An empirical investigation of leaders and managers. *Leadership and Management in Engineering, 11*, 310-320, pg. 313. In essence, leadership tends to be characterized by terms like vision, inspiration, and motivation, while management was defined by terms like action, day-to-day running of the organization, and the mundane aspects of making an organization function. In essence, leadership is defined by the ability to create a vision for the organization that managers can then carry out on a day-to-day basis.

Conceptual Distinctions

Toor admits that often people have a hard time clearly distinguishing between the terms "leadership" and "management" because there is a thin line between the two concepts. As one member of Toors study noted, "Leadership is something that subordinates or followers look up to. A leader would be able to manage well, too. But managers are not necessarily good leaders, and subordinates look up to them for instructions, not guidance."Toor, S. U. R. (2011). Differentiating leadership from management: An empirical investigation of leaders and managers. *Leadership and Management in Engineering, 11*, 310-320, pg. 314. In essence, leadership encompasses management but is seen as "more than" just management. Many of Toor's research participants suggest that all good leaders would have to be good managers, but not all good managers make good leaders.

Functional Divergences

When interviewing the various Singapore leaders, functional divergences also emerged in Toor's research. Leadership was characterized by two primary functions: challenging and empowering. In essence, leaders should challenge their followers to do more and then empower them to take chances, make decisions, and innovate. Whereas, management was characterized by two different functions: imposing and stability/order. From this perspective, management should impose guidelines and ideas that are generated by organizational leadership on their followers in an attempt to create some semblance of stability and order within the organization. In essence, management is not making the "big" decisions, but rather relaying those decisions to their subordinates and then ensuring that those decisions get implemented within the organization itself.

Behavioral Differences

Lastly, Toor found what he termed "behavioral differences," or there are clearly two different behavioral sets that govern management and leadership. Managers manage their subordinates work and leaders lead by example. While these explanations are not overtly concrete, one of the participants in Toor's study put it this way, "Maybe the difference is basically that you just manage in management, and you lead in leadership. In management, you enforce the regulations, whereas in leadership, you lead by example. In management, people don't follow you; they obey you. In leadership, people follow you by their own choice."Toor, S. U. R. (2011). Differentiating leadership from management: An empirical investigation of leaders and managers. *Leadership and Management in Engineering, 11*, 310-320, pg. 315.

Overall, there are clear distinctions (although admittedly convoluted) between the two terms "leadership" and "management." We hope this brief discussion of this

research has at least grasped that there are fundamental differences between the two concepts. The rest of this chapter is really devoted to leadership.

7.1 Approaches to Leadership

> **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
>
> 1. Explain the trait approach to leadership.
> 2. Differentiate between Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory and Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory as situational approaches to leadership.
> 3. Understand the similarities and differences between Chester Barnard's Functions of the Executive and Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups as functional approaches to leadership.
> 4. Compare and contrast Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's Managerial Grid and George Graen's Leader-Member Exchange Theory as relational approaches to leadership.
> 5. Explain James MacGregor Burns' Transformational Approach to leadership.

As with most major academic undertakings, there is little agreement in what makes a leader. Since the earliest days of the study of business, there have been discussions of leadership. However, leadership is hardly a discussion that was originated with the advent of the academic study of businesses. In fact, the oldest known text in the world, *The Precepts of Ptah-hotep*, was a treatise written for the Pharaoh Isesi's son (of the fifth dynasty in Egypt) about being an effective Pharaoh (or leader).Wrench, J. S. (2013). How strategic workplace communication can save your organization. In J. S. Wrench (Ed.), *Workplace communication for the 21st century: Tools and strategies that impact the bottom line: Vol. 2. External workplace communication* (pp. 1-37). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger. Although it's relatively easy in hindsight to look at how effective an organizational leader was based on her or his accomplishments, determining whether or not someone will be an effective leader prior to their ascension is a difficult task. To help organizations select the "right" person for the leadership role, numerous scholars have come up with a variety of ways to describe and explain leadership. According to Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson, "Over the past 100 years, five primary approaches for understanding and explaining leadership have evolved: the *traits approach*, the *situational approach*, the *functional approach*, *the relational approach*, and the *transformational approach* [emphasis in original]."Hackman, M. S., & Johnson, C. E. (2009). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (5th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland, pg. 72. The rest of this section is going to explore these different approaches to leadership.

Trait Approach

The first major approach to leadership is commonly referred to as the **trait approach**[4] to leadership because the approach looks for a series of physical, mental, or personality traits that effective leaders possess that neither non-leaders nor ineffective leaders possess. We start with this approach to leadership predominantly because it's the oldest of the major approaches to leadership and is an approach to leadership that is still very much in existence today. The first major study to synthesize the trait literature was conducted by Ralph Stogdill in 1948.Stogdill, R. M. (1948). Personal factors associated with leadership: A survey of the literature. *Journal of Psychology, 25*, 35-71. In 1970, Stogdill reanalyzed the literature and found six basic categories of characteristics that were associated with leadership: physical, social background, intelligence and ability, personality, task-related, and social.Bass, B. M. (1990). *Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership: Theory, research, and managerial applications* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Free Press. Table 7.2 "Traits Associated with Leadership" contains a list of the personality traits from the 1970 study in addition to other researchers who have discovered a variety of other traits associated with leadership.

Table 7.2 Traits Associated with Leadership

Stogdill (1970)	Adaptability
	Adjustment
	Assertiveness
	Alertness
	Creativity, Originality
	Diplomacy
	Dominance
	Emotional Balance
	Enthusiasm
	Extraversion
	Independence, Nonconformity
	Objective, Tough-mindedness

4. Approach to leadership studies that searches for a series of physical, mental, or personality traits that effective leaders possess that neither non-leaders nor ineffective leaders possess.

	Resourcefulness
	Self-confidence
	Sociability, Interpersonal Skills
	Strength of Conviction
	Tolerance of Stress
Mann (1959)Mann, R. D. (1959). A review of the relationship between personality and performance in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 56*, 241-270.	Adjustment
	Conservatism
	Dominance
	Extroversion
	Intelligence
	Masculinity
Kirpatrick and Locke (1991)Kirkpatrick, S. A., & Locke, E. A. (1991). Leadership: Do traits matter? *The Executive, 5*, 48-60.	Cognitive Ability
	Integrity
	Motivation
	Task Knowledge
Lussier and Achua (2007)Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2007). *Leadership: Theory, application, skill development* (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western.	Dominance
	Emotional Intelligence
	Flexibility
	High energy
	Integrity
	Intelligence
	Confidence
	Drive
	Internal Locus-of-Control
	Self-Confidence

	Sensitivity to Others
	Stability

From <u>Table 7.2 "Traits Associated with Leadership"</u> you can start to see that research has found a variety of different traits associated with leadership over the years. Notice, that there is some overlap, but each list is clearly unique. In fact, one of the fundamental problems with the trait approach to leadership is that research has provided a never-ending list of personality traits that are associated with leadership, so no clear or replicable list of traits exists.

Even communication researchers have examined the possible relationship between leadership and various communication traits. In an experimental study conducted by Sean Limon and Betty La FranceLimon, M. S., & La France, B. H. (2005). Communication traits and leadership emergence: Examining the impact of argumentativeness, communication apprehension, and verbal aggressiveness in work groups. *Communication Quarterly, 70*, 123-133., the researchers set out to see if an individual's level of three communication traits could predict leadership emergence within a group. The three communication traits of interest within this study were communication apprehension ("fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons"McCroskey, J. C. (1984). The communication apprehensive perspective. In J. A. Daly & J. C. McCroskey (Eds.), *Avoiding communication: Shyness, reticence, and communication apprehension* (pp. 13-38). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; pg. 13.), argumentativeness ("generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues"Infante, D. A., & Rancer, A. S. (1982). A conceptualization and measure of argumentativeness. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 46*, 72-80; pg. 72), and verbal aggressiveness ("attack one's self-concept instead of, or in addition to, one's positions on a topic of communication"Infante, D. A., & Wigley, C.J. (1986). Verbal aggressiveness: An interpersonal model and measure. *Communication Monographs, 53*, 61-69.). Ultimately, the researchers found that an individual's level of argumentativeness positively predicted an individual's likelihood of emerging as a leader while an individual's communication apprehension negatively predicted an individual's likelihood of emerging as a leader. Verbal aggression, in this study, was found to have no impact on an individual's emergence as a leader. In other research, leader verbal aggression was found to negatively impact employee level of satisfaction and organizational commitment while argumentativeness positively related to employee level of satisfaction and organizational commitment.de Vries, R. E., Bakker-Pieper, A., & Oostenveld, W. (2010). Leadership = communication? The relations of leaders' communication styles with leadership styles, knowledge sharing and leadership outcomes. *Journal of Business Psychology, 25*, 367-380. doi: 10.1007/s10869-009-9140-2 These three communication traits demonstrate that an

individual leader's communication traits can have an impact on both an individual's emergence as a leader and how followers will perceive that leader.

The original notion that leaders were created through a magic checklist of personality traits has fallen out of favor in the leadership community.Dinh, J. E., & Lord, R. G. (2012). Implications of dispositional and process views of traits for individual difference research in leadership. *Leadership Quarterly, 23*(4), 651-669. doi:10.1016/j.leaqua.2012.03.003 However, more recent developments in leadership theory have been reintegrating the importance of personality traits as important aspects of the process of leadership. In Scott Shane's book *Born Entrepreneurs, Born Leaders: How Genes Affect Your Work Life*Shane, S. (2010). *Born entrepreneurs, born leaders: How your genes affect your work life*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press., he argues that while genetics may not cause humans to become leaders or entrepreneurs, one's genetic makeup probably influences the likelihood that someone would become a leader or entrepreneur in the first place. In the same vein, Jessica Dinh and Robert LordZaccaro, S. J. (2007). Trait-based perspectives of leadership. *American Psychologist, 62*(1), 6-16. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.62.1.6 have argued that personality traits should be examined within specific leadership events instead of as fundamental aspects of some concrete phenomenon called "leadership." In essence, Dinh and Lord argue that an individual's personality traits may impact how they behave within specific leadership situations but that specific personality traits may not be seen across all leaders in all leadership contexts.

Situational Approach

As trait approaches became more passé, new approaches to leadership began emerging that theorized that leadership was contingent on a variety of situational factors (e.g., task to be completed, leader-follower relationships/interactions, follower motivation/commitment, etc.). These new theories of leadership are commonly referred to as the **situational approaches**[5]. While there are numerous leadership theorists who fall into the situational approach, we're going to briefly examine two of them here: Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory and Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory.

Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory of Leader Effectiveness

Fred Fiedler began developing his theory of leadership in the 1950s and 60s and eventually coined it the "Contingency Theory of Leader Effectiveness."Fiedler, F. E. (1967) *A theory of leadership effectiveness*. New York: McGraw-Hill. In his theory, Fiedler believed that leadership was a reflection of both a leader's personality and behavior, which were constant. Fiedler believed that that leaders do not change their leadership styles, but rather when situations change, leaders must adapt their leadership strategies. Fiedler's basic theory started with the notion that leaders

5. Approach to leadership that studies leadership as a phenoemnon of differing organizational contexts and situations that lead or enable different types of leadership behavior.

typically were either task-oriented or relationship-oriented. **Task-oriented leaders**[6] focused more on the task and accomplishing organizational goals. **Relationship-oriented leaders**[7] focused on creating positive interactions with followers and establishing positive relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and confidence.

To determine a leader's preference for tasks or relationships, leaders are asked to think about all of the followers with whom they've worked and select the one follower with whom they've had the most problems. By thinking about the follower with whom the leader has had the most problems, it's generally very easy to determine if the leader is more task or relationship-oriented because that follower is generally the opposite. Fiedler, termed this follower the leader's least preferred coworker (LPC).

Once a leader's LPC is determined, Fielder's model asks leaders to examine their **situation favorableness**[8], or the degree to which a leader can influence her or his followers within a given situation. To determine situational favorableness, leaders must examine three distinct aspects of their leadership style: leader-member relations, task structure, and position power.

Leader-Follower Relations

The first factor of situation favorableness leaders must attend to involves the nature of their relationship with their followers. Leaders who have positive relationships with their followers will have high levels of mutual trust, respect, and confidence; whereas leaders with negative relationships with their followers will have lower degrees of mutual trust, respect, and confidence. The more positive a leader's relationships with her or his followers, the more favorable the situation will be for the leader.

Task Structure

Next, leaders must determine if the task at hand is one that is highly structured or one that that is unstructured. Highly structured tasks are ones that tend to be repetitive and unambiguous, so they are more easily understood by followers, which leads to a more favorable situation for the leader. If tasks are unstructured, then the leader will have followers who are less likely to understand the task, which will make for a less favorable leadership situation.

6. Leaders who are focused on the task and accomplishing organizational goals.

7. Leaders who are focused on creating positive interactions with followers and establishing positive relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and confidence.

8. The degree to which a leader can influence her or his followers within a given situation.

Position Power

Lastly, leaders need to know whether they are in a position of strong or weak power. Leaders who have the ability to exert power over followers (reward and punish followers), will have greater ability to exert the leader's will on followers, which is more favorable for the leader. Leaders who do not have the ability to exert power over followers are in a much less favorable leadership situation.

Situational Favorableness

When one combines the three factors (leader-follower relations, task structure, and position power), the basic contingency model proposed by Fiedler emerges. Figure 7.1 "Fiedler's Contingency Model" illustrates the basic model proposed.

Figure 7.1 Fiedler's Contingency Model

In this model, you can see that the combination of the three factors create a continuum of most favorable to least favorableness for the leader. Notice that there are eight basic levels ranging from the left side of the model, which is more favorable, to the right side of the model, which is least favorable. One area of concern that can impact the usability of this model is ultimately a leader's LPC. If the situation matches a leader's LPC, the leader is lucky and he or she doesn't need to alter anything. However, often the situation leads to an imbalance between the leader's LPC and the appropriate leader behavior necessitated by a situation. In this case, the leader can either attempt to alter her or his leadership style, which is not likely to lead to a positive outcome, or the leader can attempt to change the situation to match her or his LPC style, which will be more likely to lead to a positive outcome.

Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory

Like Fiedler's Contingency Model, the basic model proposed by Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard is also divided into task (leader directive behavior) and

relational (leader supportive behavior) dimensions.Hersey, P., & Blanchard, K. H. (1969). Life cycle theory of leadership. *Training and Development Journal, 23*(5), 26–34. However, Hersey and Blanchard's theory of leadership starts with the basic notion that not all followers need the same task or relationship-based leadership, so the type of leadership a leader should utilize with a follower depends on the follower's readiness. Figure 7.2 "Situational Leadership Model" shows the basic model.

Figure 7.2   Situational Leadership Model

In the basic model seen in Figure 7.2 "Situational Leadership Model", you have both dimensions of leadership behavior (supportive and directive). Based on these two dimensions, Hersey and Blanchard propose four basic types of leadership leaders can employ with various followers depending on the situational needs of the followers: directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating. Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., & Johnson, D. E. (2000). *Management of organizational behavior: Leading human resources* (8th ed.). Upper Saddle, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Directing

The first type of leader discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory is the **directing leader**[9] (originally termed telling). A directing leader is

9. Form of leadership discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory where a leader use low supporting behavior and high directive behavior.

needed by followers who do lack both the skill and the motivation to perform a task. Hersey and Blanchard recommend against supportive behavior at this point because the supporting behavior may be perceived as a reward by the follower. Instead, these followers need a lot of task-directed communication and oversight.

Coaching

The second type of leader discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory is the **coaching leader**[10] (originally termed selling). The coaching leader is necessary when followers have a high need for direction and a high need of support. Followers who are unable to perform or lack the confidence to perform the task but are committed to the task and/or organization need a coaching leader. In this case, the leader needs to have more direct control over the follower's attempt to accomplish the task, but the leader should also provide a lot of encouragement along the way.

Supporting

Next, you have followers who still require low levels of direction from leaders but who need more support from their leaders. Hersey and Blanchard see these followers as individuals who more often than not have requisite skills but still need their leader for motivation. As such, **supporting leaders**[11] should set about creating organizational environments that foster these followers' motivations.

Delegating

Lastly, when a follower is both motivated and skilled, he or she needs a **delegating leader**[12]. In this case, a leader can easily delegate tasks to this individual with the expectations that the follower will accomplish the tasks. However, leaders should not completely avoid supportive behavior because if a follower feels that he or she is being completely ignored, the relationship between the leader and follower could sour.

Functional Approach

In both the trait and situational approaches to leadership, the primary outcome called "leadership" is a series of characteristics that help create the concept. The **functional approach**[13], on the other hand, posits that it's not a series of leadership characteristics that make a leader, but rather a leader is someone who looks like, acts like, and communicates like a leader. To help us understand the functional approach to leadership, we'll examine two different sets of researchers commonly

10. Form of leadership discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory where a leader use high supporting behavior and high directive behavior.

11. Form of leadership discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory where a leader use high supporting behavior and low directive behavior.

12. Form of leadership discussed in Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory where a leader use low supporting behavior and low directive behavior.

13. Approach to leadership that posits that it's not a series of leadership characteristics that make a leader, but rather a leader is someone who looks like, acts like, and communicates like a leader.

associated with this approach: Chester Barnard's Functions of the Executive and Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups.

Chester Barnard's (1938) The Functions of the Executive

The first major functional theorist was an organizational researcher by the name of Chester Barnard who published a ground-breaking book in 1938 titled *The Functions of the Executive.*Barnard, C. I. (1938). *The functions of the executive.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. It is from this book's title that the functional approach to leadership gets its name. In this book, Barnard argues that executives have three basic functions.

Formulating Organizational Purposes and Objectives

The first function a leader should have is the creation (or formulation) of the organization's basic purpose and its objectives. In essence, leaders should be able to form a clear vision for the organization and then set about creating the tasks necessary to help the organization accomplish that vision.

Securing Essential Services from Other Members

The second function of a leader according to Barnard's framework was securing essential services from other members. Barnard realized that one of the inherent aspects of leadership was the leader's ability to get the services he or she needs from followers. For example, it's not just about hiring people and setting them about their tasks. Instead, it's about hiring people and then inspiring those followers in an effort to get the best out of them. In an organization where someone has a position of leadership but is not at the top of the hierarchy, leadership also becomes important in an individual's ability to reach out to other teams or divisions and secure resources and services to help the leader's team accomplish its goals. Basically, leaders must actively work to help others accomplish the organization's goals.

Establishing and Maintaining a System of Communication

According to Barnard, the first function of an executive should be to establish and maintain a system of communication. As such, Barnard came up with seven specific rules to help executives create a system of communication within their organizations:

- The channels of communication should be definite;
- Everyone should know of the channels of communication;

- Everyone should have access to the formal channels of communication;
- Lines of communication should be as short and as direct as possible;
- Competence of persons serving as communication centers should be adequate;
- The line of communication should not be interrupted when the organization is functioning; and
- Every communication should be authenticated.Barnard, C. I. (1938). *The functions of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; pp. 175-80.

From this perspective, leaders have a fundamental task in creating and controlling both the formal and informal communication systems within the organization. In fact, Chester Barnard was one of the first researchers to really extol the importance of understanding both the formal and informal communication within an organization.

Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups

Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats did not exactly set out to create a tool for analyzing and understanding the functional aspects of leadership. Instead, their 1948 article titled "Functional Roles of Group Members" was designed to analyze how people interact and behave within small group or team settings.Benne, K. D., & Sheats, P. (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal, 8*, 30-35. (Reprinted from *the Journal of Social Issues, 4*, 41-49) The basic premise of Benne and Sheat's 1948 article was that different people in different group situations will take on a variety of roles within a group. Some of these roles will be prosocial and help the group accomplish its basic goals, while other roles are clearly antisocial and can negatively impact a group's ability to accomplish its basic goals. Benne and Sheats categorized the more prosocial roles as belonging to one of two groups: task and group building and maintenance roles. **Task roles**[14] are those taken on by various group members to ensure that the group's task is accomplished. **Group building and maintenance roles**[15], on the other hand, are those roles people take on that are "designed to alter or maintain the group way of working, to strengthen, regulate and perpetuate the group as a group."Benne, K. D., & Sheats, P. (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research & Applications Journal, 8*, 30-35. (Reprinted from *the Journal of Social Issues, 4*, 41-49); pg. 31. The more anti-social (individual) roles are roles group members take on that are not relevant to neither the group nor the task at hand. Individuals embodying these roles will actually prevent the group from accomplishing its task in a timely and efficient manner. We will go into more detail about the specific nature of these various roles in Chapter 9 "Teams in the

14. Roles taken on by a group or team member to ensure that the group or team's task is accomplished.

15. Roles taken on by a group or team member to help foster a sense of community and purpose within the group itself.

Workplace", for now let's just look at Table 7.3 "Prosocial and Antisocial Group Roles"

Table 7.3 Prosocial and Antisocial Group Roles

Prosocial Group Roles	Antisocial Group Roles
Task Roles	Individual Roles
- initiator-contributor - information seeker - opinion seeker - information giver - opinion giver - elaborator - coordinator - orienter - evaluator-critic - energizer - procedural technician - recorder	- aggressor - blocker - recognition-seeker - self-confessor - playboy - dominator - help-seeker - special interest pleader
Group Building & Maintenance Roles	
- encourager - harmonizer - compromiser - gate-keeper/expediter - standard setter/ego ideal - group-observer/commentator - follower	

So, you may be wondering how these actually relates back to the notion of leadership. To help us understand why these roles are functions of leadership, let's turn to the explanation provided by Michael Hackman and Craig Johnson:

Roles associated with the successful completion of the task and the development and maintenance of group interaction help facilitate goal achievement and the satisfaction of group needs. These roles serve a leadership function. Roles

associated with the satisfaction of individual needs do not contribute to the goals of the group as a whole and are usually not associated with leadership. By engaging in task-related and group-building/maintenance role behaviors (and avoiding individual role behavior), a group member can perform leadership functions and increase the likelihood that he or she will achieve leadership status with the group.Hackman, M. S., & Johnson, C. E. (2009). *Leadership: A communication perspective* (5th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland, pg. 89.

In essence, leaders are people who perform task and relational roles while people who are non-leaders tend to focus on their own desires and needs and not the needs of the group itself. As such, each of the task and building/maintenance roles can be considered functions of effective leadership.

Relational Approach

The next approach to leadership is called the **relational approach**[16] because it focuses not on traits, characteristics, or functions of leaders and followers, but instead the relational approach focuses on the types of relationships that develop between leaders and followers. To help us understand the relational approach to leadership, let's examine two different perspectives on this approach: Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's Managerial Grid and George Graen's Leader-Member Exchange Theory.

Robert Blake & Jane Mounton's Managerial Grid

The first major relational approach we are going to discuss is Blake and Mounton's Managerial Grid.Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (1964). *The managerial grid: The key to leadership excellence*. Houston, TX: Gulf Publishing. While the grid is called a "management" grid, the subtitle clearly specifies that it is a tool for effective leadership. In the original grid created in 1965, the two researchers were concerned with whether or not a leader was concerned with her or his followers or with production. In the version we've recreated for you in Figure 7.3 "Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid", we've relabeled the two as concern for relationships and concern for tasks to keep consistent with other leadership theories we've discussed in this chapter. The basic idea is that on each line of the axis (x-axis refers to task-focused leadership; y-axis refers to relationship-focused leadership) there are nine steps. Where an individual leader's focus both for relationships and tasks will dictate where he or she falls as a leader on the Managerial Grid. As such, we end up with five basic management styles: impoverished, authority compliance, country club, team, and middle-of-the-road. Let's look at each of these in turn.

16. Approach to leadership that emphasizes the types of relationships that develop between leaders and followers.

Figure 7.3   *Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid*
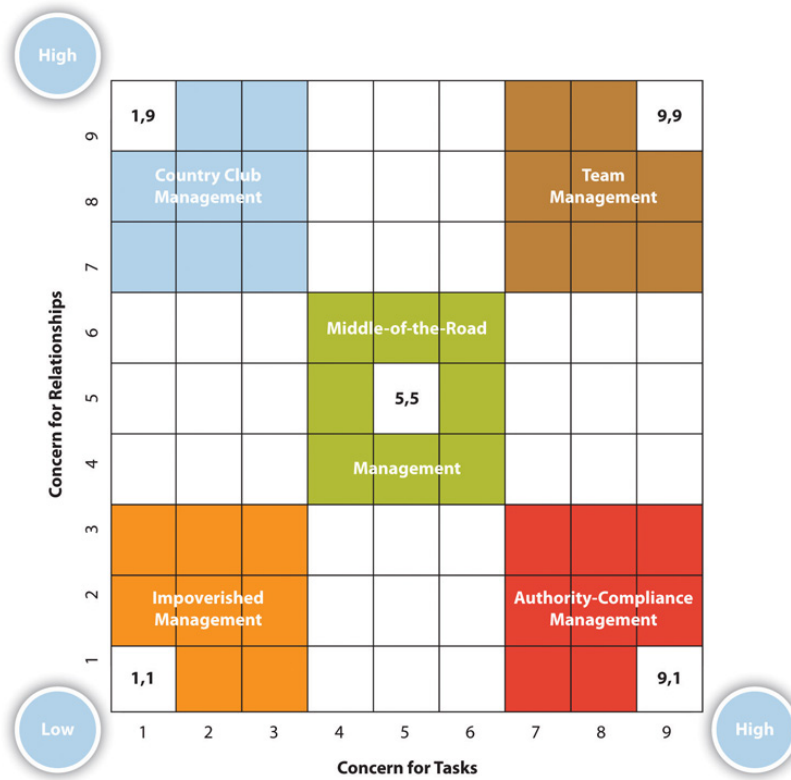
Impoverished Management

The basic approach a leader takes under the **impoverished management style**[17] is completely hands off. This leader places someone in a job or assigns that person a task and then just expects it to be accomplished without any kind of oversight. In Blake and Mouton's words, "the person managing 1,1 has learned to 'be out of it,' while remaining in the organization... [this manager's] imprint is like a shadow on the sand. It passes over the ground, but leaves no permanent mark."Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (2011). The managerial grid. In W. E. Natemeyer & P. Hersey (Eds.), *Classics of Organizational Behavior* (4th ed., pp. 308-322). (Reprinted from *The managerial grid: The key to leadership excellence*. Houston, TX: Gulf Coast); pgs. 315-316.

Authority-Compliance Management

The second leader is at the 9,1 coordinates in the leadership grid. The **authority-compliance management style**[18] has a high concern for tasks but a low concern for establishing or fostering relationships with her or his followers. Consider this leader the closest to resemble Fredrick Taylor's scientific management style of leadership. All of the decision-making is made by the leader and then dictated to

17. Managerial style discussed by Blake and Mounton's managerial grid where a leader has a low concern for task and a low concern for relationships.

18. Managerial style discussed by Blake and Mounton's managerial grid where a leader has a high concern for task and a low concern for relationships.

her or his followers. Furthermore, this type of leader is very likely to micromanage or closely oversee and criticize followers as they set about accomplishing the tasks given to them.

Country Club Management

The third type of manager is called the **country club management style**[19] and is the polar opposite of the authority-compliance manager. In this case, the manager is almost completely concerned about establishing or fostering relationships with her or his followers, but the task(s) needing to be accomplished disappears into the background. When assigning tasks to be accomplished, this leader empowers her or his followers and believes that the followers will accomplish the task and do it well without any kind of oversight. This type of leader also adheres to the advice of Thumper from the classic Disney movie *Bambi*, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all."

Team Management

The next leadership style is at the high ends of concern for both task and relationships, which is referred to as the **team management style**[20]. This type of leader realizes that "effective integration of people with production is possible by involving them and their ideas in determining the conditions and strategies of work. Needs of people to think, to apply mental effort in productive work and to establish sound and mature relationships with one another are utilized to accomplish organizational requirements."Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (2011). The managerial grid. In W. E. Natemeyer & P. Hersey (Eds.), *Classics of Organizational Behavior* (4th ed., pp. 308-322). (Reprinted from *The managerial grid: The key to leadership excellence*. Houston, TX: Gulf Coast); pg. 317. Under this type of management, leaders believe that it is their purpose as leaders to foster environments that will encourage creativity, task accomplishment, and employee morale/motivation. This form of management is probably most closely aligned with Douglas McGregor's Theory Y, which was discussed previously in Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication".

Middle-of-the-Road Management

The final form of management discussed by Blake and Mouton was what has been deemed the **middle-of-the-road management style**[21]. The reasoning behind this style of management is the assumption that "people are practical, they realize *some* effort will have to be exerted on the job. Also, by yielding some push for production and considering attitudes and feelings, people accept the situation and more or less 'satisfied' [emphasis in original]."Blake, R., & Mouton, J. (2011). The managerial grid. In W. E. Natemeyer & P. Hersey (Eds.), *Classics of Organizational Behavior* (4th ed.,

19. Managerial style discussed by Blake and Mounton's managerial grid where a leader has a low concern for task and a high concern for relationships.

20. Managerial style discussed by Blake and Mounton's managerial grid where a leader has a high concern for task and a high concern for relationships.

21. Managerial style discussed by Blake and Mounton's managerial grid where a leader has a middling concern for task and a middling concern for relationships.

pp. 308-322). (Reprinted from *The managerial grid: The key to leadership excellence*. Houston, TX: Gulf Coast); pg. 316. In the day-to-day practicality of this approach, these leaders believe that any kind of extreme is not realistic, so finding some middle balance is ideal. If, and when, an imbalance occurs, these leaders seek out ways to eliminate the imbalance and get back to some state of moderation.

George Graen's Leader-Member Exchange Theory

Starting in the mid-1970s, George Graen proposed a different type of theory for understanding leadership. Graen's theory of leadership proposed that leadership must be understood as existing in three distinct domains: follower, leader, and relationship (Figure 7.4 "Domains of Leadership").Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship-based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *The Leadership Quarterly, 6*, 219-247. The basic idea is that leaders and followers exist within a dyadic relationship, so understanding leadership must examine the nature of that relationship.

Figure 7.4 *Domains of Leadership*
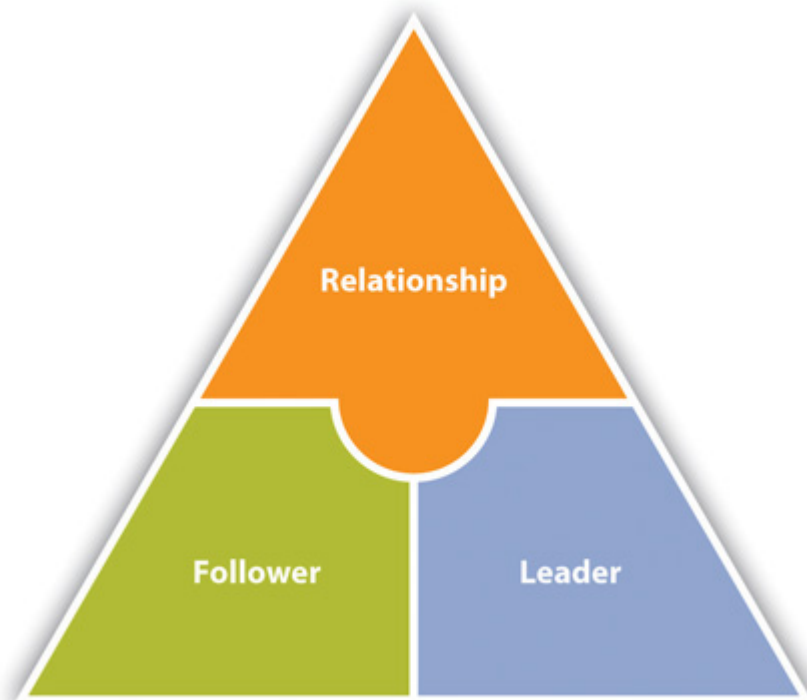
When examining the leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship, one must realize that leaders have only limited amounts of social, personal, and organizational

resources, so leaders must be selective in how they distribute these resources to their followers. Ideally, every follower would have the same type of exchange relationship with their leader, but for a variety of reasons some followers receive more resources from a leader while others receive less resources from a leader. Ultimately, **high-quality LMX relationships**[22] are those "characterized by greater input in decisions, mutual support, informal influence, trust, and greater negotiating latitude;" whereas, **low-quality LMX relationships**[23] "are characterized by less support, more formal supervision, little or no involvement in decisions, and less trust and attention from the leader."Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2007). *Leadership: Theory, application, skill development* (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson/South-Western; pg. 254.

Whether an individual follower is in a high-quality or low-quality LMX relationship really has a strong impact on their view towards the organization itself. Followers in high-quality LMX relationships (also referred to as in-groups) have higher perceptions of leader credibility and a greater regard for their leaders compared to those followers in low-quality LMX relationships (also referred to as out-groups). Not only does the nature of the relationship impact a follower's perceptions of her or his leader, but research has shown that high-LMX relationships lead to greater productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.Gagnon, M. A., & Michael, J. H. (2004). Outcomes of perceived supervisor support for wood production employees. *Forest Products Journal, 54*, 172-178. Overall, research has shown many positive benefits for followers who have high-LMX relationships including:

- More productive (produce higher quality and quantity of work);
- Greater levels of job satisfaction;
- Higher levels of employee motivation;
- Greater satisfaction with immediate supervisor;
- Greater organizational commitment;
- Lower voluntary and involuntary turnover levels;
- Greater organizational participation;
- Greater satisfaction with the communication practices of the organization;
- Clearer understanding about her or his role within the organization;
- Greater exhibition of organizational citizenship behaviors;
- Greater long-term success in one's career;
- Greater organizational commitment;
- Receive more desirable work assignments; and
- Receive more attention and support from organizational leaders. Gagnon, M. A., & Michael, J. H. (2004). Outcomes of perceived supervisor support for wood production employees. *Forest Products Journal, 54*, 172-178.'Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2007). *Leadership:*

22. Leader-member-exchange relationships marked by follower acces to decision making, support, influence, and occupational success.

23. Leader-member-exchange relationships marked by follower suppervision, lack of leadership support, little to no access to decision making, which leads to lower levels of organizaitonal success.

Theory, application, skill development (3rd ed.). Mason, OH: Thomson/ South-Western.'Gagnon, M. A., & Michael, J. H. (2004). Outcomes of perceived supervisor support for wood production employees. *Forest Products Journal, 54*, 172-178.

One of the big questions that has arisen in the leadership literature is "how do leaders select followers to enter into a high-LMX relationship." One possible explanation for why leaders choose some followers and not other followers for high-LMX relationships stems from the follower's communication style. In a 2007 study, researchers examined the relationship between follower communication and whether or not they perceived themselves to be in a high-LMX relationship with their immediate supervisor.Madlock, P. E., Martin, M. M., Bogdan, L., & Ervin, M. (2007). The impact of communication traits on leader-member exchange. *Human Communication, 10*, 451-464. Not surprisingly, individuals who reported higher levels of assertiveness, responsiveness, friendliness, cognitive flexibility, attentiveness, and a generally relaxed nature were more likely to report having a high-LMX relationship. One variable that was negatively related to the likelihood of having a high-LMX relationship was a follower's level of communication apprehension.

Transformational Approach

The final approach to leadership is one that clearly is popular among organizational theorists. Although the term "transformational leadership" was first coined by James Downtown in 1973, the term was truly popularized by political sociologist James MacGregor Burns in 1978. Downton, J. V. (1973). *Rebel leadership: Commitment and charisma in the revolutionary process*. New York, NY: Free Press.'Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York, NY: Harper Collins. In a 2001 study conducted by Kevin Lowe and William Gardner, the researchers examined the types of articles that had been published in the premier academic journal on the subject of leadership, *Leadership Quarterly*.Lowe, K. B., & Gardner, W. L. (2001). Ten years of the *Leadership Quarterly*: Contributions and challenges for the future. *Leadership Quarterly, 11*, 459-514. The researchers examined the types of research published in the journal over the previous ten years, which found that one-third of the articles published within the journal examined transformational leadership.

To help understand leadership from this approach, it's important to understand the two sides of leadership: transactional and transformational leadership. On the one hand you have **transactional leadership**[24], which focuses on an array of exchanges that can occur between a leader and her or his followers. The most obvious way transactional leadership is seen in corporate America is the use of promotions and pay raises. Transactional leaders offer promotions or pay raises to those followers who meet or exceed the leader's goals. Rewards are seen as a tool that a leader utilizes to get the best performance out of her or his followers. If the rewards no

24. Leadership that focuses on an array of exchanges that can occur between a leader and her or his followers in an effort to gain follower support.

longer exist, followers will no longer have the external motivation to meet or exceed goals.

Transformational leadership[25], on the other hand, can be defined as the "process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower."Northhouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 176. In essence, transformational leadership is more than just getting followers to meet or exceed goals because the leader provides the followers rewards. Bernie Bass proposed a more complete understanding of transformational leadership and noted three factors of transformational leadership: charismatic and inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership: Good, better, best. *Organizational Dynamics, 13*(3), 26-40.'Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Charismatic and Inspirational Leadership

The first factor Bass described for transformational leaders was charismatic and inspirational leadership. **Charisma**[26] is a unique quality that not everyone possesses. Those who are charismatic have the ability to influence and inspire large numbers of people to accomplish specific organizational goals or tasks. Where the transactional leader rewards followers for accomplishing tasks, transformational leaders inspire their followers to accomplish goals and tasks with no promise of rewards. Instead, followers are inspired by a transformational leader to accomplish goals and tasks because they share the leader's vision for the future. Bass later made inspirational motivation a unique factor unto itself to clearly separate its impact from charismatic leadership.Bass, B.M. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industrial, military, and educational impact*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Intellectual Stimulation

The second characteristic of transformational leaders is intellectual stimulation. In essence, transformational leaders "stimulates followers to be creative and innovative and to challenge their own beliefs and values as well as those of the leader and the organization."Northhouse, P. G. (2007). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 183. While both transactional and transformational leaders engage in intellectual stimulation themselves, the purpose of this intellectual stimulation differs. Transactional leaders tend to focus on how best to keep their organizations and the systems within their organizations functioning. Very little thought to innovation or improving the organization occurs because transactional leaders focus on maintaining everything as-is. Transformational leaders, on the other hand, are always looking for new and

25. Leadership approach that utilizes communication in an effort to increase follower morale, motivation, and performance to accomplish organizational goals.

26. Unique leadership trait where an individual has the ability to influence and inspire large numbers of people to accomplish specific organizational goals or tasks.

innovative ways to manage problems. As such, they also encourage those around them to "think outside the box" in an effort to make things better.

Individualized Consideration

The last factor of transformational leadership is individualized consideration, or seeing followers as individuals in need of individual development. Transformational leaders evaluate "followers' potential both to perform their present job and to hold future positions of greater responsibility. The leader sets examples and assigns tasks on an individual basis to followers to help significantly alter their abilities and motivations as well as to satisfy immediate organizational needs."Bass, B. M. (1985). Leadership: Good, better, best. *Organizational Dynamics, 13*(3), 26-40; pg. 35. The goal of this individualized consideration is to help individual followers maximize their potential, which maximizes the leader's use of her or his resources at the same time.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

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- The trait approach to leadership is the oldest approach to leadership and theorizes that certain individuals are born with specific personality or communication traits that enable leadership. As such, trait leadership scholars have examined thousands of possible traits that may have an impact on successful or unsuccessful leadership practices.
- The situational approach to leadership focuses on specific organizational contexts or situations that enable leadership. Fred Fiedler's Contingency Theory examines an individual's preference for either task or relationships and then theorizes that leaders who find themselves in situations that favor that type of leadership will be fine while leaders who are out of balance need to either change the situation or adjust their leadership styles. Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory, on the other hand, examines how leadership is dependent upon whether a follower is someone being developed or someone who has already been developed. New followers, Hersey and Blanchard theorize, need more guidance leaders should focus on the task and at hand and not on relationships with these followers. Old followers, on the other hand, need little guidance and little relationship building.
- The functional approach to leadership posits that a leader is someone who looks like, acts like, and communicates like a leader. Chester Barnard's Functions of the Executive posits that leaders should engage in three specific functions: (1) formulating organizational purposes and objectives, (2) securing essential services from other members, and (3) establishing and maintaining a system of communication. A second functional approach is Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats' Classification of Functional Roles in Groups, which examines how different people take on various group/team roles in an effort to keep the group/team striving towards a specific goal. Each of the roles that group/team members take on serve a specific function in the group/team decision making and implementing process.
- The relational approach to leadership theorizes that leadership is a matter of building and maintain relationships with one's followers. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton's Managerial Grid examine the intersection of relationship-oriented or task-oriented leader perspectives. Ultimately, Blake and Mounton propose five distinct types of leadership: (1) impoverished (low task, low relational), (2) authority-compliance (high task, low relational), (3) country club (low task, high relational), (4) team (high task, high relational), and (5) middle-of-the-road (moderate task, moderate relational). A second relational approach is George Graen's Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, which looks

at the exchange relationship between a follower and a leader. Under LMX theory, leaders take on protégés into an interpersonal communicative relationship that enables a follower to succeed within an organization.

- The transformational approach to leadership espoused by James MacGregor Burns looks at leadership as a comparison to the traditional transactional model of leadership. In the transactional model of leadership, leaders promise to punish or reward followers in order gain support. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, occurs when a leader utilizes communication in an effort to increase follower morale, motivation, and performance to accomplish organizational goals.

