



This is “The Power of Effective Communication”, chapter 5 from the book [Powerful Selling \(index.html\)](#) (v. 1.0).

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Chapter 5

The Power of Effective Communication

Video Ride-Along with Andrew Sykes, Pharmaceutical Sales Specialist at AstraZeneca

Meet Andrew Sykes. He is a pharmaceutical sales specialist in the medical care division at AstraZeneca, one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in the world. He has been in sales for five years. Andrew calls on doctors and educates them about the products he represents. His success is measured by the number of prescriptions written by doctors for the drugs for which he is responsible.

Ride along with Andrew and get his perspective on how communication works (and doesn't work) in sales. Learn about Andrew's tips for effective communication. You might be surprised by what you hear.

[\(click to see video\)](#)

5.1 Ready, Set, Communicate

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the elements of effective business communication.
2. Recognize the implications of different types of verbal and nonverbal communication.
3. Learn how your dress communicates in an interview and the workplace.
4. Discuss how technology tools can help a salesperson manage customer relationships.

A text message.

A voice mail.

A passing comment.

A Facebook post.

An unreturned phone call.

Have you ever had one of these communications be misinterpreted? You meant one thing, but your friend thought you meant something else? Sometimes, the miscommunication can result in the confusion of a meeting time or a place to get together. Or worse, it can be entirely misunderstood and may have a negative impact on your relationship.

Communication¹, the exchange of information or ideas between sender and receiver, is a challenging aspect in your personal life, at school, and especially in selling. Today, it's even more complex with business being conducted around the world and with varying communication methods. In this constant, high-speed business environment, communication blunders can cost you more than you might think. Did you ever hear the saying, "You only have one chance to make a good first impression"? It couldn't be truer when it comes to communication: The first two seconds of communication are so important that it takes another four minutes to

1. The exchange of information or ideas between sender and receiver.

add 50 percent more information to an impression—positive or negative—within that communication. Dave Rothfield, “Communicating Simply, Directly Will Improve You, Your Business,” *Orlando Business Journal*, May 15, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/05/18/smallb2.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009). Communication has often been referred to as a **soft skill**², which includes other competencies such as social graces, personality traits, language abilities, and ability to work with other people. Soft skills also encompass **emotional intelligence**³, which Adele B. Lynn, in her book *The EQ Interview: Finding Employees with High Emotional Intelligence*, defines as “a person’s ability to manage herself as well as her relationship with others so she can live her intentions.” “Interviewing for Emotional Intelligence,” *Selling Power Hiring & Recruiting eNewsletter*, October 15, 2008, <http://www.sellingpower.com/content/newsletter/issue.php?pc=878> (accessed March 16, 2010). But in today’s business world, communication has become part of the new “**hard skills**”⁴ category, a technical job requirement, because of the critical role that it plays in business. Patricia M. Buhler, “Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,” *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19. According to Peter Post, great-grandson of the late Emily Post, “Your skills can get you in the door; your people skills are what can seal the deal.” The Emily Post Institute, <http://www.emilypost.com/business/index.htm> (accessed July 13, 2009).

Misunderstood = Miscommunicated

In Chapter 3 "The Power of Building Relationships: Putting Adaptive Selling to Work" you learned about the importance of relationships. In fact, it is almost impossible to be in sales without developing relationships inside your organization and with your customers. Your relationship skills build trust, allow you to be a true partner, and help solve your customer’s problems; both internal trust and external communication are essential keys to your ability to deliver on your promises. How are these qualities intrinsically related? The way in which you communicate can determine the level of trust that your colleagues or customers have in you. Gail Fann Thomas, Roxanne Zoliln, and Jackie L. Harman, “The Central Role of Communication in Developing Trust and Its Effect on Employee Involvement,” *Journal of Business Communication* 46, no. 3 (July 2009): 287.