EXERCISES

1. Fill out the Least Preferred Coworker Scale (http://www.msubillings.edu/BusinessFaculty/larsen/MGMT321/Leas%20PreferredCoworkerScale.pdf). After completing the measure, what did you learn about your own approach to leadership? According to Contingency Theory, what leadership situations will you succeed in and what leadership situations will you need to alter either the situation or your own leadership behavior?

2. Looking at Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid, which type of leadership style do you respond best to? Why do you think you respond best to this leadership style? Do you think you lead others in this fashion? Why or why not?

3. Create a list of at least five transactional leaders and five transformational leaders. What differences do you see between these two lists and the types of organizational accomplishments they've had?

7.2 Followership

In 1988, Robert Kelley wrote an article in the *Harvard Business Review* where he explained that so much of the research on what happens between organizational members is written from the perspective that leadership is king and everything else is periphery.Kelley, R. E. (1988). In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review, 66*(6), 142-148. Instead, Kelley believed that followership should be center stage right along research and writing on leadership. Surprisingly, this article was met with a lot of controversy, "Some people just flat out didn't like it, comparing followers to sled dogs whose destiny is always to look at the rear end of the dog in front of them, but never to see the wider horizon or make the decisions of the lead dog Other readers could not thank me enough for articulating what they secretly held in their hearts."Kelley, R. E. (2008). Rethinking followership. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 5-15). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; pg 6. Since 1988, writings in the popular press and in academic circles have routinely discussed the nature of followership. While there is still some controversy over the nature of followership, leadership researchers uniformly now examine and discuss the importance of followership in the corporate environment.

So what then is followership? As a basic concept, **followership**[27] is the act or condition under which an individual helps or supports a leader in the accomplishment of organizational goals. However, Jon Howell and Maria Mendez defined followership as less in terms of a straight-forward definition but more as different roles followership can take. First, followership can take an interactive role, which means that a follower's role is to complement and support her or his leader in accomplishing organizational goals. Second, followership can be an independent role, where followers act independently of their leaders with little necessity for oversight or management. Lastly, followership can take on a shifting role perspective, where followership is seen as less a concrete title or position but rather a state one embodies depending on the tasks at hands. In some situations, an individual may be a leader and in others a follower depending on the context of the

27. The act or condition under which an individual helps or supports a leader in the accomplishment of organizational goals.

organizational goals. The rest of this section is going to examine a series of different perspectives in the literature involving organizational followership: Ira Chaleff's styles of followership, Roger Adair's 4-D Followership Model, and McCroskey and Richmond's Organizational Orientations.

Ira Chaleff's Styles of Followership

One of the first models for understanding the nature of leader-follower interactions from the follower's perspective is Ira Chaleff's Styles of Followership she discussed in her ground breaking book *The Courageous Follower*.Chaleff, I. (2003). *The courageous follower* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Barrett-Koehler. Based on the name of the book, Chaleff's perspective is that followership is an act of courage that someone decides to take. As such, she sees followership as having the courage to engage in two different behaviors: the courage to support the leader and the courage to challenge the leader's behavior and/or policies. Figure 7.5 "Styles of Followership" demonstrates what happens when you combine the courage to challenge and support.

Figure 7.5 *Styles of Followership*
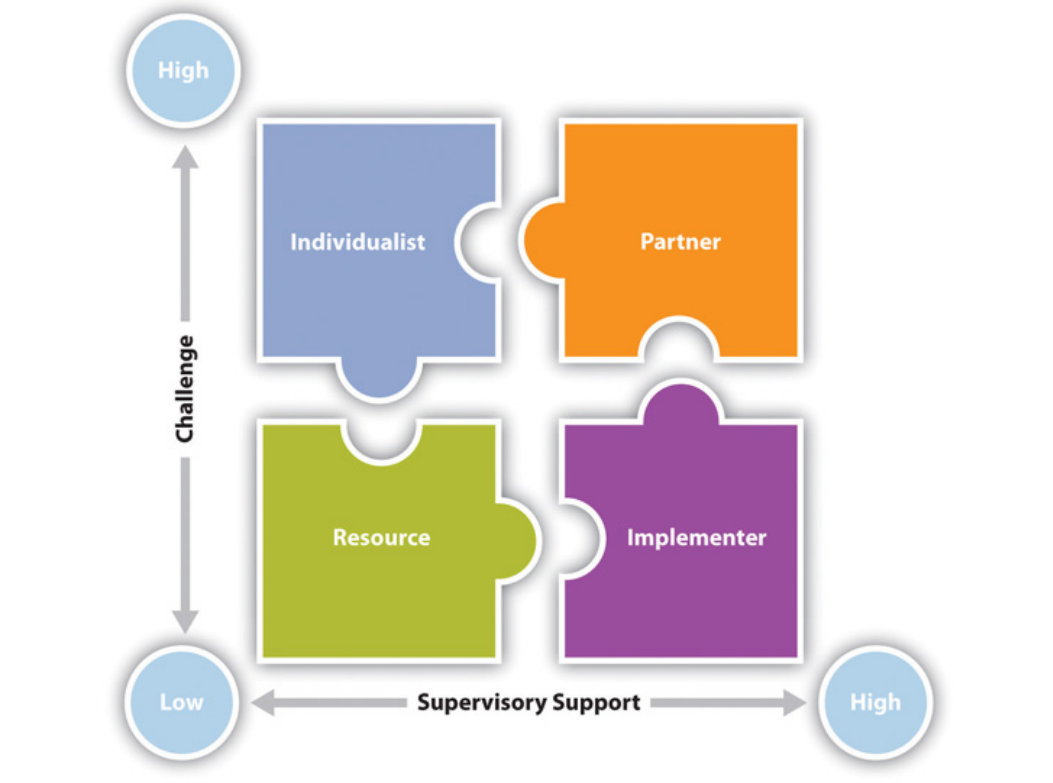
Resource

The first follower style discussed by Chaleff is the **resource**[28]. The resource is someone who will not challenge nor support the leader. This follower basically does the minimal amount to keep her or his job, but nothing more.

Individualist

The second followership style is the **individualist**[29]. This individual will provide little to no support for her or his leader, but has no problem challenging the leader's behavior and policies. This individual is generally very argumentative and/or aggressive in her or his behavior. While this individual will often speak out when no one else will, people see this person as inherently contrarian so her or his ideas are generally marginalized.

Implementer

The third followership style is the **implementer**[30]. The implementer is more than happy to support her or his leader in any way possible, but the implementer will not challenge the leader's behavior and/or policies even when the leader is making costly mistakes. The implementer simply sees it as her or his job to follow order, not question those orders. While this kind of pure-followership may be great in the military, it can be very harmful in the corporate world.

Partner

The final type of followership is the **partner**[31]. Partner followership occurs when a follower is both supportive and challenging. This type of follower believes that he or she has a stake in a leader's decisions, so he or she will act accordingly. If the partner thinks a leader's decision is unwise, he or she will have no problem clearly dissenting within the organizational environment. At the same time, these followers will ultimately provide the most (and most informed) support possible to one's leader.

Roger Adair's 4-D Followership Model

In 2008 Roger Adair proposed the 4-D Followership model to help explain the types of people who exist within an organization.Adair, R. (2008). Developing great leaders, one follower at a time. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 137-153). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. The basic model Adair proposed for understanding followers examines a follower's level of job satisfaction and her or his productivity. Based on the combination of job satisfaction and productivity,

28. Follower type described by Ira Chaleff who will not challenge nor support the leader doing only the minimal amount of work to keep her or his job.

29. Follower type described by Ira Chaleff who will provide little to no support for her or his leader but has no problem challenging the leader's behavior and policies.

30. Follower type described by Ira Chaleff who will be more than happy to support her or his leader in any way possible, but the implementer will not challenge the leader's behavior or policies even when the leader is making costly mistakes.

31. Follower type described by Ira Chaleff who will support and challenge a leader because this follower sees her or himself as having a stake in the leader's decisions.

Adair demonstrates the likelihood that someone will decide to leave the organization. The basic model can be seen in Figure 7.6 "4-D Followership Model".

Figure 7.6   *4-D Followership Model*
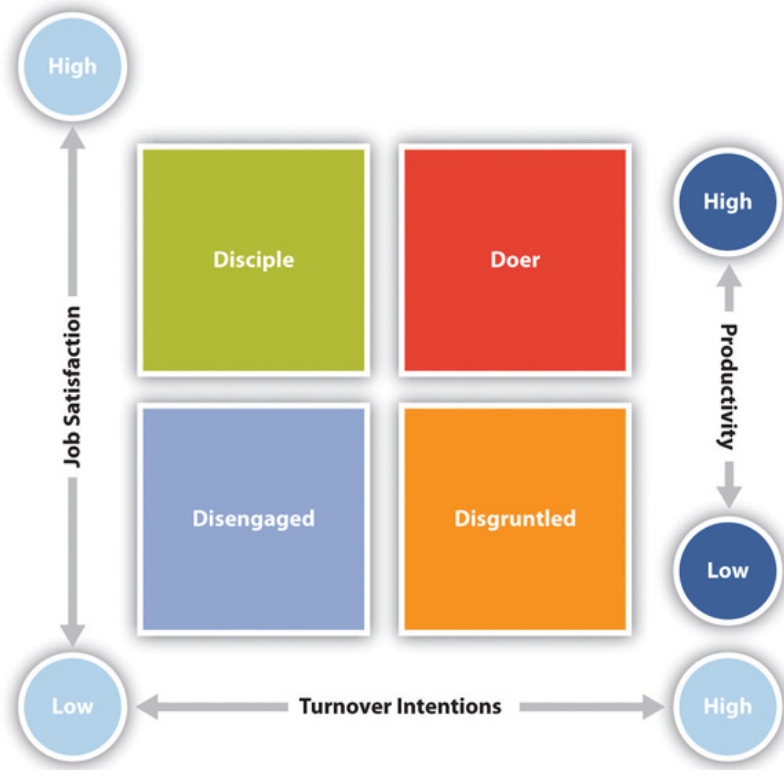
Disgruntled

The first type of follower is called the **disgruntled**[32] follower. He or she has low levels of job satisfaction and is not overly productive at work either. These followers have typically encountered some event within the organization that has left them feeling detached, angry, or displeased. Maybe this person was passed up for a job promotion or he or she is being bullied in the workplace. Whatever the initial trigger, these individuals are toxic to the work environment. If the disgruntled follower is caught early on in her or his downward slip into this state, there is a chance to pull her or him away from the disgruntled cliff. Unfortunately, too many leaders do not notice the signs early on and these followers either end up reacting negatively in the workplace or they job ship as soon as they get an offer.

32. Type of follower described by Roger Adair who has encountered some event within the organization that has left them feeling detached, angry, or displeased, which leads to low levels of job satisfaction and productivity.

Disengaged

The second type of follower is someone who is **disengaged**[33], or someone who doesn't see the value in her or his work, so he or she opts to do the minimum necessary to ensure her or his employment. Often these individuals perceive their work as meaningless or not really helping the organization achieve its basic goals, so they basically tune out. Often people who are disengaged become so because the original expectations they had for the job are simply not met, so they may feel lied to by the organization, which can lead to low levels of organizational commitment.

Doer

The third type of follower is called the **doer**[34]. Doers "are motivated, excited to be part of the team. They are enterprising people, and overall are considered high producers. The only real issue with these employees is that no matter where they go in an organization, the grass always looks greener elsewhere."Adair, R. (2008). Developing great leaders, one follower at a time. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 137-153). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass; pg. 145. A doer often starts as someone who is upwardly mobile in the organization and become doers when one of two things occurs. First, doers want more out of life and if they don't feel that there is continued possibilities for upward mobility within an organization, they are very likely to jump ship. Second, if a doer does not feel he or she is receiving adequate recognition for her or his contributions to the organization, then the doer will find someone who will give her or him that affirmation.

Disciple

The last type of follower is the **disciple**[35] and this individual is highly satisfied and highly productive. In an ideal world, only disciples would fall under leaders because they have no problem sacrificing their own personal lives for the betterment of the organization. These workers are true believers both in their work and in the overarching goal(s) of the organization. While some people may remain disciples for a lifetime, many more workers start as disciples and quickly become disengageds, disgruntleds, or doers. This generally happens because an organization's own employees, processes, or systems do not encourage disciple behavior and eventually wear the disciple down to the point where their sunny organizational outlook becomes one filled with clouds.

33. Type of follower described by Roger Adair doesn't see the value in her or his work so he or she opts to do the minimum necessary to ensure her or his employment.

34. Type of follower described by Roger Adair is highly motivated and constantly looking for bigger and better work opportunities either within their current organization or in a new one.

35. Type of follower described by Roger Adair believs both in her or his work and in the overarching goal(s) of the organization, so this follower is highly satisfied and productive.

James C. McCroskey and Virginia Richmond's Organizational Orientations

In 1962, Robert Presthus created a theory of organizational life that defined three unique types of workers: upwardly mobiles, ambivalents, and indifferents. He defined these three terms thusly:

The *upward-mobiles* are those who react positively to the bureaucratic situation and succeed in it. The *indifferents* are the uncommitted majority who see their jobs as mere instruments to obtain off-work satisfactions. The *ambivalents* are a small, perpetually disturbed minority who can neither renounce their claims for status and power nor play the disciplined role that would enable them to cash in such claims [emphasis in original].Presthus, R. (1962). *The organizational society: An analysis and a theory*. New York, NY: Random House; pg. 15.

In 2004, James McCroskey and Virginia Richmond along with their students Aaron Johnson and Heather Smith created a measure to examine and test Presthus typology of workers to see whether the three organizational orientations held up to empirical scrutiny.McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., Johnson, A. D., & Smith, H. T. (2004). Organizational orientations theory and measurement: Development of measures and preliminary investigations. *Communication Quarterly, 52*, 1-14. <u>Note 7.40 "Organizational Orientations—Short Form"</u> contains a short version of the Organizational Orientations scale. Before continuing, please take a second to complete the measure.

Organizational Orientations—Short Form

Read the following questions and select the answer that corresponds with how you perceive your workplace. Do not be concerned if some of the items appear similar. Please use the scale below to rate the degree to which each statement applies to you:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____One of my goals in life is excelling at in my job.
2. _____I would like to learn as much as possible in my job.
3. _____Most of all, I really want to be recognized for the excellent work I do in the workplace.
4. _____Accomplishing my organization's goals is worth all the work you have to do.
5. _____I am willing to work hard to accomplish my organization's goals.
6. _____Since I am a really good worker, I know I will succeed in my career.
7. _____A job is a job, it doesn't really matter where you work.
8. _____I am generally indifferent to where I work.
9. _____Generally, I just do as much as is required by my supervisor to get a paycheck.
10. _____I don't much care where I work, so long as I get a paycheck.
11. _____One job is pretty much like any other.
12. _____When it comes to choosing a workplace, I found the one that would let me get by doing the least amount of work.
13. _____I really dislike the rules and regulations I am forced to live with at my job.
14. _____Generally, I don't like the rules that my workplace makes me follow.
15. _____Most of the time, a halfhearted effort is all I feel I need to give at work.
16. _____I really think my job should just give me a paycheck and leave me alone.
17. _____One job is about like any other, a pain in the backside.
18. _____What I want most in my job is to be left alone.

SCORING: To compute your scores follow the instructions below:

1. Upwardly Mobile

   Scoring: Add scores for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6

   For Upwardly Mobiles, scores should be between 6 and 30. If your score is above 15, you are considered an upwardly mobile worker. If your score is below 15, you're not considered an upwardly mobile worker.

2. Indifferent

   Scoring: Add scores for items 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, & 18

   For Indifferents, scores should be between 6 and 30. If your score is above 15, you are considered a highly indifferent worker. If your score is below 15, you're not considered an indifferent worker.

3. Ambivalent

   Scoring: Add scores for items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, & 12

   For Ambivalents, scores should be between 6 and 30. If your score is above 15, you are considered an a highly ambivalent worker. If your score is below 15, you're not considered an ambivalent worker.

Source: Wrench, J. S., Brogan, S. M., Fiore, A. M., & McKean, J. R. (2011, November). *Consumerist education in America: When ideology impacts the basic purpose of higher education.* Paper presented at the National Communication Association's Convention, New Orleans, LA.

The Three Orientations

According to Virginia Richmond and James McCroskey, organizational orientations explain how followers orient themselves towards both their work and their workplace.Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). Organizational orientations. In *Organizational Communication for Survival: Making work, work* (4th ed., pp. 82-93). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. To help us understand the organizational orientations and their relationship to followership, let's examine each one separately.

Upwardly Mobiles

The **upwardly mobile**[36] organizational orientation is one associated with individuals who are devoted to their work, their organization, and the organization's goals. To these individuals, working and their jobs are an inherent part of their lives. In fact, these people often identify their jobs as being careers and not just jobs. To upwardly mobiles, a **job**[37] is a way to earn money, but a **career**[38] involves the pursuit of lifelong ambition and goals related to one's chosen occupation. Upwardly mobile individuals see themselves as having careers and not just jobs. In fact, an inherent part of the identity of an upwardly mobile relates to her or his career (e.g., I'm a lawyer, I'm a teacher, I'm an accountant, etc...). These individuals generally are great followers because they really see their lives and their careers as highly intertwined constructs. However, upwardly mobile individuals want to continue up the hierarchy and will consider jumping ship if they do not see a place for them within an organization in the future.

Indifferents

The second way people orient themselves at work is the **indifferent**[39] organizational orientation. Where upwardly mobile see themselves as having careers, indifferents clearly believe they have a job. In essence, the indifferent follower is one who sees work as a means to an end. The indifferent goes to work, does her or his job in order to get a paycheck, but the indifferent really sees life as something that begins once he or she has left the workplace. Indifferent followers need more guidance because they will do the minimum amount of work necessary to keep their job and earn a paycheck. Indifferents will look for a new job if they believe their current job is starting to encroach on their life outside of work. As for their communicative behavior at work, their "communication on the job is about their family or personal life. When encouraged to communicate about organizational matters with colleagues, they generally say nothing, change the topic, or suggest that others should discuss these matters."Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). Organizational orientations. In *Organizational Communication for Survival: Making work, work* (4th ed., pp. 82-93). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon; pg. 84.

Ambivalents

The last group of followers commonly seen in the workplace are ambivalents. **Ambivalents**[40] are somewhat hard to describe because they can be unpredictable. Where upwardly mobiles like to work within the hierarchy to accomplish goals, indifferents go along with the hierarchy and do what they are told to do, ambivalents tend to like neither the existing hierarchical structure, the tasks they are assigned, nor the organizational goals. These individuals are just generally discontent. In fact, these individuals often think the grass would be greener in a

36. Organizational orientation described by James C. McCroskey and Virginia Richmond associated with individuals who are devoted to their work, their organization, and the organization's goals.

37. Post of employment for an individual who is just looking to earn money.

38. Post of employment for an individual who is pursuing lifelong ambitions and goals related to one's chosen occupation.

39. Organizational orientation described by James C. McCroskey and Virginia Richmond describing followers who go to work and do their jobs in order to get a paycheck, these followers really sees life as something thatbegins once they leave the workplace

40. Organizational orientation described by James C. McCroskey and Virginia Richmond that depicts a follower who is disgruntled by the existing hierarchical structure, the tasks they are assigned, and/or the organizational goals.

different pasture. However, when they jump ship to a new organization, they tend to find themselves making the same complaints about their new organization as well. Furthermore, their moods and their behaviors within the organization can change on a daily basis. "These people can be supportive one day and destructive the next. They are moody, which makes it difficult for people to work with or for them."Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). Organizational orientations. In *Organizational Communication for Survival: Making work, work* (4th ed., pp. 82-93). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon; pg. 85. Sadly, most organizational members and leaders learn to keep their distance of ambivalents and keep their interactions with ambivalents to "small talk" to avoid setting them off. Most organizations (and its members) will be happier and more productive when these individuals leave.

Outcomes of Organizational Orientations

In the original study by McCroskey, Richmond, Johnson, and Smith examining organizational orientations, the researchers set out to examine how the three orientations related to a series of different communication and organizational variables.McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., Johnson, A. D., & Smith, H. T. (2004). Organizational orientations theory and measurement: Development of measures and preliminary investigations. *Communication Quarterly, 52*, 1-14. First, they found that upwardly mobile individuals were more motivated and higher levels of job satisfaction, while indifferents and ambivalents were neither motivated nor satisfied. As for their communication with others, upwardly mobile individuals were shown to be considerably more communicatively competent than either indifferents and ambivalents. The third major finding from the first study examined how an individual's organizational orientation impact her or his views of their supervisor's credibility. Not surprisingly, upwardly mobile followers saw their leaders as credible (competent, caring, and trustworthy), while indifferent and ambivalent followers did not. These results were later confirmed in a second study that compared both nonprofit and for-profit organizational members.McCroskey, L., McCroskey, J.C., & Richmond, V. P. (2005). Applying organizational Orientations theory to employees of profit and non-profit organizations. *Communication Quarterly, 53*, 21-40.

In a 2008 study conducted by Alan Goodboy and James McCroskey, the researchers furthered our understanding of organizational orientations by examining the relationship between the three organizational orientations and nonverbal immediacy and Machiavellianism.Goodboy, A. K., & McCroskey, J. C. (2008). Toward a theoretical model of the role of organizational orientations and Machiavellianism on nonverbal immediacy behavior and job satisfaction. *Human Communication, 3*, 293-308. Nonverbal immediacy is the perceived psychological or physical closeness between two people. The nonverbal literature has consistently shown that nonverbal immediacy (which can be influenced by effective eye contact,

appropriate use of gestures, smiling, etc.) is a positive communication trait that improves a variety of different communicative interactions including both leader-follower relationships and coworker relationships. In this study, upwardly mobile individuals were more likely to be nonverbally immediate in the workplace when compared to either indifferents or ambivalents. Machiavellianism, on the other hand, is a personality trait associated with an individual's tendency towards manipulating those around them. Both indifferents and ambivalents were more likely to be highly Machiavellian in the workplace when compared to their upwardly mobile counterparts.

Overall, these three studies clearly show that understanding one's follower's organizational orientations can be very important for follower-leader interactions in the workplace. While leaders should cultivate upwardly mobile they shouldn't ignore either indifferents or ambivalents in order to have a more productive and harmonious working environment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Followership is the act or condition under which an individual helps or supports a leader in the accomplishment of organizational goals. Followership is considered an act because of the various behaviors associated with following someone. Followership is conserved a condition because of an individual's place within an organizational hierarchy.
- Ira Chaleff's styles of followership is based on the degree to which an individual follower will support her or his leader and the extent to which a follower will challenge her or his leader. Based on these two characteristics, Chaleff proposes four distinct follower types: (1) resource (low challenge, low support), (2) individualist (high challenge, low support), (3) implementer (low challenge, high support), and (4) partner (high challenge, high support).
- Roger Adair's 4-D Followership Model looks at the combination of worker's level of job satisfaction and her or his intentions to leave the organization. Based on these two levels, Adair proposed four distinct types of workers: (1) disengage (low job satisfaction, low turnover intention), (2) disgruntled (low job satisfaction, high turnover intention), (3) doer (high job satisfaction, high turnover intention), and (4) disciple (high job satisfaction, low turnover intention). Ultimately, Adair also notes that disengaged and disgruntled followers are not very productive while doers and disciples are very productive followers.
- Based on Robert Presthus created a theory of organizational life, McCroskey and Richmond have operationalized and studied three unique Organizational Orientations: upwardly mobiles (individuals who see their careers as a vibrant part of their daily lives, so they strive to be their best at work), indifferents (followers who see work as a means to an end and really see life as something that happens outside the workplace), and ambivalents (individuals who are disgruntled with existing hierarchical structures, the tasks they are assigned, and/or the organizational goals.). Upwardly mobile followers are generally more motivated, productive, and satisfied when compared to their indifferent and ambivalent peers.

EXERCISES

1. Thinking back to your most recent job, what type of follower would Ira Chaleff characterize you as? Why?
2. Thinking back to your most recent job, what type of follower would Roger Adair characterize you as? Why?
3. After completing the Organizational Orientations-Short Form scale in Note 7.40 "Organizational Orientations—Short Form", what organizational orientation is your most prominent? How do you think your organizational orientation affects your current job? Do you think your organizational orientation would change if you were in a job versus in a career?

7.3 Mentoring and Coaching

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Differentiate between the terms "mentoring" and "coaching."
2. Explain Gregory Dawson and Richard Watson three stages of mentoring.
3. Describe Pamela Kalbfleisch's mentoring enactment theory.
4. Differentiate between executive and supervisory coaching.
5. Describe and explain the three types of coaching.

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This chapter has thus far focused on the nature of leadership and followership. We are now going to turn our attention to two very specific types of leader-follower behaviors: mentoring and coaching. Unfortunately, there tends to be some confusion within the organizational world as to the nature of these two terms, so let's quickly define them here before exploring each one in more depth. *Mentoring* is "the transfer of your [mentor's] knowledge or professional experience to another person [mentee or protégé] to advance their understanding or achievement."Hicks, R., & McCracken, J. (2009). Mentoring vs. caching: Do you know the difference? *Physician Executive, 35*(4), 71-73; pg. 71. *Coaching*, on the other hand, is the process of providing advice, instruction, or support in an attempt to help an individual increase efficiency or productivity in the workplace. The basic difference between mentoring and coaching is the desired result. The goal of mentoring is to help someone advance through the various hurdles associated with one's career; whereas, coaching is about helping an individual engage in self-improvement in an effort to do her or his job better. Now that we've explored the basic differences between mentoring and coaching, let's explore each in turn.

Mentoring

Mentoring[41] is a term used throughout business and a variety of other endeavors in life, and the concept goes back thousands of years to Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. The Odyssey tells the story of an elderly and wise sea captain named Mentor who gives Odysseus's sun, Telemachus, guidance while his father is off fighting the Trojan War. From the gentle guidance of Mentor to the more formalized and established mentoring programs commonly seen in corporate America, the word "mentoring" commonly refers to a relationship where one individual with more knowledge and experience (the mentor) aids another individual who has less knowledge and experience (the mentee or protégé).

41. The transfer of experience or knowledge from a senior individual (the mentor) to a junior individual (the mentee or protégé) in an effort to help the junior individual learn the ins and outs of organizational life.

So, why would any individual desire to belong to a mentoring relationship. According to Kathy Kram in her ground breaking book *Mentoring at Work*Kram, K. E. (1985). *Mentoring at work.* Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman., mentoring provides two basic functions for mentees: career and psychosocial. Career functions are the ones people most commonly think of when they think about mentoring because career functions are associated with helping the mentee "learn the ropes" in the organization (or a field) in an effort to help that person climb the corporate-ladder. Mentors can engage in a number different behaviors to help a mentee do this. For example, a mentor can coach the mentee (more on this later in this section); a mentor can sponsor the mentee's advancement by placing the mentee on interesting and challenging projects; a mentor can help mentee receive recognition and/or ensuring the mentee is widely visible; and a mentor can provide the mentee certain protections from organizational or field-based politics.Ragins, B. R., & Kram, K. E. (2007). The roots and meaning of mentoring. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-15). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. The psychosocial functions, on the other hand, include mentoring behaviors that "build on trust, intimacy, and interpersonal bonds in the relationship and include behaviors that enhance the protégé's professional and personal growth, identity, self-worth, and self-efficacy."Ragins, B. R., & Kram, K. E. (2007). The roots and meaning of mentoring. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-15). Los Angeles, CA: Sage; pg. 5. The goal of psychosocial functions is to help foster a relationship that is built on "acceptance and confirmation and providing counseling, friendship, and role-modeling" for the mentee.Ragins, B. R., & Kram, K. E. (2007). The roots and meaning of mentoring. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3-15). Los Angeles, CA: Sage; pg. 5. In the rest of this section we are going to examine the basic stages that a mentoring relationship goes through, mentoring enactment theory, and the outcomes mentoring has for mentees, mentors, and organizations.

Stages of Mentoring

Mentors and mentoring is not a stagnant concept by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, mentoring relationships evolve over time and change as the mentee and mentor's relationship changes. Gregory Dawson and Richard Watson explain mentoring as a three stage process: hierarchical years, junior/senior colleague years, and trusted sage years.Dawson, G. S., & Watson, R. T. (2007). Involved or committed? Similarities and differences in advising and mentoring in the academic and business world. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 2007*(20), 3-10.

Hierarchical Years

After either acquiring a mentor on one's own or having one formally assigned to you, the first period in a mentoring relationship is one marked by formality. During these years, the mentor's job is to direct and guide a mentee through corporate life. This period can last anything from three to five years and generally includes such behaviors as assisting "that person in understanding the corporate culture, getting appropriate work supplies, completing required forms, getting placed on an initial project and guiding the new professional through recurring yearly actions (e.g., performance appraisals)."Dawson, G. S., & Watson, R. T. (2007). Involved or committed? Similarities and differences in advising and mentoring in the academic and business world. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 2007*(20), 3-10; pg. 5.

Junior/Senior Colleague Years

The junior/senior colleague years are marked by a period when the mentor and mentee redefine their relationship based on the needs and goals of those involved in the relationship. One of the marked differences during this time period is the change from a directive approach to mentoring (where the mentor is advising and supervising the mentee) to one that is marked by mutual respect and collaboration. Instead of the mentor inviting the mentee to participate on projects, the mentee is now dealing with her or his own projects and may or may not invite her or his mentor to participate as an equal partner on projects. During this period, the mentee should further expand her or his professional network and be seen as someone who can launch out on her or his own. You'll notice that this period has both the notion of junior and senior colleague. This shift happens naturally over time. As someone starts out as a junior college, there is the expectation that the mentee will take on more and more projects of increasing complexity. Eventually, these projects become more central to the organization's mission and the individual takes on senior status as a colleague to her or his mentor.

Trusted Sage Years

The final stage of the mentoring relationship occurs when the mentor and mentee are no longer bound by notions of organizational hierarchy and truly develop a working friendship with one another. During this stage it becomes even more important for an individual to have their own mentees as a way to pass on the legacy they received from their own mentor(s). Probably the number one hallmark of going from the colleague years to the trusted sage years is the establishing of one's own mentoring relationships with mentees.

Pamela Kalbfleisch's Mentoring Enactment Theory

Now that we've explored the basic stages of mentoring, we are going to switch gears and try to understand a more general understanding of the initiating, maintaining, and repairing of mentoring relationships. To help us understand how mentor-mentee relationships functions from a communication perspective, Pamela Kalbfleisch developed the mentoring enactment theory.Kalbfleisch, P. J. (2002). Communicating in mentoring relationships: A theory for enactment. *Communication Theory, 12*, 63-69. From Kalbfleisch's theory on mentoring, we learn that the very center of the mentor-mentee relationship are two people who are joined together either formally or informally for the explicit purpose of achieving success. While mentees desire mentoring relationships because of the known value of mentoring on one's career trajectory (see mentee outcomes below), mentors experience inherent costs.

For example, there are costs associated with "loss of time spent coaching a protégé, vulnerability through sharing hard-earned techniques and secrets, and potentially developing difficulties in one's personal and professional life because of a relationship with a protégé."Kalbfleisch, P. J. (2002). Communicating in mentoring relationships: A theory for enactment. *Communication Theory, 12*, 63-69; pg. 64. So, why then do mentors opt to enter into mentoring relationships? Well, there is not a single answer to this question. Different people have a variety of different answers depending on their own organizational and personal perceptions of mentoring itself. According to Kalbfleisch there are four common reasons people decide to mentor a protégé: altruism, pay-it-forward, organizational expectations, or self-interest. First, a mentor could enter a mentoring relationship out of pure altruism. The mentor may feel some kind of deeply held obligation to help others, so he or she seeks out and enters into mentoring relationships out of a simple desire to see others grow. Second, a mentor could enter a mentoring relationship because he or she feels the need to pay-it-forward. The notion of paying-it-forward is based on the idea that the second generation mentor was at one point a protégé, so he or she feels a sense of obligation to her or his mentor, so the second generation mentor pays the debt to her or his mentor by opting to take on protégés. In this sense, you're paying-the-mentoring forward to a new generation of protégés. The third reason a mentor may opt to take on a protégé is a result of organizational expectations. Many organizations have formal mentoring requirements for individuals who reach a certain seniority stage. Often in these formal mentoring situations, the mentor may not have a choice in the choosing of her or his protégés, so these mentoring relationships may not be the most effective because the mentor may feel strong-armed into the relationship. The final reason some mentors take on a protégé is out of pure self-interest. Some mentors want a protégé for no other reason than they want someone can help "accomplish outcomes or for an entourage to follow in one's wake."Kalbfleisch, P. J. (2002). Communicating in mentoring relationships: A theory for enactment. *Communication Theory, 12*, 63-69; pg. 64. When

it's all said and done, there are a variety of reasons or even a combination of reasons why a mentor ultimately decides to enter into a mentoring relationship.

Kalbfleisch's mentoring enactment theory was developed by applying the knowledge communication scholars have about a range of other interpersonal relationships. After examining what researchers know about interpersonal relationships, Kalbfleisch proposed nine basic propositions related to the enactment of mentoring relationships (<u>Table 7.4 "Mentoring Enactment Theory Propositions"</u>).

Table 7.4 Mentoring Enactment Theory PropositionsKalbfleisch, P. J. (2002). Communicating in mentoring relationships: A theory for enactment. *Communication Theory, 12*, 63-69; pgs. 66-68.

Proposition #	Proposition
Proposition 1	Generally, requests to a more advanced other to be a mentor to the requestor are likely to be rejected in initial interactions between the advanced other and the requestor.
Proposition 2	Generally, requests to a more advanced other to be a mentor to the requestor are more likely to be rejected than are requests for help on a specific task made by this same requestor.
Proposition 3	Requests made to a more advanced other to be a mentor to the requester will be more likely to be accepted when the advanced other previously has agreed with a third party to serve as a mentor in a relationship.
Proposition 4	Offers made to a less advanced other to be a protégé are likely to be accepted.
Proposition 5	Offers of help made to a less advanced other are likely to be accepted.
Proposition 6	Protégés will be more likely than mentors to direct their conversational goals and communication strategies toward initiating, maintaining, and repairing their mentoring relationship.
Proposition 7	The closer a mentor is linked to a protégé's career success, the greater the protégé's communicative attempts to initiate, maintain, and repair a mentoring relationship.
Proposition 8	Female protégées will be more likely than male protégés to direct their conversational goals and communication strategies toward initiating, maintaining, and repairing their relationship with their mentor.

Proposition #	Proposition
Proposition 9	Mentors will be more likely to direct their conversational goals and communication strategies toward maintaining and repairing their relationship when invested in the mentoring relationship.

The first three propositions are all geared to examine the initiation of mentoring relationships. In essence, mentors are not likely to take on a protégé when the protégé approaches the mentor and asks for that mentoring relationship. However, mentors are more likely to help a potential protégé with a specific task. In essence, it's better as someone looking for a mentor to ask for help on a specific task and then let the relationship develop naturally. The one case when this isn't true occurs when a potential mentor as previously agreed to mentor someone. In these cases, the mentor has already been primed to taking on the role of mentor, so he or she tends to be more open in these cases to taking on a mentor.

The four and fifth propositions approach mentoring initiation from the mentor's perspective instead of the protégés'. In proposition four, Kalbfleisch theorizes that when a mentor asks a protégé to initiate a mentoring relationship, the protégé is more likely than not to agree to the relationship. This is also true if a mentor reaches out to a potential protégé offering a helping hand (as seen in the 5th proposition). In both of these cases, individuals who are less-advanced in a hierarchical structure are willing and will accept both offers of help and offers of mentorship.

Propositions six, seven, and eight examine the role of communication within a mentor-protégé relationship. Specifically, Kalbfleisch theorizes that protégés will use conversations and strategic communication to initiate, maintain, and repair their mentoring relationships. Kalbfleisch predicts that this is more likely if someone is in a mentoring relationship that impacts the protégé's success in the workplace or if the protégé is a female. Obviously, if someone's success is in the hands of a mentor, making sure that relationship is effective is of paramount importance to the protégé. As such, the protégé is going to strategically use communication to ensure that the mentoring relationship is stable and healthy. Kalbfleisch also predicts that women will engage in this behavior to a greater degree than men, which has been supported by previous research on mentoring.Kalbfleisch, P. J. (1997). Appeasing the mentor. *Aggressive Behavior, 23*, 389-403.

The final proposition for the enactment of mentoring relationships theorizes that as mentors become more involved in the mentoring relationship, the mentors will become more likely to direct conversational goals and communication strategies

towards maintaining and repairing that relationship with their protégés. In the initial stages of a mentoring relationship, the mentor really has nothing to gain from the mentoring relationship but incurs a number of costs. As the relationship progresses, the mentor invests a lot of time and resources into developing her or his protégé, so it should be no surprise then that the mentor will want to protect that relationship because of the investment.

Outcomes for Mentoring

By now you may be wondering why mentoring is so important, well we're here to tell you that there a wide range of positive outcomes that happen as a result of mentoring. To help us understand the importance of mentoring in the modern organization, let's examine outcomes related to mentees, mentors, and organizations.

Mentee Outcomes

In a 2007 analysis of 20 years of mentoring research, Thomas Dougherty and George Dreher found a wide range of positive benefits for everyone involved in the mentoring process.Dougherty, T. W., & Dreher, G. F. (2007). Mentoring and career outcomes. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 51-93). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. Here is a partial list of the outcomes mentoring can have on a mentee over the course of her or his career. All of these outcomes are positively related to mentoring unless otherwise stated in the outcome:

- Career Commitment
- Career Mobility
- Career Opportunity
- Career Recognition
- Employee Motivation
- Hierarchical Level
- Job Satisfaction
- Lower Levels of Work Stress
- Lower Turnover Intentions
- Number of Promotions
- Organizational Commitment
- Organizational Socialization
- Performance
- Productivity
- Total Annual Compensation

Mentor Outcomes

While there has been a lot of research examining how mentoring is beneficial for the protégé, there has not been as much research examining possible benefits to the mentor-mentee relationship from the perspective of the mentor. As noted earlier, there are a range of reasons an individual may opt to become a mentor, so some of the outcomes are intrinsically tied to the original reason(s) someone opts to engage in a mentoring relationship with a potential protégé. However, the following tangible benefits have been seen for the mentor:Allen, T. D. (2007). Mentoring relationships: From the perspective of the mentor. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 123-147). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

- Job Satisfaction
- Lower Burnout Rates
- Lower Turnover Intentions
- Number of Promotions
- Organizational Commitment
- Salary
- Subjective Career Success

One theoretical reason for why mentors actually have positive outcomes (especially those related to promotions and salaries) may have to do with the fact that "mentors may be rewarded by organizations because they are recognized as good organizational citizens."Allen, T. D. (2007). Mentoring relationships: From the perspective of the mentor. In B. R. Ragins & K. E. Kram (Eds.), *The handbook of mentoring at work: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 123-147). Los Angeles, CA: Sage; pg. 135.

Organizational Outcomes

Many of the outcomes seen for both the mentor and the mentee are also outcomes for the organization itself. For example, organizations benefit from employees who are motivated, satisfied, less likely to leave, and show higher performance and productivity levels. Based on these factors alone, you would think organizations would spend more time formalizing the mentoring process to ensure that all employees receive these kinds of opportunities and advancements within the organization. Furthermore, numerous studies have found a very strong return on investment for organizations who engage in formal mentoring programs, so formalized mentoring programs really do make business sense.Kaye, B., & Scheef, D. (2000, April). *Mentoring.* In ASTD's, *Info-line Series.* Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development

Coaching

As discussed at the beginning of this section, **coaching**[42] can be defined as the process of providing advice, instruction, or support in an attempt to help an individual be more efficient or productive in the workplace. From this perspective, the goal of coaching is to help individuals succeed in the workplace. Where the goal of mentoring is to help someone advance through a mentee's career, coaching focuses on helping an individual engage in self-improvement in an effort to do her or his job better.

Now before we go into more detail about coaching, we should differentiate between two basic types of coaching commonly discussed in the management literature. First, we have **executive coaching**[43], or the "process of a one-on-one relationship between a professional coach and an executive (the person coached) for the purpose of enhancing behavioral change through self-awareness and learning, and thus ultimately for the success of the individual and the organization."Baek-Kyoo, B. J., Sushko, J. S., & McLean, G. N. (2012). Multiple faces of coaching: Manager-as-coach, executive coaching, and formal mentoring. *Organization Development Journal, 30*, 19-38; pg. 26. In the world of executive coaching, a leader within an organization hires an executive coach for the pure purposes of improving that leader's performance within the organization. An entire sub-field of executive coaches exist in today's marketplace. Some executive coaches are very effective and have helped the top CEOs in the county become better leaders and achieve their organization's goals. However, there are many charlatans that exist within this market, so we do not really recommend just hiring an executive coach on a whim.

Supervisory coaching[44], on the other hand, involves "an ongoing process for improving problematic work performance; helping employees recognize opportunities to improve their performance and capabilities; empowering employees to exceed prior levels of performance; and giving guidance, encouragement and support to the learner."Baek-Kyoo, B. J., Sushko, J. S., & McLean, G. N. (2012). Multiple faces of coaching: Manager-as-coach, executive coaching, and formal mentoring. *Organization Development Journal, 30*, 19-38. This form of coaching involves what most people in the workplace will encounter with regards to coaching. We term this supervisory coaching because in this instance the coaching is actually being conducted by one's supervisor in the workplace.