Just like relationships are the cornerstone of trust, communication is the foundation of relationships. But it’s difficult to establish and develop relationships; it takes work and a lot of clear communication. You might think that sounds simple, but consider this: Nearly 75 percent of communications that are received are interpreted incorrectly. At the same time, interestingly, many people consider themselves good communicators. The telling disconnect occurs because people tend to assume that they know what other people mean or people assume that others know what they mean. This is compounded by the fact that people tend to hear

2. A term that relates to a person’s communication skills, social graces, personality traits, language abilities, and the ability to work with others.

3. A person’s ability to manage herself as well as her relationship with others so she can live her intentions.

4. Technical knowledge required to perform a specific job.

what they want to hear—that is, a person may interpret elements of a conversation in such a way that the taken meanings contribute to his already established beliefs. When you put these assumptions together, communication can easily become “miscommunication.” Patricia M. Buhler, “Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,” *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.

The Communication Model

The standard model of communication has evolved based on two parties—the **sender**⁵ and the **receiver**⁶—exchanging information or ideas. The model includes major processes and functions categorized as **encoding**⁷, **decoding**⁸, **response**⁹, and **feedback**¹⁰. In addition, the model accounts for **noise**¹¹, which symbolizes anything that might disrupt the sending or receiving of a message. George E. Belch and Michael A. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin, 2009), 146. The communication model is shown in **Figure 5.1 “Traditional Communication Process”**.

Figure 5.1 Traditional Communication Process Source: Adapted from Michael R. Solomon, Greg W. Marshall, and Elnora W. Stewart, *Marketing: Real People, Real Choices*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 378.



5. Person who originates a message or communication.
6. Person who is the intended recipient of a message or communication.
7. The process of converting a message to be sent to a receiver into a symbolic form such as letters, pictures, or language.
8. The process of converting an encoded message into meaning on the part of the receiver.
9. An action taken by the receiver in response to a message.
10. The method of providing information back to the sender in response the message.
11. Anything that can interfere with the communication of a message between sender and receiver.
12. The method by which a message is communicated.

The model helps describe exactly how communication takes place. For example, if you send a text message to your friend to ask him if he wants to go a movie, you are the source, or sender, of the message. You translated or encoded your message into text characters. A personal digital assistant (PDA) such as a BlackBerry, iPhone, or cell phone is the **channel**¹², or the method by which you communicated your message. Chances are, if your friend does not have his PDA or cell phone with him, your message will not reach him, and you might miss the movie. So in this example, the PDA or cell phone is the channel. When your friend, the receiver, reads the message, he decodes it or determines what you meant to communicate, and then he responds. If he was talking to another friend while he was reading your text message and didn’t see the time the movie started, that conversation would be considered noise because it would be interfering with the communication of your message. Noise interferes with communication or causes distraction, whether it is heard or seen. When your friend responds to you by saying that he wants to go see

the movie, he is providing feedback (or a response to your message). Figure 5.2 "Communication Process Example" shows this example applied to the communication model.

The same thing can happen in a selling situation. For example, if you call a prospect to set up a meeting, you are the sender. The message is the meeting information (e.g., date, time, and place) that you encode into words. The channel is the telephone, and the receiver is the prospect. It sounds easy enough. Assume, however, that the prospect responds to you and agrees to the meeting. But because he was checking his e-mails while he was talking to you (which is noise), he puts the wrong time on his calendar. When you come for the appointment, he's out of the office, and your sales call doesn't take place. Now you have to start the communication process all over again. This is only an example of simply setting up a meeting. Now imagine the challenges if you started explaining the features and benefits of a complex product or negotiating a contract. You can see why understanding the communication process is so important in selling.

Figure 5.2 *Communication Process Example*



Did You Know...?

- Positive e-mail messages are likely to be interpreted as neutral.
- Neutral e-mail messages are likely to be perceived as negative.
- People who send e-mails overrate their ability to communicate feelings.
- There is a gap between how a sender *feels* when he writes the e-mail and the way the emotional content is communicated that can cause an error in decoding on the part of the receiver.
- One simple e-mail can lead to a communication debacle if the e-mail is not clearly written and well thought out from the recipient's point of view. Jeremy Dean, "Avoid Email Miscommunication," PsyBlog, <http://www.spring.org.uk/2007/10/avoid-email-miscommunication.php> (accessed July 15, 2009).