Three Types of Coaching

In 1948 during the American Psychological Association Convention in Boston, Massachusetts, Benjamin Bloom led a discussion about creating a common language for test developers and educators. Through a series of conference presentations from 1949 to 1953 groups met to discuss the idea of a common language, which

42. The process of providing advice, instruction, or support in an attempt to help an individual be more efficient or productive in the workplace.

43. The establishment of a professional relationship between a hired individual (professional coach or therapist) whose job it is to help an individual within a leadership position and that person within a leadership position become all that he or she can be within an organizational environment.

44. The communicative process of helping a subordinate improve her or his performance through direction, encouragement, and support.

ultimately culminated in the publication of the ground-breaking book *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals; Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* in 1965.Bloom, B. S., Engelhart, M. D., Furst, E. J., Hill, W. H., & Krathwohl D. R. (1956). *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals, Handbook I: Cognitive Domain.* New York, NY: David McKay. In this book, Bloom and his colleagues noted that there are three primary dimensions of learning that teachers should be concerned with in the classroom: of cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skill), and affective (attitude). Before we explain what each of these three domains of learning are, please take a second and complete the Organizational Coaching Scale found in Note 7.53 "Organizational Coaching Scale".

Organizational Coaching Scale

This survey includes a number of statements about how you may feel about your current working condition. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each of the statements by marking your opinion to the left of each statement according to the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____My supervisor works with me to improve my on-the-job skills.
2. _____My job skills have gotten better as a result of my supervisor's training.
3. _____My supervisor has not helped me with any job skills necessary to complete my work.
4. _____My supervisor has not attempted to correct any of my job related behaviors.
5. _____My supervisor trains new employees on any necessary skills to completely function in our workplace.
6. _____My supervisor does not work with me to improve my on the job skills.
7. _____My job skills are not improving because of a lack of training from my supervisor.
8. _____My supervisor has helped me improve my job skills.
9. _____My supervisor corrects job-related behavior problems when he or she sees them.
10. _____My supervisor makes sure all new-hires are completely trained on skills that are necessary to function in our workplace.
11. _____My supervisor makes sure I have all necessary information to complete my job.
12. _____My supervisor withholds information that could help me function better as an employee.
13. _____My supervisor makes sure my information needs are fulfilled.
14. _____My supervisor makes sure I understand what I'm doing at work.
15. _____My supervisor provides me with all the information I need to be a competent worker.

16. _____My supervisor prevents me from getting necessary information to complete my job.
17. _____My supervisor gives me all the information I need to help me function better as an employee.
18. _____My supervisor does not make sure that I understand what's going on at work.
19. _____My supervisor does not make sure my information needs are fulfilled.
20. _____My supervisor does not make any attempt to see if I understand what is going on at work, or not.
21. _____My supervisor is concerned with whether, or not, I enjoy what I'm doing while at work.
22. _____My supervisor does not care if I think my job is dull.
23. _____My supervisor clearly is involved with trying to motivate me to be a better employee.
24. _____My supervisor wants to make sure that I'm not bored on the job.
25. _____My supervisor is only concerned with whether, or not, I get my work done.
26. _____My supervisor does not try to motivate me on the job.
27. _____My supervisor does not care if I am interested in the work at all.
28. _____My supervisor tries to make sure I'm excited to be at work.
29. _____My supervisor doesn't care about how I feel about my job.
30. _____My supervisor creates a positive working atmosphere.

SCORING: To compute your scores follow the instructions below:

1. Skills-Based Coaching

    Step One: Add scores for items 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, & 10

    Step Two: Add scores for items 3, 4, 6, & 7

    Step Three: Add 24 to Step 2.

    Step Four: Subtract the score for Step two from the score for Step Three.

    For Skills-Based Coaching, scores should be between 10 and 50. If your score is above 50, you perceive your supervisor to be teaching

you the skills you need to perform your job. If your score is 29 or below, you do not perceive your supervisor as teaching you the skills you need to perform your job.

2. Cognitive-Based Coaching

    Step One: Add scores for items 11, 13, 14, 15, & 17

    Step Two: Add scores for items 12, 16, 18, 19, & 20

    Step Three: Add 30 to Step 2.

    Step Four: Subtract the score for Step two from the score for Step Three.

    For Cognitive-Based Coaching, scores should be between 10 and 50. If your score is above 50, you perceive your supervisor to be providing you the knowledge you need to perform your job. If your score is 29 or below, you do not perceive your supervisor as providing you the information you need to perform your job.

3. Affective-Based Coaching

    Step One: Add scores for items 21, 23, 24, 28, & 30

    Step Two: Add scores for items 22, 25, 26, 27, & 29

    Step Three: Add 30 to Step 2.

    Step Four: Subtract the score for Step two from the score for Step Three.

    For Affective-Based Coaching, scores should be between 10 and 50. If your score is above 50, you perceive your supervisor to be promoting in you a positive attitude about your job. If your score is 29 or below, you do not perceive your supervisor is either unconcerned with your attitude about your job or is actually creating a negative organizational environment.

Source: Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., Berletch, N., Powley, C., & Wehr, A. (2008). Organizational coaching as instructional communication. *Human Communication, 11*, 279–292.

You may be wondering what three domains of learning has to do with organizational coaching. Quite a lot actually. In a 2008 study conducted by Wrench, McCroskey, Berletch, Powley, and WehrWrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., Berletch, N., Powley, C., & Wehr, A. (2008). Organizational coaching as instructional communication. *Human Communication, 11*, 279-292., the researchers argued that organizational coaching is fundamentally related to learning, so examining organizational coaching in-light of the three domains of learning made conceptual sense. We should also note that the three domains of learning have been applied in other non-educational settings. For example, the three domains of learning are commonly referred to as the KSAs (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) in both training and development and human performance improvement.Biech, E. (Ed.). (2008). *ASTD handbook for workplace learning professionals*. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.

Cognitive/Knowledge

The first domain of coaching is referred to as **cognitive-based coaching**[45], which refers to the recognition and recall of information and the development of intellectual abilities and skills. Let's look at both parts of this definition. First, individuals undergoing cognitive coaching will be taught how to recognize and recall information that will help them perform their jobs better. This could be anything from learning how to recognize and troubleshoot problems as they arise in the workplace to more simplistic tasks like knowing who to call when you have a question. The second part of coaching involves the development of intellectual abilities and skills. Overtime, a good coach will help her or his subordinates develop themselves intellectually.

When it comes to developing someone intellectually, you want to stretch the subordinate and give them new cognitive tasks that will be a reach for the person without too much undue stress. For example, one of our colleagues had a secretary who was not technically savvy. When he became the secretary's immediate supervisor, he decided he wanted to use an electronic calendar instead of the more traditional paper and pen calendar for keeping his meetings. While this may not seem like a big deal, this secretary needed to be coached and taught how to use the computer scheduling program. This new cognitive task was just enough of a stretch for the secretary without causing her complete frustration and a huge amount of stress.

Psychomotor/Behavior

The second type of coaching, **skills-based coaching**[46], is one that is very important in the workplace even though it's a domain of learning often overlooked in the educational system. Psychomotor learning emphasizes "some muscular or motor

45. The coaching process associated with the acquisition or enhancement of recognition and recall of information and the development of intellectual abilities and skills.

46. The coaching process associated with the acquisition or enhancement a specific skill that can help someone be more productive or efficient.

skill, some manipulation of material objects, or some act which requires neuromuscular co-ordination."Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives; the classification of educational goals. Handbook II: The affective domain.* New York, NY: David McKay, p. 7 The goal of psychomotor learning is the acquisition of a specific skill that can help someone be more productive or efficient. Think back across your own life. You've learned many skills that make you more productive and efficient in life. Maybe you've learned to use a computer keyboard and no longer need to look at your fingers while typing. Maybe you've learned how to use the bells and whistles of a specific software program like Microsoft Office or Adobe Creative Suite. When we learn these skills, they clearly involve cognitive power, but we refer to them as psychomotor because it's the manipulation of your body to complete a task, which is a fundamentally different type of learning. Think about when you learned to ride a bicycle. You could have all the knowledge in the world about gravity and the engineering of a bicycle, but just having the cognitive knowledge is not enough to get you upright and moving down a road successfully.

A great deal of coaching in the workplace involves psychomotor coaching because the professional world is filled with skills that workers need to learn. Everything from learning how to put together a burger at a fast food restaurant to computer programming involves learning specific skills sets in the workplace.

Affective/Attitude

The final type of coaching that happens in the workplace relates to the affective nature of one's work. The affective domain of coaching is one where "objectives which emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection. Affective objectives vary from simple acceptance to selected phenomena to complex but inherently consistent qualities of character and conscience [learning about] interests, attitudes, appreciations, values, emotional sets or biases."Krathwohl, D. R., Bloom, B. S., & Masia, B. B. (1964). *Taxonomy of educational objectives; the classification of educational goals. Handbook II: The affective domain.* New York, NY: David McKay, p. 7 In other words, **affective coaching**[47] examines an individual's emotional reaction to her or his work and working environment.

First, affective coaching involves ensuring that one's subordinate has a positive attitude towards the work he or she is accomplishing. When subordinates do not see the value of their work or how their work fits into the larger picture of the organization, it's very common that they will become disillusioned and not be optimal workers. As such, supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that their subordinates maintain a positive attitude about the work. In fact, subordinates often take their cues from supervisors with regards to how they emotionally approach a task. If a supervisor assigns a task with a grimace on her or his face,

47. The coaching process associated with the acquisition or enhancement positive emotional reactions to an individual's work and working environment.

then of course the subordinate is going to approach that same task with some trepidation and disappointment. Ultimately, supervisors, through their coaching capacity, need to check in with subordinates and see how they are emotionally reacting to their work.

Second, affective coaching involves ensuring that employees are working in and helping to create a positive working environment. In some organizations where supervisors are removed from their subordinates, they may have no idea when an organizational climate is becoming toxic. For our purposes, we want supervisors who are tied into the organization and actually go about fostering and encouraging a positive working climate for their subordinates.

Outcomes of Coaching

Now that we've examined the basic types of coaching in the workplace, let's talk about some of the research that's been conducted examining organizational coaching. In the original study that created the Organizational Coaching Scale, the researchers found that individuals who had supervisors who utilized all three forms of coaching were more motivated, satisfied, and productive.Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., Berletch, N., Powley, C., & Wehr, A. (2008). Organizational coaching as instructional communication. *Human Communication, 11*, 279-292. Furthermore, subordinates who reported having coaching supervisors reported fewer disengagement strategies. Disengagement strategies are strategies that an individual uses to decrease closeness or termination relationships in the workplace.Sias, P. M., & Perry, T. (2004). Disengaging from workplace relationships. *Human Communication Research, 30*, 589-602. In essence, people who have a positive coaching relationship with their supervisor feel more connected to their organizations, so they are less likely to start to disengage from their relationships in the workplace. Furthermore, a subsequent study examining cognitive, skill, and affective coaching in an organization found that individuals who received all three types of coaching were less likely to engage in latent dissent in the workplace (see Chapter 5 "Communicating Between and Among Internal Stakeholders" for a refresher on organizational dissent).Berletch, N., Powley, C., Wrench, J. S., & Wehr, A. (2007, April). *The interrelationships between positive feedback and coaching in the workplace.* Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association's Convention, Providence, RI.

Overall, the research results clearly indicate that organizational coaching is an important part of the success of an organization. For this reason, supervisors should create clear strategies for how they go about cognitive, skill, and affective coaching to ensure that it is happening in a systematic manner. Too often, coaching is left to chance in the modern workplace to the organization's detriment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Differentiate between the terms "mentoring" and "coaching."
- Explain Gregory Dawson and Richard Watson three stages of mentoring. The first stage, the hierarchical years, occurs after a protégé has gotten and a job and the mentor's job is to direct and guide a mentee through corporate life. The second stage, the junior/senior colleague years, marked by a period when the mentor and mentee redefine their relationship based on the needs and goals of those involved in the relationship. During this stage, the mentor-mentee relationship changes from a directive approach to mentoring (where the mentor is advising and supervising the mentee) to one that is marked by mutual respect and collaboration. The final stage of mentoring, the trusted sage years, occurs when the mentor and mentee are no longer bound by notions of organizational hierarchy and truly develop a working friendship with one another.
- Pamela Kalbfleisch created mentoring enactment theory as a way to explain the establishment and enactment of mentoring relationships within organizational settings. The theory examines a series of conversational goals and communication strategies that both mentors and mentees utilize within a mentoring relationship. The nine propositions proposed in the theory can be seen in Note 7.53 "Organizational Coaching Scale".
- Executive coaching occurs when an individual, the leader, hires an external consultant who functions in the position as paid-for mentor (usually a professional coach or therapist specializing in leader development). The goal of executive coaching is to help the leader become all the he or she can be within her or his leadership position. Supervisory coaching, on the other hand, includes the day-to-day work that a person in a supervisory position does with someone in a subordinate position. The goal of supervisory coaching is to help the subordinate improve her or his performance through direction, encouragement, and support.
- Famed educational researcher Benjamin Bloom and a group of colleagues first noted there were three domains of learning. McCroskey, Berletch, Powley, and Wehr furthered these notions of learning domains but attaching them to supervisory coaching. The three forms of coaching are: cognitive-based coaching (recognition and recall of information and the development of intellectual abilities and skills), skills-based coaching (acquisition or enhancement of a specific skill that can help someone be more productive or efficient), and affective coaching (acquisition or enhancement positive emotional reactions to an individual's work and working environment).

EXERCISES

1. Think of a time when you've been mentored? At what stages do you think your mentoring relationship reached? Did you get all the way to trusted-sage? Why or why not?
2. Apply Pamela Kalbfleisch's mentoring enactment theory to one of your own mentoring relationships (either as a mentor or mentee).
3. Complete the Organizational Coaching Scale in Note 7.53 "Organizational Coaching Scale". Based on the results from your analysis of your supervisor's coaching behavior, what areas do you think your supervisor could improve on? Why do you think your supervisor coaches you in the way he or she does?

7.4 Chapter Exercises

Real World Case Study

The following case is based on a consulting experience of one of our colleagues. Names and institutions have been altered for this case.

Janet, an organizational consultant, was approached to serve as an executive coach for a financial wizard at an auditing the firm named Jerry. Jerry had everything senior management was looking for in a star employee. His projects came in on time and always under budget using fewer company resources than his counterparts. However, there was one problem the company had with Jerry—no one wanted to work with Jerry. Jerry was known for belittling and yelling at subordinates who did not turn in assignments on time and up to Jerry's high standards.

Janet was contacted to work one-on-one with Jerry and help him develop various interaction skills. The company wanted to keep Jerry, but it needed Jerry to start acting and playing like someone on a team. Janet's first contact with Jerry went about as bad as one would expect. Jerry didn't understand why Janet was there and really thought the whole coaching process was a waste of money. Furthermore, Jerry really believed that there was nothing wrong with how he communicated with others. In his own words, "I'm just honest. I may be blunt, but that's because I don't have time to play wet nurse to a bunch of junior colleagues who shouldn't be in corporate America." Over time, Jerry became more and more aggressive as their coaching sessions continued. In fact, Jerry showed a clear resistance to coaching and the reports of aggressive behavior from his subordinates to human resources escalated.

1. Can all employees be coached?
2. If you were Janet, how would you handle this situation?
3. Is it every appropriate for a consultant to fire a client who just has no desire to change?
4. If you were Jerry's boss, how would you handle his behavior and his lack of a desire to change his behavior?

End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. Jonathan is a leadership researcher. He is currently trying to determine if an individual's communication apprehension (a commonly study communication trait) impacts the effectiveness of an individual's leadership within a nonprofit. Which approach to leadership is Jonathan employing?

   a. functional
   b. relational
   c. situational
   d. trait
   e. transformational

2. Tika's new boss is so much fun to work for. Basically, the job is almost like a party on most days. Her boss is more concerned with building morale and relationships than micromanaging people to ensure that the group gets their work done. According to Blake and Mouton's Leadership Grid, what type of leaders is Tika's new boss?

   a. authority-compliance
   b. country club
   c. impoverished
   d. middle-of-the-road
   e. team

3. Which of the following is NOT an outcome of a leader-member exchange relationship?

   a. greater follower organizational commitment
   b. greater follower organizational commitment
   c. greater follower organizational participation
   d. lower voluntary turnover intentions of a follower
   e. lower follower exhibition of organizational citizenship behaviors

4. Joaquin is a definite go-getter. Whiel Joaquin is one of the most productive individuals at X-corp, he also realizes that X-corp may not necessary be the best organization for him to escalate up the corporate ladder. As such, he's always checking want-ads on

Moster.com and LinkedIn. What type of follower would Roger Adair classify Joaquin as?

a. disciple
b. disengaged
c. disgruntled
d. doer
e. dramatic

5. Bob has a phone call every Monday morning with a paid consultant. The consultant's job is to help Bob, the CEO of a small tech-firm in California, direct his company's future and help Bob realize his own goals. What type of coaching is Bob involved in?

a. supervisory-coaching
b. skills-based coaching
c. executive coaching
d. affective coaching
e. cognitive-based coaching

Answer Key

1. A
2. B
3. E
4. D
5. C

Chapter 8

Organizational Identity and Diversity

Who Are "We"?

It's a weeknight, you've worked late, and you don't feel like making dinner when you get home. So you decide to grab a bite on the way. Having opted for fast food, you consider the choices. There's the leading national burger chain; if you go there, then you know exactly what you'll get no matter which location you visit. One rival burger chain, however, works hard at promoting a reputation for higher-quality *meat*, while another advertises higher-quality *sandwiches*. Then there are the alternatives to hamburgers: a national chain that proffers a home-style menu; another that promotes chicken as a kind of anti-burger; yet another that specializes in Mexican-themed foods. Among all these different chains, their corporate identities have been respectively conveyed through the symbols of a clown, a king, a redhead, a colonel, a cow, and a dog.

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This scenario highlights some basic issues of *organizational identity*. Each of the organizations referenced above is trying to foster a unique identity in a world already saturated with competing messages. George Cheney and Lars Christensen likened this challenge to that of a shipwrecked castaway who, after putting a message in a bottle, goes to throw it in the ocean but "cannot see the water [because] it is covered with messages in bottles."Cheney, G., & Christensen, L. T. (2001). Organizational identity: Linkages between internal and external communication. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The nmew handbook of organizational communication* (pp. 231–269). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 240. To convey its identity to the world, however, the organization must first establish its own firm sense of who "we" are. And because "we" means everyone, then organizational identity is not just a corporate matter to be decided by management. To carry off its corporate image, individual organization members—from executives to employees—must buy into and identify with the organization.

Then, too, if organizational identity starts with members and is then projected to others, the traditional distinction between "external" and "internal" communication becomes blurred. Communication activities—including advertising, marketing, and public relations—that convey an organization's identity to external audiences are, in fact, the flip side of internal communication activities by which members make sense of who "we" are. The concept of identity casts organizational communication as a dialectic: organization members negotiate who "we" are; that identity is negotiated with the organization's environment; and then the organization adjusts its identity in response to how it is perceived. To return to our opening scenario, the external activities by which each fast food chain communicates its identity to consumers cannot be divorced from the internal communications by which that same identity is fostered among members of each organization. Thus, the basic issues of organizational identity can be expressed by a series of questions:

- How do communications between members of an organization develop a sense of who "we" are?
- As this sense is developed, how is organizational identity maintained and transmitted to new members?
- How is this identity conveyed to persons who are, at least in a formal sense, outside the organization?

The first question is of greater interest to managers of new organizations, while the second and third are concerns for managers of established organizations. Indeed, *organizational identification* is a prime corporate objective as management strives to cultivate employees who feel strongly attached and loyal to the organization and its values. At the same time, leaders engage in *impression management* to engender positive feelings among the various publics—from customers, to shareholders, to the media—on whose goodwill the organization depends. Nevertheless, the managerial drive to maintain a stable corporate identity and foster strong organizational identification among employees has certain risks. Too much homogeneity can cause an organization to be set in its ways and respond too slowly to changes in the marketplace; for example, IBM ruled the computer world through the 1980s but its organizational identity as a maker of "business machines" may have caused it to miss the personal-computer revolution. Moreover, too much homogeneity in a workforce can lead to groupthink and deny organizations the diverse mix of employees and viewpoints that boosts creativity and leads to better decisions.

In this chapter, then, we have paired *identity* and *diversity* as two aspects of organizational life that exist in a tension which must be successfully balanced. This is true for leaders who must manage public impressions about the organization and, simultaneously, who must manage employees so that they identity sufficiently with

the organization to support the desired corporate identity. But this need to manage the tension between identity and diversity is also true for individual organization members.

Since the Industrial Revolution and then with accelerating force in the twentieth century, organizations have become major sources of personal identity for many people. In traditional societies, the bonds of local community and local authority supplied stable roles for people. In modern societies, however, people derive a major part of their identities from the organizations with which they affiliate. Perhaps you know people who identify so completely with an organization that its values form their personal sense of moral duty. Perhaps you have experienced this feeling yourself about a sports team on which you played, a church or mosque to which you belong, a club that you joined, or even the college you now attend. For individuals, the tension between organizational identity and diversity is sometimes called the *work-life conflict*. At work you want to be a valued "team player" who helps to achieve organizational goals, and yet you also want to retain your own identity. First, you desire to give your employer the advantage of your own unique perspectives; second, you understand the personal need to "get a life."

Then, too, the social contract between employers and employees has changed over the past two generations in response to globalization (see Chapter 6 "Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization"). Until the 1970s people generally believed that employees who strongly and loyally identified with their organizations would be rewarded with job security and a reasonable expectation of a lifelong career. Today, employees realize they have no such guarantees and do not expect to spend their entire adult lives working for a single company. Under this new social contract you must balance the level of organizational identification needed to do your work effectively and gain satisfaction from your employment, with the knowledge that you must build a personal "brand" that is separate from your current organization. Why? Chances are that you will be working for another company someday.

8.1 Identity and the Organization

Because it raises questions of ontology, epistemology and axiology (see Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication"), the concept of *identity* evokes debate among organizational communication scholars which reflects larger controversies in the field. One review noted that, while "interest in concepts of organizational identity has grown" and "the literature is expanding rapidly," the notion "has been subjected to much scrutiny and debate, [and] definitions and conceptualizations of the topic remain essentially contested."Seidl, D. (2005). *Organizational identity and self-transformation: An autopoietic perspective*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate; pg. 67.

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From a postmodern perspective the very concepts of identity and individuality are suspect. Where Western philosophy views each person as a self-contained unit who is in charge of his or her intentions, postmodernists regard each person as "site" where the flux of larger historical and cultural discourses conditions our thoughts and intentions. From a critical perspective, on the other hand, the concept of identity is entangled with societal structures of power that "colonize" individual consciousnesses in order to make the dominant order seem normal and natural. These two approaches, postmodern and critical, may also be extended from personal identity to organizational identity. Postmodernists would question the

assumption that organizations have autonomous identities and instead view organizations as sites where larger historical discourses compete. And critical scholars might analyze how management cultivates an organizational identity that legitimates its own interests and, by making those interests seem the natural order of things, brings workers under its control and domination.

The concept of organizational identity also raises a question similar to one we explored in Chapter 6 "Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization" about organizational culture. In other words, is organizational identity just one attribute, among a set of many different attributes, that an organization "has," a variable that leaders can "manage" to boost performance? (This would be the postpositive or functionalist view.) Or should identity be seen as a phenomenon that emerges from members' communicative interactions, and thus part of what an organization "is"? (This would be the interpretive view.) Table 8.1 "Approaches to Organizational Identity" below suggests how the four approaches to organizations—postpositive, interpretive, critical, and postmodern—might view organizational identity.See also Gioia, D. A. (1998). From individual to organizational identity. In D. A. Whetten & P. C. Godfrey (Eds.), *Identity in organizations" Building theory through conversations* (pgs. 17–31). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Table 8.1 Approaches to Organizational Identity

Approach to Organizations	View of Organizational Identity
Functionalist	Identity is one of the attributes that an organization "has" and may be managed to improve organizational performance
Interpretive	Identity is an emergent phenomenon that arises from the social and communicative interactions between organization members
Critical	Identity is a tool that management can manipulate to universalize its interests (i.e., equate "company interests" with managerial interests)
Postmodern	Identity is a modern conceit; an organization does not have a unique "self" for its intentions are conditioned by larger historical discourses; if anything, organizations are fragmented into multiple identities

We will explore postmodern and critical views of organizational identity in greater detail later in the chapter. But we start with an interpretive perspective since the concept of organizational identity originated in that tradition. To get a grip on the concept, we begin with two basic metaphors: the organization as a biological organism, and the organization as a person. The first metaphor will help us grasp

the *organizational* aspect of identity and the second to comprehend the *communicative* aspect.

Two Metaphors

As we learned in Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication", systems theory is based on the metaphor that an organization can be likened to biological organism. From that perspective, we can understand how a living thing must somehow maintain a boundary between itself and the environment. The boundary may be permeable as resources pass between the organism and the environment. But if there is no boundary then the organism would cease to exist as an identifiable entity. Now let us apply the metaphor to organizations.

We do not speak of a "civilization" as an "organization"; a civilization is, practically speaking, unbounded. On the other hand, a basic function of any organization is to continually organize a boundary between itself and its environment. Establishing a boundary is accomplished in two ways. First, an organization sets up formal hierarchies: for example, a company adopts a form of ownership and a corporate structure, sets hiring and firing procedures for determining who can be an employee, and establishes locations where work takes place. But since all organizations establish formal boundaries, something is still missing: What makes "us" different from "them"? Thus, a second way that an organization creates and maintains a boundary is by developing a sense of "who we are" that distinguishes it from other organizations. This second type of boundary is one way to define the concept of organizational identity. From this standpoint, then, one basic organizing function of an organization is to continually organize an identity that distinguishes it from the environment of other organizations.

Our second metaphor likens an organization to a person. More than a century ago, Charles Horton Cooley asserted that identity is constructed through language and has both an individual *and* a social aspect; indeed, identity is partly shaped as each of us mentally constructs a **looking-glass self**[1] based on how we believe others perceive us.Cooley, C. H. (1922). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribner. Writing at about the same time as Cooley, George Herbert Mead likewise described how speech is the means by which each person develops a unique sense of self.Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. He reasoned that if each human lived alone then there would be no need for a "self." The need arises from the fact that humans live in societies. Like Cooley, he conceptualized the self as having individual and social aspects; Mead called the individual element the **"I"**[2] and the social element the "*me*." The "I" is the spontaneous and creative self; the "me" is the looking-glass self (a term Mead borrowed from Cooley) a person constructs by imagining how a "generalized other" (a composite mental picture of society) perceives him or her. Acquiring and

1. A term coined by Charles Horton Cooley, the looking-glass self is a mental image of how you think others perceive you and which drives the social aspect of your self.

2. As first described by George Herbert Mead, the "I" is the individual aspect of your self and the "me" is the social aspect of your self.

maintaining a "self" comes through negotiating it with others. In turn, negotiation is accomplished via language and talk—by communicating. Mead held that each person negotiates a sense of self by imagining what others think of him or her and then negotiating a self that will be accepted by others. A later theorist, Erving Goffman, built on Cooley's and Mead's theories by likening humans' everyday relations to a drama; people are actors who each present a **face**[3] and stage a (continually updated and amended) life story that will gain them social approval. The notion that the events of your life folded in a logical progression and can be told as a sequential narrative is really a conceit; events happen randomly so that, in fact, you must impose a "plot" upon them. And yet, just as in a play, your "audience" participates by suspending its disbelief in order to benefit from larger truths. So to play the game, save face with others and feel good about yourself, you must have coherent and satisfying life story to tell.Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday. If we extend these ideas to organizations, we can grasp how development of an organizational identity is a process of communicatively (and continually) negotiating (and adjusting) an organizational "self" by telling a coherent story that the organization's members and publics will accept.

How people use communication to negotiate and manage their identities is a vital field of research of research in communication studies. William Cupach and Tadasu Imahori proposed an Identity Management Theory to explain the communication strategies that individuals use to manage their identities, or "support" their "faces," at various stages of their interpersonal relationships.Cupach, W. R., & Imahori, T. T. (1993). Identity management theory: Communication competition in intercultural episodes and relationships. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pp. 112–131). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. The impact of group affinities (family, gender, ethnic, cultural) and intergroup encounters on identity is explored by Stella Ting-Toomey's Identity Negotiation Theory.Ting-Toomey, S. (1993). Communication resourcefulness: An identity negotiation perspective. In R. L. Wiseman & J. Koester (Eds.), *Intercultural communication competence* (pgs. 72–111). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. (2005) etc Michael Hecht and his colleagues look at identity as a layered phenomenon that has individual, social, and communal properties which are enacted via communication.Hecht, M. L., Warren, J. R., Jung, E., & Krieger, J. L. (2005). The communication theory of identity: Development, theoretical perspective, and future directions. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Theorizing about intercultural communication* (pgs. 257–278). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Interest in exploring the formation of individual and group identities through communication arose in the 1980s and has remained strong. Not surprisingly, this movement also stimulated scholarly interest in theorizing the dynamics of organizational identity.

3. According to Erving Goffman, constructing your self is like a drama; that is, you are like an actor who presents a face to an audience and, as in a play, stages a life-story that you hope will gain social acceptance.

The Concept of Organizational Identity

Through the biological metaphor we grasped how an organization must establish boundaries, even if permeable and blurred, in order for the notion of an "organization" to have any meaning. And through likening the organization to a person, we saw how these boundaries must be communicatively negotiated in ways that distinguish the organization's story from those of other organizations in a socially acceptable manner. We chose this way of introducing our topic because, as Dennis Gioia observed, the "important features of individual identity supply the basis for the extension of the notion to organizations."Gioia, D., op cit., pg. 20. Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael similarly noted that identity has been researched at the level of the individual, group and, more recently, the organization because of the many parallels across the three levels."Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1996). Organizational identity and strategy as a context for the individual. *Advances in Strategic Management, 13*, 19–64.

So we turn now to the literature on **organizational identity**[4], a concept that originated in 1985 with Stuart Albert and David Whetten. They defined organizational identity as a tripartite combination of "the central character of an organization" (e.g., its values, practices, services, products, structure, ownership), the distinctive qualities that it claims to possess, and the enduring manifestation of its identity over time.Albert, S. A, & Whetten, D. A. (1985). Organizational identity. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 7*, 263–295; pg. 292. According to this definition, then, the fast food chains described in the opening scenario of this chapter have formed identities that bring together their central characters as retail restaurants operated through a franchise business model, their individual claims to distinction vis-à-vis the other chains, and their consistency in sticking with their respective identities. Albert and Whetten did not suggest leaders "decide" the identities of their organizations. Rather, identity formation is an interactive process in which outsiders voice perceptions of an organization, so that the organization's definition of itself is influenced as it considers this feedback and reflects on how it fits into its environment.Ibid, pg. 273.

Their conception was modeled on the processes of individual identity formation theorized by Cooley, Mead, and Goffman. Writing a few years later, Ashforth and Mael further grounded organizational identity in **social identity theory**[5] (SIT).Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review, 14*, 20–39; pg. 21 This psychological theory, proposed in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, holds that one's self-concept combines a "personal identity" based on individual traits with a "social identity" based on group classifications.Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 38–43). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole. At the time, most social

4. In Stuart Albert and David Whetten's original conception, organizational identity has three dimensions as its reflects the central character of an organization and its own claims of distinctiveness, and as it endures over time; subsequent scholars have explored how organizational identity can change and how an organization can have multiple identities.

5. Proposed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner, social identity theory (SIT) holds that one's self-concept combines a "personal identity" based on individual traits with a "social identity" based on group classifications.

psychologists believed a group identity was generated through competition with other groups; Tajfael and Turner contended that a group identity can emerge when members feel like insiders. SIT thus provided an insight that, through Ashford and Mael's application, aided in further developing the concept of organizational identity. As David Seidl noted, SIT explained how "the individual member uses descriptions of the organization as part of his [sic] own self-descriptions" and thereby opened the door "to apply psychological identity theories to organizations."Seidl, D., op cit., pg. 72.

Since the work of Albert and Whetten and Ashford and Mael in the 1980s, the literature on organizational identity has continued to expand. Over three decades, the concept has moved from Albert and Whetten's original thesis—that organizational identity is central, distinctive, and enduring—to a more nuanced view: identity is adaptive, even unstable, and exists in dynamic relation with external audiences' and internal members' perceptions of an organization. In particular, researchers question whether identity can be seen as enduring when today's organizations exist in a world of accelerating change and many are now set up as loosely structured networks. Recently, Mary Jo Hatch and Majken SchultzHatch, M. J., & Schultze, M. (2004). *Organizational identity: A reader*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. summarized the major developments in theorizing organizational identity, which are presented in <u>Table 8.2 "Theoretical Developments: Hatch & Schultz"</u> below.

Table 8.2 Theoretical Developments: Hatch & Schultz

ROOTS IN SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY		
CooleyCooley, C. H., op cit.	1902	The self has both individual and social aspects. The social aspect is constructed as a "looking-glass self" when a person considers how others may perceive him or her.
MeadMead, op. cit.	1934	The self is comprised of an "I" (the spontaneous and creative aspects of self) and a "me" (the looking-glass self that imagines how it is perceived by the "generalized others").
GoffmanGoffman, op cit.	1959	The self is a "face" that each person "presents" to others. Negotiating and maintaining the self is like a drama; a person strives to present a face that will be accepted by an audience of others.

Tajfel & Turner Tajfel & Turner, op cit.	1979	One's self-concept combines a personal identity based on individual traits with a social identity based on group classifications. Group identities can emerge as members feel like insiders.
Brewer & Gardner Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996). Who is this "we"? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 71*, 83–93.	1996	The self can be analyzed at three levels: personal self-concept, relational self-concept, and collective self-concept.
EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT		
Albert & Whetten Albert & Whetten, op cit.	1985	Originated concept of organizational identity, theorized as a combination of an organization's central character, the distinctive qualities it claims to possess, and the enduring manifestation of an identity over time.
SchwartzSchwartz, H. S. (1987). Anti-social actions of committed organizational participants: An existential psychoanalytic perspective. *Organization Studies, 8*, 327–340.	1987	Proposed that research on organizational identity can be pursued through a psychoanalytic framework.
Ashforth & Mael Ashforth & Mael, Social identity theory, op cit.	1989	Applied Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory to organization studies and introduced the concept of "organizational identification" to describe how individual members identify with an organization.
AlvessonAlvesson, M. (1990). Organization: From substance to image? *Organization Studies, 11*, 373–394.	1990	Introduced the concept of "organizational image" as an aspect of organizational identity.
Dutton & Dukerich Dutton, J. E., & Dukerich, J. M. (1991). Keeping an eye on the mirror: Image and identity in organizational adaptation. *Academy of Management Journal, 34*, 517–514.	1991	Investigated how organizational identities adapt in response to an organization's environment and concerns for how it is perceived.
Ginzel, Kramer & Sutton Ginzel, L. E., Kramer, R. M., & Sutton, R. I. (1993). Organizational impression management as a reciprocal influence process: The neglected role of the organizational audience. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 15*, 227–266.	1993	Adapted Goffman's notion of impression management to organizations, thus envisioning impression management not as merely a managerial function but as a negotiation between an organization and its audiences.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: MULTIPLE IDENTITIES		
Pratt & Rafaeli Pratt, M. G., & Rafaeli, A. (1997). Organizational dress as a symbol of multilayered social identities. *Academy of Management Journal, 40*, 862–898.	**1997**	Organization members manage multiple identities; for example, their identities as members of a specific organization and their identities as members of their professional community.
Golden-Biddle & Rao Golden-Biddle, K., & Rao, H. (1997). Breaches in the Boardroom: Organizational identity and conflicts of commitment in a nonprofit organization. *Organization Science, 8*, 593–611.	**1997**	Different segments of an organization may have different identities, which may lead to "hybrid identities" as members combine different (and sometimes conflicting) identities.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: STABILITY AND CHANGE		
Gioia, Schultz & Corley Gioia, D. A., Schultze, M., & Corley, K. G. (2000). Organizational identity, image, and adaptive instability. *Academy of Management Review, 25*, 63–81.	**2000**	Contrary to Albert and Whetten's description of organizational identity as enduring, identity is dynamically unstable and adaptive. The *label* given to an organization may be stable, but the meaning of the label changes.
Hatch & Schultz Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2002). The dynamics of organizational identity. *Human Relations, 55*, 989–1018.	**2002**	Organizational identity is formed, maintained, and transformed through the dynamic interaction of organizational identity, organizational image, and organizational culture.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: NARRATIVE AND DISCOURSE		
Czarniawska-Joerges Czarniuawska-Joerges, B. (1997). Narratives of individual and organizational identities. *Communication Yearbook, 17*, 193–221.	**1997**	Organizational identity may be analyzed as a narrative production or a story that an organization tells to gain acceptance.
Alvesson & Willmott Alvesson, M., & Willmott, H. (2002). Identity regulation as organizational control producing the appropriate individual. *Journal of Management Studies, 39*, 619–644.	**2002**	Managerial interests attempt to regulate organizational identity in order to "produce" an "appropriate" member and thus maintain control.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: AUDIENCES		
Elsbach & Kramer Elsbach, K. D., & Kramer, R. M. (1996). Members' response to organizational identity threats: Encountering and countering the *Business Week* rankings. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 41*, 442–476.	**1996**	Threats to organizational identity (e.g., criticism in the media) prompt members to respond with various strategies to affirm and repair the threatened identity and thus restore their own social identities.

Cheney & Christensen Cheney & Christensen, op. cit.	**2001**	An organization's internal and external communication is linked through its identity. How an organization sees itself and believes others see it will affect corporate issue management.

To get a sense of where the theory of organizational identity is headed, consider how fast food chains have been transformed over the years. In the 1960s and 70s when families seldom ate out, McDonald's advertising proclaimed "You Deserve a Break Today." Back then its main rival, Burger King, trumpeted the slogan "Special Orders Don't Upset Us" to reassure moms that their finicky kids would not balk at going out to dinner. Television commercials for Kentucky Fried Chicken were aimed at mothers who could enjoy an occasional respite from the stove by putting a ready-made, home-style meal on the family dinner table. Today, of course, families eat out regularly and fast fare, rather than home cooking, sets consumer taste preferences. As their environment has changed, the chains have adapted their identities—and are adapting again, even now, in response to concerns about "McDonaldization" and obesity. With people spending more time and eating more meals in fast food establishments, all of the major chains are cultivating identities akin to comfortable sit-down restaurants with quality menus.

A further challenge for research on organizational identity is a problem that has confronted those who study organizational culture. As we learned in <u>Chapter 6 "Organizational Communication Climate, Culture, and Globalization"</u>, the idea of organizational culture was popularized in the 1980s by the business press and, at the same time, separate literatures developed in management science (taking the view that an organization "has" a culture which can be managed) and organization studies (taking the view that an organization "is" a culture). A similar situation exists in the expanding literature on organizational identity. The business press has offered popularized notions of organizational (or corporate) identity (or image); the management science literature has explored how organization leaders can form, maintain, and transform identity; and the organization studies literature—as seen in <u>Table 8.2 "Theoretical Developments: Hatch & Schultz"</u> above—has investigated identity as a phenomenon that emerges through social interaction. Through it all, terms such as *organizational identity*, *corporate identity*, *organizational image*, *corporate image*, *organizational culture*, and *corporate culture* have assumed different meanings to different scholars and researchers.

Hatch and Schultz attempted to sort out and synthesize these literatures with a theory that not only distinguishes the differences between identity, image and culture, but shows how each dynamically impacts on the other. Along the way, they

put forth a theory of how organizational identity is formed, maintained, and transformed.

Identity, Image, Culture

While the term *organizational identity* is common in the literature of organization studies, Hatch and Schultz found that the term *corporate identity* appears frequently in the literature on managerial strategy and marketing. Upon review, they discovered that the term "organizational identity" typically connoted something that was transmitted internally via interpersonal communication and was shared by all organization members. In contrast, "corporate identity" often connoted a managerial perspective that was transmitted to external stakeholders via mediated communication. But "instead of choosing between corporate and organizational identity" as a preferred term, Hatch and Schultz "advocate combining the understandings . . . into a single concept of identity defined at the defined at the organizational level of analysis."Hatch, M. J., & Schultz, M. (2000). Scaling the Tower of Babel: Relational differences between identity, image, and culture in organizations. In M. Schultz, M. J. Hatch & M. H. Larsen (Eds.), *The expressive organization: Linking identity, reputation, and the corporate brand* (pp. 13–35). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press; pg. 17. Their proposal is grounded in the notion, described at the outset of this chapter, of organizational identity as a dialectic phenomenon in which internal sense-making about "who we are" interacts dynamically with the perceptions of external stakeholders.

To construct a concept of organizational identity that unifies its internal and external aspects, Hatch and Schultz's began by defining what identity is *not*. They observed in the organizational literature that *identity* and *image* were often linked, as were *identity* and *culture*. But is identity synonymous with image? Or is it synonymous with culture? And if not, what are the differences? To spell them out Hatch and Schultz delineated, as illustrated in Table 8.3 "Identity, Image, and Culture: Hatch & Schultz" below, how the concepts might be distinguished.