Effective Communication

How do you avoid the pitfalls of poor communication and build productive business relationships? It's best to always communicate in a timely manner and in the method that your customer prefers. That may be easier said than done. Here are six tips that can help you increase your chances of making your communications effective.

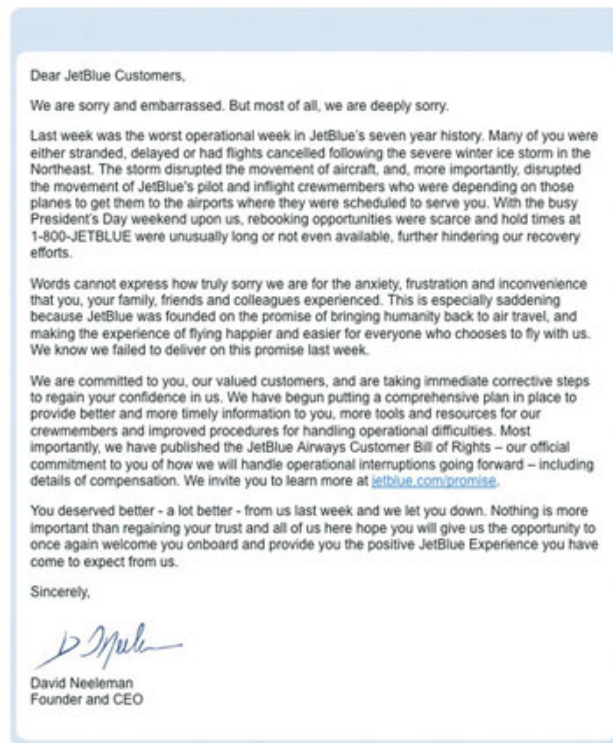
Tip 1: Empathy Is Essential

One of the key elements of being a good communicator is having empathy. That means thinking about your communication from the receiver's point of view. It's focusing on what *she* wants to learn as a result of your communication, not what you want to tell her. Empathy is about demonstrating that you care about the other person's situation. Think about when you received your acceptance letter from your college; the letter probably mentioned what an exciting time it is in your life. The author of the letter demonstrated empathy because she focused on the situation from your perspective. A purely factual letter, without empathy, might have said that you were accepted and that now the school can make their budget since they met their enrollment goal. That would be quite a different letter and would make you feel very different (and probably not very welcome). Although it's always best to be candid, you should deliver information from the receiver's point of view and address her concerns. Steve Aduato, "Empathy Is Essential to Effective Communication," NJBiz, <http://www.stand-deliver.com/njbiz/2008/020408.pdf> (accessed July 14, 2009).

Empathy is an integral part of emotional connection, one of the elements of a brand that you learned about in [Chapter 1 "The Power to Get What You Want in Life"](#). (Keep in mind that when you are in sales, you *are* the brand to the customer.) It is especially important to have an emotional connection and empathy when apologizing to customers. Chances are the customer is already angry, or at least disappointed, when you are not able to deliver as expected. You can express empathy in your communications by saying or writing, "You have every right to be upset. I understand how you must feel. I apologize for the late delivery. Let's work on a new process that will help prevent it from happening again." Mary Ellen Guffey, *Business Communication*, 6th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Publishing, 2008), 280. Some of the best brands have disappointed their customers but showed empathy when they apologized. For example, the letter from then JetBlue CEO David Neeleman shown in [Figure 5.3 "Letter of Apology from JetBlue"](#) is an example of a letter of apology that demonstrates empathy and emotional connection and also offers corrective action.

Figure 5.3 Letter of Apology from JetBlueJetBlue Airways, "An Apology from David Neeleman," <http://www.jetblue.com/about/ourcompany/apology/index.html> (accessed February 18, 2010).

An apology from David Neeleman



Tip 2: Think Before You Communicate

Quick responses, whether verbal or via electronic methods, can be less effective than those that are considered and can even cause misunderstanding. Although a timely response is critical, it's worth a few minutes to think about exactly what you want to say before you say it (or type it).

Tip 3: Be Clear

It seems obvious, but not everyone is clear in his communications. Sometimes, people are trying to avoid “bad news” or trying to avoid taking a stand on a topic. It's always best to avoid confusion and clearly say what you mean by framing your message in a way that is easily understood by all receivers. It's also a good idea to avoid **buzz words (or jargon)**¹³—those words, phrases, or acronyms that are used only in your company. If they can't be avoided, explain them in the same communication terms. You should also avoid jargon on your résumé and cover letter—help your reader see your brand story at a glance without needing a decoder ring.

Tip 4: Be Brief

Business communication should be short and to the point. Your customers are busy and need information—whether it's a proposal, report, or follow-up to a question—in a clear, concise way. It's best to avoid being verbose, especially in any business plans, proposals, or other significant documents. Patricia M. Buhler, “Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,” *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.

Tip 5: Be Specific

If you go to dinner at Cheesecake Factory and there is a wait to get a table, the hostess will hand you a portable pager and tell you that the wait will be twenty to twenty-five minutes. Perfect. You have just enough time to run a quick errand at a nearby store at the mall and be back in time to get your table. If, on the other hand, she told you that you will be seated shortly, you might have an expectation of being seated in five to ten minutes. Meanwhile, “shortly” might mean twenty to twenty-five minutes for her. You would probably forgo running your errand because you think you are going to be seated soon but end up waiting for twenty-five minutes and being frustrated. Being specific in your communication not only gives clarity to your message but also helps set your customer's expectations. In other words, your customer won't expect something you can't deliver if you are clear about what exactly you *can* deliver and when. The same is true for prices. For example, if you order from the menu at the Cheesecake Factory, you know precisely what you will

13. Words, phrases, or acronyms that are used only in a company.

get to eat and how much it will cost. However, if there is a menu special that you heard about tableside, but weren't told how much the dish was, you might be surprised (and disappointed) when you receive the check. Specificity avoids surprises and sets expectations. See some examples in [Table 5.1 "General versus Specific Statements"](#) of general statements that can be communicated more effectively when made into specific statements.

Table 5.1 General versus Specific Statements

General Statement	Specific Statement
I'll get back to you shortly.	I'll get back to you by Tuesday.
It will only take a few minutes.	It will take less than 5 minutes.
It will cost about \$5,000 plus installation.	The cost is \$4,800 plus \$200 for installation.
Everything is included.	It includes your choice of entrée, vegetable, dessert, and coffee.

Tip 6: Be Timely

Timing is everything in life and most certainly in selling. It's best to be proactive with communication, and if you owe someone a response, do it sooner rather than later. If you are slow to respond to questions and communication, it will be difficult to develop trust, as prolonged responses may seem to imply that you are taking action without informing the customer what it is you are doing. Timing is especially important when you are communicating a negative response or bad news. Don't put it off; do it as soon as possible and give your customer the benefit of complete information.

Rules of Engagement

At the beginning of each relationship, ask your customer how he prefers to communicate. Getting the answers to these simple questions will save time and confusion throughout your relationship and help ensure good communication.

- How do you prefer to receive regular communication (e-mail, text, phone, in person, hard copy)?
- What can I expect as a standard turnaround time for response to questions and issues?
- How do you prefer to receive urgent communication (e-mail, text, phone)?
- Who else (if anyone) in the organization would you like to also receive communication from me?
- When is the best time to touch base with you (early morning, midday, or later in the afternoon)?
- How frequently would you like a status update and in what format (e-mail, phone, in person)?

Listen Up

While you may think you are ready to communicate, it's a good idea to stop and listen first. Creating your message is only half of communication; listening is the other half. But it's difficult to listen because we listen faster than we speak—that is, based on what the other person is saying, we are already constructing responses in our minds before they have even finished. As a result, many people are guilty of “listening too fast.” Jeffrey J. Denning, “How to Improve Your Listening Skills, Avoid Mix-ups,” *Ophthalmology Times* 26, no. 10 (May 15, 2001): 28. Cicero once said that it is good thing that humans were given one mouth and two ears, in light of the way we use them. Patricia M. Buhler, “Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,” *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19.