Table 8.3 Identity, Image, and Culture: Hatch & Schultz

Distinguishing Culture and Identity		Distinguishing Identity and Image	
CULTURE	**IDENTITY**	**IDENTITY**	**IMAGE**
Contextual	**Textual**	**Internal**	**External**
taken-for-granted assumptions and meanings that	narrative of organization whose "text" its members "read" and shapes	perspective on the organization held by its own members	perspective on the organization held by its external stakeholders

Distinguishing Culture and Identity		Distinguishing Identity and Image	
shape everyday organizational life	sense of "who we are"		
Tacit	**Explicit**	**Self**	**Other**
taken-for-granted assumptions and meanings that do not require conscious reflection	reflections by members about the meaning of the organization which occur at a conscious level	perspective held by insiders who regard the organization as a "self"	perspective held by outsiders who regard the organization as an "other"
Emergent	**Instrumental**	**Singularity**	**Multiplicity**
members' own local constructions of symbols out of organizational artifacts and meanings	use of organizational symbols and artifacts to express and communicate "who we are"	perspective of insiders who interpret the organization based primarily on the organization as a source	perspective of outsiders who interpret the organization based on multiple sources of information

Organizational identity[6], then, is according to Hatch and Shultz the internal perspective of members who identify with the organizational "self" as they "read" its narrative, base their interpretations on internal information, reflect consciously on its meaning, and deploy symbols and artifacts to express their collective identity. **Organizational culture**[7] emerges from members' symbolic constructions to form unconsciously accepted assumptions and meanings that shape everyday organizational life. **Organizational image**[8] is the perspective held by external stakeholders who view the organization as "other" to themselves and interpret the organization based not only on the organization itself but on multiple sources.

By these definitions, Hatch and Schultz mark out organizational identity, culture, and image as distinct phenomena. Nevertheless, these phenomena do not operate in isolation but exist in dynamic relationships by which identity and culture, and identity and image, influence one another. Their Organizational Identity Dynamics Model holds that identity and culture are related as conscious "reflecting embeds identity in culture" and "identity expresses cultural understandings," and that identity and image are related as "expressed identity leavers impressions on others" and "identity mirrors the images of others."Hatch & Schultz, The dynamics of organizational identity, op cit.; pg. 379. In other words, as members consciously reflect on an organization's identity, their shared understandings become internalized and part of a tacit culture whose taken-for-granted assumptions are manifested through the symbols and artifacts that members construct to express "who we are." And as those expressions of "who we are" leave impressions on outsiders to create the organization's external image, the image becomes the

6. In Stuart Albert and David Whetten's original conception, organizational identity has three dimensions as its reflects the central character of an organization and its own claims of distinctiveness, and as it endures over time; subsequent scholars have explored how organizational identity can change and how an organization can have multiple identities.

7. To distinguish organizational culture from organizational identity, Hatch and Schultz described culture as emerging from members' symbolic constructions to form unconsciously accepted assumptions and meanings that shape everyday organizational life. Organizational image is the perspective held by external stakeholders who view the organization as "other" to themselves and interpret the organization based not only on the organization itself but on multiple sources.

8. To distinguish organizational image from organizational identity, Hatch and Schultz defined image as a perspective held by external stakeholders who view the organization as "other" to themselves and interpret the organization based not only on the organization itself but on multiple sources.

organization's own looking-glass self by which the organization consider how it is generally perceived and accordingly adjusts and (re)negotiates its identity. Hatch and Schultz graphically represented the identity/culture and identity/image dyads as shown in Figure 8.1 "Organizational Identity and Culture: Hatch & Schultz" and Figure 8.2 "Organizational Identity and Image: Hatch & Schultz" below.

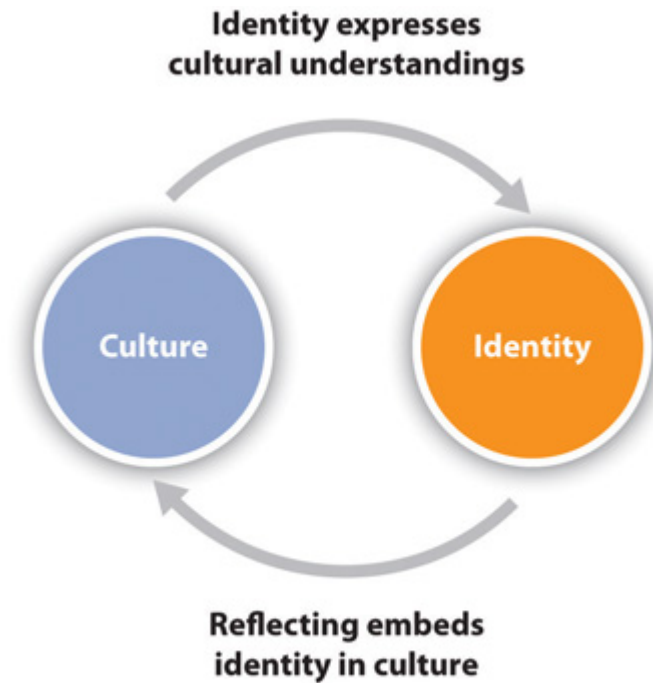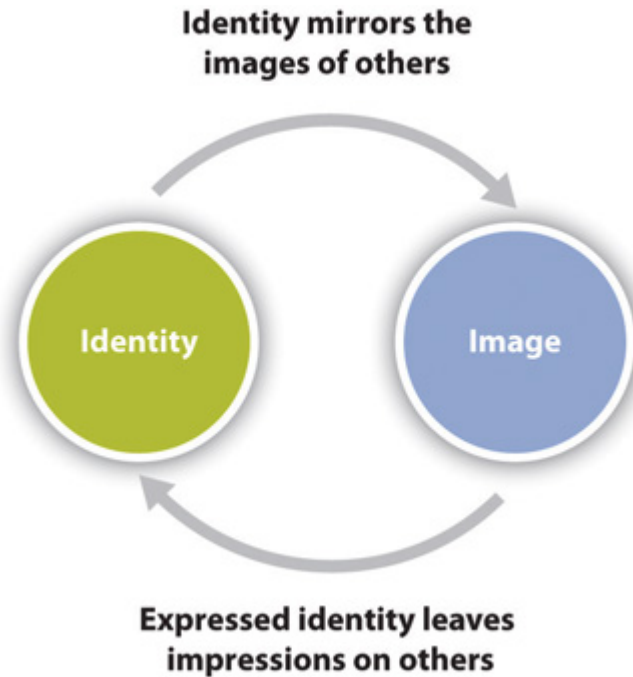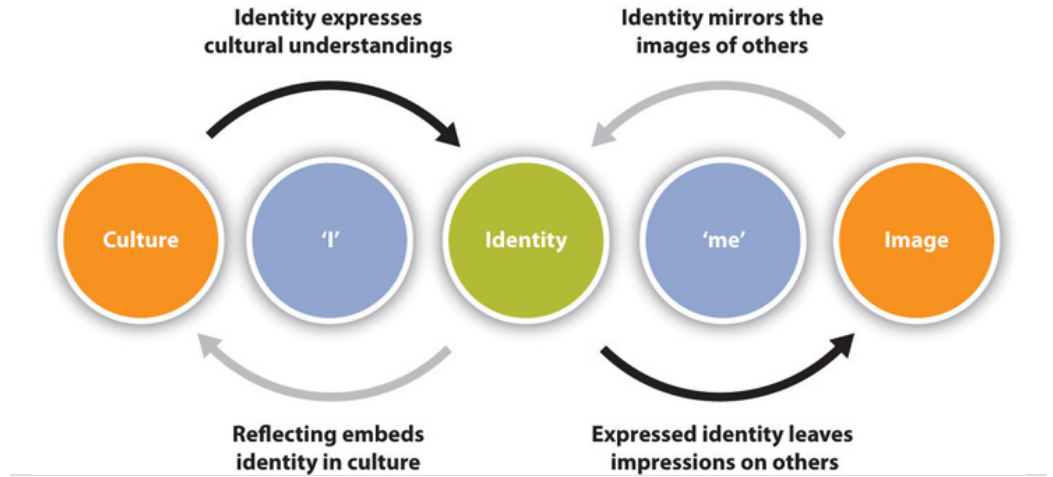*Figure 8.1* *Organizational Identity and Culture: Hatch & Schultz*

Figure 8.2 *Organizational Identity and Image: Hatch & Schultz*

Identity mirrors the images of others

Identity

Image

**Expressed identity leaves impressions on others**

Taking their cue from Mead, Hatch and Schultz labeled the identity/culture dyad as the organizational analog for the "I" of the organizational self, and the identity/ image dyad as the analog of the "me." Thus, through the dynamic interrelationship between organizational identity and culture, members construct an organizational "I" that is tacit internalized, and furnishes the context for making meaning. And through the dynamic interrelationship between identity and image, members construct an organizational "me" that must be continually negotiated with others. Yet Mead's original theory also held that the "I" and the "me" shaped one another. Hatch and Schultz's Organizational Identity Dynamics Model therefore combines the two dyads and puts identity as the nexus between the organizational "I" and "me," as shown in Figure 8.3 "Organizational Identity Dynamics Model" below.

Figure 8.3   *Organizational Identity Dynamics Model*

By extending Hatch and Schultz's Organizational Identity Dynamics Model, as depicted in <u>Figure 8.4 "Integration of Culture and Image via Identity"</u>, we can see how identity mediates—provides a transmission belt, if you will—between internal culture and external image. The figure below shows how organizational culture and image are integrated through the two processes of reflection on identity and expression of identity.

Figure 8.4   *Integration of Culture and Image via Identity*
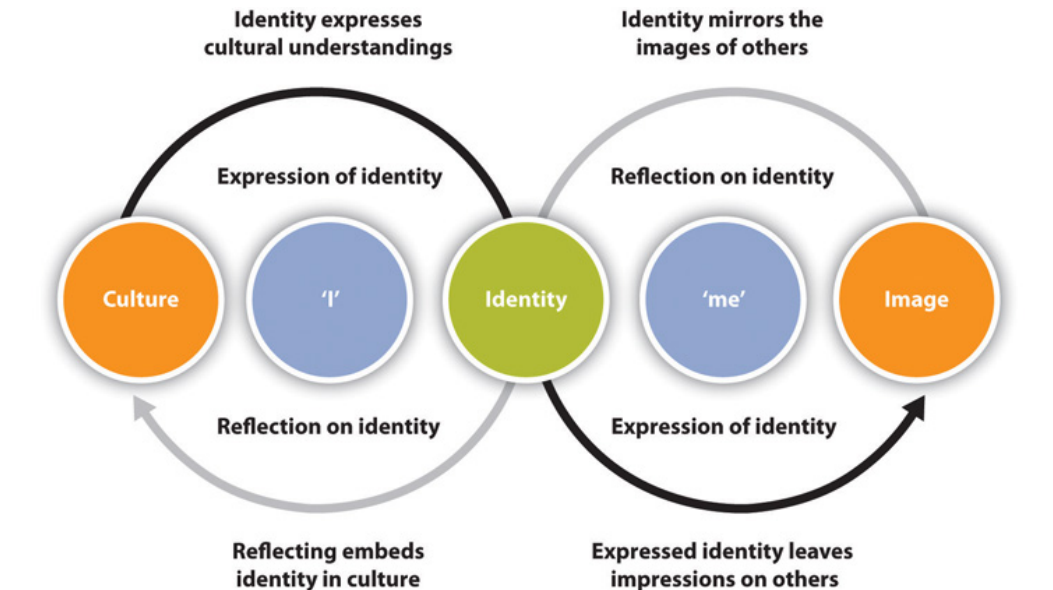
Identity as a Mutable Quality

Conscious reflection on organizational identity is a key to the notion of **adaptive instability**[9] advanced by Gioia, Schultz, and Corley.Gioia et al., Organizational identity, image, and adaptive instability, op cit. Their theory addresses a trend that was recognized by Stuart Albert, who originated the concept of organization a generation earlier. In the twenty-first century, organizations operate in a world characterized by the "flattening of hierarchies, the growth in teamwork and empowerment, the outsourcing of secondary competencies, and so on [that] are means of creating flexible pools of sophisticated capacities."Albert, S., Ashforth, B. E., & Dutton, J. E. (2000). Organizational identity and identification: Charting new waters and building new bridges. *Academy of Management Review, 25*, 13–17; pg. 13. In such a world, can organizational identity be an *enduring* trait? Albert and his colleagues argued that the dismantling of bureaucratic structures increases the need for cognitive structures—that is, identities—which give organizations a rudder to steer by. But Gioia, Schultz, and Corley challenged the notion that organizational identity is enduring—which, together with centrality and distinctiveness, is one of the three dimensions contained in Albert and Whetten's original definition.

In their model—as in the Organizational Identity Dynamics Model described earlier—identity and image are distinct but interdependent phenomena. As the external impressions that form an organization's reputation are inevitably subjected to feedback and events, members ask themselves four questions. Two are questions of self-reflection: Who do we think we are? Who do we think we should be? Two are questions of other-reflection: Who do "they" think we are? Who do "they" think we should be? If a discrepancy is detected between self-perception and other-perception, and if action is believed to be warranted, then organization members must ask: How should we change our identity (the way we think about ourselves) to sustain a new image? And how should we change our image (the way outsiders perceive us) to sustain a new corporate identity? The changes are projected to outsiders, external impressions of the organization are altered, and the adaptive process—shown in Figure 8.5 below—reboots (and continually recurs) all over again. As such, argued Gioia, Schultz and Corley, organizational identity is best seen as unstable and mutable rather than enduring.

9. Challenging Albert and Whetten's thesis that organizational identity is enduring, Dennis Gioia and his colleagues argued that identity has the quality of adaptive instability as external feedback and events trigger challenges to an organization's image and the organization responds by reflecting on how it sees itself and how others see it.

Figure 8.5
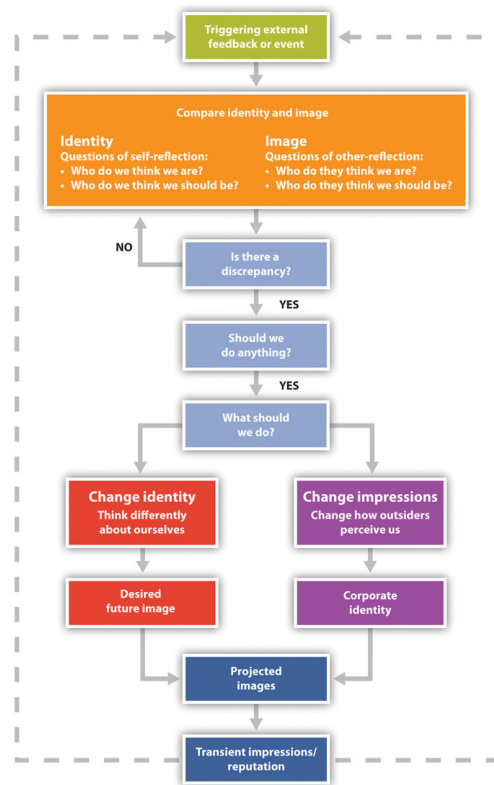
Identity-Image Interdependence: Gioia et al.

Communicating Organizational Identity

Organizational identity is projected to external audiences through various means of communication—a topic we will explore at length in Chapter 14 "Stress, Conflict, and Negotiation". Taken together, these are often called "strategic communication" or "integrated marketing communication." Separately, scholars and practitioners designate these means of communication as advertising, marketing, and public relations. As David Guth and Charles Marsh explain:

- Advertising is "the use of controlled media (media in which one pays for the privilege of dictating message content, placement, and frequency) in an attempt to influence the actions of targeted publics."
- Marketing is "the process of researching, creating, refining, and promoting a product or service to targeted consumers."

- Public relations is "the management of relationships between an organization and its publics."Guth, D. W., & Marsh, C. (2012). *Public relations: A value-driven approach* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon; pg. 11.

If you are majoring in communication then you may be concentrating on advertising, marketing, and public relations; you may aspire to do these activities as a career. Certainly, many communication majors end up as advertising, marketing, or public relations professionals. Traditionally, these activities are treated as linear communication (see Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication") in which a sender conveys a message through a channel to a receiver. Theories of mass communication have progressed over the past eighty years from the simplistic "magic bullet theory" (mass media direct sway the public) and two-step theory (mass media reach opinion leaders, who sway the public), to the n-step theory (mass media reach the different opinion leaders on various issues, who sway the public on those issues) and diffusion theory (mass media influence people who then influence their peers), and to agenda-setting theory (mass media do not determine what people think but, rather, what they think *about*)McCombs, M. & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of the mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36,* 176–187. and uses and gratifications they (people are not passive users of media but choose their information sources).Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973/1974). Uses and gratifications research. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 37*, 509–523. The latter theory envisions mass communication as a two-way process in which media users' choices influence media producers, even as media producers' messages influence users who choose to consumer their programming. Similarly, public relations theory views "PR" not as one-way and asymmetrical, but as a two-way symmetrical process by which an organization and its stakeholders mutually resolve conflicts.Hunt, J. E., & Grunig, L. A. (1992). Models of public relations and communication. In J. E. Grunig (Ed.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 285–326). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

With this growing appreciation for the two-way nature of external organizational communication, George Cheney and Lars Christensen have injected the concept of organizational identity into the mix. Corporate communication campaigns are generally viewed as linear or interactional: organizational leaders think up a message, strategically choose the channels that most effectively reach the desired recipients, and measure results to determine success and guide future campaigns. In other words, corporate communications are formulated according to the rational intentions of corporate communicators. But Cheney and Christensen challenged this assumption: "[I]nternal perceptions (identities, expectations, and strategies) strongly affect what problems are 'seen,' what potential solutions are envisioned, and how the problems are ultimately addressed." Thus, "organizational identity affects the diagnosis of issues" and how corporate leaders manage them.Cheney & Christensen, op cit., pg. 249. This leads Cheney and Christensen to observe that, if

organizational identity is the reference point for corporate communicators, then corporate communication and issue management are self-referential and, even though they "seem to be directed toward others, [they] may actually be **auto-communicative**[10], that is, directed primarily toward the [organizational] self."Ibid, pg. 258.

This startling observation has profound meaning for anyone who is, or aspires to be, a corporate communicator. Cheney and Christensen laid out a number of ethical concerns. For example, as a corporate communicator you may need to ask yourself whether your organization's culture is disposed toward actions of integrity or of harm. You may need to question whether you are conveying "truth" when, because your point of reference is a given organizational identity, your messages emerge from your own perspective. At worst, your messages may have become so auto-communicative, and thus your system so closed, that you are only talking to yourself. The antidote to self-referentiality, argue Cheney and Christensen, is self-reflexivity. "To know the environment better, organizations should, in other words, try to know themselves." Only by bringing core meanings and assumptions to the surface and by being "sensitive to . . . one's own auto-communicative predispositions . . . can organizations hope to counter the self-referential tendencies" that can lead to unethical communications.Ibid, pgs. 263–264.

10. As George Cheney and Lars Christensen noted, an organization's identity shapes how its leaders and managers diagnose and address problems; thus, since corporate issue management is self-referential, corporate communication (advertising, marketing, public relations) that seems directed to external audiences may actually be auto-communication as the organization in reality talks primarily to itself.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Different ontologies about organizations (i.e., the nature of their being) lead to different perspectives on organizational identity. A functionalist (or postpositive) ontology regards identity as one of a set of attributes that an organization "has" and which therefore can be managed to optimize performance. An interpretive ontology regards identity as part of what an organization "is" since it emerges from the communicative interactions that constitute an organization. A critical ontology may see organizational identity as a tool of management to make its interests seem normal and natural. A postmodern ontology "de-centers" the very notion of identity by seeing organizations and individuals not as autonomous units but as sites of contestation between multiple discourses.

- In originating the concept of organizational identity, Stuart Albert and David Whetten built on theories of how individual identities are formed. They looked to the theories of Charles Horton Cooley, George Herbert Mead, and Erving Goffman who held that the "self" has both an individual and a social aspect. Extending these ideas to organizations, Albert and Whetten argued that organizational identity is the central character of an organization, the distinctive qualities it claims to possess, and the enduring manifestation of its identity over time. Formation of this identity, however, is an interactive process in which outsiders voice perceptions that influence the organization's definition of itself. Since Albert and Whetten introduced their thesis in 1985, subsequent scholars have explored how organizations can have multiple identities and how organizational identities can change.

- To distinguish between organizational identity, organizational culture and organizational image, Mary Jo Hatch and Majken Schultz advanced a single theory to delineate each concept and explains how each phenomenon is interrelated with the other. Identity is a conscious perspective shared by members; culture emerges from members' symbolic constructions to form tacit assumptions and meanings; and image is a perspective held by external stakeholders. Organizational identity and culture are interrelated because members' reflections on identity become embedded in culture, even as identity comes to express cultural understandings. Organizational identity and image are interrelated because the expression of identity leaves impressions on outsiders, even as the organization takes those impressions into account in forming its identity. The identity/culture dynamic is the organizational equivalent to the individual aspect of the self, and the identity/image dynamic is equivalent to the social aspect.

- Dennis Gioia, Majken Schultz, and Kevin Corley challenged Albert and Whetten's original assertion that organizational identity is enduring. Instead they argued that organizational identity is unstable and mutable. As external feedback and events trigger challenges to an organization's image, its identity takes on the quality of "adaptive instability." The organization reflects on itself, reflects on how it is perceived, compares its identity and its image, addresses any discrepancy by adjusting its identity to generate a desired image, projects the image to its external environment, and the process starts over again.
- An organization externally communicates its identity through advertising, marketing, and public relations. By these communications, organizations engage in corporate issue management. George Cheney and Lars Christensen pointed out that an organization's identity—how it sees itself—shapes the problems it perceives and the solutions it formulates. When issue management becomes "self-referential" then corporate communication can actually become "auto-communication." Though advertising, marketing, and marketing are purportedly directed to external audiences, the organization is really talking to itself. To avoid unethical communication, leaders and managers must be aware of their potential for auto-communication.

EXERCISES

1. Think of an organization to which you have belonged. It might be a sports team on which you played, a club that you joined, a company where you worked, a church or mosque or synagogue where you have worshipped, or the college you now attend. What was (or is) its organizational identity? Now as you think of that identity, think of how it may have formed. How would you compare the formation of its identity to the way a person forms his or her identity? Are the theories of Cooley, Mead, and Goffman applicable to organizations? If so, how?

2. Consider again the organization you named in Exercise 1. Describe how (using Albert and Whetten's definition) its identity reflects its central character and the distinctive qualities it claims to possess, and how the identity has endured over time. Now, referring to Hatch and Schultz's theory, describe how its identity, culture, and image are interrelated. Finally, referring to Gioia, Schultz and Corley's theory of adaptive instability, describe how the organization's identity has changed in response to external feedback and events that have challenged its image.

3. Finally, think again of the organization you analyzed in Exercises 1 and 2. In what ways might its organizational identity—the way it sees itself—have shaped the problems it perceives and the solutions it formulates? Do you see, as Cheney and Christensen cautioned, any auto-communication in its advertising, marketing, and public relations? Explain your answer.

8.2 Identity and the Organization Member

> ### LEARNING OBJECTIVES
>
> 1. Distinguish between organizational *identity* and *identification.*
> 2. Recognize how management strives to guide employees' socialization into the organization so employees strongly identify with the organization.
> 3. Understand the processes by which organization members come to identify with the organization and incorporate that affinity into their self-identities.
> 4. Grasp the postmodern and critical concern that managerial interests can use organizational identity and identification to sustain their control.

While organizational *identity* may be developed by an *organization*, organizational *identification* may be developed by its *members*. In introducing their concept of **organizational identification**[11], Ashforth and Mael defined it as "a specific form of social identification," where identification is "the perception of oneness with or belongingness to a group, involving direct or vicarious experience of its successes and failures."Ashforth & Mael, Social identity theory, op cit., pgs. 22, 34. As noted above, you may have felt such identification with a sports team, a club, a house of worship, your alma mater, your place of work, or any number of organizations to which you have belonged. In a moment we will look at the psychological components that Asforth and Mael ascribed to organizational identification. But first, let us review the issue from the corporate side rather than the individual side.

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From the Organizational Perspective

Leaders expend much effort toward managing employees' identification with the organization in hopes of producing a workforce that is committed and loyal. So they pay much attention to ensuring new members "learn the ropes" and are socialized into the values and practices of the organization. As we review at length in <u>Chapter 12 "Entering, Socializing, and Disengaging"</u>, Fredric JablinJablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation, and exit. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts, & L. W Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 679–740). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.'Jablin, F. M.

11. Blake Ashforth and Fred Mael started with social identity theory—which holds that one's self-concept combines a "personal identity" based on individual traits with a "social identity" based on group classifications—and originated the concept of organizational identification by defining it as a specific form of social identification or perception of oneness with a group.

12. Through processes initiated by management and through your own information gathering, you are socialized into the values and practices of an organization.

13. According to Frederic Jablin's framework, this is the first phase of organizational socialization in which, prior to formal entry, your environmental influences (e.g., family, media, peers, education, previous organizational experiences) and the employer's recruiting process begins your socialization and aligns you with the organization's identity.

14. This second phase of organizational socialization spans the period from your initial employment offer, to your start on the job, to your full assimilation into the organization.

15.

16. During the third and final phase of organizational socialization you are separated from the organization; the manner of your disengagement is governed by the manner of your exit: whether by retirement, taking another job, or being discharged.

17.

18. During the preentry segment of organizational entry, when you have been offered a job but not yet begun, messages from your employer and the formation of initial impressions (on both sides) continue your organizational socialization.

(2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. proposed that **organizational socialization**[12] occurs in three phases: **anticipatory socialization**[13], **organizational entry**[14] and **assimilation**[15], and **organizational disengagement**[16] and **exit**[17]. These are illustrated in Figure 8.6 "Organizational Socialization" below.

Figure 8.6 *Organizational Socialization*

In the first phase, anticipatory socialization, you envision a specific job or career; this vision, according to Jablin, is likely influenced by family, media, peers, education, and any previous organizational experiences you have had. Along with environmental influences, noted Michael Kramer, the process of anticipatory socialization also takes in process of being recruited and hired by a specific organization.Kramer, M. W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations.* Malden, MA: Polity. Hiring, of course, leads to organizational entry and assimilation, the next phase of socialization. Jablin broke this phase down into three segments.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. During **preentry**[18] when you have been offered a job but not formally begun, you receive messages from the employer and initial impressions—both by and about you—are formed. Then during formal **entry**[19] the organization strives to acclimate you to its ways, while you try to make sense of how you fit in—until you experience the **metamorphosis**[20] of assimilation as an established member. Finally, the phase of organizational disengagement and exit occurs as you leave your employment. Through the first two phases in which you are recruited and hired, and then initiated and assimilated, organizations use many methods to "get you on board" and foster strong identification: new employee orientation programs, training programs, mentoring programs, information giving, and more.

From the perspective of organization leaders, the goal of the socialization is to produce employees who adopt—as we learned in Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives"—a desirable **followership style**[21]. Ira Chaleff described the ideal follower as one how supports the leader and offers corrective feedback

when needed.Chaleff, I. (2003). *The courageous follower* (2nd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Barrett-Koehler. Roger Adair contrasted the Disgruntled follower and the Disengaged follower, with the excited and motivated Doer and the self-sacrificing Disciple.Adair, R. (2008). Developing great leaders, one follower at a time. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff, & J. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations* (pp. 137–153). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Robert Presthus divided followers into Upwardly Mobiles who revel in an organization's system, Indifferents who go along, and Ambivalents who resist.Presthus, R. (1962). *The organizational society: An analysis and a theory*. New York, NY: Random House; pg. 15. Robert Kelley proposed a typology of Alienated, Passive, Conformist, and Exemplary followers—the latter combining active engaged in an organization with independent thought and judgment for achieving organizational goals.Kelley, R. (1992). *The power of followership: How to create leaders that people want to follow and followers who lead themselves*. New York: Doubleday/Currency. A common thread that runs through all of these typologies is the assumption that followers should identify strongly enough with an organization to perform their duties with motivation and commit their independent thought and judgment to the service and benefit of the group.

From an Individual Perspective

Fostering organizational identification is seen by leaders as an essential management function. But for individuals, the implications are more complex. As we noted at the outset of the chapter, people in modern societies derive much of their self-identities from the organizations with which they affiliate. Evaluating the implications must start with a better understanding of organizational identity as a psychological phenomenon. Since much of the research follows Ashforth and Mael's construct of organizational identity, then that is where we will begin.Ashforth & Mael, Social identity theory, op cit.

Table 8.2 "Theoretical Developments: Hatch & Schultz" above illustrates how Ashforth and Mael applied to organizations the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner—who, in turn, had built on the work of Cooley and Mead. Ashforth and Mael surveyed the extant literature and found that the term *organizational identification* was sometimes used interchangeably with such terms as *commitment* and *internalization*. Guided by social identity theory, they defined **identification**[22] as a "cognitive construct that is not necessarily associated with any specific behaviors or affective states" since "an individual need only perceive him- or herself as psychologically intertwined with the fate of the group" and he or she "personally experienc[es] the successes and failures."Ibid, pg. 21. In other words, your identification with a social group (such as an organization) is a mental picture rather than a set of actions or feelings. Further, identification can be distinguished from *internalization*: "Whereas identification refers to self in terms of social

19. During the period of your initial formal entry into an organization, socialization continues as managers and coworkers help you "get on board" and as you try to make sense of how you fit in.

20. In the last segment of the entry phase of organizational socialization, you experience the metamorphosis of full assimilation as an established member of the organization.

21. The concept of different leadership styles has prompted the complementary concept of different followership styles; the literature on management generally presupposes that strong organizational identification is a component of the followership style that effective managerial leadership should produce.

22. Ashforth and Mael defined identification as a cognitive construct (or mental picture of one's self as intertwined with a group) as opposed to a set of behaviors or emotions; further, identification attaches the self to a social categories ("I am"), while internalization attaches the self to guiding principles ("I believe").

categories (I am), internalization refers to the incorporation of values, attitudes, and so forth within the self as guiding principles (I believe)."Ibid, pgs. 21–22. <u>Table 8.4 "Distinguishing Organizational Identification"</u> below puts these ideas into perspective by suggesting how an employee of the (hypothetical) Better Burgers franchise might express affinity with her organization.

Table 8.4 Distinguishing Organizational Identification

Phenomenon	Example	Explanation
Identification	"I'm Better!"	The employee cognitively constructs a mental picture of her social self as intertwined with Better Burgers.
Behavior	"I'm loyal"	The employee takes the action of being committed to her association with Better Burgers
Emotion	"I'm love my job"	The employee enjoys feelings of satisfaction through her association with Better Burgers
Internalization	"I'm a *burgerista*"	The employee takes as her guiding principle the value that Better Burgers places on creativity and quality

Ashforth and Mael argue that social identification can drive your actions and feelings, or vice versa. But when organizational identification is understood as a specific form of social identification—and when identification is seen as a cognitive construction or mental picture of the self, rather than a set of behaviors of feelings—then social identity theory suggests five factors can push employees and managers to identify with their organizations:

- The *distinctiveness* of the organization, so that membership confers a unique self-identity.
- The *prestige* of the organization, so that membership boosts self-esteem.
- An awareness of *out-groups* (i.e., other organizations), so that awareness of the *in-group* (i.e., one's own organization) is reinforced.
- *Competition* with other organizations, so that distinctions are more clearly delineated.
- *Groups formation factors* that may include physical proximity, interpersonal relations, attractiveness, similarity, shared background, and common threats or aspirations.Ibid, pgs. 24–25.

Think again of the fast food chains we have used as an example throughout this chapter. If you were employed by one of these chains then (ideally, from management's point of view) you might identify with the chain as your own self-

23. In Tompkins and Cheney's theory of organizational control, management gains concertive control when employees internalize approved attitudes and behaviors and discipline themselves.

24. Using structuration theory as a framework, Phillip Tompkins and George Cheney argued that members' identification with an organization's identity furnishes a medium for members to act socially within the organization; in so doing, they reproduce the system so that member identification and organizational identity also become outcomes of their action—hence, an *identity-identiffication duality*.

25. In Tompkins and Cheney's theory of organizational control, the direct and open use of power by management is called simple control.

26. In Tompkins and Cheney's theory of organizational control, management's selection of the communication tools employees are expected to employ is called technical control.

27. In Tompkins and Cheney's theory of organizational control, management's determination of formal policies and procedures employees must follow is called bureaucratic control.

28. In Tompkins and Cheney's theory of organizational control, management's attempts to inculcate common values and practices around which members form their interests and relationships is called cultural control.

identity becomes intertwined with its distinctiveness ("Our burgers are uniquely best!") and prestige ("We're the leading national chain!") and with its contrasts to other chains ("The other chains want to be like us" and "The competitions won't beat us because their burgers aren't as good!"). In addition, your organizational identification might be enhanced if your restaurant is in your own neighborhood, if get along well with your manager and coworkers, and if your fellow employees are nice people who have similar personalities, background, dreams, and challenges.

For your manager—and more broadly, for the fast food chain's corporate leadership—a prime goal is to "produce" employees with the organizational identification described above. Of course, if you like where you work and feel a sense of belonging and purpose, then your organizational identification will tend to boost your job satisfaction. But it also follows that an organization's attempts to "manage" your identity is tied to corporate leadership's desire for control and predictability. Phillip Tompkins and George Cheney have called this **concertive control**[23]. Drawing on structuration theory (see Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication"), they proposed that and **identity-identification duality**[24] operates within organizations.Tompkins, P. K. & Cheney, G. (1985). Communication and unobtrusive control in contemporary organizations. In R. D. McPhee & P. K. Tompkins (Eds.), *Organizational communication: Traditional themes and new directions* (pp. 179–210). Newbury Park, CA: Sage; see also Scott, C. R., Corman, S. A., & Cheney, G. (1998). The development of a structurational theory of identification in the organization. *Communication Theory, 8*, 298–336. The more you are linked with other organization members that share the same premises, the more you will all cultivate like identities for yourselves and, in turn, be self-actualized by relationships with likeminded coworkers. Thus, identity and identification are both mediums and outcomes of social action. Tompkins and Cheney theorized that organizations deploy communication to control their members in five ways starting with **simple control**[25] through direct and open use of power, **technical control**[26] that selects the communication tools members are expected to employ, and **bureaucratic control**[27] that determines formal policies and procedures members must follow. Then through **cultural control**[28] organizations seek to inculcate common values and practices around which members form their interests and relationships, while through concertive control organizations induce members to discipline themselves as approved attitudes and behaviors come to seem natural and normal. As members accept these unwritten rules they in turn reinforce and reproduce them—individually and through interactions with other members—until these expectations become the very goals which motivate members and form their sense of obligation.

Tompkins and Cheney also drew on rhetorical theory (see Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication"), citing Kenneth Burke's concept of identification as a process in which **consubstantiation**[29], or a sharing of substances,

29. Rhetorical scholar Kenneth Burke (whom Tompkins and Cheney reference in their theory of organizational control) contended that persuasion cannot occur without identification; the basis for one person to persuade another is *consubstantation* or a sharing of substances that causes a listener to identify with a speaker.

30. Aristotelian rhetorical theory (which Tompkins and Cheney reference in their theory of organizational control) holds that argument syllogistically from major premise, to minor premise, to conclusion; a skillful speaker who knows the mind of an audience can omit a well-known premise, which the audience mentally supplies and thus is drawn along to the speaker's conclusion.

31.

32. Four "technologies" or modes for getting things done, theorized Michel Foucault, operate in the modern world; technologies of production permit us to manipulate the physical world.

33. Four "technologies" or modes for getting things done, theorized Michel Foucault, operate in the modern world; technologies of sign systems permit us to communicate.

34. Four "technologies" or modes for getting things done, theorized Michel Foucault, operate in the modern world; technologies of power submit individuals to domination and determine their conduct.

causes persons to identify with one another and makes persuasion possible.Burke, K. (1969). *A rhetoric of motives.* Berkeley: University of California Press. Identification with an organization occurs as members imbibe its premises, shape their own identities by these premises, and ultimately reason by them. They likewise drew on Aristotle's concept of the **enthymeme**[30].Aristotle (2007). *On rhetoric: A theory of civic discourse* (2nd ed.) (G. A. Kennedy, Trans.). New York: Oxford University Press. Reasoning in organizations occurs syllogistically—often from a major premise, to a minor premise, to a conclusion. Enthymemic argument occurs when a premise is widely shared by an audience. A speaker merely omits that premise from the argument and thus impels the audience to fill in the missing premise and be drawn along to the speaker's conclusion. So for example, when management and workers share the premise that profits are good for everyone, managers need only urge employees to practice "customer service excellence" and employees will supply the missing premise that "satisfied customers are repeat customers" and so be drawn along to the conclusion that making a profit is an imperative. When such identification occurs, the organization has gained concertive control over its members.

From Postmodern and Critical Perspectives

Writing in the 1970s, French philosopher Michel Foucault described a fundamental change from premodern to modern societies. In the old era of kings, discipline was achieved through direct and physical punishments such as public beheadings of people who offended the order of the realm. In the present era of bureaucracies, however, **discipline**[31] is achieved not through direct and physical means but through indirect and intangible means, such that people come to discipline themselves. Foucault gave the analogy of a state prison, which is an invention of modern society. Inmates are aware of the faceless, all-seeing (or "panoptic") guard tower above them. Knowing they are not watched *every* moment but could be at *any* moment, they discipline themselves.Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (A. Sheridan, Trans.). New York: Vintage. (Original work published 1975) In a modern organization the method of surveillance may not be visual means such as cameras; bureaucracies have methods of reporting and accounting that keep tabs on people. Foucault became interested in the development of the concept of "self" throughout Western history and concluded that the "self" has become one of four "technologies" that operate in the modern world. These include:

(1) **technologies of production**[32], which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) **technologies of sign systems**[33], which permits us to use signs, meanings, symbols, symbols, or signification; (3) **technologies of power**[34], which, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, an objectivizing of the subject; (4) **technologies of the self**[35], which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain

number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality. . . . each one of them is associated with a certain type of domination. Each implies certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes.Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16–49). Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; pg. 18.

In Foucault's formulation, "technologies" is not meant in the popular sense of machines but, rather, simply as ways of getting things done. Thus, modern society has ways of manipulating the physical world, of communicating, of hierarchizing human relationships (since a completely egalitarian society is an impossibility), and of modifying the self (since living with other people makes the unmodified self an impossibility). Each way of getting things done implies submission to the larger historical and cultural discourses that are the dominant discourses in a given society. Numerous scholars in organization studies have applied Foucault's ideas to organizational settings.For example, see Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, post modernism, and organizational analysis 2: The contribution of Michel Foucault. *Organization Studies, 9*, 221–235; McKinlay, A., & Starkey, K. (1998). *Foucault, management, and organization theory*. London: Sage. Thus, as Mike Savage demonstrated in his study of a major nineteenth-century railroad, employees readily disciplined themselves in return for pay increases and a career ladder that offered upward mobility.Savage, M., (1998). Discipline, surveillance, and the "career": Employment on the Great Western Railway, 1833–1914. In A. McKinlay & K. Starkey (Eds.), *Foucault, management, and organization theory* (pp. 65–92). London: Sage. Foucault himself examined the implications of his thesis and argued that individuals, when confronted with pressures by dominant discourses to modify their selves, could respond ethnically by asking four questions:

1. *Ethical substance:* Which part of myself or my behavior is influenced or concerned with moral conduct? What do I do because I want to be ethical?
2. *Mode of subjection:* How am I being told to act morally? Who is asking? To whose values am I being subjected?
3. *Ethical work:* How must I change myself or my actions in order to become ethical in this situation?
4. *Ethical goal:* Do I agree with this definition of morality? Do I consent to becoming this character in this situation? To what am I aspiring to when I behave ethically?Faber, B. (1999). Intuitive ethics: Understanding and critiquing the role of intuition in ethical decisions. *Technical Communication Quarterly, 8(2)*, 189–202; adapted from Foucault, M. (1984). On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress.

35. Four "technologies" or modes for getting things done, theorized Michel Foucault, operate in the modern world; technologies of the self permit individuals to modify their bodies, thoughts, conduct, and ways of being to attain desired ends.

In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp. 352–355). New York: Pantheon; also see Moore, M. C. (1987). Ethical discourse and Foucault's conception of ethics. *Human Studies, 10,* 81–95.

While Foucault's ideas provide a framework for many scholars to explore questions of the self in organizational settings, Matts Alvesson and Hugh Willmott took their own critical look starting with the literature—reviewed above—on organizational identity and identification. They argued that management engages in **identity regulation**[36] as a form of organizational control in order to "produce" the "appropriate" individuals that management desires.Alvesson & Willmott, Identity regulation, op cit. Identity regulation, believed Alvesson and Willmott, is accomplished as management promulgates a discourse that defines identity and thus shapes processes of identity formation and change. This managerial discourse addresses four targets and is conducted in nine modes, as shown in Table 8.5 "Identity Regulation: Alvesson & Willmott" below.