Listening, in fact, is so important that companies like Starbucks believe that it may directly improve profits. According to Alan Gulick, a Starbucks Corporation spokesperson, if every Starbucks employee misheard one \$10 order each day, it would cost the company one billion dollars in a year. [citation redacted per publisher request]. That's why Starbucks has a process to teach their employees how to listen. Although listening may seem passive, it is actively linked to success: One study conducted in the insurance industry found that better listeners held

higher positions and got promoted more than those who did not have developed listening skills. Beverly Davenport Sypher, Robert N. Bostrom, and Joy Hart Seibert, “Listening, Communication Abilities and Success at Work,” *Journal of Business Communication* 26, no. 4 (Fall 1989): 293. So it’s worth it to hone your listening skills now so that when you get into the business world you can be successful. Here are a few tips:

- **Use active listening.** Confirm that you heard the sender correctly by saying something like, “Just to be sure I understand, we are going to move forward with twelve cases for your initial order, then revisit your inventory in five days.” Review the communication model above and take notice of the importance of decoding. If you decode a message from your customer incorrectly, the communication is ineffective and could even be costly. In the example above, the customer might have said in response, “I meant that the initial order should be five cases, and we’ll revisit the inventory in twelve days.” That’s a big difference.
- **Ask questions.** Questions are a way to gather more information and learn about your customer and their business. They are also an excellent way to demonstrate that you are communicating by listening. You learned in Chapter 2 "The Power to Choose Your Path: Careers in Sales" that asking the *right* questions is critical to being a successful salesperson. Focus on listening and asking the right questions, and you’ll be rewarded with great information.
- **Focus.** Although multitasking has seemingly become a modern virtue, focus actually helps create more effective communication. Stop and focus on your customer when he is speaking. This is a sign of respect, and this concentration allows you to absorb more information. Take notes to remember exactly what you discussed. There’s nothing more important than what your customer has to say. Jeffrey J. Denning, “How to Improve Your Listening Skills, Avoid Mix-ups,” *Ophthalmology Times* 26, no. 10 (May 15, 2001): 28.
- **Take notes.** While it may seem like you will remember everything that is said at a meeting or during a conversation, taking notes signals that you are listening, and it provides you with an accurate record of what was said. “The palest ink is better than the best memory.” “A Lesson on Listening,” Selling Power Pharmaceuticals eNewsletter, April 9, 2008, <http://www.sellingpower.com/content/newsletter/issue.php?pc=814> (accessed March 16, 2010).

Video Clip

Listen More, Talk Less

[\(click to see video\)](#)

This video highlights some challenges and tips for listening in sales.

Source: Josaine Feigon, <http://www.tele-smart.com>

Link

Are You a Good Listener?

Take this quiz to find out if you are a good listener.

<http://www.chuckbauer.com/resources/assessments/are-you-listening-an-assessment>

There's More to Communication than Meets the Eye...or Ear

It's important to remember that you will be communicating with many different people about many different topics in selling. Sometimes, you will be communicating one-on-one and sometimes you will be communicating with a group. Just as people have varying social styles (as you've learned in [Chapter 3 "The Power of Building Relationships: Putting Adaptive Selling to Work"](#)), it's important to know that people also absorb information differently. Research conducted in the 1970s indicates that people comprehend information in four distinct ways:

- **Why.** They want to know the reasons for doing something.
- **What.** They want to know the facts about it.
- **How.** They want to know only the information they need to get it done.
- **What if.** They want to know the consequences of doing it.

This can be a helpful road map of the elements you will want to include in your communications, especially if you are communicating with a group, since you may not know everyone's best method of absorbing information. It's been proven that if people don't receive the type of communication they prefer, they tend to tune out or reject the information.

You've probably noticed that both people and brands communicate the same message multiple times and usually in multiple ways. Creative repetition is key to

successful communication. Think about the advertising Pepsi ran when it launched its new logo in early 2009; you most likely saw the television commercial during the Super Bowl, noticed a billboard in a high-traffic area of a major city, received an e-mail, saw banner ads on the Internet, reviewed the commercial on YouTube, and saw the new logo on the packaging. Pepsi's ad campaign illustrates the "three-times convincer" concept, which claims that 80 percent of people need to be exposed a message three times to buy into it, 15 percent need to be exposed to it five times, and 5 percent need to be exposed to it up to twenty-five times. Natalie Zmuda, "Pepsi, Coke Try to Outdo Each Other with Rays of Sunshine," *Advertising Age*, January 19, 2009, http://adage.com/abstract.php?article_id=133859 (accessed July 14, 2009). You may have seen the message so many times that it's hard to remember what the old logo even looked like.

Types of Communication

It is important to use multiple types of communication so that repetition does not become boring like a broken record. There are three types of communication: **verbal**¹⁴, which involves speaking to one or many people to convey a message; **nonverbal**¹⁵, which includes body language and other observations about people; and **written**¹⁶, which includes a message that is read in hard copy, e-mail, text message, instant message, Facebook, Twitter, blog, or other Internet-based written communication. [citation redacted per publisher request]. Varying the usage of these mediums can help ensure your customer's attention, but you must carefully develop each skill separately to communicate effectively.

Verbal Communication

An introduction, a presentation, a telephone conversation, a videoconference call: these are all examples of verbal communication because information is transmitted orally. Despite the ubiquitous use of technology in the business world, verbal communication is the most common method of exchanging information and ideas. Verbal communication is powerful, fast, and natural and includes voice inflections that help senders and receivers understand the message more clearly. The downside to verbal communication is that once it is spoken, the words are essentially gone; they are preserved only in the memory of those present, and sometimes the memories of the specific words spoken vary dramatically. The he-said-she-said argument is an example of this. No one really knows who said what unless the words are recorded. Recall is rarely exactly the same between two or more people.

Voice inflection¹⁷, the verbal emphasis you put on certain words, can have a significant impact on the meaning of what you say. In fact, the same words can take on completely different meaning based on the inflection you use. For example, if

14. Communication that involves speaking to one or many people.

15. Communication that includes body language and other observations about people.

16. Communication that is done by way of printed words on paper or a screen.

17. Verbal emphasis on certain words.

you say the sentence in [Figure 5.4 "The Impact of Intonation"](#) with an inflection on a different word each time, the sentence communicates something completely different each time.

Figure 5.4 The Impact of Intonation

Sentence	Meaning
I borrowed your book.	I was the one who took your book.
I borrowed your book.	I didn't take your book; I only borrowed it.
I borrowed your book.	Your book was the one I borrowed.
I borrowed your book .	I borrowed your book, not your laptop.

Source: Based on ideas in Kiely, M. (October, 1993). When “no” means “yes.” *Marketing*, 7–9.

You may also enjoy hearing recognized selling expert Zig Ziglar discuss the importance of intonation in a sales call.

Video Clip

Zig Ziglar Says It Best

It’s not what you say; it’s how you say it.

<http://www.candogo.com/search/insight?i=1581>

- 18. A meeting that takes place in at least two remote locations and includes technology support to see and hear people in all locations simultaneously.
- 19. An audio broadcast transmitted via an MP3 player.
- 20. A meeting that takes place on the Internet that allows participants in remote locations to view what is on the screen and hear the speaker and ask questions.

Verbal communication may take place face-to-face, such as an in-person conversation or group meeting, speech, or presentation. It could also take place by phone in an individual conversation, a conference call, or even a voice mail. Other forms of verbal communication include **videoconferences**¹⁸, **podcasts**¹⁹, and **Webinars**²⁰, which are increasingly common in business. All these methods allow you to use inflection to communicate effectively. Face-to-face meetings also provide the opportunity to use and interpret other visual cues to increase the effectiveness of your communication.