Table 8.5 Identity Regulation: Alvesson & Willmott

Target	Mode	Example
Employee	Defining the person directly	"A male middle manager" may do his "managing" by following directives from above but then hides his subordinate position by projecting masculine values
	Defining a person by defining others	A group of salesmen are constructed as "real men" because management believes women lack a "killer instinct" and thus does not hire them
Action orientations	Providing a specific vocabulary of motives	A manager tells new employees the company pays fair wages and does not "bid" for recruits, implying they should be motivated intrinsically and not by pay
	Explicating morals and values	The organization espouses certain values and heroes, so that employees cannot resist without losing their dignity and being made to feel unworthy
	Knowledge and skills	The organization conducts management training that prompts managers to identify with the company as a whole and not with a department or specialty
Social relations	Group categorization and affiliation	Giving employees emotional gratification as "team members" counters any tendency for employees to think of themselves as individuals
	Hierarchical location	The social status of units in the organization (leaders, executives, middle and junior managers, employees, etc) is supported by their positions in the hierarchy

36. Matt Alvesson and Hugh Willmott argue that, as means of organizational control, managerial interests engage in identity regulation through discursive practices that shape the processes of employees' identity formation and thus "produce" the "appropriate" employee.

Target	Mode	Example
Scene	Establishing and clarifying a distinct set of rules of the game	A "team player" ethos causes employees to rein in their own traits (brilliance, ability, aggressiveness, personal values, etc) so others do not feel threatened
	Defining the context	Management talks about the uncertainty, competition and changes that globalization is bringing, thus implying that employees must be adaptable and enterprising

Thus, identity regulation "encompasses the more or less intentional effects of social practices upon processes of identity construction and reconstruction" and includes "induction, training, and promotion procedures [that] are developed in ways that have implications for the shaping and direction of identity."Ibid, pg. 625. These practices are intended to influence what Alvesson and Willmott call the **identity work**[37] that all members do to ascertain the nature of the organization and their parts in it. This identity work explores six aspects of **self-identity**[38]: central life interest, coherence, distinctiveness, direction, positive value, and self-awareness. In particular:

- A person's *central life interest* is bound up in the questions of "Who am I?" and "What are we?"
- The desire for *coherence* is felt as a need to tell one's life story as a narrative with a discernible sequence rather than a fragmented jumble of random events
- The desire for *distinctiveness* is akin to the need, discussed earlier in the chapter, to set boundaries that distinguish "me" from others
- *Direction* provides a (if often vague) basis of what is appropriate, desired, and valued on which a person can decide what is reasonable
- A set of *positive social values* lend self-esteem to a person's identity
- A person gains a self-identity, in part, when he or she has acquired a *self-awareness* of that identity.

37. All employees engage in identity work, theorized Alvesson and Willmott, as they interpret organizational discourses in light of their own central life interest, desires for coherence and distinctiveness, need for direction and self-affirming social values, and emerging self-awareness.

38. In Alvesson and Willmott's theory, identity work produces a (precarious) self-identity; the managerial objective in identity regulation is to shape the processes of identity work and this produce appropriate employees.

Thus, identity work is the process by which "people are continuously engaged in forming, repairing, maintaining, strengthening, or revising the constructions that are productive of a precarious sense of coherence and distinctiveness."Ibid, pg. 626. Having defined the three concepts of identity regulation, identity work and self-identity, Alvesson and Willmott saw them working in a dynamic relation as shown in Figure 8.7 "Identity Regulation, Identity Work, Self-Identity" below. Their conclusion: identity is "an important yet still insufficiently explored dimension of organizational control," and one whose importance will increase in a post-

bureaucratic world of loosely networked organizations where control must be accomplished by managing the "insides" of employees.Ibid, pg. 620.

Figure 8.7 *Identity Regulation, Identity Work, Self-Identity*
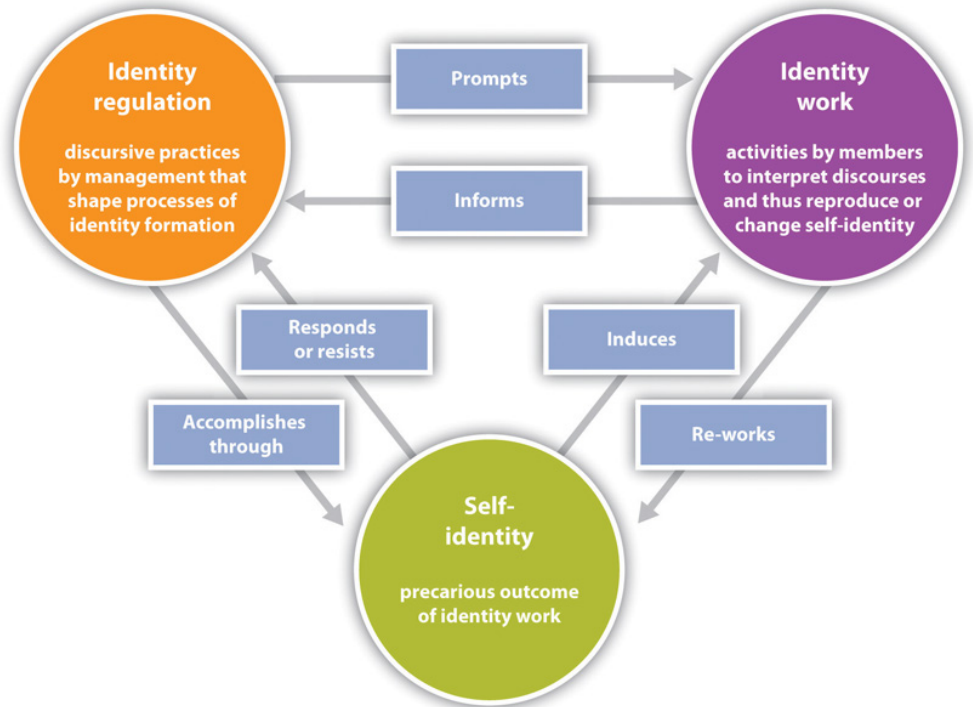
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Organizational identity is the collective identity that an organization may form; organizational identification is developed by individual members as they identify with the organization. The concept of organizational identification originated with Blake Ashford and Fred Mael. In applying social identity theory—which holds that one's self-concept combines a "personal identity" based on individual traits with a "social identity" based on group classifications—they defined organizational identification as a form of social identification as members perceive oneness or belonging with the organization.
- A key management objective is to foster strong organizational identification among employees. This occurs through conscious efforts to socialize employees into the values and practices of the organization so that they "get on board" and feel an affinity with the organization's identity. Frederic Jablin described how this socialization occurs in three phases: anticipatory socialization, organizational entry and assimilation, and organizational disengagement and exit. During the first two phases especially, management strives to encourage organizational identification through such means as recruiting and hiring communications, new employee orientation programs, training programs, and mentoring programs.
- While management strives to encourage organizational identification, these efforts are not the whole story of how employees come to identity with an organization. Taking their cue from social identity theory, Ashforth and Mael observed that feelings of oneness and belonging are fostered as the organization is seen as distinctive and prestigious, and as comparisons to and competitions with other organizations delineate differences between "us" versus "them." However, Phillip Tompkins and George Cheney drew on structuration theory to posit an *identity-identification duality*. Identification is not only a means for organizations to engage in social actions; identification is also an outcome of those actions. The more employees who identify with an organization act together with other such coworkers, the more they identify with the organization. Over time, believed Tompkins and Cheney, increasing identification leads to *concertive control* as members so identify with an organization that they discipline themselves to conform to managerially approved values.
- French philosopher Michel Foucault described how premodern societies enforced discipline through direct physical means, whereas modern societies enforce discipline through the possibility of indirect surveillance that compels people to discipline themselves. Matts Alvesson and Hugh Willmott, working from the literature on

organizational identification, posited that *identity regulation* affords management a means of control through "producing" the "appropriate" employee. All organization members must do *identity work* to form an organizational self-identity. Identity regulation occurs as management engages is discourses that attempt to shape employees' identity work. These management discourses may strive to define the appropriate employee, appropriate actions, appropriate relations, and appropriate rules and contexts for organizational life.

EXERCISES

1. In the exercises for Section 8.1 "Identity and the Organization" above, you were asked you to think of an organization to which you have belonged—perhaps a sports team on which you played, a club that you joined, a company where you worked, a church or mosque or synagogue where you have worshipped, or the college you now attend. In section 8.1 we asked you to explore that organization's identity; now we ask you think about your own identification with that organization. Describe how the organization guided your socialization, first through the anticipatory socialization phase prior to your actual joining, and then through the phase of your formal entry and assimilation. What methods did the organization use in encouraging you to strongly identify with that organization?

2. Thinking of the same organization you analyzed in Exercise 1, switch your gaze from the ways it tried to socialize you and instead consider your own responses. Following Ashforth and Meal's framework: Did the organization's distinctiveness make you, as a member, feel unique? Did its prestige boost your self-esteem? As you became aware of other similar organizations, did the comparisons highlight what was different about your organization? Did that make you feel more a part of the "in" group? Was this feeling heightened by any actual or perceived competition with the other organizations? And as Tompkins and Cheney suggested, did your organizational identification increase as you spent more time with other members who also identified with the organization? Did you ultimately conform to the organization's values and practices, without being told, because you felt they were your own?

3. Finally, consider again the organization you analyzed in Exercises 1 and 2. Now refer to Table 8.5 "Identity Regulation: Alvesson & Willmott" above which lists the targets and discourses that organization leaders and managers can use to engage in identity regulation. The left column lists discursive targets, the second lists discursive modes, and the third lists examples given by Alvesson and Willmott. Make a chart of your own and, in the third column, list your own examples of how the organization to which you belonged may have engaged in identity regulation. After listing your examples, jot down some thoughts on how these discourses may have shaped your identity work and influenced your self-identity in the organization.

8.3 Diversity and the Organization

In thinking about identity and identification, we can easily slip into the trap of thinking the organization has *an* identity and that, likewise, the employee has *an* identity. In other words, each has *one* unified and integrated identity. This mode of thinking is, in fact, the "default" position in Western culture. We think of a each person as a single unit so that, metaphorically, we project this same quality onto the "super-person" which is the organization. Yet Albert and Whetten's original thesis about organizational identity readily allowed that organizations can have multiple identities.Albert & Whetten, op cit. Communication scholars, as well as researchers in psychology and other fields, have long recognized that the same is true of individuals. Each one of us constructs our sense of self from a multitude of identities—perhaps our family, ethnicity, gender, age country of origin, region or city, religion, hobbies, clubs, alma maters, political affiliations, profession, employer, and work department. Moreover, identity is an ongoing construction that must be constantly negotiated, renegotiated, and adjusted in light of new experiences as you encounter new people and situations. (And from a postmodern perspective, the "self" is a fiction since each person is a "site" where multiple discourses compete. Thoughts and intentions are shaped and conditioned by those discourses and by the language with which to express them.)

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To illustrate how people with different (and multiple) identities must mesh to accomplish work, consider this textbook. Under the auspices of a publisher, the

three authors came together to perform the work. We share an interest in organizational communication and yet our identities (and their components) are very different. One author (Wrench) is a white male, a member of Generation X who hails from Texas, earned his doctorate in West Virginia, moved from Ohio to New York, has a special interest in learning processes, and identifies with his roles as department chair, teacher, scholar, author, speaker, and consultant. Another author (Punyanunt-Carter) is a woman of color and member of Generation X who also attended universities in Texas and Ohio, and now teaches at her Texas alma mater where she researches, among other interests, faither-daughter communication. The third author (Ward) is a Baby Boomer who almost exactly mirrors the average (documented by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) of holding 11.3 jobs through the first three decades of his career.Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, July 25). Number of jobs held, labor market activity, and earnings growth among the youngest baby boomers: Results from a longitudinal survey summary. Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/news.release/nlsoy.nr0.htm White, middle-aged, male, American, Southerner, proud of his alma maters in Virginia and South Carolina, he self-identifies as an academic, teacher, faculty member of his Texas institution, and specialist in organizational and religious communication. Yet through a dozen job changes his identity has varied: writer/editor, corporate communication director, broadcaster, freelance and, upon entering academe in midlife, graduate student, and college professor. Furthermore, two of the authors favor social-scientific research methods while the third holds to an interpretive epistemology. To write this textbook, then, we found ways of making our diversity an advantage rather than a liability.

Or consider your Organizational Communication class. Your class is analogous to an organization with a governing board (the administration), CEO (your instructor), and members (the students). Probably you have experienced how different classes have different "personalities" or, if you will, organizational identities. Somehow, the climate and culture of one class—even just the atmosphere when you walk in the door—is completely different than another class. That identity is driven by many factors: the university, the subject of the class, the instructor, and the composition of the students. And college professors know that different sections of the *same* course, even during the *same* semester, have different identities. Thus, for every class in which you are enrolled—including your Organizational Communication class—you must work through the diverse identities of your teachers, your classmates, and yourself in order to pass the course. You must find a way to work with your instructor, and you must cooperate with other students for class discussions and group projects that are integral to the work of each course.

In a very real sense, your textbook and your Organizational Communication class are microcosms of processes that occur daily in the workplace—as individuals and organizations balance the need for a shared identity with the need to accommodate

a diverse identities and collectively leverage the strengths they bring to the table. That is the tension we will explore in this section.

Theory and Reality

The notion of boosting performance by encouraging a diverse workforce takes us a long way from the classical theories of management that we encountered in Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication". The theories of Frederick Taylor envisioned the organization as a homogeneous "machine" whose inputs and outputs could be scientifically managed. Max Weber held that bureaucratic management according to impersonal and but fair rules was preferable to the personalized leadership that characterized nineteenth-century capitalism. And Henri Fayol advocated a military style of management based on unity of direction and command. With all these classical theories, individual identities should be left at the factory gate and a diversity of perspectives and opinions would detract from Taylor's control, Weber's impartiality, and Fayol's unity. Yet as we also saw in Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication", the human relations approach to organizations recognized that workers have felt needs, while human resources theories encouraged management to tap worker creativity by enlisting their participation in organizational decision-making. Systems theory likewise, as we learned in Chapter 4 "Modern Theories of Organizational Communication", acknowledges that an organization needs a diversity of resources that is sufficient to handle the complexity of its environment. Intepretive approaches suggest that an organization "is" its diversity since the organization and its culture are constituted by the communicative interactions of its various members. Postmodern and critical approaches celebrate diversity by recovering voices that have been historically marginalized in organizations.

Quite apart from theory, however, is the practical reality of an increasingly diverse workforce in the United States and many other nations. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) tracks numerous demographic traits including age, gender, race and ethnicity, disability, family and marital status, educational attainment, military veteran status, and more. Each trait can be an integral component of a person's self-identity both in private life and on the job—and in the aggregate, the demographic mix is constantly changing. Organizations must keep abreast of these changes to find and attract the best talent; managers must stay on top of these changes to best help their employees succeed; employees must be aware of these changes to work effectively with coworkers. In 2006, a BLS report projected the composition of the U.S. labor by decade through 2050.Toossi, M. (2006, November). A new look at long-term labor force projections to 2050. *Monthly Labor Review* [electronic version]. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2006/11/art3full.pdf The projections, shown in Figure 8.8 "U.S. Labor Force Racial Distribution to 2050", Figure 8.9 "U.S. Labor Force Race and Gender Distribution to
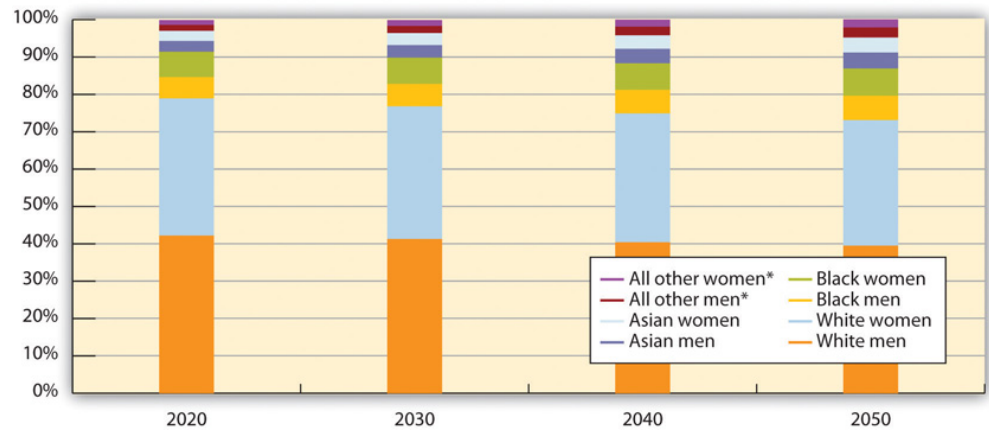
2050", Figure 8.10 "U.S. Labor Force Ethnic Distribution to 2050", and Figure 8.11 "U.S. Labor Force Ethnic and Gender Distribution to 2050" below, suggest steady growth in the numbers of black, Asian, and Hispanic men and women as percentages of the workforce. But despite the growing numbers of workers in these categories, the agency estimates that overall growth in the U.S. labor force will slow significantly as compared the previous half-century. The Baby Boom generation is aging, while the participation rate of women in the labor force is leveling off after previous decades of rapid growth.

Figure 8.8   *U.S. Labor Force Racial Distribution to 2050*
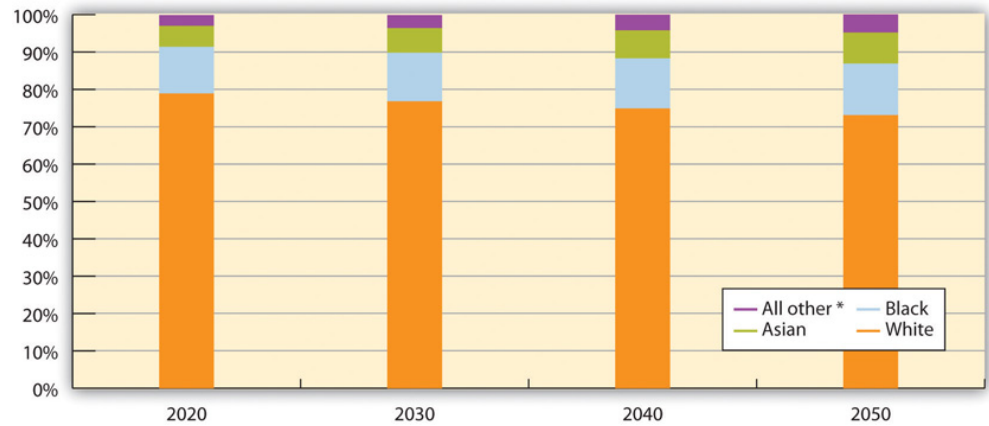
"All other" includes those classified as of multiple racial origin and the race categories of American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders.

Figure 8.9   *U.S. Labor Force Race and Gender Distribution to 2050*

"All other" includes those classified as of multiple racial origin and the race categories of American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders.

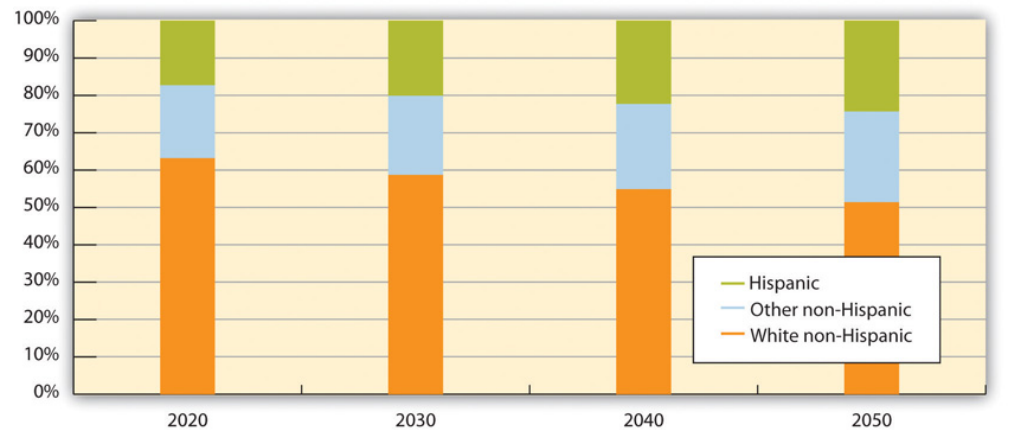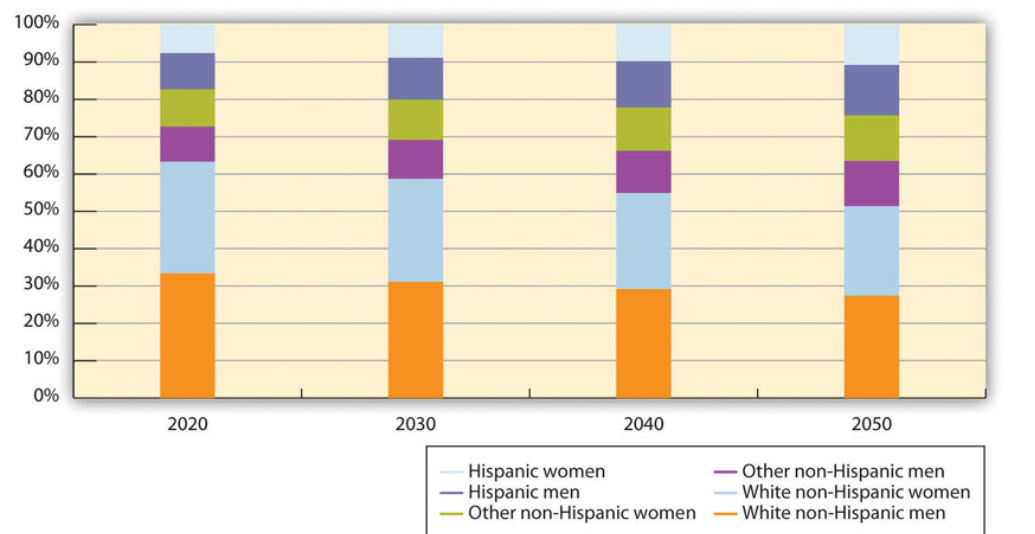*Figure 8.10* *U.S. Labor Force Ethnic Distribution to 2050*

Figure 8.11 *U.S. Labor Force Ethnic and Gender Distribution to 2050*

Given the trend toward increasingly multicultural workplaces, organizations have solid business reasons to keep pace. Taylor Cox and Stacy Blake summarized these reasons in six arguments for embracing diversity: (1) Organizations with a reputation for welcoming diverse employees will gain a recruiting edge in a shrinking labor pool, while (2) those that struggle with integrating women and minorities will face increased costs as the labor pool steadily diversifies. Further, organizations with diverse workforces will benefit from the improved (3) creativity, (4) problem-solving and (5) managerial flexibility spurred by multiple viewpoints, even as they (6) gain greater insights for marketing products and services to an increasingly diverse public.Cox, T. H., & Blake, S. (1991). Managing cultural diversity: Implications for organizational effectiveness. *Academy of Management*

Executive, 5(3), 45–56. Nevertheless, achieving these benefits is not easy because accustomed modes of thinking—whether in an organizational culture, or in the surrounding society—may be transmitted over generations, be deeply ingrained, and be slow to change. A sense of the challenge is suggested in Table 8.6 "Prohibited Employment Practices: EEOC" below, which lists employment practices prohibited by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and examples of violations cited by the agency.U.S. Equal Employment Opportinty Commission (n.d.). *Prohibited employment policies/practices.* Retrieved October 26, 2012, from http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/practices/index.cfm

Table 8.6 Prohibited Employment Practices: EEOC

Protected categories	"Under the laws enforced by EEOC, it is illegal to discriminate against someone (applicant or employee) because of that person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information. It is also illegal to retaliate against a person because he or she complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit."
General principles	"The laws enforced by EEOC prohibit an employer or other covered entity from using neutral employment policies and practices that have a disproportionately negative effect on applicants or employees of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin, or on an individual with a disability or class of individuals with disabilities, if the polices or practices at issue are not job-related and necessary to the operation of the business. The laws enforced by EEOC also prohibit an employer from using neutral employment policies and practices that have a disproportionately negative impact on applicants or employees age 40 or older, if the policies or practices at issue are not based on a reasonable factor other than age."

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
Job advertisements	"It is illegal for an employer to publish a job advertisement that shows a preference for or discourages someone from applying for a job because of his or her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"For example, a help-wanted ad that seeks 'females' or 'recent college graduates' may discourage men and people over 40 from applying and may violate the law."

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
Recruitment	"It is also illegal for an employer to recruit new employees in a way that discriminates against them because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"For example, an employer's reliance on word-of-mouth recruitment by its mostly Hispanic work force may violate the law if the result is that almost all new hires are Hispanic."
Application and hiring	"It is illegal for an employer to discriminate against a job applicant because of his or her race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	For example, an employer may not refuse to give employment applications to people of a certain race.
	"An employer may not base hiring decisions on stereotypes and assumptions about a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	
	"If an employer requires job applicants to take a test, the test must be necessary and related to the job and the employer may not exclude people of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, or individuals with disabilities."	
	"In addition, the employer may not use a test that excludes applicants age 40 or older if the test is not based on a reasonable factor other than age."	
	"If a job applicant with a disability needs an accommodation (such as a sign	

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
	language interpreter) to apply for a job, the employer is required to provide the accommodation, so long as the accommodation does not cause the employer significant difficulty or expense."	
Job referrals	"It is illegal for an employer, employment agency or union to take into account a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information when making decisions about job referrals."	
Job assignments and promotions	"It is illegal for an employer to make decisions about job assignments and promotions based on an employee's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"For example, an employer may not give preference to employees of a certain race when making shift assignments and may not segregate employees of a particular national origin from other employees or from customers."
	"An employer may not base assignment and promotion decisions on stereotypes and assumptions about a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	
	"If an employer requires employees to take a test before making decisions about assignments or promotions, the test may not exclude people of a particular race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), or national origin, or individuals with disabilities, unless the employer can show	

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
	that the test is necessary and related to the job."	
	"In addition, the employer may not use a test that excludes employees age 40 or older if the test is not based on a reasonable factor other than age."	
Pay and benefits	"It is illegal for an employer to discriminate against an employee in the payment of wages or employee benefits on the bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"For example, an employer many not pay Hispanic workers less than African-American workers because of their national origin, and men and women in the same workplace must be given equal pay for equal work."
	"In some situations, an employer may be allowed to reduce some employee benefits for older workers, but only if the cost of providing the reduced benefits is the same as the cost of providing benefits to younger workers."	
Discipline and discharge	"An employer may not take into account a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information when making decisions about discipline or discharge."	"For example, if two employees commit a similar offense, an employer many not discipline them differently because of their race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."
	"When deciding which employees will be laid off, an employer may not choose the oldest workers because of their age. Employers also may not discriminate when deciding which workers to recall after a layoff."	
Employment references	"It is illegal for an employer to give a negative or false	

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
	employment reference (or refuse to give a reference) because of a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	
Reasonable accommodation and disability	"The law requires that an employer provide reasonable accommodation to an employee or job applicant with a disability, unless doing so would cause significant difficulty or expense for the employer." "A reasonable accommodation is any change in the workplace (or in the ways things are usually done) to help a person with a disability apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, or enjoy the benefits and privileges of employment."	"Reasonable accommodation might include, for example, providing a ramp for a wheelchair user or providing a reader or interpreter for a blind or deaf employee or applicant."
Reasonable accomodation and religion	"The law requires an employer to reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices, unless doing so would cause difficulty or expense for the employer."	"This means an employer may have to make reasonable adjustments at work that will allow the employee to practice his or her religion, such as allowing an employee to voluntarily swap shifts with a co-worker so that he or she can attend religious services."
Training and apprenticeship programs	"It is illegal for a training or apprenticeship program to discriminate on the bases of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"For example, an employer may not deny training opportunities to African-American employees because of their race."

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
	"In some situations, an employer may be allowed to set age limits for participation in an apprenticeship program."	
Harassment	"It is illegal to harass an employee because of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"Harassment can take the form of slurs, graffiti, offensive or derogatory comments, or other verbal or physical conduct. Sexual harassment (including unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct of a sexual nature) is also unlawful."
	"It is also illegal to harass someone because they have complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit."	"The harasser can be the victim's supervisor, a supervisor in another area, a co-worker, or someone who is not an employee of the employer, such as a client or customer."
	"Although the law does not prohibit simple teasing, offhand comments, or isolated incidents that are not very serious, harassment is illegal if it is so frequent or severe that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or if it results in an adverse employment decision (such as the victim being fired or demoted)."	"Harassment outside of the workplace may also be illegal if there is a link with the workplace. For example, if a supervisor harasses an employee while driving the employee to a meeting."
Terms and conditions of employment	"The law makes it illegal for an employer to make any employment decision because of a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information."	"That means an employer may not discriminate when it comes to such things as hiring, firing, promotions, and pay. It also means an employer may not discriminate,

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
		for example, when granting breaks, approving leave, assigning work stations, or setting any other term or condition of employment—however small."
Pre-employment inquiries	"As a general rule, the information obtained and requested through the pre-employment process should be limited to those essential for determining if a person is qualified for the job; whereas, information regarding race, sex, national origin, age, and religion are irrelevant in such determinations. Employers are explicitly prohibited from making pre-employment inquiries about disability."	"Therefore, inquiries about organizations, clubs, societies, and lodges of which an applicant may be a member or any other questions, which may indicate the applicant's race, sex, national origin, disability status, age, religion, color or ancestry if answered, should generally be avoided."
	"Although state and federal equal opportunity laws do not clearly forbid employers from making pre-employment inquiries that relate to, or disproportionately screen out members based on race, color, sex, national origin, religion, or age, such inquiries may be used as evidence of an employer's intent to discriminate unless the questions asked can be justified by some business purpose."	"Similarly, employers should not ask for a photograph of an applicant. If needed for identification purposes, a photograph may be obtained after an offer of employment is made and accepted."
Dress code	"In general, an employer may establish a dress code which applies to all employees or employees within certain job categories. However, there are a few possible exceptions." "While an employer may require all workers to follow a	"For example, a dress code that prohibits certain kinds of ethnic dress, such as traditional African or East Indian attire, but otherwise permits casual dress would treat some employees less favorably

Aspect of employment	Prohibited practice	Example
	uniform dress code even if the dress code conflicts with some workers' ethnic beliefs or practices, a dress code must not treat some employees less favorably because of their national origin."	
	"Moreover, if the dress code conflicts with an employee's religious practices and the employee requests an accommodation, the employer must modify the dress code or permit an exception to the dress code unless doing so would result in undue hardship."	because of their national origin."
	"Similarly, if an employee requests an accommodation to the dress code because of his disability, the employer must modify the dress code or permit an exception to the dress code, unless doing so would result in undue hardship."	
Constructive discharge/ forced to resign	"Discriminatory practices under the laws EEOC enforces also include constructive discharge or forcing an employee to resign by making the work environment so intolerable a reasonable person would not be able to stay."	

39. The unseen attitudes that lead to discrimination.

40. The observable actions that are prompted by prejudicial attitudes.

41. The belief that one's own culture is the most natural and is superior to others.

42. Generalizations that ascribe certain traits to all members of a social classification; e.g., older persons are forgetful, women are emotional, the differently abled are helpless, religious believers are judgmental, gay men are effeminate, or persons of a given racial or ethnic heritage are lazy, or unscrupulous, or dirty, or timid.

Still, the laws inforced by the EEOC can only address *discrimination* and not *prejudice.* **Prejudice**[39] is an unseen attitude; **discrimination**[40] is the observable behavior driven by prejudice. Prejudicial attitudes need not consist of active malice; a prejudicial attitude can stem from **ethnocentrism**[41]—the belief that one's own culture is the best or most natural—and from **stereotypes**[42] which portray older persons as forgetful, or women as emotional, or the differently abled as helpless, or religious believers as judgmental, or gay men as effeminate, or persons of a given racial or ethnic heritage as lazy, or unscrupulous, or dirty, or timid. Though more

than 100,000 individual charge filings were lodged with the EEOC in 2011, enforcement alone cannot end prejudice and its effects.U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (n.d.). *EEOC charge receipts by state (includes U.S. territories) and basis for 2011*. Retrieved October 26, 2012, from http://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/enforcement/state_11.cfm There can be, for example, the silent discrimination that limits the access of women and minorities to informal communication networks and to professional mentors, or turns them into "tokens" so that employers feel no obligation to recruit more. The real path to embracing diverse identities within today's organizations is in the everyday business of working out relationships of mutual respect and dignity. Brenda Allen, in her study of social identities and communication, concluded with three simple recommendations: *be mindful* of your own biases, *be proactive* in setting aside those biases, and *fill your communication toolbox* with a repertoire of skills for effective and empatheic listening and dialogue.Allen, B. J. (2011). *Difference matters: Communicating social identity*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland.

Balancing Identification and Identity

We opened the chapter by pairing identity and diversity as aspects of organizational life that exist in a tension which must be balanced. This is just as true for you, as an organization member, as it is for the organization. In this concluding section we will cast the identity/diversity balance *for individuals* as an identification/identity balance. In other words, how do you balance your organizational identification with your personal identity—that is, your need to identify with the organizational sufficiently to be a team member and get satisfaction from you job, with the need to "be your own person" and "have a life"? Concern about **work-life balance**[43] is not new; much was said in the postwar years as fathers went back to work and climbed the new corporate ladders, and again a generation later when the rise of two-income households put terms such as *latchkey kid* and *supermom* into the popular vocabulary. Today with the rise of the Internet and social media, many are concerned about the subtle ways that work is "colonizing" personal life as employees are increasingly pressured to answer work-related emails at home and be available 24/7 to answer phone calls, texts, and tweets from supervisors, coworkers, clients, and customers.

Since the 1990s some organizations have experimented with alternative work arrangements including flex time (flexible working hours), telecommuting or flex place (working from home a certain number of days per week), and job sharing (allowing a full-time job to be shared by two or more part-time employees). Yet the Families and Work Institute (FWI), in its *2012 National Study of Employers*, found that the "culture of flexibility" had stagnated due to the economic pressures of the 2008–09 recession.Matos, K., & Galinsky, E. (2012). *2012 National Study of Employers*. New York: Families and Work Institute; pg. 6. After surveying more than a thousand

43. Term often used to describe the issues that arise as individuals attempt to balance the sometimes conflicting demands of their work and their personal lives.

U.S. organizations of all sizes and occupations, FWI discovered that on the one hand, since 2005 "employers have increased their provision of options that allow employees to better manage the times and places in which they work" through flex time, flex place, and other policies. But on the other hand, "employers have reduced their provision of options that involve employees spending significant amounts of time away from full-time work" through opportunities to move between full- and part-time status and with career breaks for personal or family responsibilities. Employees thus have more options for managing their daily time but fewer options for managing their lives and careers.

Still, the availability of more flex time is a positive step. But why, then, did a 2008 FWI study find that between two-thirds and three-quarters of employee in various occupations reported "not having enough time" to spend with their spouses, partners, or children?Matos, K., & Galinsky, E. (2011). *Workplace flexibility in the United States: A status report.* New York: Families and Work Institute; pgs. 12–13. The same survey revealed that, even when employees have access to schedule flexibility, 70 percent use it no more than once a month and 19 percent never use it. Even to care for a sick child, employed parents took an average of only 3.6 days off per year.Ibid, pg. 5. "[H]aving access to flexibility options is one thing, but having a culture that supports their use is another. Employees can have substantial access to flexibility, but when they feel that its use is not condoned, they might as well not have access. . . . [A] culture of flexibility is as, if not more, important than simply having access to flexibility options."Ibid, pg. 14. Since 89 percent or more of employees in all occupations surveyed reported that their supervisors are responsive to requests for time off, then "the obstacles to using flexibility likely reside with coworkers, senior leaders, clients, and with employees' perceptions of the organizational norms."Ibid, pg. 14.

This returns us, of course, to the issue of balancing identification and identity—how much you identify with your organization, versus how much you construct your identity from other sources and maintain that identity. In modern societies where many people spend the bulk of their waking hours at work—and where many people accept job transfers that uproot them from traditional sources of identity—striking a good balance between work and life is a challenge. In the United States, the "culture of flexibility" that organizations need to accommodate a diverse workforce has run up against the ingrained expectation that employees should, heart and soul, be "company people." The "right" balance between work and life, between organizational identification and self-identity, is different for each person. You will need to decide what is right for you. But knowledge is power. In this chapter we have learned about the processes by which an organization forms an identity, by which it attempts to socialize employees into that identity, and by which employees acquire an organizational identification. We have learned about *identity regulation*, *concertive control*, and *technologies of the body* through which

modern organizations "produce" employees who discipline themselves according to desired norms. With this knowledge you can look squarely at organizational processes, question assumptions that may be taken for granted as normal and natural, and make informed choices about your own participation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Black, Asian, and Hispanic men and women will comprise steadily increasing percentages of the U.S. labor force through at least 2050. Yet the total labor force will grow slowly as Baby Boomers retire and the participation rate of women levels off after rising rapidly in previous decades. Organizations that embrace a diverse labor force will, as Cox and Blake summarized, enjoy a recruiting edge in a shrinking labor pool and benefit from the creativity, problem-solving, flexibility, and marketing insights generated by diverse perspectives. But as large number of charges filed annually with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission suggest, prejudicial attitudes and stereotypes still lead to workplace discrimination. This discrimination may be subtle, perhaps as women and minorities are denied access to informal networks and mentors. Brenda Allen recommends three simple steps: be mindful, be proactive, and fill your communication toolbox with effective listening and dialogue skills.
- Although organizations are increasingly willing to provide some measure of daily schedule flexibility for their employees, they have been less willing in recent years to give significant time off (beyond what the law requires) to employees who desire a career break for parenting or other caregiving responsibilities. Even so, large majorities of employees who do have access to scheduling flexibility seldom or never use it. The reason is not that supervisors are unresponsive. Rather, the cultures of most workplaces assume that strong organizational identification and dedication should be the norm. Awareness of how organizational identity and identification are formed can help you assess the processes occurring around you and make informed choices for balancing work and life.

EXERCISES

1. Throughout the section exercises in this chapter, you have thought about a specific organization to which you have belonged—perhaps a sport teams, a club, a house of worship, a workplace, or the college you attend. Think one more time about this organization. Could it benefit from taking a more proactive stance toward recruiting a diverse membership? If so, make a list of how the organization would gain a recruiting edge over other organizations, and how a greater diversity of perspectives within its membership could improve creativity and problem-solving and help the organization do a better job of getting its message out to a diverse public. Think of specific instances when the organization's actions could have been more effective if its membership and leadership were more diverse.

2. Chances are that you have struggled with balancing your personal life with your work—whether that work was a job, or school, or your involvement in community organizations or clubs. To what extent do you think that your decisions about the amount of time you spend at work, at school, or in other involvements are shaped by your identification with the organization in question? To what extent is it shaped by the norms and expectations of that organization's culture? Has there ever been a time when you overcommitted yourself? Why? Jot down your thoughts. How could the information in this chapter have helped you make more informed choices?

8.4 Chapter Exercises

Real World Case Study

An important and frequently cited article in the literature on organizational identity explored the case of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.Dutton & Dukerich, op cit. Established in 1921, the Port Authority develops and operates transportation facilities that serve a two-state region. These include three airports (Kennedy, LaGuardia, and Newark), a major downtown bus terminal, a train service, various bridges, tunnels and harbor facilities, and—at the time the study was conducted in the 1980s—the World Trade Centers in Manhattan. Researchers Jane Dutton and Janet Dukerich interviewed managers and employees and found they most frequently described the Port Authority's identity as a technically expert professional organization and not a social services agency, as ethically high-minded, as a superior provider of quality transportation services, as committed to the betterment of the region and indeed a symbol of the region, as a "fixer" with an "can-do" ethos, and as a "family" that deserved employee loyalty.

This identity was externally challenged in 1982 when the numbers of homeless persons frequenting the downtown Port Authority bus terminal increased. Improvements in the Manhattan real estate market prompted to closure of many single-occupancy hotels, putting hundreds of men on the street. Their increasing presence at the bus terminal was all the more noticeable because the Port Authority had just completed a major facelift and enlargement of the facility.

The Port Authority, which maintains a large police force, saw the homeless as a police issue and invoked New York's anti-loitering law to evict offenders from the terminal. By 1985, however, the homeless could be found not only in the bus terminal but in the Port Authority's flagship facilities including its three airports and the World Trade Centers. Now the homeless were not just an issue for the bus terminal, but for the entire organization. Facility managers were compelled to formally budget funds for dealing with the problem. Their focus was still on removing the homeless, but now the bus terminal managers sought out social services agencies to take them.

Several events in 1987 marked a turning point. New York City repealed its anti-loitering law; the appearance of crack cocaine in the city increased the number of homeless; and the police union, to gain leverage in a contract dispute, circulated negative stories about the Port Authority in the press. Public concerns were voiced that the Port Authority was inhumanely evicting the homeless. Recognizing that a coordinated response was needed, the Port Authority formed a centralized Homeless Project Team and funded a research project. For the organization, homelessness had now become a business problem with a moral dimension. By 1988, Port Authority leaders publicly argued that homelessness was a regional problem and funded construction of two drop-in centers, one near the bus terminal and the other near the World Trade Centers. But when municipal authorities balked at running the shelters, Port Authority personnel became increasingly resigned to—and began to feel heroic about—dealing with the homeless themselves. By the time Dutton and Dukerich ended their research in 1989, the Port Authority had come to see itself as a "quiet advocate" for the homeless—and even bolstering the

economic competitiveness of the region by providing model leadership on an issue faced by transportation services in cities and regions nationwide.