Verbal communication is especially important throughout the steps of the selling process. Your choice of words can make the difference in someone's decision to first hear your sales presentation, and your presentation can determine whether that person will purchase your product or service. You will learn more specifically about how communication is used throughout the selling process covered in later chapters.

Nonverbal Communication

Imagine that you are in a retail store buying a suit for an interview. When the salesperson approaches you, she smiles, makes eye contact, and shakes your hand. You respond positively. You notice that she is dressed professionally, so she makes you feel as if you will receive good fashion advice from her. When you make your choice, the tailor comes over wearing a tape measure around his neck. You know he is a professional and you can trust him to alter your new suit properly. On the other hand, if the salesperson waits on you only after you interrupt her personal phone call, doesn't make eye contact or shake your hand, acts as if she is bored being at work, and is dressed in worn jeans and flip-flops, it's unlikely that you trust her to help you choose your suit.

You have, no doubt, used and noticed nonverbal communication in virtually every personal encounter you have had. Think about it: A gesture, a smile, a nod, eye contact, what you are wearing, the fact that you are frequently checking your cell phone for text messages, and how close you stand to someone are all examples of nonverbal communication.

Video Clip

Say versus Do

[\(click to see video\)](#)

This video describes the difference between verbal and nonverbal communication.

Source: eHow.com

21. Formula used to explain situations in which verbal communication and nonverbal communication do not match; in other words, when facial expressions contradict words, people tend to believe the facial expressions.

Nonverbal communication is extremely powerful. In fact, some studies indicate that the influence from nonverbal communication such as tone and visuals can have a greater impact than the spoken words. Dr. Albert Mehrabian, a famed psychologist and professor emeritus of psychology at University of California, Los Angeles, is considered a pioneer in the area of body language and nonverbal communication. His research includes an equation, called the **Mehrabian formula**²¹, Albert

Mehrabian, “Silent Messages,” <http://www.kaaj.com/psych/smorder.html> (accessed July 15, 2009). that is frequently used to define the relative impact of verbal and nonverbal messages based on experiments of communication of feelings and attitudes. Dr. Mehrabian developed the formula shown in **Figure 5.5 "The Mehrabian Formula"** to define how communication takes place.

Figure 5.5 *The Mehrabian Formula*

$$\text{Total liking} = 7\% \text{ verbal liking} + 38\% \text{ vocal liking} + 55\% \text{ facial liking}$$

The Mehrabian formula is used to explain situations in which verbal communication and nonverbal communication do not match. In other words, when facial expressions contradict words, people tend to believe the facial expressions. “Mehrabian’s Communication Research,” Businessballs.com, <http://www.businessballs.com/mehrabiancommunications.htm> (accessed July 15, 2009).

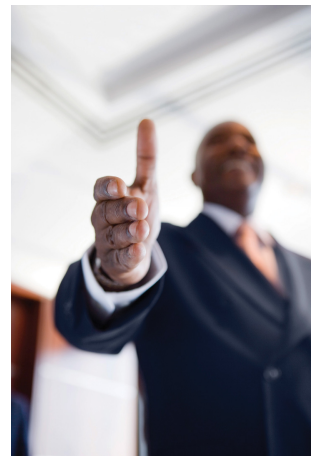
Types of Nonverbal Communication

- Handshake
- Body language
- Gestures
- Nodding or shaking your head
- Eye contact (or lack of eye contact)
- Eye roll
- Facial expressions
- Touch
- Space or proximity
- Dress
- Multitasking (e.g., texting while listening to someone, earphones in ears while working)

Your Handshake Says It All

In some countries, you might bow when you meet someone; in others you might kiss; but when you meet someone for a business meeting in the United States, it's best to shake hands. Terri Morrison, "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands," <http://www.getcustoms.com/2004GTC/Articles/new011.html> (accessed July 23, 2009). Although fist bumps and high fives may be trendy as friendly greetings, neither is appropriate in a business setting.

Figure 5.6



Your handshake says a lot about you.