1. How did the Port Authority's organizational identity change? At the same time, how was the changed identity rooted in its original identity as technically expert, professional, ethical, a service provider, a "can-do" fixer, and a regional symbol?
2. Using Hatch and Schultz's Organizational Identity Dynamics Model (see <u>Figure 8.3 "Organizational Identity Dynamics Model"</u>), explain how the Port Authority's identity and culture were interrelated, and how its identity and image were interrelated.
3. Using Gioia, Schultz, and Corley's model for identity-image interdependence (see <u>Figure 8.5</u>), describe the external event of the homelessness issue triggered at the Port Authority a process of self-reflection and other-reflection as managers compared their organizational identity and organizational image, perceived discrepancies, and made changes. Continue your analysis by following the model of Gioia et al. through the successive phases of the homelessness issue.
4. Cheney and Christensen argued that organizational identity strongly affects the problems that corporate leaders "see" and their strategies for managing those issues. To what extent was this dynamic at work in the Port Authority's responses to the homelessness issue? Did the Port Authority's public communication ever reach the point of being auto-communicative; i.e., the organizational mostly talking to itself?
5. Dutton and Dukerich found that many of the personnel they interviewed exhibited a strong identification with the Port Authority? Using Ashforth and Mael's framework (in-group distinctiveness and prestige; awareness of and competition with other groups), how do you think these employees formed such a strong organizational identification? Using Alvesson and Willmott's model (see <u>Figure 8.7 "Identity Regulation, Identity Work, Self-Identity"</u>), how do you think these employees' identity work was shaped by the discourses of Port Authority management?
6. Dutton and Dukerich did not document the diversity of the Port Authority's management and workforce. But as a general proposition, how do you think a diverse and multicultural organization might have approached the homelessness issue described in the case study? Would the response be different than the response of the Port Authority?

End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. According to Albert and Whetten's original definition, organizational identity refers to features of an organization that are:

   a. internal, external, and environmental
   b. formal, informal, and cultural
   c. cognitive, affective, and behavioral
   d. central, distinctive, and enduring
   e. structural, cultural, and adaptive

2. According to Hatch and Shultz, organizational identity is distinguishable from organizational culture because it is:

   a. contextual, tacit, and emergent
   b. textual, explicit, and instrumental
   c. internal, self-referential, and singular
   d. external, other-focused, and multiple
   e. cognitive, affective, and behavioral

3. According to Ashforth and Mael, organizational identification is a:

   a. set of feelings
   b. set of behaviors
   c. set of guiding principles
   d. cognitive construct
   e. cultural assumption

4. According to Tompkins and Cheney, when organization members discipline themselves to conform to desired norms then the organization has achieved:

   a. simple control
   b. technical control
   c. bureaucratic control
   d. cultural control
   e. concertive control

5. According to Alvesson and Willmott, management engages in discursive strategies to shape the processes of employees' identity formation; these discourses are called:

a. identity construction
b. identity work
c. identity regulation
d. identity control
e. identity production

Answer Key

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. E
5. C

Chapter 9

Teams in the Workplace

Teams in the Workplace

In your college experience, one of your professors will most likely assign you to work on a group project. Sometimes, your professor will allow you to pick the other members of your group and sometimes you are not allowed to pick your group members. Unless you are very fortunate, you probably did not have a very good experience working on the group project. This is because most people do not know how to work in groups. To be more specific, most people do not know how to interact or communicate in groups and teams. Often times, there might be what Andy Hargreaves and Ruth Dawe identify as "contrived collegiality", in which everyone works on similar jobs as quickly as possible, they don't discuss anything, make poor judgment decisions, and are more concern with completion than quality.Hargreaves, A. & Dawe, R. (1990). Paths of professional development: Contrived collegiality, collaborative culture, and the case of peer coaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 6*(3), 227–241.

Many people work together in teams in organizations. Think about all the teams and groups that you belong, such as family, friends, work, church, etc. We are involved with a variety of groups for different reasons. You are probably involved with certain groups and teams based on your abilities, experiences, and/or talents. Your participation and the degree to which you contribute will often depend on the communication interactions in that group. In this chapter, we will discuss the importance of teams. We will discuss the characteristics of teams, types of teams and downside to teams.

Is this a group or a team?

9.1 Group

Looking at the picture above, can you tell if it is a group or a team? How do you know it is a group? Many organizations have several different kinds of groups. These groups can be informal or formal. Formal groups are usually assigned by a supervisor or higher administrator. Formal groups can include: sales teams, work teams, problem-solving groups, management teams, and unions. Informal groups usually occur due to common interests and/or social compatibility. Informal groups can include: Christmas office particies, coffee breaks, poker night, car pooling, and complaining sessions. Informal groups do not have specific rules about membership or the types of communication in that group. Every group is essential for people to accomplish their tasks and seek social support.

John Baird defined **group**[1] as "a collection of more than two persons who perceive themselves as a group, possess a common fate, have organizational structire, and communicate over time to achieve personal and group goals."Baird, J. E., Jr. (1977). *The dynamics of organizational communication*. New York: Harper and Row, pg. 9. In essence, a group is two or more individuals who communicate with each other to attain their goal. Because this is a book on organizational communication, a group in this context will have specific goals, influence, and interactions. These specific goals might be to have an advertising campaign completed, financial portfolios on all the organization's clientes completed, and/or updating new technology programs on all the computers in the organization. Influences that groups might have may be to help management understand the importance of having a day care facility onsite or assist managers in acquiring potential resources for employees. Interactions might include co-workers being informed about specific changes in the organization and/or warnings that employees should be aware of. Notice that the key importance in these definitions is the word communication. For instance, five people waiting for the bus is not a group. They all have the same goal: to get on the bus. However, each person is not influencing the other and they do not have to communicate with each other. Group members need to be able to communicate with each other. Often times, organizations will use groups to accomplish organizational gorals. Work groups are created to perform tasks in an efficient and

1. Two or more people that think they are a group, have a common goals, structure, and interactions to achieve their desired goals.

effective manner. Problem solving groups are used to discuss organizational dilemmas. These groups will convene to examine, analyze, and dissimenate information.

Group vs. Team

You have probably heard the old saying that there is no "I" in "TEAM". And it's true! However, do you know what the differences are between a group and a team? Most people might say that a team has a common goal or purpose. In addition, they might say that each person on a team is interdependent. In other words, each person on the team recognizes that every person is valuable and knows what needs to be done to accomplish their goal.Lee, G. V. (2009). From group to team: Skilled facilitation moves a group from a collection of individuals to an effective team. *Journal of Staff Development, 30*(5), 48–49.

On the other hand, groups might include people that have similar roles or tasks, such as all medical nurses. Groups can eventually become teams. The main difference is that teams need to support each team member. It takes a lot of characteristics for a group to become a team. The main difference is that in a team each individual is not only responsible for their efforts and contributions to the group, but also for the collective outcome of the group. Moreover, the emphasis is not on the individual but the team. Hence, the communication is different, because in teams, people want to discuss and come to a conclusion about how to solve the problem. In groups, the main reason why people communicate is to share information without much discussion. These differences are displayed in <u>Table 9.1 "Differences between Groups and Teams"</u>.

Table 9.1 Differences between Groups and Teams

Groups	Teams
Every person is accountable.	Everyone is accountable for their work to the group & others' work.
The focus is to share information and opinions.	The focus is to discuss, make decisions, solve problems, and strategize.
Emphasis on individual goals.	Emphasis on team goals.
Outcome is on each individual's contribution.	Outcome is on the entire group's contribution.

Groups	Teams
Identify every person's roles & tasks.	Indentify every person's roles & tasks in regards to help the collective effort. Each person can often switch and/ allocate parts of their tasks to others.
The focus is each person's outcome and struggles.	The focus is on the team's outcome and struggles.
The objectives and goals of the group are placed by a manager or leader.	The objectives and goals of the group are placed by team leader with team members.

Tuckman's Model of Groups

Bruce Tuckman's model of groups is well known for explaining how teams develop. He noted that these stages are forming, storming, norming, and performing (Figure 9.1 "Tuckman's Model of Groups").Tuckman, B. W. (1965). Developmental sequences in small groups. *Psychological Bulletin, 63*(6), 384–399. Tuckman realizes that groups will have many differences in assumptions, values, and goals. This model addresses the groups' need to examine and resolve certain questions before the group can work together effectively. This model is important for any team member to recognize that before the team can move forward from one stage to another they need to make sure that the core issues are being met before they can advance. If the team does not move forward, then it means that certain issues are not being satisfactorily met. This model also helps team leaders identify signs that issues need to be address appropriately before the team can actually perform their task effectively.

Stage 1: Forming

The group is in its beginning stages. Individuals are trying to figure out the climate and the types of communication that would be appropriate. Members heavily rely on the team leader for direction and information. Members are still trying to develop their relationships and associations with others. For instance, one of the authors of this book was involved on a job search committee. The organization picked the members and expected the group to pick a leader. It was pretty chaotic because everyone was still trying to figure out everyone else.

Stage 2: Storming

In this phase, conflict is present. Members communicate to obtain influence and acknowledgment. Members may become polarized or take stand on certain issues. Conflict can arise out of personal or task related issues. If the group can confront and solve the problems, then they can move towards the next stage. After the group

leader was selected, conflict arose in who we thought we should hire and why. Everyone had their own opinion on the matter.

Stage 3: Norming

Unlike the previous group where conflict was present, the group moves toward more open and accepting styles of communication. The group wants to work in an effective and harmonious manner. More team members feel better due to the fact that the communication has changed from a confrontational style to a non-confrontational style. Members have shared values and attitudes. There is a difference between behaviors and feelings. In the previous example, after the members understood their roles and their agendas, then the group was more cohesive in terms of determining what to do next.

Stage 4: Performing

In this stage, members can concentrate on accomplishing the group's task. Because they have been able to solve the groups' problems, they can direct their energy towards the completion of the task. Group members feel a better sense of shared responsibility and a sense of personal accountability. After everyone was able to communicate and share their opinions, they were able to really produce quality results for finding the right candidate for the job.

We are sure that you can think back on group projects that you have worked on and recognize the storming and forming phases are real. If you are involved with groups where forming and storming are preventing you from accomplishing the task at hand, you need to address your group and their concerns before you can move forward.

Figure 9.1 Tuckman's Model of Groups
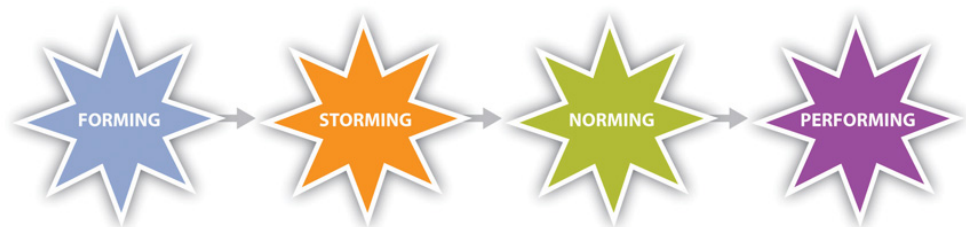
Team Performance Model

Many times, team leaders will try to form groups using ice breakers, enforcing the idea of professionalism, assuming that norms will counteract the group's differences, and relying solely on agendas, and activities to compensate for the group negativity or dissatisfaction.Lee, G. V. (2009). From group to team: Skilled facilitation moves a group from a collection of individuals to an effective team. *Journal of Staff Development, 30*(5), 48–49. One new model that illustrates a better way of developing teams is Allan Dexler, David Sibbet, and Russ Forrester (2009)'s Team Performance Model.Drexler, A., Sibbet, D., & Forrester, R. (2009). *The team performance model.* San Francisco: The Grove Consultants. The model consists of seven stages that illustrate how a team can be formed and then complete their task: orientation, trust building, goal clarification, commitment, implementation, high performance, and renewal (Figure 9.2 "Team Performance Model").

Stage 1: Orientation

In this beginning phase, group members come together and ascertain the about the task or directive at hand. Most of the time, these individuals do not have a work history with the other people on the team. Hence, group members may question their purpose with the group. For that reason, team members must be informed about how the group was formed and the reason why each person was selected for that task. Drexler et al. noted that if a certain individual feels unsatisfied for being on this team, then they will experience puzzlement, indecision, and possibly fear. Moreover, if certain members feel a disconnect from the group, then they will focus on this disconnection and possible make the other group members feel uncomfortable. The disconnected group member may become more reserved and detached from the group. In some conditions, the disconnected group member might provide some uncalled-for comments and possibly never attain much value in the team's mission. For instance, one of the writers of this book was asked to be on a group analyzing other graduate programs. It was very nerve-wrecking because none of the group members knew each other or why they were put together. The team leader explained that we were selected based on our experiences and we could provide the best input.

Once the orientation stage is settled, then group members are in the process of becoming a team. Everyone in the group has a new perception of the group as a team, they use terms like "us," feel a connection with the group's purpose, and think about the team's possibilities for achievement.

Stage 2: Trust building

Most everyone will agree that trust is an essential element for team performance. A team is interdependent. Thus, group members have to be able to give up control and reliance on others so that they can execute their task. Think about all the people you trust and how over time this trust has allowed us to know the other person even more. In the previous example about the group analyzing graduate programs, each person in the group had a specific task and a deadline. Each member had to trust the other members to complete their task otherwise the group would fail and not be able to accomplish their goal. The same holds true in teams. The development of trust allows teams the ability to create more efficiency. If teams lack trust, then they will be more guarded of others, and not be willing to communicate the truth. Teams that lack trust will also lack integrity because group members are not expressing their true feelings and opinions. The result of these behaviors hinder the legitimacy and genuineness of the work. At the same time, lack of trust will prevent cooperation and collaboration among the group members.

Stage 3: Goal Clarification

In this stage, team members are trying to figure out the team's ultimate goal(s) and their agenda. Team members create a shared vision with clear and concise goals. They have explicit assumptions with each other about the goal. In the previous example, it was at this stage that certain group members were wary about their comments and were worried that their comments would not be taken seriously. The team leader had to meet with the group again to reassure them that their comments were valuable for the success of the organization. At this stage, some members become apathetic or skeptical about the goal. In addition, there may be some extraneous competition among group members. The key factor in this stage is to make sure all group members know the goal or expected outcome for the group.

Stage 4: Commitment

After the group is clear in their goal, there needs to be some communication about certain roles. Group members need to collectively decide how resources, such as time and effort will be allocated and utilized for maximum efficiency. Each member realized that their comments were important so they worked harder to accomplish the goal.There will be group members who will become dependent on others to complete their task, which will delay the outcome. There will also be some resistance from group members who may have different perceptions in how their time and effort could be used best.

Stage 5: Implementation

Once the decision is made on how each person will contribute to the group's goal, then there will be a better sense of the execution of that goal. Teams are informed with all the basic information of who, what, when, where, and why. Teams can move forward and implement the task. They can put all their resources, comments, input together and finalize their task. In any event, there may be conflicts at this stage. There may be team members that will miss deadlines and may feel non-allied in the team's main object. If group members can figure out what works best, then work can be completed.

Stage 6: High Performance

When all group members know when and who is doing what towards their team's goals, a group reaches a state of high performance. They may realize that the methods have been performed well, then they can be more flexible. They are more likely to say "Wow!" at their progress and possibly surpass expectations. In this stage, there is more interaction and synergy. Disgruntled team members may feel disharmony or overburdened, so it is important that the team be able to adapt and accommodate all group members to be able to perform effectively. After the group gets into a groove, and is completed to finishing the task, the group will be amazed at the ending results.

Stage 7: Renewal

After the team has completed their task, they may ask whether it is worth it to continue or add new members. The team needs time to reflect on whether they should continue, stop, or form a new team. Often team members will feel burnout or boredom after the task has been completed. The team needs to take time to celebrate the completion of their goals and recognize key team members. In the previous example, the team leader took everyone out to dinner to celebrate on a job well done!

The benefit of this model is that it allows us to understand the communication situations that can occur during each phase. The model illustrates the importance of having such conversations at each stage.

Figure 9.2   Team Performance Model

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Groups can be informal or formal.
- There are many differences between groups and teams. Group stresses individual outcomes, whereas team stresses individual and collective outcomes. The individual is a key element in the group. Teams share responsibility. Moreover, the communication is very different.
- Team development takes place in phase: forming, storming, norming, and performing.
- The team developmental model showcases seven stages that groups go through before they can work efficiently and effectively as a team.

EXERCISES

1. Think about a group you are currently working in at work, home, church, etc. Fill out the survey on: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader/teamsuv.html. After completing the measure, what did you learn about your group? What can you do to improved your group communication?
2. Looking at the Team Performance Model, what do you think is the hardest stage? Why? What do you think is the easiest stage? Do you think this model is accurate? Why or why not?
3. Create a list of at least two groups and two teams that you belong to? What differences do you see between these two lists and the types of organizational accomplishments they've had?

9.2 Types of Teams

Work Team

When you think of work teams, you might think back to Chapter 3 "Classical Theories of Organizational Communication" when we talked about workers who were shoveling coal or on assembly lines trying to complete a task. A **work team**[2] is a group that individuals are usually appointed in an organization. Richard Wellins, William Byham, and Jeanne Wilson defined work teams as "an intact group of employees who responsible for a 'whole work process or segment that delivers a product or service to an internal or external customer.'"Wellins, R., Byham, W., Wilson, J. (1991). *Empowered teams.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, pg. 3. When we work for an organization, our supervisors and/or managers will usually assign work teams for us. These teams can differ in regards to type and size. These groups are vital to the organization's longevity and overall success. Wellins et al. noted that several of the major corporations such as General Mills and AT&T, had significant results in productivity with the use of work teams. In order to have effective work teams, organizations must allow for empowerment.Einsenberg, E. M., & Goodall, H. L., Jr. (1993). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint.* New York, NY: St. Martin's Press. As you can imagine, if a group is given a task to solve an organizational dilemma, but not allowed to execute it, then it does nothing but frustrate the group. Wellins et al. explained there is a relationship with the amount of group empowerment and the group responsibility.

Susan Cohen and Diane Bailey analyzed work teams and discovered that are many elements to their organizational performanceCohen, S. G., & Bailey, D. E. (1997) What makes teams work: Group effectiveness research from the shopfloor to the executive suite. *Journal of management, 23,* 239–290.:

1. *Group composition.* How does the size, diversity, and experience of the group members influence the team?

2. A group whose members are appointed in the organization.

2. *Task design.* How does the constitution and difficulty of the team's task impact their performance?
3. *Organizational context* includes reward/punishment procedures and the type of supervision that the team experiences.
4. *Internal processes* is the amount of teamwork and/or conflicts that occur.
5. *Group psychological traits* include group norms that influence the team's performance. Is the group cohesive and cooperative?
6. *Effectiveness* is not just the outcome of the task, but also the perceptions of satisfaction, commitment, retention, and absenteeism.

Cohen and Bailey noted that work teams are viewed as the most ideal way to make decisions in organizations. This is because work teams have more flexibility, originality, and adaptability. There are many advantages to work teams. This includes:

1. Empowerment of members to have a more straightforward part in the decision making process
2. The development of a more multi-skilled workforce rather than deskilled
3. The advancement of stronger team synergies that produce more creativity in decision making
4. The subordination of individual's agenda to the task
5. Better decisions by grouping talented team members together
6. Better autonomy due to direct supervision
7. More commitment to the organization and its goals
8. Overall higher productivity levels.Mumby, D. K. (2013). *Organization communication: A critical approach.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Parallel Team

Collateral organizations are also called **parallel teams**[3].Fisher, D. (2000). *Communication in organizations* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Jaico. These are groups that are usually created "outside regular authority and communication structures to identify and work on problems that the formal organization is unwilling or unable to deal with."Fisher, D. (2000). Communication in organizations (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Jaico, pg. 322. For instance, an organization like a university can hire a parallel team to create better advertising and marketing campaigns and let them focus on educating students. Parallel teams can be very beneficial because it usually happens outside the organization itself.

3. These teams are created externally from the main organization to work on specific objectives.

Project Team

Another type of team is called **project teams**[4]. These are work groups that are created for a particular task.Keller, R. (1994). Technology-information processing fit of contingency theory. *Academy of Management, 37*(1), 167–179. Project teams often use individuals with specialized skills to achieve a goal in a set predetermined amount of time. Some examples of project teams might include creating a new model or determining the best application for technology. Usually, project team members are selected for their experience and/or expertise in a specific area. Robert Keller discovered that teams with challenging tasks were more likely to process information more resourcefully, in turn creating a better quality outcome. These teams are usually created very quickly with a detailed objective. Often times, these group members do not have time to spend on getting to know the other members.

Management Team

Project Teams have to work quickly to complete their task.

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Another type of team is called **management teams**[5].Menz, M. 2012. Functional top management team members: A review, synthesis, and research agenda. *Journal of Management, 38*(1), 45–80. These teams consist of employees who have the highest organizational management levels and have the duty of maintaining the organization. These members possess leadership and authoritative powers that are given to them by shareholders and/or board of directors. You'll notice that all of the organizational positions below start with the word "chief." Because the word "chief" is listed in all of these positions, the group of executives who embody these different roles are often referred to as the "C-suite" in organizational literature. Some of the positions that are part of a management team include:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)—this person is usually responsible to the entire organization and communicates with the board of directors and/or chairman of the organization. The CEO has to execute the board of directors' decisions and to preserve the organization's functions and goals. Sometimes that CEO is president of the organization.

Chief Operations Officer (COO)—this person primarily focuses on sales and production. They typically are more involved that the CEO. Yet, they are in constant communication with the CEO. The COO is sometimes recognized as a vice president of the organization.

4. Specific and/or specialized individuals are selected to accomplish a goal in a fixed amount of time.

5. This group is in charge of the daily responsibility of directing the organization.

Chief Financial Officer (CFO)—this person focuses on the financial aspects of the organization. The CFO reviews and evaluates all financial data, budgets, and costs associate with the organization. The CFO often explores the financial stability and uprightness of the organization. The CFO presents this information to the board of directors and governmental regulatory affiliates such as the Securities and Exchange Commission. The CFO is also known as a senior vice present.

Chief Technology Officer (CTO)—this person reports to the CEO. This person is mainly accountable for the technological advances and matters in the organization. This can also include any scientific innovations or discoveries.

Chief Learning Officer (CLO)—this person reports to the CEO. This person is accountable for all of the workplace learning and human performance improvement activities within the organization. This individual usually has a background in education, instructional design, and adult learning.

Chief Diversity Officer (CDO)—this person reports to the CEO. This person's duties include assessing, cultivating, defining, and nurturing cultural diversity as an organizational resource. Other common duties include affirmative action/equal employment opportunity and ensuring the creation of an inclusive climate within the organization itself.

Overall, the organization management team has many key individuals that maintain the organization's mission and goals. These individuals must communicate with each other so that the organization can run effectively and efficiently. Moreover, they must be able to handle crises and resolve problems successfully for the organization's prosperity and future success.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Work teams are integral for an organization because they have the have the objective of completing certain outcomes.
- Parallel teams are formed externally. Parallel teams look at specific items that the organization might overlook or not perceive accurately.
- Project teams are composed of specific/specialized members that need to obtain a goal in a set amount of time.
- Management teams have the responsibility of running and maintaining the organization. There are many different people with specific tasks to keep the organization running in an efficient and effective manner.

EXERCISES

1. Thinking back to your most recent job, what types of groups did you have and what did you do?
2. Thinking back to your most recent job, what type of communication happens in these groups?
3. What management team members did you see at the organization that you worked for in the past? If no one, then what management team position do you think is most important at your current organization? Why?

9.3 The Downside to Teams

Not only are there different types of groups and teams, there are also different types of outcomes and challenges that groups can encounter. In this section, we will look at some of the negative challenges to teams. In this section, you will learn about the downside to teams and ways to prevent them from happening.

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Groupthink

Irving Janis (1983) brought attention to the idea of "Groupthink."Janis, I. (1983). *Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes.* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. Irving described **groupthink**[6] as a group's inclination to defer critical thinking and accept solutions without much consideration. Groups that encounter groupthink misjudge their own resources, find supporting evidence, and evade analyzing opposing ideas. Groupthink usually occurs when a crisis is discovered. Think back to an organization that you were involved with and how the crisis was dealt with. Was it handled in a responsible and ethical manner? Why or why not?

Take a few minutes to complete the crisis knowledge index. Compare your answers with others in your class. How can identifying a crisis help you prevent groupthink? How can identifying a crisis allow for groupthink to happen?

6. The group's inclination to defer critical thinking and accept solutions without much consideration.

Crisis Knowledge Scale

Crisis Knowledge Index

Instructions: Below are several descriptions dealing with the extent to which you are now aware of the crisis that occurred. Please use the scale below to rate the degree to which each statement applies to your perceptions about your knowledge of the crisis:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____I know the details of the crisis.
2. _____I do not feel knowledgeable about the crisis that occurred.
3. _____The details of the crisis that occurred are very clear to me.
4. _____I do not know enough about the crisis that occurred.
5. _____I do not comprehend the details of the crisis that occurred.
6. _____My knowledge of the crisis that occurred is limited.
7. _____I completely understand the details of the crisis that occurred.
8. _____I feel knowledgeable about the details of the crisis that occurred.
9. _____I comprehend the details of the crisis that occurred.
10. _____The details of the crisis that occurred are not clear to me.

Recode = 2, 4, 5, and 10. Add all items together.

Source: Wrench, J. S., Fiore, A., & Charbonnette-Jordan, C. (2007). The impact of crisis communication on levels of acute-traumatic stress disorder as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. *Journal of the Wisconsin Communication Association, 26*, 30–45.

Janis noted that groupthink as "a mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when members' striving for unanimity overrides their motivation to realistically appraise alternative course of action."Janis, I. (1983). *Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes.* (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, pg. 9. Groupthink happens quite often.

Think about a group meeting that you have been involved with. Perhaps, one person in the group will offer a suggestion and/or idea, then everyone in the group agrees with it without thinking about the negative or positive consequences of the idea. People do this all the time because the person who offered the idea might be a highly powerful member, others don't want to disagree, or there is not a huge stake in the decision. At times people will not offer resisting ideas or be a devil's advocate on an idea because there may be consequences or the person is fearful of what others may think. Groupthink can cause frustration to individuals who feel that their voices are not heard and their time was not valued. Hence, it is important to provide opportunities for all group members to speak so that groupthink does not occur.

Risky Shift

Groupthink is not the only thing that happens in groups. Sometimes groups will make "risky" or precarious decisions.Isenberg, D. J. (1986). Group polarization: A critical review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*(6): 1141–1151. This results in what is known as **risky shift**[7]. Isenburg found that individuals are more likely to make riskier group decisions than individual decisions. For instance, in a group discussion, there are members that may advocate for an extreme position more than they would in other circumstance, because they are part of a group. Daniel Isenburg illustrated that risky shift has occurred in jury decision making processes.Isenberg, D. J. (1986). Group polarization: A critical review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 50*(6): 1141–1151. Mock jury members were more likely to choose punitive damages that varied significantly from individual juror members. The findings revealed that when individuals would support a low award, group discussion would influence the juror to a more compassionate result. At the same time, if the juror wanted a harsh penalty, after group discussion, the juror would be more likely to give a harsher punishment. Risky shift maintains that a group's decision tends to be more risky than the individual group member's decision before the group convened. Risky shift is an important concept, because it not only illustrates how one group member cannot affect the entire group, but also how it impacts the individual's own decision. Thus, communication between and among group members cannot be overstated.

Team Conflict

Conflict[8] is inevitable and will most likely occur in groups and teams. Roy Berko, Andrew Wolvin, and Darlyn Wolvin categorized two types of tensions that group will encounter: primary and secondary.Berko, R., Wolvin, A., & Wolvin, D. (2012). Communicating: A social and career focus (12th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson. The first is primary tension, which happens initially when groups are formed. The second is

7. The result that happens when individuals are more likely to make riskier group decisions than individual decisions.

8. The discord among group members. This can be primary or secondary.

called secondary tension, which happens after group has been developed. In other words, primary tensions are ones that often happen before the group meets and secondary tensions often happen after the group meets.

Primary Tension

Individuals might feel tension before a meeting begins due to the following reasons:Zaremba, A. J. (2010). *Organizational communication* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford.

- A fear that the each member in the group will not have similar tasks and responsibilities.
- An uncertainty about the topic of the meeting and the possibility for uncomfortable topics.
- The topic is uneasy and/or distressing.
- The task might involve written or speaking skills and they do not feel competent in those skills.
- They have communication apprehension, which means they are nervous about communicating in that context.
- They meeting will cause more work or work that is beyond their capabilities.
- They do not feel properly prepared.
- Previous negative group experiences.
- Negative working relationship with the team leader.
- Time constraints
- Other personal issues that might interfere with their involvement with the group.

As you can see, each of these tensions can make work conditions rather uncomfortable. Think about a group meeting that you had to prepare for, did you have any of these primary tensions? How did you react to them?

Secondary Tensions

As stated earlier, secondary tensions occur after the meeting begins. These tensions can be classified into four types: procedural, equity, affective, and substantive. Zaremba, A. J. (2010). *Organizational communication* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford, pg. 184.

- *Procedural* tensions originate from group members' perceptions that the group is not productive. Group members believe that the agenda is ineffective and/or that the team leader is not adhering to the agenda.

- *Equity* tensions happen when group members do not feel equal. They may feel that certain things are not fair, such as work load and/or responsibility. On the other hand, equity issues may stem from feel that there are more controlling members that dominate and their opinions are worth more than others.
- *Affective* tensions happen when team members do not like each other. Team members will find it more difficult to communicate. There may be huge rivalry and competitiveness in the group.
- *Substantive* happen when there are legitimate concerns about the task. Conflict here can turn into problem solving moments, creativity, increased information sharing, and provide a better perspective of the opposition. Substantive conflict is beneficial because everyone gets a different perspective of the same topic. It can result in a better outcome because all voices are heard.

Social Loafing

Another downside to teams is **social loafing**[9].Karau, S. J., & Williams, K. D. (1993). Social loafing: A meta-analytic review and theoretical integration. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 65*, 681–706. Social loading happens when certain group members do not put forth as much effort in the group compared to when they are working independently. Sometimes groups are not productive because group members do not fully contribute. Sometimes you will get the best work when group members work by themselves because they don't have to report or communicate with anyone else. Think about a group that you were involved in, did someone "ride your coat tails" or became a "free-rider"? Take a few minutes to complete Note 9.18 "Workplace Input Scale" on Workplace Input Scale. Do you think you engage in social loafing? Why or why not?

There is research that discusses how social loafing can be avoided. Dan Rothwell argued that social loafing can be prevented by collaboration, content, and choice.Rothwell, J. D. (2012). *In the company of others: An introduction to communication* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Oxford. He noted that competitive situations will not get group members motivated and motivation can impede social loafing. First, collaboration is the key to get everyone involved. If everyone feels like they are special and are given meaningful tasks, then they are more likely to contribute. Second, content provides each group member with their importance to the task. People are more likely to contribute if they are informed with the knowledge about their task and other group members are informed about that group members contribution. Third, choice is helpful for social loafing because it provides group members to pick the task that they are better apt or skilled to complete.

9. This happens when certain group members do not put forth as much effort in the group compared to when they are working independently.

Workplace Input Scale

Workplace Input Scale

Instructions: This survey includes a number of statements about how you may feel about your current working condition. You will probably find that you agree with some of the statements and disagree with others, to varying extents. Please indicate your reaction to each of the statements by marking your opinion to the left of each statement according to the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. _____I have no input at work at all.
2. _____Nobody cares about what I say at work.
3. _____People at work do not listen to my input at all.
4. _____When I have a good idea at work, it's like I'm talking to a wall.
5. _____People always listen to my suggestions at work.
6. _____No one wants to hear my ideas at work.
7. _____My co-workers pay attention to my input.
8. _____People in my workplace always heed my suggestions.
9. _____People take my ideas seriously at work.
10. _____I have no problem having my ideas heard at work.
11. _____I have a lot of input on the job.
12. _____My input plays an important part on my job.
13. _____People listen to what I have to say at work.
14. _____No one pays attention to my ideas at work.
15. _____Nobody listens to my suggestions at work.
16. _____People care about my ideas at work.
17. _____When I have a good idea at work, people listen.
18. _____No one takes my ideas seriously at work.
19. _____No one in my workplace heeds my suggestions.
20. _____I have a problem getting my ideas heard at work.

Recode: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14, 15, 18, 19, & 20

Source: Wrench, J. S., McCroskey, J. C., Richmond, V. P., & Brogan, S. M. (2005). *The development, reliability, and validity testing of new measures in organizational communication.* Manuscript in preparation.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Groupthink occurs when there is a crisis and none of the group members stop to analyze the pros and cons of the solution.
- Conflict occurs in teams. There are two types of tensions: primary and secondary. Primary occurs before the meeting starts and secondary occurs after the meeting begins.
- Risky shift occurs when group members are more likely to make a riskier decision as a group rather than individually.
- Social loafing happens when group members do not work as hard in a group context compared to when they work by themselves.

EXERCISES

1. Think of a time when you've been in a group, what are the advantages and disadvantages with working in a group?
2. Apply the different downsides to teamwork to one of your group experiences. If you had the ability to change it, what could you have done or do differently to prevent these downsides?
3. Complete the Workplace Input Scale. Based on the results from your analysis of your group experience(s), what areas do you think you could improve upon? Why do you think your other group members communicate to you in the way he or she does?

9.4 Group Communication Roles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Explain Task Roles.
2. Explain Maintenance Roles.
3. Describe Self-centered roles.

Kenneth Benne and Paul Sheats created a scheme for understand the functional roles of group members. It was created by the First National Training Laboratory in Group Development in 1947. They classified three types:

(1) *Group task roles.* Participant roles here are related to the task which the group is deciding to undertake or has undertaken. Their purpose is to facilitate and coordinate group effort in the selection and definition of a common problem and in the solution of that problem.

(2) *Group building and maintenance roles.* The roles in this category are oriented toward the functioning of the group as a group. They are designed to alter or maintain the group way of working, to strengthen, regulate and perpetuate the group as a group.

(3) *Individual roles.* This category does not classify member-roles as such, since the participations denoted here are directed toward the satisfaction of the participants individual needs. Their purpose is some individual goal which is not relevant either to the group task or to the functioning of the group as a group. Such participations are, of course, highly relevant to the problem of group training, insofar as such training is directed toward improving group maturity or group task efficiency. Benne, K., & Sheats, P. (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications, 8*, 30–35. (Reprinted from 1948 *Journal of Social Issues, 4*(2), 41–49), pg. 31.

Task Roles

10. Roles that individual group or team members embody that help a group accomplish its basic task(s).

The first type of roles that individuals can take-on within a group are all centered around the tasks that the group needs to accomplish. These roles are all pro-social and help the group strive towards achieving the group or team's goal. Benne and Sheats identified twelve different **task roles**[10] that group members could take on.

Remember, in smaller groups or teams individuals could take on multiple roles and it's entirely possible that multiple group members take on the same roles as well.

Initiator-Contributor

The initiator-contributor is all about providing new and keen insight and ideas to the group. This person may help the group brainstorm new and novel ways to go about understanding or looking at a particular problem.

Information Seeker

The information seeker focuses on ensuring that the group has accurate and relevant information as it goes about problem solving. This person asks to see relevant data to ensure the accuracy of the information the group uses while attempting to problem solve.

Opinion Seeker

The opinion seeker is not concerned with the accuracy of information, but is more interested in understanding the group's values. What are the group's values and how are the used to solve problems? When a potential solution to a problem is solved, the opinion seeker will ask for clarification of whether the solution is in sync with the group's purported values.

Information Giver

The information giver is someone within a group that has some kind of authoritative understanding or specific expertise that can help inform a group's decision making process. This person can often use her or his own knowledge or personal experiences to help inform a group's decision making process.

Opinion Giver

The opinion giver, like the opinion seeker, is concerned less with the facts surrounding a specific problem, but is more concerned with ensuring the group sticks to its values. This person will offer suggestions and insight on how the group can employ its values while making specific decisions.

Elaborator

The elaborator takes the ideas that other people have had within a group and tries to flesh out the ideas in a meaningful way. The evaluator can also help a group

understand specific rationales for the decisions it has made, or think through how the implementation of a specific decision would practically work.

Coordinator

The coordinator tries to find the common links between the various ideas that group members have and combine them in some kind of succinct package. Furthermore, the coordinator tries to coordinate the various activities that the group or team must accomplish along the way.

Orienter

The orienter is akin to a group or team's mapmaker. This person's role is to show where the group has been in an effort to understand where the group is right now. Furthermore, this person will point out when the group has gotten completely off topic and try to refocus the group back to the decision at hand.

Evaluator-Critic

The evaluator-critic's job is to help assess the actual functionality of the group and the decisions that it makes. This individual ensures that the group is meeting predetermined standard levels and not just "getting by" with quick and easy solutions to complex problems. This person really seeks out to hold the group to a clear standard of excellence by evaluating or questioning "practicality," the "logic," the "facts" or the "procedure" of a suggestion or of some unit of group discussion." Benne, K., & Sheats, P. (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications, 8*, 30–35. (Reprinted from 1948 *Journal of Social Issues, 4*(2), 41–49), pg. 32.

Energizer

Often groups get worn down by the decision making process because some decisions may take months or years to come to fruition. The energizer's primary role is to help pull groups out of a rut and encourage them to make decisions or take action. Like the evaluator-critic, the energizer also attempts to help groups reach a higher quality of decision making.

Procedural-Technician

All groups have simple tasks that someone needs to take care of. Whether it's rearranging a room into a circle or photocopying the agenda and minutes from the

previous meeting, the procedural-technician ensures that the routine tasks of the group get accomplished.

Recorder

The recorder, often called a group or team's secretary, is the individual who takes copious amounts of notes in an effort to help a group or team understand its own decision making process. These notes ultimately become the group's memory of where they have been and where they are going, so the recorder is a very important role in any group or team. At the same time, you want to make sure that the recorder is skilled in taking notes and can quickly transcribe those notes into some kind of formalized minutes.

Group/Team Building or Maintenance Roles

The second type of roles discussed by Benne and Sheats are referred to as group/team building or maintenance roles. **Group/team building roles**[11] are roles that help build a group-centered identity for the members, while **maintenance roles**[12] are roles that help keep that group-centered identity over the lifecycle of the group or team. Benne and Sheats identified seven specific group/team building or maintenance roles.

Encourager

The encourager is functionally the group or team's cheerleader. This person encourages people to come up with new ideas and then praises group or team members for the ideas they generate. This person also encourages the group to seek out alternative ways of seeing a problem and fosters an environment where alternative ideas and suggestions are welcomed.

Harmonizer

The harmonizer's job is to ensure that the group effectively handles conflict. All groups will eventually have conflict. In fact, conflict can actually be very important for groups to survive and thrive. However, when conflict becomes person-focused instead of task-focused, the harmonizer will help alleviate the tension of the group and help conflict parties solve their conflicts pro-socially.

Compromiser

The compromiser is someone who realizes that her or his ideas are in conflict with another person or faction of the group or team. Instead of holding her or his

11. Roles that individual group or team members embody that help build a group-centered identity for the members.

12. Roles that individual group or team members embody that help keep that group-centered identity over the lifecycle of the group or team.

ground refusing to budge one inch in her or his ideas, the compromiser tries to seek out a compromise between her or himself and the conflict parties. Compromising does not mean this individual is a doormat, but rather compromising is a strategy to help groups build better, more informed decisions.

Gatekeeper

In a group or team setting, the gatekeeper's job is to ensure that all participants are freely and openly involved in the group's decision-making. The gatekeeper will encourage people who are on tangents to bring it back to the decision at hand while encouraging those who are more reticent in their communication to actively participate in the decision-making.

Standard Setter

The standard setter or ego sets out to ensure that the group or team's decision making processes meet a certain quality level. This role is similar to the opinion giver under the task roles, but this roles is specifically focused on how the group goes about making decisions and then holds the groups to those standards.

Group-Observer and Commentator

The group-observer and commentator watches how the group goes about completing its purpose. This individual will take notes about the group's functioning and then periodically inform the group about how well it is working as a group or team. This person's focuses on ensuring the group or teams' processes for decision making do not leave out minority voices, prevent poor brainstorming, or jump to decisions too quickly.

Follower

The follower is an individual who attempts to not rock the boat for the group. This person is often passive and just observes the group's decision processes. Instead of being an active participant in the group's decision-making, he or she will serve as an audience for the decision making process during group discussions.

Self-Centered Roles

13. Roles that individual group or team members embody that focus on the individual desires of group members and not necessarily on what is best for the group or its decisions.

The final category of group roles identified by Benne and Sheats are generally very destructive and can harm the group decision-making process. Benne and Sheats called these roles **self-centered**[13] because the roles focus on the individual desires of group members and not necessarily on what is best for the group or its decisions.

According to Benne and Sheats, when self-centered roles are noticed by group members, it's very important to quickly diagnose why these roles are appearing within the group. The researchers offered a number of reasons why these self-centered roles may start to surface:

The diagnosis may reveal one or several of a number of conditions—low level of skill-training among members, including the group leader; the prevalence of 'authoritarian' and 'laissez faire' points of view toward group functioning in the group; a low level of group maturity, discipline and morale; an inappropriately chosen and inadequately defined group task, etc. (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications, 8*, 30–35. (Reprinted from 1948 *Journal of Social Issues, 4*(2), 41–49), pg. 32.

The authors recommend that when groups face these self-centered roles, it becomes very important to ascertain why they are occuring and take steps to prevent their reoccurance. However, Benne and Sheats cautions against the outright suppression of self-centered roles because the suppression can prevent groups or teams from going through the self-diagnosis necessary to fix the group or team. Ultimately, the researchers identified eight types of self-centered roles.

Aggressor

The aggressor tends to be an individual who feels the need to improve her or his own standing within the group by taking others down. Aggressors can enact a number of behaviors that ultimately impact group morale and the basic functioning of the gorup itself. Some of the behaviors identified by Benne and Sheats are, "deflating the status of others, expressing disapproval of the values, acts or feelings of others, attacking the group or the problem it is working on, joking aggressively, showing envy toward another's contribution by trying to take credit for it, etc." (2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications, 8*, 30–35. (Reprinted from 1948 *Journal of Social Issues, 4*(2), 41–49), pg. 32.

Blocker

The blocker is someone who simply either hates everything the group is doing and rejects everything the group recommends or he or she keeps rehashing group or team decisions that have been long since decided. This person may simply say "no" to anything the group likes and is often a giant stumbling block for groups.

Recognition-Seeker

The recognition-seeker seeker is all about showing how he or she is such a vital person in the group by trumpeting her or his achievements (whether relevant or not). Often this person acts in this fashion for fear that the group or team will see her or him as irrelevant. So instead of becoming a relic of the group, he or she feels it is necessary to show how vitale he or she is to the group by wasting the group's time while seeking recognition.

Self-Confessor

The self-confessor sees the group or team as the setting to air her or his own feelings, ideology, insight, or values. This person sees the group or team as her or his own therapy session and has no problem self-disclosing inappropriate information to group or team members during meetings.

Playboy/Playgirl

The playboy or playgirl clearly could care less about the group or team and its goals. In fact, this person is generally quite vocal in her or his lack of caring. He or she may simply become overly cycnical of the group/team and it's decision-making or actively disrupt the decision-making process through horseplay or other nonchalant behavior.

Dominator

The dominator is someone who tries to control the group/team and dominate the group's discussion and decision-making processes. This individual is often highly manipulative and will attempt to coerce those in subordinate status positions to her or his stance within the group. Often these people will see their own position within the group or team as more superior than other group members and will make this very clear while asserting that her or his ideas are more superior because of her or his elevated position within an organization's hierarchy.

Help-Seeker

The help-seeker tries to get the group to be sympathetic by stressing that he or she is insecure or confused. The goal of the help-seeker is to downplay her or his own ability to contribute to the group by making other group/team members care for her or him.

Special Interest Pleader

The special interest pleader is someone who always has a secondary agenda within a group. According to Benne and Sheats, a special interest pleader pleads on behalf of a specific group (e.g., small businesses, labor, gender, race, etc...), but is "usually cloaking [her or] his own prejudices or biases in the stereotype which best fits [her or] his individual need".(2007). Functional roles of group members. *Group Facilitation: A Research and Applications, 8*, 30–35. (Reprinted from 1948 *Journal of Social Issues, 4*(2), 41–49), pg. 32. By allegedly "speaking on behalf" of a special interest group, the special interest pleader serves to distract the group/team from its basic decision making processes.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The first form of group roles proposed by Benne and Sheats are tasks roles or roes that individual group or team members embody that help a group accomplish its basic task(s). Benne and Sheats identified twelve different task roles: initiator-contributor, information seeker, opinion seeker, information giver, opinion giver, elaborator, coordinator, orienter, evaluator-critic, energizer, procedural technician, and recorder.
- The second form of group roles proposed by Benne and Sheats are group building and maintenance roles. Group building roles are roles that help build a group-centered identity for the members; whereas, maintenance roles are roles that help keep that group-centered identity over the lifecycle of the group or team. Benne and Sheats identified seven different group building/maintenance roles: encourager, harmonizer, compromiser, gate-keeper, standard setter, group-observer and commentator, and follower.
- The second form of group roles proposed by Benne and Sheats are self-centered roles, or roles that individual group members embody that focus on the individual desires of group members and not necessarily on what is best for the group or its decisions. Benne and Sheats identified eight different self-interest roles: aggressor, blocker, recognition-seeker, self-confessor, playboy/playgirl, dominator, help-seeker, and special interest pleader.

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<div style="background:#1a5b8f;color:white;text-align:center;font-weight:bold;letter-spacing:2px;padding:8px;">EXERCISES</div>

1. Think about a group you are in, what roles are present?
2. Looking at different group roles, what do you think are the best and worst? Why?
3. Create a list of at least two groups belong to? What group roles are present? Are they effective?

9.5 Chapter Exercises

Real World Case Study

The following case is based on a consulting experience of one of our colleagues. Names and institutions have been altered for this case.

Morgan, an organizational consultant, was approached to serve as an executive coach for a work team in a new organization called Sankaya. Sankaya is a retail organization geared towards fashion merchandising and retailing. This work team was trying to figure out ways to generate sales, maximize profits, and minimize resources. Sankaya encouraged the work team to think outside the box and figure out innovative ways to increase sales. The work team was skeptical about Morgan's involvement. They did not feel they needed an "outsider" to coach them on their task. It became quite apparent in the first meeting that group members were not cohesive. Certain ideas were given more credit and time than others. Also, some group members were even implying to do unethical means to increase sales, such as not pay their workers for constructing their garments and even giving themselves raises for working on the team.

1. Can these employees be coached?
2. If you were Morgan, how would you handle this situation?
3. How can you change this group's communication behaviors?
4. How would you handle the unethical ideas, especially if you do not have the power to stop or prevent them from happening?

Real World Case Study #2

After 40 years in the same building, Corporate Communications built a new building to attract more customers. The new building has more space and better lighting. However, in the old building everyone knew each other because the space was so small. All the employees were able to interact with each other because there was only one entrance and one exit into the building. Moreover, many of the employees were collaborating and interacting with other employees because they were not separated by their job. In other words, technicians would work right alongside people in human resources and advertising. In the new building, each employee was place in a distinct location so that all the human resources employees could be found in the same office. This new building has cause more tension and stress among the employees who may sense a feeling of professional jealousy and competition. Many employees are unhappy.

1. If you were hired as a consultant, what would you do?
2. What recommendations would you provide?
3. How can you change this organization's communication behaviors?
4. What hindrances and limitations could you foresee in implementing your ideas?

End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. Jonas was assigned to a group. He is still learning his group member's names and interest. According to the team development model, which stage is Jonas in?

   a. forming
   b. norming
   c. storming
   d. transforming
   e. performing

2. Tessa has been working in a group for about two month. Her group members are still not sure about their ultimate goal. According to the Team Performance Model, which stage is her group in?

   a. trust building
   b. commitment
   c. goal clarification
   d. implementation
   e. renewal

3. Tessa has been working on a project team. They want her team to complete an advertising campaign by tomorrow. Based on what you know about project teams, which element can Tessa not spend much time on with her other group members?

   a. trust building
   b. commitment
   c. goal clarification
   d. implementation
   e. building stronger relationships

4. Zavin is the only person in his organization in charge of the sales and marketing of the organization. What would his title most likely be?

   a. Chief Executive Officer
   b. Chief Operations Officer
   c. Chief Technology Officer
   d. Chief Financial Officer
   e. all of these

5. Brenna's group members just found a new problem with a product that has already been sold in stores. Everyone in her group believes that they should just ignore the problem. No one questions the decision to ignore the problem. What downside of teams is most likely occurring in this situation?

   a. group think
   b. risky shift phenomenon
   c. executive decision making
   d. apathetic conflict
   e. social loafing

Answer Key

1. A
2. C
3. E
4. B
5. A

Chapter 10

Recruiting, Socializing, and Disengaging

Working Life

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, an average person (as of 2010) can expect to live until he or she is about 78.5 years of age.Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). Life expectancy. Retrieved from: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/lifexpec.htm Let's say you start working a 40 hour a week job right out of college at age 22 and have the luxury of working until you're 65, then you will have worked approximately 43 years. There are 52 weeks in a year, so let's say you're really lucky and only have to work 48 of them. If you work only an 8 hour shift (with 30 minutes for lunch), you'll work approximately 1,800

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hours per year or 77,400 over the course of your working career. At this rate, your work career will account for 11.33 percent of your life. And trust us, if you look at the numbers we've provided here, we are clearly low-balling our estimates. In reality, depending on the type of career choice you make, you could easily end up spending 15–20 percent of your life working.

Most individuals will not have a singular job. In fact, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "the baby boom (1957–1964) held 11.3 jobs from age 18 to age 46."Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, July 25). Number of jobs held, labor market activity, and earnings growth among the youngest baby boomers: Results from a longitudinal survey summary. Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/news.release/nlsoy.nr0.htm For this reason, we spend a good chunk of our time being recruited by organizations, entering into new organizations, acclimating ourselves to new organizations, and eventually leaving organizations. This chapter is going to focus on the process of recruiting, socializing, and leaving organizations.

10.1 Recruiting

Organizations spend a good deal of time and money recruiting people to work in organizations. This section is going to examine the process of recruiting new organizational members. Believe it or not, recruitment is very important for an organization because poor recruitment can be a very costly mistake. Table 10.1 "The Cost of Recruitment" shows research from a handful of studies that examine the cost for recruiting a new employee. Leigh Branham estimates that the costs associated with recruiting someone can be anything from 25 to 200 percent of the person's annual salary.Branham, L. (2000). *Keeping the people who keep you in business: 24 ways to hang on to your most valuable talent.* New York, NY: AMACOM. Overall, recruiting new employees is a time consuming and expensive process. In this section, we're going to examine the recruitment process along with various issues related to employee expectations and finding the best talent.

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Table 10.1 The Cost of Recruitment

Study Description	Findings
Examined the cost of recruiting both operations and management in five-star hotels in Australia.Davidson, M. C. G., Timo, N., & Wang, Y. (2010). How much does labour turnover cost? A case study of Australian four- and	$9,591 for an 8 hour employee. $109,909 for a manager.

| Study Description	Findings
five-star hotels. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 22*, 451–466. doi: 10.1108/09596111011042686	
Examined how much it cost to recruit a new front-line desk clerk at hotels in New York City and Miami.Hinkin, T. R., & Tracey, J. B. (2000). The cost of turnover : Putting a price on the learning curve. *Cornell Hotel & Restaurant Administration Quarterly, 41*, 14–21. doi: 10.1177/001088040004100313	$5,827—Miami
	$12,246—NYC
Examined the costs associated with recruiting a number of different occupations.Sommer, R. D. (2000). *Retaining intellectual capital in the 21st century.*	$109,909—Journeyman Machinist
	$133,000 for an HR manager
	$150,000 for an accounting professional
Examined the cost of recruiting public school teachers in Texas.Texas Center for Educational Research. (2000, October). *The cost of teacher turnover*: *Report Prepared for the Texas State Board for Educator Certification.* Austin, TX: Texas Center for Educational Research.	$3,000 and $4,000 per teacher
Examined the costs of various jobs in the state of Louisiana.Louisiana Department of State Civil Service. (2011, January 13). Report on turnover rates for non-classified employees. Retrieved from: http://senate.legis.state.la.us/streamline/Topics/2011/Act%20879%20Turnover%20Report%20AMENDED%20Jan%2013%202011.pdf	Average of $25,000 for jobs that are high stress protective services (e.g., police officers & correction staff).

The Recruitment Process

Recruitment takes a lot of economic and human resources to do effectively. Unfortunately, some organizations do not adequately think through the basic strategies for recruiting to ensure the maximum benefits of the recruitment process. Maybe an organization is more concerned with filling a position than finding the best person for the job. Other organizations end up with people who have exaggerated their qualifications in order to get the job. Some organizations try to paint an unrealistic rosy-picture of what it's like to work there only to end up with new hires who become disgruntled once they are faced with the actual reality of the job. Whatever the reasons that exist for poor recruitment, problematic recruitment is a reality in many organizations. According James Breaugh, employee recruitment encompasses four specific actions on the part of an organization:

  a. bring a job opening to the attention of potential job candidates who do not currently work for the organization,

b. influence whether these individuals apply for the opening,

c. affect whether they maintain interest in the position until a job offer is extended, and

d. influence whether a job offer is accepted.Breaugh, J. A. (2008). Employee recruitment, Current knowledge and important areas for future research. *Human Resource Management Review, 18*, 103–118. doi: 10.1016/j.hrmr:2008.07.003, pgs. 103–104.

To help organizations think through effective employee recruitment, James Breaugh, Therese Macan, and Dana Grambow proposed a simple five-step model for understanding recruitment in modern organizations, which can be seen in <u>Figure 10.1 "Model of Employee Recruitment"</u>.Breaugh, J. A., Macan, T. H., & Grambow, D. M. (2008). Employee recruitment: Current knowledge and directions for future research. In G. P. Hodgkinson & J. K. Ford

Figure 10.1 Model of Employee Recruitment
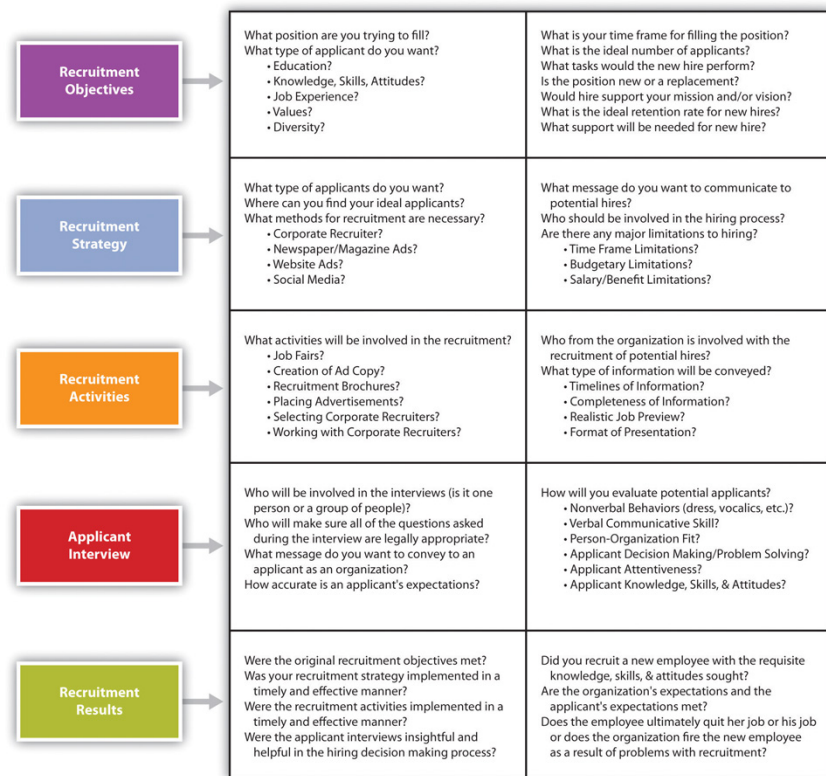
Recruitment Objectives

The first stage of recruiting new employees consists of determining the basic objectives for the new employee. Are you creating a brand new position or

attempting to refill a position because of voluntary or involuntary turnover? At this stage in the recruitment process, you need to truly brainstorm everything from the type of applicant you're looking for (e.g., educational background, job experience, skill set, etc.) to the role this person will actually play within the organization itself. The more specific you can be at this point in the recruitment process, the easier it will be to weed out eventual applicants who simply do not meet the basic objectives of the organization.

Recruitment Strategy

The next stage in recruitment involves thinking through the specific strategies that the organization plans to employ to recruit potential applicants. If you look in Figure 10.1 "Model of Employee Recruitment", you'll notice that the questions asked during this phase primarily deal with determining how you will find your applicant pool and then how you will craft specific messages targeted at potential applicants that will entice them to apply. First, you need to know what type of applicant you need to target. For example, are you looking for someone who has just a high school education or are you looking for someone who has an MBA and 20 plus years of experience running nonprofit organizations? You'll notice that this part of the recruitment strategy stems directly out of recruitment objectives.

Second, you need to think about the organization's messaging strategy. The messaging strategy includes everything from crafting specific messages to determining the best possible outlets for these messages. For entry-level, minimum wage applicants, you may create simple, straightforward descriptions of the job and post them on local job websites or in the newspaper. When attempting to hire a senior-level executive, you may work with a consultant known as an external corporate recruiter during this process. An **external corporate recruiter**[1] is an individual (or group of individuals) who have specific expertise in searching for and recruiting potential job applicants. Because corporate recruiters have specific expertise in the recruitment process, they can help an organization in a number of specific ways. First, they can help an organization decrease the amount of time that it takes to search for and eventually hire a new employee (commonly referred to as the **time to hire**[2]). External corporate recruiters often specialize in specific industries or types of positions, so they already have a network of potential applicants or know how to target potential applicants. Second, they can increase the quality and quantity of the candidate pool. Next, they can help an organization keep its recruiting costs down because of the focused nature of the job search itself. Lastly, they can ensure that all governmental regulations associated with recruitment and hiring are met. Although most human resource personnel can also accomplish this function, sometimes a second pair of eyes not related to the organization can be important to ensure compliance with relevant laws and regulations.

1. An individual (or group of individuals) who have specific expertise in searching for and recruiting potential job applicants.

2. The amount of time that it takes to search for and eventually hire a new employee.

Recruitment Activities

Once you've determined your objectives and your strategy, it's time to actually let the rubber hit the road and start the recruitment of potential applicants. At this point, you're basically involved in three specific activities. First, you're engaged in the day-to-day process of searching for and recruiting candidates. This stage can involve everything from placing advertisements on a job website to attending career fairs at a local college or university.

Next, you need to think through all of the internal resources that will be involved in the recruitment process. Who will create job ads? How much time do you have devoted to recruitment? Who is going to oversee the entire recruitment project? Recruitment should have a central project manager who oversees the entire process. If you have too many different people attempting to run your recruitment, you will run into serious problems. As such, it's important to have a specific individual who is ultimately in charge of the actual recruitment process to ensure all of the small steps are completed accurately and in a timely fashion.

Lastly, you're crafting the specific messages you want potential applicants to see and/or hear. Whether you're creating a simple call for applicants in a local newspaper or creating an online video to entice applicants, a lot of time is involved in the crafting of effective messages targeted towards applicants. These messages should be both informative (explaining the job and the types of applicants sought) and persuasive (enticing people to apply). In addition to creating the messages, you need to determine where these messages will ultimately been seen or heard by the types of applicants you desire. Although your strategy for this process was determined in the previous step, at this step in the process you need to implement and adjust your targeted message outlets as necessary.

Applicant Interview

Once you have started to receive applications for your position, it's time to start going through the stack of potential employees. Before you actually get to the interview step, you need to systematically go through the applications and determine which ones are viable candidates and which ones simply are not. There are many people who simply apply to any and every job whether they have the background or skills necessary to complete the job. The first step in screening out individuals is to have a standard set of objectives for determining the qualifications of the applicant. By employing this objective standard, you can generally weed through a giant portion of the applicants and easily determine the ones that you may want to interview.

For low-level or entry level positions, the recruitment process is generally more straight forward and involves less expense on the part of the organization. These interviews may simply take place within the organization on the day someone fills out an application if a manager is readily available.

On the other hand, when an organization is recruiting a professional position or senior-level executive, there may be a whole interview process in place. There are a number of different types of interviews an organization can take. Some organizations employ telephone interviews first to determine which applicants should be brought to the organization for a face-to-face interview. Today it's also common to do this first round of interviews using video conferencing software like Skype. The goal of this first set of interviews is to help the recruiters focus their recruitment efforts to a handful of potential applicants they may wish to interview on the organization's campus. After the telephone interviews, the recruitment team may finalize their list of applicants and either bring them directly to the organization for an interview or employ an off-campus face-to-face interview.

An **off-campus face-to-face interview**[3] (sometimes called a flyover interview) occurs when an organization arranges to have an off-site location (typically in or near an airport) to conduct a round of interviews. In essence, interviewees are flown to the airport and then taken to a conference room within the airport or nearby the airport for a face-to-face interview with the recruitment team. Once the interview is over, the applicant is put back on her or his plane and sent home. Many organizations use this strategy when recruiting senior-level executives because there is nothing quite like a face-to-face interview and these can be cheaper than an on-campus face-to-face interview.

An **on-campus face-to-face interview**[4] occurs when an organization brings the individual to the organization for an interview. On-campus face-to-face interviews can last from a half-day interview to a multi-day interview depending on type of hire an organization is attempting. The more senior the position, the more likely the organization will involve an extended interview process in an attempt to gain a more thorough understanding of the possible fit of the applicant. These interviews can be very expensive because they involve the costs of transportation, housing, food, and entertainment during the interview.

Obviously, these are not the only types of interviews that organizations can employ, but they are different enough to demonstrate the array of possible choices an organization has for conducting an interview. As you can see from the above descriptions, the interview process can be as cheap as the time lost while a manger conducts an on-the-spot interview to one that could cost over one-hundred thousand dollars. For this reason, interviews should be conducted strategically

3. When an organization arranges to have an off-site location (typically in or near an airport) to conduct a round of interviews.

4. When an organization brings the individual to the organization for an interview.

looking for the various factors discussed in Figure 10.1 "Model of Employee Recruitment".

Recruitment Results

The final stage of recruitment examines the results of the recruitment process itself. Once an applicant has signed a contract and joined your organization, it's always a smart idea to objectively analyze how recruitment went in an effort to improve the process for future hires. Ultimately, when evaluating the results of your recruitment, you should look at both the short-term and long-term results of recruitment. The short-term results include determining if the first four stages of recruitment were effective (objectives, strategy, activities, and interviews). The long-term results focus on whether or not a new employee meets the organization's expectations or doesn't meet the organization's expectations, which could lead to either voluntary or involuntary turnover.

Realistic Job Previews

One of the major problems occurring post-hiring involves the expectations of the new employee. Social psychological research has demonstrated that when an individual's expectations are not met, the individual will experience dissonance leading to a disliking of the event itself.Aronson, E., & Carlsmith, J. M. (1962). Performance expectancy as a determinant of actual performance. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 65*, 178–182. Paula Popovich and John Wanous explain that dissatisfaction is likely to occur when three conditions occur:

1. the expectation is strongly believed in;
2. the expectation concerns something of high personal value; and
3. the individual feels personally responsible for the mistaken expectation (i.e., "I should have known" vs. "nobody's perfect").Popovich, P., & Wanous, J. P. (1982). The realistic job preview as a persuasive communication. Academy of Management Review, 7, 570–578, pg. 571.

Whether one looks at hiring an individual from the organization's perspective or looks at the new employee's perspective, recruitment and hiring clearly meets all three of these conditions. Figure 10.2 "Problems with Traditional Organizational Recruitment" illustrates the problems associated with traditional recruiting strategies and how they leads to problems with expectations. First, organizations historically have done their best to make their organization look very positive and downplay or simply avoid any of the downsides of a particular job. Unfortunately, these traditional organizational recruitment strategies lead to inflated expectations

on the part of a new hire. When that new hire comes face-to-face with the reality of working within an organization, he or she quickly becomes disillusioned because her or his initial expectations are not being met. With unmet expectations, the new employee will eventually become dissatisfied with her or his job. With employee dissatisfaction, two possible paths emerge, neither of them beneficial for the organization. First, a dissatisfied employee may decrease her or his commitment to the organization and simply start looking for a new job (voluntary turnover). Second, a dissatisfied employee's productivity level may drop, causing the organization to become dissatisfied with the employee, which will lead to the employee's firing (involuntary turnover). Of course, with either voluntary or involuntary turnover, the organization will be faced with recruiting a new employee and the cycle starts again.

*Figure 10.2*   *Problems with Traditional Organizational Recruitment*
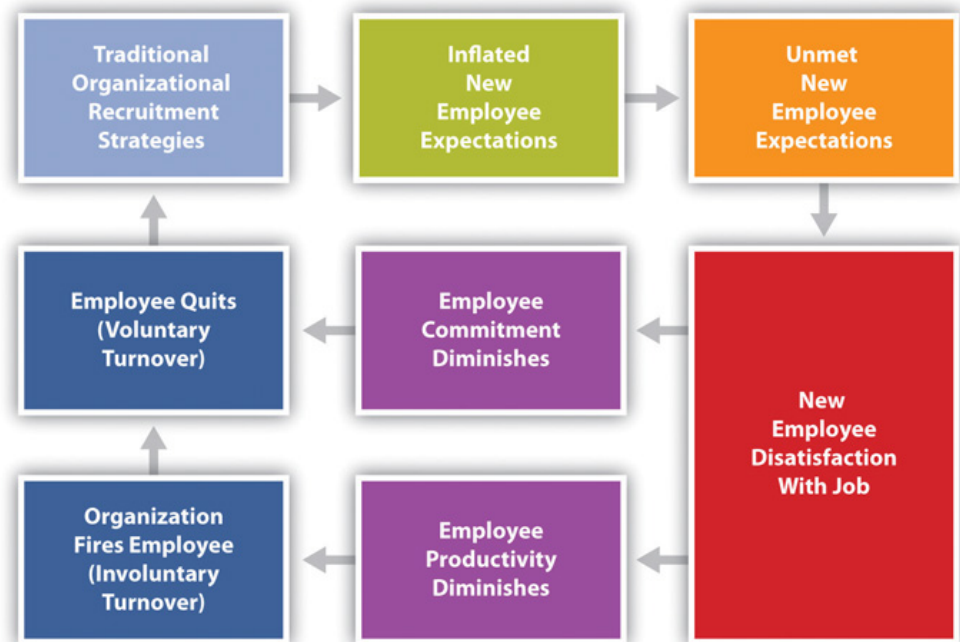
In addition to the organization misrepresenting who it is and how it functions, individual applicants can also misrepresent themselves. In Figure 10.3 "Misrepresentation of Qualifications" we see what happens when an individual applicant misrepresents her or his qualifications. In this case, the organization will be dissatisfied because the new hire cannot perform in the fashion the applicant said he or she could. As the organization's expectations are unmet, the organization becomes dissatisfied, which will eventually lead to the individual employee's firing (involuntary turnover).

Figure 10.3   Misrepresentation of Qualifications
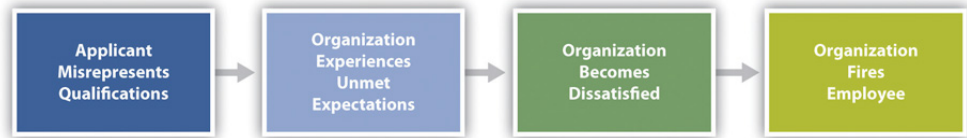
A second type of misrepresentation that can occur during the application process involves an individual employee's cultural preferences. For example, maybe an individual applicant says he or she is all about teamwork during the interview, but in reality that applicant is a loner and prefers to work on projects alone. If this applicant is hired with the expectation that he or she will work on a number of teams, there will be unmet expectations on the part of the organization if the new employee quickly shows disinterest in teamwork. Furthermore, this new employee will experience unmet needs and desires for autonomy if he or she is constantly being forced to engage in teamwork. In the case of the organization's unmet experiences, the organization will become dissatisfied, which will eventually lead to the organization firing the new employee. On the case of the individual employee, he or she will become dissatisfied with all of the pressure for teamwork and eventually look for another job that more accurately suits her or his cultural preferences.

Figure 10.4   Misrepresentation of Cultural Preferences
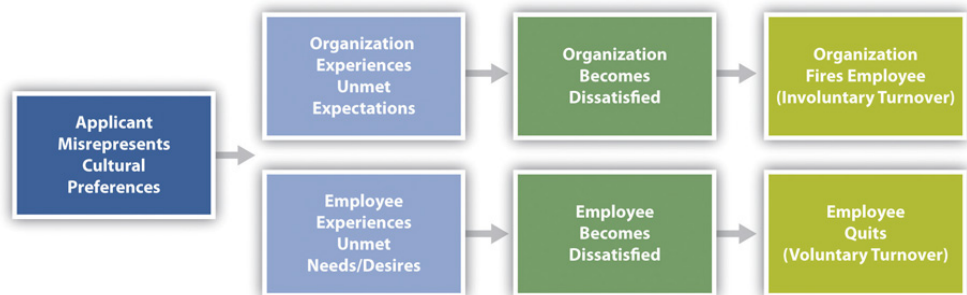
Although organizations can never completely prevent applicant misrepresentations, they can build in processes to prevent the outcomes associated with traditional recruitment processes. The basic premise of the realistic job preview is that new employees often have inaccurate perceptions about the positions for which they are applying. These expectations, as discussed above, lead to dissatisfaction on either the employee's part or the organization's part. To alleviate these inflated expectations, "it has been suggested that an employer should provide recruits with candid information concerning a job opening (i.e., information about both positive and negative job and organizational

attributes)."Breaugh, J. A. (2008). Employee recruitment, Current knowledge and important areas for future research. *Human Resource Management Review, 18*, 103–118. doi: 10.1016/j.hrmr:2008.07.003, pg. 106. <u>Figure 10.5 "Realistic Job Preview Theory"</u> illustrates why realistic job previews are effective. First, when a realistic job preview is given to applicants, the applicant will have more realistic expectations when he or she decides to accept a job offer. As that new employee enters into the organization, he or she will have more realistic expectations about the organizational culture and the day-to-day work that is expected. When an individual has realistic expectations, it's much easier for these expectations to be met, which will lead to increased employee satisfaction and motivation. With increased employee satisfaction and motivation, your new employee will demonstrate greater organizational commitment and overall productivity. Ultimately, the goal of this process is to ensure that a new hire is less likely to be fired or quit.

To help us further understand the nature of realistic job previews, we are going to focus on three important aspects of this process. First, we will examine the theoretical basis for why realistic job previews work. Second, we'll examine the importance of communication in the process of realistic job previews. Lastly, we'll examine the research related to the outcomes of realistic job previews and their overall effectiveness.

Figure 10.5   *Realistic Job Preview Theory*

Two Theories for Realistic Job Previews

By this point, you may be wondering why realistic job previews (RJPs) are an effective tool when hiring new employees. Research has indicated two theoretical possibilities for why RJPs work.

Self-Selection Theory

The first theory explaining the effectiveness of realistic job previews is called the self-selection theory. In essence, self-selection theory argues that when applicants are faced with a realistic portrayal of an organization and what it would be like to work within an organization, the employee will have a more accurate understanding and more realistic expectations.Wanous, J. P. (1980). *Organizational entry: Recruitment, selection, and* As such, when an applicant decides to accept a job offer, he or she is knowingly opting to work within that organization (flaws included). In essence, people who feel that there is a good person-organization fit will self-select into the organization. Conversely, individuals who do not see the organization as a good person-organization fit will knowingly self-select out of working within that organization. Basically, self-selection theory posits that the more information someone has, the more accurately he or she can decide if an individual organization is somewhere he or she wants to work.

Inoculation Theory

The second major theoretical position researchers have posed for the effectiveness of RJPs is called inoculation theory. William J. McGuire originally created inoculation theory to explain how attitudes and beliefs are altered during persuasion attempts.McGuire, W. J. (1961). The effectiveness of supportive and refutational defenses in immunizing defenses. *Sociometry, 24*, 184–197. In the world of medicine, we often inoculate people using weakened strains of a virus and injecting them into an individual (called a vaccine). The weakened virus ultimately helps a host build up immunity to the virus itself. In the world of new employee hiring, the RJP functions as a vaccine, which ultimately prepares a new hire for the realities of working within the organization and her or his job duties. In essence, by presenting an RJP, an employer can help prepare a new hire in incremental steps for the day-to-day life the new hire is going to experience within the organization, so by the time the new hire starts the job, he or she has already built up "immunity."

Communication & Realistic Job Previews

The realistic job preview (RJP) process is inherently a communicative one. One of the most important questions that should be asked is how will the message be presented. This message strategizing includes when the message will be presented, who will present the message, and the medium utilized. There are a number of different options that could be utilized: brochures, audio visual, human resource personnel, future coworkers, and virtual reality.

The first option involves using a brochure or new employee manual that realistically describes what it is like working for the organization. This brochure/manual should include details in a balanced fashion to ensure that the new employee is getting an accurate picture of what life would be like working within the organization. Unfortunately, brochures tend to be detached and simply are often either not read thoroughly or not read at all.

The second option that many organizations utilize for delivering an RJP is some form of audiovisual RJP. The most common audiovisual RJP is the video. Table 10.2 "Realistic Job Preview Videos" contains a list of just a handful of video RJPs that are available on the internet.

Table 10.2 Realistic Job Preview Videos

Bank of America	http://careers.bankofamerica.com/rjp/
Federal Air Marshalls	http://www.realisticjobpreview.net/fams/
Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	http://www.realisticjobpreview.net/tsa_final.htm
Child Protective Services (CPS, State of AZ)	https://www.azdes.gov/main.aspx?menu=154&id=4297
Quick Chek	http://www.quickchek.com/culture_video.asp
Pharmacy Technician	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58mZFJADxWQ
Sears Sales Consultant	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFUxEkX0hHE
Treatment Plant Equipment Operators	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoPeWWmZoCA
Customer Service	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRxJ9MJwBT4
OwensCorning Home Experts	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp4dZj0ZOF8

When you look at the various RJPs presented in Table 10.2 "Realistic Job Preview Videos", you'll see a wide range of different types of jobs and different ways to present the information. Some videos have high production values and look like mini-movies (the TSA videos) and make the work look exciting while others include simple interviews with an employee who works for the organization in a specific position (Pharmacy Technician/Customer Service). Early research examining

brochures and videos really didn't find any differences between the two mediums and their actual effectiveness. Admittedly, most of the research on audiovisual techniques and RJPs occurred back in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The third option listed above involves using the hiring personnel to describe the organization and the position. Although the hiring personnel may be great for describing the organization, he or she may not have the most accurate or up-to-date knowledge of what work life is like in every department. Research conducted by Alan Saks and Steven Cronshaw found that an RJP presented orally by an interviewer was better than a written RJP when predicting an individual's attitude about the job and accepting a job offer. Furthermore, individuals who received the oral RJP found the organization to be more honest as a whole.Saks, A. M., & Cronshaw, S. F. (1990). A process investigation of realistic job previews: Mediating variables and channels of communication. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 11*, 2210236.

Fourth, an organization could utilize an informal meeting with a current employee who works within the division the new hire will work in. No one really has a clearer perception of work life than someone actually involved in the same type of work the applicant will be required to do. Research conducted by Stephen Colarelli investigated using an incumbent bank teller to deliver an RJP during the hiring process as compared to a written RJP or no RJP at all. The research found that individuals who received the RJP from an incumbent bank teller were less likely to have quit the job after 2 or 3 months. In fact, Colarelli's research found no difference in turnover rates between those who received the brochure and those who didn't receive an RJP at all.

Lastly, many organizations actually utilize some form of virtual reality simulation for delivering RJPs. In essence, the virtual reality simulation is designed to present job applicants with scenarios that would resemble the actual working conditions the potential employees would face in a day-to-day working environment. These types of simulations may be great for jobs that are highly routinized (employees do the same thing day-in and day-out), but not so great for jobs that are more chaotic. These interactive simulations can not only provide the applicant with an RJP, but the simulations can be created in a fashion that demonstrates to the organization whether or not the applicant would be a good fit as well. Although applicants indicate that they appreciate the interactive quality of the simulations when determining whether to work somewhere,Murphy, J. P. (2012, April 13). Show, don't tell—Job tryouts go virtual [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://www.shakercg.com/blog/tag/realistic-job-preview/ there really is no outcome data on the actual effectiveness of this new method.

Outcomes of Realistic Job Previews

Ultimately, the big question for most organizations relates to the effectiveness of realistic job previews in the prevention of voluntary and involuntary turnover. A number of research studies have attempted to determine whether a realistic job preview works in the manner discussed in Figure 10.5 "Realistic Job Preview Theory". In a study conducted by Jean Phillips that compiled the research results from 40 different studies examining realistic job previews, she found that RJPs did lead to lower initial expectations and lower levels of both voluntary and involuntary turnover.Phillips, J. M. (1998). Effects of realistic job previews on multiple organizational outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Academy of Management Journal, 41*, 673–690. However, the statistical relationships between RJPs and the outcome variables wasn't exactly overwhelmingly strong. For this reason, David Earnest, David Allen, and Ronald Landis have cautioned that while RJPs are definitely effective, the actual return on their investment for an organization may not be high enough to warrant their utilization within a modern organization.Earnest, D. R., Allen, D. G., & Landis, R. S. (2011). Mechanisms linking realistic job previews with turnover: A meta-analytic path analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 64*, 865–896. In their study of 52 different research studies examining realistic job previews, the researchers found that an RJP increased new employee perceptions of organizational honesty, which in-turn actually impacted voluntary turnover. In essence, the researchers argued that an "RJP signals something about unobservable organizational characteristics such as organizational honesty, organizational support, and care for employees."Earnest, D. R., Allen, D. G., & Landis, R. S. (2011). Mechanisms linking realistic job previews with turnover: A meta-analytic path analysis. *Personnel Psychology, 64*, 865–896; pg. 888. Although the overall outcomes for RJPs may not be the greatest organizational investment, they do help to moderately decrease both voluntary and involuntary turnover, so investing moderate amounts of organizational resources may still be worth the investment.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The costs of recruiting can be quite extensive for organizations. Depending on the complexity of the job, costs can range from a few thousand dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars to recruit a new employee, so effective recruitment is fiscally important for organizations.

- Breaugh, Macan, and Grambow created a five-stage model for explaining effective employee recruitment. Stage one, recruitment objectives, involves determining the basic objectives for a new position. Stage two, recruitment strategy, involves thinking through the most effective practices for locating and recruiting potential employees. Stage three, recruitment activities, involves the day-to-day process for recruiting potential applicants, allocating resources for recruitment, and crafting recruitment messages. Stage four, applicant interview, involves interview potential applicants in an effort to determine person-organization fit. Lastly, stage five, recruitment results, involves examining the effectiveness of the organization's overall recruitment strategy post-hire.

- Traditional recruitment practices have led to a combination of unmet expectations on the part of both employees and organizations. When employees have unmet expectations, their productivity and commitment will diminish, which could lead to either voluntary or involuntary turnover. When the organization's expectations are not met, the organization will be disgruntled with the new employee, which will lead to involuntary turnover.

- The goal of a realistic job preview is to provide potential applicants a complete picture of both the day-to-day work the applicant will be tasked with and explanation of the organization's culture. The goal of a realistic job preview is to ensure that applicants have a complete picture of the working environment, which will lead to an increase in met expectations for both the new employee and the organization.

- Although there are a number of methods one can utilize to present a realistic job preview (e.g., written documents, videos, hiring personnel, virtual reality, etc.), research generally supports that the most effective tool involves a conversation with a current employee who occupies the same position.

- Realistic job previews have been shown to have many beneficial outcomes for organizations. First, realistic job previews lead to more accurate new employee expectations. Second, realistic job previews decrease both voluntary and involuntary turnover. Lastly, realistic job previews increase new hires' beliefs that an organization is honest,

which in-turn leads to decreased levels of voluntary and involuntary turnover.

EXERCISES

1. You are in the process of hiring a new employee. You believe that a realistic job preview would be very important during the hiring process, but your boss doesn't understand its importance. How would you go about framing your argument in terms of a realistic job preview's financial impact on your organization?
2. Table 10.2 "Realistic Job Preview Videos" provides a list of a wide range of realistic job preview videos. Select one of the videos and then answer the following questions. Do you think the realistic job preview is effective? Why or why not? How would you go about making this video more effective for new employees?
3. You've been asked to sit down with a new employee who is taking over your current job (or most recent job). What information do you think would be most important to impart to this person in a realistic job preview? Why do you think that information is the most important? Do you think your supervisors would agree with your assessment of the position? Why or why not?

10.2 Socializing

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Organizational socialization[5] can be defined as the the process an organization utilizes to ensure that new members acquire necessary attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills to become productive organizaitonal members. In essence, organizational socialization is a life-long process that individuals go through from childhood to retirement.Wanberg, C. R. (2012). Facilitating organizational socialization: An introduction. In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of organizational socialization* (pp. 17–21). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. In this section, we are going to examine the stages of organizational socialization, best practices for organizational socialization, and the importance of communication during socialization.

Stages of Organizational Socialization

To help us understand organizational socialization, we're going to look at the basic stages of organizational socialization originally discussed by Fredric Jablin.Jablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation, and exit. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts, & L. W Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 679–740). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.'Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Jablin proposed that organizational socialization can be broken into three distinct parts:

5. The process an organization utilizes to ensure that new members acquire necessary attitudes, behaviors, knowledge, and skills to become productive organizaitonal members.

anticipatory socialization, organizational entry and assimilation, and organizational disengagement/exit (Figure 10.6 "Organizational Socialization"). To help us understand socialization, we are going to explore the first two forms of socialization (anticipatory and organizational entry/assimilation) in this section and organizational disengagement/exit in the next section.

Figure 10.6   *Organizational Socialization*

Anticipatory Socialization

The first part of socialization is referred to as **anticipatory socialization**[6], or the period before an individual actually joins an organization. To help us understand anticipatory socialization, let's examine the two types of anticipatory socialization discussed by Fredric Jablin: vocational and organizational socialization.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Vocational Anticipatory Socialization

Vocational anticipatory socialization[7] refers to the process an individual undertakes as he or she selects a specific job or career. Pretty much from the moment you understand the world around you, you start being socialized into the world of work. Fredric Jablin explained that there are five influential groups that affect our role anticipatory socialization: family, media, peers, education, and previous organizational experience.

The first form of vocational anticipatory socialization comes from our families. Think back to your early childhood and you may have memories of your parents sitting around the dinner table sharing stories of their workdays. These stories from our early childhood influence us largely later in life when it comes to how we perceive work. The stories we hear from our parents actually influence how we understand what it means to work and how we perceive work life. Furthermore, our families actually instill in us attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values about work. Even something as simple as the chores you were required to complete growing up informed your understanding of what it meant to work. Later in life, your family encourages you academically and even helps to direct you towards specific

6. The period of time before an individual actually joins an organization.

7. The process an individual undertakes as he or she selects a specific job or career.

occupations. Often this direction is intentional (e.g., your mother wants you to be a physician), but this direction can be unintentional as well (e.g., parents disparage their own line of work or specific occupations). Overall, our families have a great deal of influence on our perceptions of work and different occupations.

The second most pervasive socializer of work today is probably the media. From the earliest moments most American children can sit up, they are consuming one form of media or another. Even children's television shows like *Sesame Street*, *Thomas and Friends*, and *Bill Nye—The Science Guy* illustrate various occupations, which can have a profound effect on how children view the world of work. Children's books also can have a direct impact on how people come to understand what work is. The reality is children are greatly influenced by the media, so it should be no surprise that these early impressions of what it means to work learned through the media impact our understanding of the work world. Obviously, as we grow older, we come to realize that these portrayals are often inaccurate, but this early learning still sticks with us and influences our future job and career selection decisions. However, Susan Barber warns us that these portrayals can also lead to unrealistic expectations of what the work world really looks like.Barber, S. (1989). When I grow up: Children and the work-world of television. *Media and Values, 47*, [online reprint]. Retrieved from http://www.medialit.org/reading-room/when-i-grow-children-and-work-world-television Too often television shows depict high-income jobs (e.g., lawyers, doctors, business executives, pop stars, etc.), while more blue-collar jobs are left completely out of the work landscape on television (e.g., carpenters, electricians, plumbers, etc.). Furthermore, there is a general tendency in a lot of media portrayals to depict occupations where the income earners are making a considerable more amount of money than the average family in the United States. These inflated expectations often persist into the college years.

The third form of vocational anticipatory socialization comes from our immediate peer group. As we all know, peer-influence is a very important part of growing up and continues to be important into adulthood. In a fashion similar to how we learn from our families, our peers influence our attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values about work. Our peer groups growing up help reiterate what types of occupations are deemed desirable and which ones should be avoided. Furthermore, we also learn about the world of work by listening to our peers' stories of their own work experience or the experiences of our peers' families and friends. These stories help to further solidify our perceptions about the world of work beyond that of our immediate family members.

The fourth form of vocational anticipatory socialization comes from our education. Not surprisingly, education is another very important factor to consider when looking at the landscape of how people are socialized. In fact, our educational system (just like the media) tends to overemphasize certain types of occupations. In

an interesting study conducted by Fredric Jablin,Jablin, F. M. (1985). An exploratory study of vocational organizational communication socialization. *Southern Speech Communication Journal, 50*, 261–282. he found that classroom activities, discussions, and textbooks tended to overemphasize specific occupations while downplaying other occupations. In addition to this subversive socialization, schools often expect students to write research reports or give oral presentations about possible careers. Furthermore, in public education there does tend to be an over-emphasis on the importance of attaining a college degree.Kramer, M. W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations*. Malden, MA: Polity. If you look at the United States Census data from 2010, a very interesting picture emerges.United States Census (2010). Educational attainment by selected characteristics: 2010. Retrieved from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2012/tables/12s0232.pdf In the United States, 19.4 percent of the population has a bachelor's degree and an additional 10.5 percent has an advanced degree, so rough 30 percent of the population has some form of advanced education past an associate's degree. When one analyzes the data, people with just a bachelor's degree make an average of $17,000 dollars per year more than those with an associate's degree (9.1% of the US population) and $36,464 more on average than those who do not have a high school diploma (12.9% of the US population). However, our educational system is clearly designed to streamline students towards those occupations that involve advanced degrees that will not be attained by 70 percent of the actual population.

The final form of vocational anticipatory socialization comes from previous organizational experiences we've personally had. Whether you've worked as a cashier at a local grocery store, helped run your parent's farm, or were just an active member of your local church growing up, we all have previous organizational experience that influences how we view the nature of organizations. Whether you've had actual work experience or voluntary associations within the context of an organization, these experiences form our perceptions of how organizations function and what it means to work. Any organizational experience helps you form attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and values about work. One of the reasons internships are often pushed in higher education today is to ensure that students not only get a taste of an occupation that may interest them, but the internship experience helps students develop interpersonal skills in the workplace while developing a work ethic that will become very important as the student enters the job market.

Organizational Anticipatory Socialization

In addition to vocational socialization, there is a second form of anticipatory socialization that needs to be addressed: organizational anticipatory socialization.Kramer, M. W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations*. Malden, MA: Polity. **Organizational anticipatory socialization**[8] is the process an individual goes through as he or she attempts to find an organization to

8. The process and individual goes through as he or she attempts to find an organization to join.

join. According to Michael Kramer, we can break the organizational anticipatory socialization into two basic processes: recruiting and reconnaissance and selection. Kramer, M. W. (2010). *Organizational socialization: Joining and leaving organizations.* Malden, MA: Polity.

The recruiting and reconnaissance process and the selection process involves all of the steps discussed previously in <u>Figure 10.1 "Model of Employee Recruitment"</u>. When we look at this process from the perspective of the applicant, we see that applicants have to find job advertisements or be approached by corporate recruiters. The applicant needs to ascertain whether the job description is a good fit for her or his educational background, skill set, and cultural preferences. During the organizational anticipatory socialization stage, both the applicant and the organization are making determinations of person-organization fit.

Organizational Entry & Assimilation

The second major step in organizational socialization involves the entry and assimilation of new organizational members. Fredrick Jablin proposed a three-step process when attempting to understand organizational entry and assimilation: preentry, entry, and metamorphosis. Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Preentry

The first step in organizational entry is referred to as **preentry**[9], or the period of time after someone has been asked to join an organization but before he or she is actually working within the organization. Jablin pointed out that there are three important issues that arise during the preentry stage. First, one must consider the types of messages a new employee receives from the organization prior to starting work. These messages could include realistic job previews or "surprises." In this context, there could be either negative surprises, messages that are contradictory to what was discussed in the hiring process (e.g., work schedule, benefits, organizational expectations, etc.), or there could be positive surprises, messages that are pleasant and demonstrate positive aspects of working within the organization (e.g., expressions of caring, expressions of honest, expressions of organizational justice, etc.).

Second, new employees should be aware of how current organizational members view the new employee. The communicative strategies involved during this period generally involve impression management. **Impression management**[10] is the

9. The period of time after someone has been asked to join an organization but before he or she is actually working within the organization.

10. The process (either conscious or unconscious) where an individual deliberately attempts to influence the perceptions and opinions of others.

process (either conscious or unconscious) where an individual deliberately attempts to influence the perceptions and opinions of others. In this case, new organizational members attempt to form impressions about who they are as people and workers in the minds of new coworkers and supervisors. This could involve touting one's previous work successes in an effort to bolster one's credibility or purposefully self-handicapping oneself (e.g., "I'm a little weak when it comes to using a spreadsheet.") in an effort to downplay organizational expectations.

Lastly, Jablin points out that the preentry period is also important to current organizational members who "converse about and make sense of new hires during this period, and in particular how they socially construct or create a reputation for newcomers in everyday conversations."Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 753. In essence, once someone is hired there is a period of time when current organizational members attempt to create an image about the new hire. This image includes both how this new hire will fit within the current structure of the organization and the new hire's reputation. The reality is, people in an organization will talk about new hires in an effort to reduce some of the uncertainty that is bound to come with a new organizational member. Unfortunately, the reputations that are generated could easily inflate the new hires' skills making it harder for the new hire to actually meet the unrealistic expectations created. In other words, it's always important to attempt to get the pulse of how organizational members view you when you first start the job in an effort to correct any misconceptions people may have.

Entry

The second stage of organizational entry and assimilation involves the actual process of entering the organization as a new member. The goal during the entry period is to help new members assimilate themselves within the organizational culture. According to Fredric Jablin, organizational assimilation involves the process an individual goes through as he or she is acclimating her or himself within an organization's culture.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ultimately, the entry period involves two interrelated processes: intentional socialization efforts and individualization. Jablin, F. M. (1987). Organizational entry, assimilation, and exit. In F. M. Jablin, L. L. Putnam, K. H. Roberts, & L. W Porter (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational communication: An interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 679–740). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

First, during the entry period, organizations attempt to help new employees understand the organization's culture and the work expectations for the new employee. Often this process is formal and involves some kind of new employee training or probationary period while the new employee "learns the ropes." This process includes helping employees understand both the rules and norms of the organization. The **rules**[11] of an organization are the explicit dictates that govern employee behavior within the organization. For example, maybe there is a formal dress policy. One of our coauthors worked for a hospital that had very strict dress policies. One of the policies dictated the necessity of closed-toed shoes (no sandals or flip-flops). Another policy spelled out what happened when paperwork was not submitted on time. **Norms**[12], on the other hand, involve the informal expectations related to how new employees should behave within the organization. Norms are not formal policies, but they dictate how people behave in much the same way. For example, maybe Monday through Thursday everyone is expected to wear a business suit, but there is a norm that people are allowed to dress in business casual clothes on Friday. This allowance for casualness on Fridays may not be expressly written anywhere in the formal employee manual (aka rule), but it may be very much the norm of how people behave within the organization.

In addition to acclimating a new employee to the organization, new employees often attempt to negotiate the new work environment to better fit their individual attitudes, skills, and cultural values. One of our coauthors is very much not a morning person. When he entered into his latest job, one of the things he negotiated was not teaching classes before noon. Thankfully, his organization was flexible and allowed for this individualization of the job to better meet his preferences for a teaching schedule. However, individualization can become very problematic if the new hire attempts to morph into something he or she was not hired for. Imagine an organization hires a new public relations expert only to discover quickly that the person really is more interested in marketing and not public relations. Although these may be related industries within the organization, having someone become something they were not hired to be will quickly lead to organizational dissatisfaction.

Metamorphosis

The final stage of organizational entry and assimilation involves the metamorphosis stage. The concept of metamorphosis refers to the profound change that occurs when someone goes from one stage to the next in life. In the organizational world, **metamorphosis**[13] occurs when an individual transforms her or himself from the "new kid on the block" to an established member of the organization. Obviously, metamorphosis does not happen quickly. Often these transitions happen rapidly (e.g., success of one's first big project), but more often these transitions happen over a long period. Often people wake up one day only to realize that they truly are

11. The explicit dictates that govern employee behavior within the organization.

12. The informal expectations about how new employees should behave within the organization.

13. When an individual transforms her or himself from a new organizational member to an established member of the organization.

part of the organization and its culture. Furthermore, this process is not a stagnant one. As people move in and out of new positions within an organization, they may experience the process of entry and assimilation all over again. For example, when someone goes from being a low-level employee to mid-level management, the individual may still work within the same organization but her or his perception of the organization and its functions may drastically alter with the new position.

Overall, entering into an organization and assimilating is not something that happens overnight. Entering and assimilating is a process that takes time both for new organizational members and those members who already exist within the organization itself. So, you may be wondering, how can you make your socialization process smoother when you enter into a new organization? Virginia Peck Richmond and James McCroskey proposed ten communicative behaviors to avoid during organizational entry (Table 10.3 "Dead on Arrivals").Richmond, V. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (2009). *Organizational communication for survival: Making work, work* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon; pgs. 192–193. Richmond and McCroskey termed these behaviors DOA or "dead on arrival" to indicate that those who engage in the behaviors discussed in Table 10.3 "Dead on Arrivals" generally will not have a very long life in an organization if they communicate in this manner.

Table 10.3 Dead on Arrivals

1. DOAs hold supervisors solely responsible for their growth and motivation.
2. DOAs often think they know it all and refuse assistance from other employees and their supervisors.
3. DOAs make statements about how behind the times the organization is and how out of touch the organization is.
4. DOAs want all the rewards available in the system without paying any dues or putting in the time to earn them.
5. DOAs often deviate from the organizational norms.
6. DOAs enjoy arguing over insignificant issues simply to get attention.
7. DOAs are constantly "poking their noses" into other peoples' business.
8. DOAs usually step on the toes of the people in the good old boys/girls clubs.
9. DOAs usually will talk negatively about their boss and their co-workers behind their backs at social gatherings or other functions outside the immediate work unit.
10. DOAs try to get things accomplished without following the proper communication channels in the organization.

Methods of Socialization

Now that we've explored the basic steps involved in the organizational entry and assimilation process, let's explore a number of issues related to socialization in the workplace. To help us explore methods of socialization, we're going to first explore socialization resources theory, then we'll examine the toolbox that most organizations use for assimilating new members, and lastly we'll discuss the communication strategies that new employees and organizations employ during the assimilation process.

Socialization Resources Theory

Alan Saks and Jamie Gruman have recently created an integrated approach for understanding effective organizational socialization, which they have deemed socialization resources theory.Saks, A. M., & Gruman, J. A. (2012). Getting newcomers on board: A review of socialization practices and introduction to socialization resources theory. In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of organizational socialization* (pp. 27–55). New York, NY: Oxford University Press. The basic premise of socialization resources theory is that during a period of stress (e.g., entering into a new organization), the availability of resources to that individual will determine her or his ability to cope with the stressful situation, which will in-turn help the individual adjust and successfully socialize within the organization. To help explain how effective socialization works, Saks and Gruman developed a list of seventeen resource dimensions that have been shown in both the academic and practitioner literatures on organizational socialization to facilitate effective organizational socialization. Table 10.4 "Dimensions of Socialization Resources Theory" provides an overview of the 17 dimensions.

Table 10.4 Dimensions of Socialization Resources Theory

	SRT Dimension	Explanation
Prior to Entry		
1.	Anticipatory Socialization	To what extent does an organization reach out to new members prior to organizational entry in an effort to make the new member feel welcome?
Immediately After Entry		
2.	Formal Orientation	What is the nature of a new employee's orientation (e.g., length, delivery method [face-to-face/online], what types of activities, & who is involved)?

	SRT Dimension	Explanation
3.	Proactive Encouragement	To what extent are new employees encouraged to actively meet new people, ask questions, and develop organizational relationships?
4.	Formal Assistance	Are new hires assigned formal mentors to help with organizational socialization?
Social Capital Resources		
5.	Social Events	To what extent does an organization hold formal social events (e.g., happy hours, lunches, parties, etc.)?
6.	Socialization Agents	To what extent do organizational insiders reach out to new hires informally?
7.	Supervisor Support	Do supervisors reach out to new employees demonstrating caring and support?
8.	Relationship Development	Does the organization provide the time and space for new hires to meet and develop relationships with other organizational members?
Work-Related Resources		
9.	Job Resources	Do new hires have the necessary resources (equipment and space) to perform their jobs?
10.	Personal Planning	To what extent does an organization clearly communicate work expectations to the new hire?
11.	Training	Does the organization provide relevant programs to provide a new employee necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively perform her or his job?
12.	Assignments	Are initial assigned tasks relevant to why the person was hired and provide some level of challenge and reflect the expectations of future task assignments?
13.	Information	To what extent does an organization clearly communicate information about the organization and its expectations?
14.	Feedback	Do supervisors provide timely and accurate feedback to new employees related to organizational values and task performance?
15.	Recognition & Appreciation	Are new employees praised for their effort and performance?
Follow-Up Period		
16.	Follow-Up	Does the organization have processes in place to follow an employee's progression after a formal orientation period has ended?
17.	Program Evaluation	To what extent and how often does an organization track the effectiveness of its organizational socialization programs?

The resources discussed in <u>Table 10.4 "Dimensions of Socialization Resources Theory"</u> really are considered the best practices in organizational socialization. As such, this list can be very effective when diagnosing an organization's current socialization practices. In essence, an organizational consultant could utilize this list of resource dimensions in an effort to determine where an organization succeeds and needs improvement in the organization's socialization efforts.

Tools for Assimilating New Members

As we've discussed above, assimilating new organizational members into the culture of the organization is very important. Organizational scholars commonly refer to the practice of assimilating new members as onboarding. **Onboarding**[14] refers to the process of welcoming and orienting new organizational members to facilitate their adjustment to the organization, its culture, and its practices. Klein and Polin argue that socialization is what happens within a new employee; whereas, onboarding processes are put in place by management and human resource departments to help facilitate socialization. Klein, H. J., & Polin, B. (2012). In C. R. Wanberg (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of organizational socialization* (pp. 267–287). New York, NY: Oxford University Press; pg. 268. As such, over the years a number of different types of onboarding programs were established. To help us understand the possible tools that organizations can utilize to facilitate onboarding, we are going to examine briefly orientation programs, training programs, and formal mentoring programs.

Orientation Programs

The first common tool used by organizations during an onboarding program involves some kind of formal orientation program. The general goal of an orientation program is to facilitate the general understanding of the organization and one's expected duties within the organization. New employee orientation programs can generally last from three hours to multiple days depending on the complexity of the organization and the duties expected by the new hire. Common topics during orientation programs include the history of the organization, the mission/vision of the organization, organizational rules, benefits of working for the organization, and other topics deemed necessary by either the organization or local, state, and federal government agencies.

Training Programs

The second way organizations go about onboarding new members is through training programs. The goal of formal training programs during the onboarding process is to facilitate the acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge needed complete one's job. Although there are some training programs that have broad

14. The process of welcoming and orienting new organizational members to facilitate their adjustment to the organization, its culture, and its practices.

organizational appeal (sexual harassment training, workplace bullying training, crisis management training, etc.), most of the training targeted towards newcomers is position-specific training. For example, maybe your position requires you to utilize Microsoft's Project Management software. To help you prepare to complete your training, your organization may send you to a workshop or possibly get you a subscription to an online training program like Lynda.com or TotalTraining.com. The goal of training programs is to help get new members up to speed as fast as humanly possible.

Formal Mentoring

As discussed in <u>Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives"</u>, mentoring is the transfer of experience or knowledge from a senior individual (the mentor) to a junior individual (the mentee or protégé) in an effort to help the junior individual learn the ins and outs of organizational life. To help with onboarding, many organizations establish formal mentoring programs where new members are assigned a mentor upon hiring who is supposed to help acclimate the new member to the organization. Formal mentoring is really only as successful as the mentors who participate in the mentoring programs. If the mentors are too busy or unconcerned with the new hires, then the formal mentoring program will not be overly effective. On the other hand, if organizations taking mentoring seriously and provide support and training for potential mentors, formal mentoring programs can be very successful. Notice this is not the same type of mentoring discussed in <u>Chapter 7 "Leader and Follower Behaviors & Perspectives"</u> when we discussed informal mentoring.

Communication & Socialization

One of the most important parts of socialization (and onboarding) involves the type, quantity, and quality of the communication sent and received by new employees during the socialization process. Fredric Jablin explained that there are four primary functions for communication during the socialization process: information giving, information seeking, relationship development, and role negotiation.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Information Giving

15. The types of information a new employee provides to coworkers and superiors during organizational entry.

The first function of communication during socialization involves information giving. **Information giving**[15] refers to the types of information a new employee provides to coworkers and superiors during organizational entry. How much and what one shares with others is extremely important during the initial periods of a

new job. Some employees are hesitant to provide any personal information to coworkers and supervisors until after they get to know them, but information giving is one of the easiest ways to help alleviate any fear coworkers or supervisors may have about a new hire. In a study conducted by Fredric Jablin, he found that 25.6% of a newcomer's communication was information-giving.Jablin, F. M. (1984). Assimilating new members into organizations. In R. N. Bostrom (Ed.), *Communication Yearbook 8* (pp. 594–626). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. Jablin further describes four basic types of information given by new employees: evaluative work, evaluative nonwork, descriptive work, and descriptive nonwork.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

The first form of information giving was labeled evaluative work and consists of information shared regarding one's like or dislike of the job itself. This could include discussions of unmet expectations or needs. The amount of stress one feels on the new job. One's overall level of motivation or job satisfaction with the new job. All of these forms of information giving are evaluative in nature and centered around the job itself.

Evaluative nonwork, on the other hand, examines the types of judgmental information given by a new hire about issues that are outside the confines of the organization itself. These could include evaluative statements related to other organizations an individual belongs to (e.g., social clubs, churches, etc.). These statements could also examine how the job affects one's participation in nonwork activities. Again, all of these types of information giving focus on judgments of nonwork activities.

Next, you have descriptive work information giving, which focuses on information provided by a new employee related to one's understanding of a specific organizational or job task (e.g., task performance, task goals, and task instructions). Again, the purpose of this information is not to judge what is occurring within the organization, but to provide information to others about the specific tasks.

Lastly, individuals can provide information that describes nonwork activities. Generally, these forms of information relate to individual's hobbies, family life, and personal goals. For example, maybe a new coworker went to the movies last night and tells you about the plot. Maybe another new coworker was recently married and shows you pictures of her or his wedding. Both of these examples involve new employees simply providing organizational members more information about the new employee in an effort to help older organizational members learn about the new employee.

Information Seeking

The second type of communicative behavior that occurs during organizational socialization is information seeking. **Information seeking**[16] involves a new employee's proactive search for information. In a study conducted by Vernon Miller and Fredric Jablin, the researchers observed seven basic tactics that new employees utilize when attempting to seek information.Miller, V. D., & Jablin, F. M. (1991). Information seeking during organizational entry: Influences, tactics, and a model of the process. *Academy of Management Review, 16*, 92–120. The seven tactics can be found in <u>Table 10.5 "Information Seeking Tactics"</u>.

Table 10.5 Information Seeking Tactics

1. Overt: Asking for information in a direct manner.
2. Indirect: Getting others to give information by hinting and use of noninterrogative questions.
3. Third Party: Asking someone else rather than the primary information target.
4. Testing: Breaking a rule, annoying the target, and so on and then observing the target's reaction.
5. Disguising Conversations: Use of jokes, verbal prompts, self-disclosure, and so on to ease information from the target without the person's awareness.
6. Observing: Watching another's actions to model behavior or discern meanings associated with events.
7. Surveillance: Indiscriminately monitoring conversations and activities to which meaning can be retrospectively attributed. Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; pg. 770.

Relationship Development

The next purpose of communication during organizational assimilation involves the development of relationships with coworkers and supervisors. As discussed earlier in this chapter, we spend a considerable amount of time in our lives at work. Of that time we spend at work, a great deal of it involves interacting with our coworkers and supervisors. As such, one of the primary reasons we communicate with people when we first enter into an organization is to develop relationships (both formal and friendly) with the people in our workplace. Although we may not become "best" friends with our coworkers and supervisors, most of us will make friends at work. In fact, research examining friendship in the workplace has demonstrated that organizations that encourage the development of workplace friendships will

16. A new employee's proactive search for information.

have employees who are more satisfied, motivated, and productive.Nielsen, I. K., Jex, S. M., & Adams, G. A. (2000). Development and validation of scores on a two-dimensional workplace friendship scale. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 60*, 628–643.

Role Negotiation

The final reason for communication during the entry stage of organizational socialization involves role negotiation. Earlier in this chapter we discussed the idea of how new employees attempt to individualize their work experience. Role negotiation is a part of this individualization. Although employees often wait an appropriate amount of time before starting the individualization of their workplace, eventually a new employee will have built up enough credibility to start conversations with coworkers and supervisors to individualize their workplace. **Role negotiations**[17] occurs when an employee attempts to negotiate with her or his supervisor about communicated expectations. When people are hired, there are clearly established expectations related to the job in question (sometimes called a job description). These expectations can involve everything from the tasks one completes to one's place in the organizational hierarchy. When one attempts to engage in role negotiation, the new employee is attempting to alter her or his supervisor's expectations in an effort to alter or individualize the new employee's work life.

17. The process that occurs when an employee attempts to negotiate with her or his supervisor about communicated expectations.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fredric Jablin articulated three basic stages of organizational socialization: anticipatory socialization, organizational entry/ assimilation, and organization disengagement/exit. Anticipatory socialization is the period of time before an individual enters into an organization. Organizational entry/assimilation is the period of time that occurs from the moment an individual enters an organization to the moment he or she becomes an established member of the organization. Organizational disengagement/exit is the period of time when an individual has decided to leave an organization to the moment he or she actually makes her or his exit.

- Vocational anticipatory socialization is the process an individual undertakes as he or she selects a specific job or career. From our earliest moments in life, our families, peers, teachers, and organizational experiences socialize us and teach us about the world of work. Organizational anticipatory socialization, on the other hand, is the process and individual goes through as he or she attempts to find an organization to join.

- Fredrick Jablin's proposed a three-step process for organizational entry and assimilation: preentry, entry, and metamorphosis. Preentry is the period of time after someone has been asked to join an organization but before he or she is actually working within the organization. Entry refers to the period of time when an individual first enters into the organization and goes through traditional orientation and socialization processes. Lastly, Metamorphosis occurs when an individual transforms her or himself from a new organizational member to an established member of the organization.

- Alan Saks and Jamie Gruman socialization resources theory examines the types of resources new employees need to effectively socialize within an organization. The theory starts with the notion that people undergoing periods of stress (like entering into a new organization) need to be provided with necessary resources to help manage and alleviate the stress. Based on research in scholarly journals and the popular press, Saks and Gruman developed a typology of 17 different "best practices" for the types of resources necessary for effective organizational socialization.

- Onboarding is the process of welcoming and orienting new organizational members to facilitate their adjustment to the organization, its culture, and its practices. Organizations historically have utilized three different techniques for successful onboarding: orientation programs (formalized program that facilitates the general understanding of the organization and one's expected duties within the

organization), training programs (programs designed to facilitate the acquisition of necessary skills and knowledge needed complete one's job.), and formal mentoring (programs designed to help facilitate the transfer of experience or knowledge from a senior individual to a junior individual in an effort to help the junior individual learn the ins and outs of organizational life.).

- Communication is a very important part of new employee socialization. Fredric Jablin explained that there are four primary functions for communication during the socialization process: information giving, information seeking, relationship development, and role negotiation. First, organizations engage in information giving, or the types of information a new employee provides to coworkers and superiors during organizational entry. Second, new employees engage in information seeking, which involves new employees proactively seeking out information necessary to accomplish one's job. Third, new employees use communication to develop relationships with their supervisors and coworkers. Lastly, new employees use communication to engage in role negotiations, which occur when an employee attempts to negotiate with her or his supervisor about communicated expectations.

EXERCISES

1. Think about your most recent job. What types of socialization activities did your employer engage in? Do you think these activities were effective in your socialization? Why or why not?
2. Using a previous organizational experience, describe your own experience with organizational socialization using Fredrick Jablin's three-step process for organizational entry and assimilation: preentry, entry, and metamorphosis.
3. Using a previous organizational experience, provide examples Fredric Jablin's four primary functions for communication during the socialization process: information giving, information seeking, relationship development, and role negotiation.

10.3 Disengaging

As discussed in <u>Figure 10.6 "Organizational Socialization"</u>, there are three primary phases of organizational socialization. The first two were discussed in the previous section. In this section, we're going to examine the final part of organizational socialization, how individuals go about disengaging from an organization. To help us understand disengagement, we are going to examine two types of organizational-disengagement and the steps of disengagement.

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Types of Organizational Disengagement

Disengagement[18] is the process an individual goes through when considering a separation and then separating oneself from an organization.Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. For our purposes, we are going to examine disengagement in terms of either a voluntary process or an involuntary process.

Voluntary Disengagement

Voluntary disengagement[19] occurs when an individual decides that he or she needs to look for alternatives elsewhere. There are countless reasons for why an individual may decide that it's time to move on. Whether someone sees greener pastures elsewhere or just needs a change of scenery, people regularly change their jobs. People also voluntary disengage from a job when they transfer to another department or division or retire. As noted earlier in this chapter, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, "The average person born in the latter years of the baby boom (1957–1964) held 11.3 jobs from age 18 to age 46, according to the U.S. Bureau

18. The process an individual goes through when considering a separation and then separating oneself from an organization.

19. Form of disengagement that occurs when an individual decides that he or she needs to look for alternatives elsewhere.

of Labor Statistics. Nearly half of these jobs were held from ages 18 to 24."Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012, July 25). Number of jobs held, labor market activity, and earnings growth among the youngest baby boomers: Results from a longitudinal survey. (USDL-12-1489). Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf; para. 1. There is no reason to suspect that this trend is going to change any time soon.

Involuntary Disengagement

Involuntary disengagement[20] occurs when an individual is forced to leave an organization. The most common forms of involuntary disengagement are getting fired or getting downsized (involuntary turnover), but getting fired or downsized are only two forms of disengagement that are involuntary. Other forms of involuntary disengagement include changes that happen as a result of mergers or acquisitions or non-voluntary transfers. In each of these last two cases, individuals are moved to a new position or transferred to a new location with the threat that noncompliance will result in losing one's job.

Steps of Disengagement

Whether someone is going through voluntary or involuntary disengagement, Fredric Jablin proposed the general steps that he or she will take are generally fourfold: preannouncement, announcement of exit, actual exit, and postexit. Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Let's look at each of these steps.

Preannouncement Step

Communication during the **preannouncement step**[21] of disengagement involves any cues or signals one consciously or unconsciously sends when someone dissatisfied with particular people, work, or the organization. Consciously sent cues and signals may include decreased productivity or increased incidences of absenteeism or lateness. These cues send the message that you are officially starting to "check out." Dissatisfied coworkers may also start to have conversations with their families and friends about the possibility of finding a new job long before they have they start to disengage in the workplace itself. These

Other cues may be subconsciously sent but are observable to others. For example, someone may increase her or his voicing of dissatisfaction with one's coworkers, supervisors, work, or the organization as a whole. Although the person may realize

20. Form of disengagement that occurs when an individual is forced to leave an organization.

21. Step in the disengagement process involving any cues or signals one either consciously or unconsciously sent by someone dissatisfied with particular people, work, or the organization.

that he or she is voicing dissatisfaction, he or she may not realize that others are seeing the increased dissatisfaction as an indication that the person is starting to disengage. Even if someone is not voluntarily disengaging, coworkers and supervisors may view a change in someone's attitude at work, decrease in organizational citizenship, or decrease in organizational commitment as indicators that he or she needs to be corrected or forced out of the organization.

Announcement of Exit Step

Eventually, the dissatisfied organizational member will officially make it known that he or she is leaving (voluntary disengagement), or the organization will make it known that the organizational member will be leaving (involuntary disengagement), which occurs in the **announcement of exit step**[22]. It is not uncommon for people to roll-out one's announcement of exit over a period of weeks or even months depending on the nature of one's job. One of our coauthors once had a letter of resignation sitting in his desk waiting to be sent to his immediate superior 30 days prior to his intended last day of work. His secretary knew that he had accepted another position two months prior, but she had been the only organizational member to know that he was leaving. Unfortunately, he let it slip a week early to his most vocal coworker that he wouldn't be around long enough to work on a project and that she should probably assign someone else the task. Within 10 minutes, he started receiving phone calls from coworkers, and within 24 hours the organization was already having phone conferences determining what would happen to his position post-voluntary turnover. Obviously, this announcement did not go as originally planned.

The purpose of communication during the exit step is to help reduce uncertainty on the parts of those leaving and those staying within the organization. On the part of the individual, the announcement of exit step helps to solidify that leaving is going to be a "good thing." On the part of coworkers, communication helps to create accounts and justifications for why the individual is voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the organization. According to Jablin, exit accounts provided by those leaving an organization typically fall into one of four categories:

22. Step in the disengagement process when either a dissatisfied organizational member officially makes it known that he or she is leaving (voluntary disengagement), or when the organization makes it known that the organizational member will be leaving (involuntary disengagement).

1. exit will facilitate the person's achieving long-term goals (future orientation),
2. exit allows one to avoid a bad situation/problems at work,
3. exit is due to unique circumstances (e.g., organizational restructuring, spouses' job, unique opportunity), or
4. some mixture of the above kinds of accounts. Jablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational*

communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; g. 790.

Of course, Fredric Jablin also recognized that organizational members sticking around have options for how they respond to these accounts as wellJablin, F. M. (2001). Organizational entry, assimilation, and disengagement/exit. In F. M. Jablin & L. L. Putnam (Eds.), *The new handbook of organizational communication: Advances in theory, research, and methods* (pp. 732–818). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; g. 790.:

1. simply accept the leave-taker's account,
2. blend the leave-taker's account with the one circulating around the office,
3. reject the account provided by the leave-taker,
4. construct a new account based on some of the information provided by the leave-taker, or
5. create a brand new account for why the person is actually leaving.

Actual Exit Step

Finally, the individual actually leaves the organization, which is referred to as the **actual exit step**[23]. Now, the period from which an individual announces exit to when he or she exits the organization can happen in a manner of minutes to months depending on whether the exit is voluntary or involuntary and the post-exit plans of the person taking leave. If the parting is amicable, it's possible there will be celebrations to honor the person as he or she leaves (retirement or going away parties). If the parting is not amicable, the person may simply not be there one day and coworkers will speak in hushed tones about the person's exit.

Communication during the actual exit step is generally focused on how the leave taker behaves and how her or his coworkers respond to the actual disengagement. We always recommend that when taking leave an organization don't burn any bridges—it's just not worth it in the long run. Instead, even if you're in a situation where you are being involuntarily turned over, it's in your best interest to keep your communication professional. Coworkers should also keep things professional during the actual process of exiting. Even if you didn't like a specific colleague, it really just isn't professional to come off looking catty, vindictive, or happy that you've pushed someone out of the organization.

Postexit Step

The final step in organizational disengagement is the **post-exit step**[24]. When someone finally leaves an organization (whether voluntary or involuntary), those

23. Step in the disengagement process when an organizational members actually leaves the organization.

24. Step in the disengagement process when an individual who has left an organization makes sense of her or his experiences within the organization and when organizational members make sense of the former colleague's departure.

who are left behind need to deal with her or his absence. For example, who has to take on the person's workload? Are you going to re-hire for that position, or are you just going to let the position go unfilled for a period? These are basic questions that organizational members ask as they attempt to understand how the work environment has altered because the person has left the organization.

At the same time, the person who has left the organization also has to renegotiate who he or she is as a person now that the association with the organization is no more. People always associate their lives to some extent with their jobs or careers. When someone leaves an organization (whether voluntarily or involuntarily), he or she is forced to create a new version of whom he or she is as a person. Obviously, if you left of your own free will and both you and the organization consider your leaving amicable, you may have a quicker adjustment period postext. Conversely, if you've spent the greater part of your life working for an organization only to be downsized a couple of years before retirement, your adjustment and view of your former organization is going to be much more complicated. Furthermore, you may find yourself having to explain why you've left the organization for many years to come, so the postexit communication process may be one that takes years to effectively complete.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- When people disengage from an organization there are two basic types of disengagement: voluntary and involuntary. Voluntary disengagement occurs when an individual decides that he or she needs to look for alternatives elsewhere. Involuntary disengagement, on the other hand, occurs when an individual is forced to leave an organization.
- Explain Fredric Jablin's four step model of organizational disengagement: preannouncement, announcement of exit, actual exit, and postexit.. The preannouncement step occurs when an individual transmits cues or signals, either consciously or unconsciously, because he or she is dissatisfied with particular people, work, or the organization. Next is the announcement of exit step, which occurs when either the individual (when voluntary) or the organization (when involuntary) announces that the employee will be exiting the organization. Third, is the actual exiting of the individual, which occurs when the employee makes her or his departure. Lastly, the individual who has left the organization makes sense of her or his experiences within the organization while organizational members make sense of their former colleague's departure.

EXERCISES

1. Describe a time when you were a part of either involuntary or voluntary disengagement. Explain how communication occurred during the period of disengagement.
2. Take a time when you've left an organization. Using Jablin's four step model of organizational disengagement, describe your experience leaving the organization.

10.4 Chapter Exercises

Real World Case Study

The following case study is based on a first-person narrative article published in the *Harvard Business Review*.Grossman, M. (2011). HSN's CEO on fixing the shopping network's culture. *Harvard Business Review, 89*(12), 43–46.

Mindy Grossman had worked for Nike for six years when she was passed up for a promotion. Although she realized that the men who got the job were deserving, she knew that her only possibility for ensuring progress in her career was to look for CEO jobs outside of Nike. Eventually, a corporate recruiter asked if she would be interested in applying for the CEO position at IAC Retailing. Her first question, "What's IAC Retailing?"

IAC Retailing's flagship was the Home Shopping Network (HSN) along with a number of minor companies abroad. In the previous ten years, HSN had seven different CEOs, so Grossman quickly realized that something was wrong with how things were run at IAC Retailing. On her first trip to HSN's headquarters in Florida, she was surprised to find a dirty office, apathetic employees, and an organization at a loss for innovation.

Shortly before starting her job, she received a call from the head of Human Resources who asked what she would like to do on the first day of her job. She responded by asking, "What do other employees do on the first day?" "They go to new employee orientation," the head of HR Responded. Much to the surprise of the head of HR, Grossman responded that she would also go through new employee orientation. During the orientation she saw the basic product line, took a tour of the set, and even listened to individuals in the call center. Going through the orientation process provided Grossman with a quick and comprehensive snapshot of the organization and how it functioned and those places where the organization currently was not functioning.

Since taking over the reins at IAC Retailing, she's turned HSN from a second-tier shopping channel into a direct-to-viewer shopping powerhouse. In August of 2008, she took the company public and despite a downtrodden economy, by 2011 HSN was valued at over $2 billion.

1. Do you think new CEOs should go through new employee orientation? Why?
2. How do you think going through the orientation process at HSN impacted Grossman's credibility among her new subordinates?
3. Do you think Grossman's success at HSN is directly related to the understanding of the organization she received during her new employee orientation? Why?

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End-of-Chapter Assessment Head

1. Darlene is in the process of putting together her organization's plan for hiring a new Chief Financial Officer (CFO). One of the parts of her plan involves thinking through the communicative messages she wants potential CFOs to receive. According to Breaugh, Macan, and Grambow, which step of the model of employee recruitment is Darlene engaging?

   a. recruitment objectives
   b. recruitment strategy
   c. recruitment activities
   d. applicant interview
   e. recruitment results

2. Which theory of realistic job previews explains that realistic job previews work because the RJP prepares a new hire in incremental steps for the day-to-day life the new hire is going to experience within the organization?

   a. inoculation theory
   b. self-selection theory
   c. organizational socialization theory
   d. socialization resources theory
   e. disengagement theory

3. One of the ways employees are socialized into the world of work is through families, friends, and educational experiences. What type of socialization do these represent?

   a. preventive socialization
   b. organizational anticipatory socialization
   c. precautionary socialization
   d. vocational anticipatory socialization
   e. business-related anticipatory socialization

4. Bobby has only recently started working at Universal Corp. During a lunch room conversation, he mentions to a new coworker that he is an avid snowboarder. According to Fredric Jablin, what type of information giving is Bobby engaging in?

   a. evaluative work
   b. evaluative non-work

</div>

      c. descriptive work

      d. descriptive non-work

      e. information acquisition

5. Peter is feeling more and more disgruntled at work. His productivity is slipping and he just doesn't seem to care much about his job anymore. Although Peter hasn't said anything to anyone, most people in his office assume he's on the job market. According to Fredric Jablin, which step in disengagement is Peter exemplifying?

      a. preannouncement

      b. announcement

      c. pre-exit

      d. actual exit

      e. post exit

Answer Key

1. B
2. A
3. D
4. D
5. A

Chapter 11

Teams in the Workplace

11.1 Group vs. Team

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

11.2 Characteristics of Teams

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

11.3 Types of Teams

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

11.4 The Downside to Teams

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 12

Entering, Socializing, and Disengaging

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

12.1 Entering

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

12.2 Socializing

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

12.3 Disengaging

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 13

Technology in Organizations

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.1 Innovation in Organizations

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.2 A Brief History of Technology in Organizations

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.3 Why We Use Technology

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.4 Benefits of Technology on Organizational Outcomes

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.5 Knowledge Management

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

13.6 The Downside to Technology in the Organization

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 14

Stress, Conflict, and Negotiation

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

14.1 Stress

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

14.2 Conflict

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

14.3 Negotiation

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 15

The Dark Side of Organizational Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

15.1 Aggression in the Workplace

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

15.2 Discrimination in the Workplace

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

15.3 Employee Behavior

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

15.4 Organizational Behavior

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

15.5 Outcomes of the Dark Side

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 16

Corporate Communications: Communicating with External Stakeholders

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

16.1 Communication with an Organization's Environment

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

16.2 Types of External Stakeholders

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

16.3 Public Relations and Marketing

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

16.4 Sales

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

16.5 Customer Service

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 17

Strategic Communication (issue management, risk communication, & crisis communication)

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

17.1 Corporate Issue Management

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

17.2 Risk Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

17.3 Crisis Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 18

The Professional Side of Organizational Communication

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

18.1 Organizational Development

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

18.2 Communication Analysis

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

18.3 Organizational Change

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

18.4 Workplace Learning

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

18.5 Human Performance Improvement

PLEASE NOTE: This book is currently in draft form; material is not final.

Chapter 19

Organizational Communication and Your First Job out of College

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