© 2010 Jupiterimages Corporation

Be Memorable

Here's a networking tip: When you shake hands with people at a meeting, they are two times more likely to remember you than if you don't shake hands, according to a recent study conducted by the Incomm Center for Trade Show Research. Rachel Zupek, "The Worst Way to Shake Hands," *CNN.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/worklife/11/05/cb.hand.shake/index.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).

The exact history of the handshake is unknown; however, at one time it was used as method to prove that you had no weapons in your hands. Rachel Zupek, "The Worst Way to Shake Hands," *CNN.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/worklife/11/05/cb.hand.shake/index.html> (accessed July 13, 2009). A good handshake is essential in business; it is the first nonverbal cue that you give to the person with whom you are meeting. It's so important to have a good handshake that a recent study conducted at the University of Iowa showed that during mock interviews, those students who scored as having a better handshake were also considered more hireable by interviewers. According to Greg Stewart, a business professor who conducted the study said, "We found that the first impression begins with a handshake and sets the tone for the rest of the interview." "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, <http://www.bcjobs.ca/re/career-advice/career-advice-articles/interview-advice/good-handshake-key-to-interview-success> (accessed July 12, 2009).

Do you think you have a good handshake? Believe it or not, it's worth practicing your handshake. Here are five tips for a good handshake:

1. Extend your right hand when you are approximately three feet away from the person with whom you want to shake hands. Rachel Zupek, "The Worst Way to Shake Hands," *CNN.com*, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/LIVING/worklife/11/05/cb.hand.shake/index.html> (accessed July 13, 2009).
2. Keep your wrist straight and lock hands connecting your hand with the same part of the other person's hand. John Gates, "A Handshake Lesson from Goldilocks," Free-Resume-Help.com, <http://www.free-resume-help.com/handshake-interview.html> (accessed July 12, 2009). Apply appropriate pressure; don't crush the person's hand.
3. Shake up and down three or four times. "Good Handshake Key to Interview Success," BC Jobs, <http://www.bcjobs.ca/re/career-advice/>

[career-advice-articles/interview-advice/good-handshake-key-to-interview-success](http://www.bcjobs.ca/re/career-advice/career-advice-articles/interview-advice/good-handshake-key-to-interview-success) (accessed July 12, 2009).

4. Avoid the “wet fish” handshake. “Good Handshake Key to Interview Success,” BC Jobs, <http://www.bcjobs.ca/re/career-advice/career-advice-articles/interview-advice/good-handshake-key-to-interview-success> (accessed July 12, 2009). This is where practice is really important. The more you shake hands, the less nervous you will be.
5. Smile and make eye contact. “Good Handshake Key to Interview Success,” BC Jobs, <http://www.bcjobs.ca/re/career-advice/career-advice-articles/interview-advice/good-handshake-key-to-interview-success> (accessed July 12, 2009). This is your opportunity to use multiple types of nonverbal communication to get your meeting or interview off to a good start.

Link

Shake on It

What does your handshake say about you?

<http://www.howcast.com/videos/105154-How-To-Shake-Hands>

Body Language

Do you use your hands when you talk? If so, you are using body language to help make your point. But body language includes more than talking with your hands. **Body language**²² is what we say without words; nonverbal communication using your body includes elements such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, a head tilt, a nod, and even where and how you sit. Body language can indicate an unspoken emotion or sentiment that a person might be feeling either consciously or subconsciously. Body language can indicate if you are listening to someone and are engaged in what he is saying, disagreeing with him, or getting bored. (You might want to think twice about the body language you are using in class.) It's important that you are aware of what you communicate with *your* body language and to understand and respond to the cues you are getting from *someone else's* body language.

22. Nonverbal communication using body elements such as gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and proximity.

Do You Speak Body?

Here are some common examples of body language and what they mean. Kathryn Tolbert, “What We Say without Words,” *Washington Post*, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/gallery/2008/06/23/GA2008062301669.html> (accessed July 15, 2009). Neal Hendes, “How to Read Body Language: Ten Tips,” *EzineArticles*, <http://ezinearticles.com/?How-to-Read-Body-Language—Top-10-Tips&id=991635> (accessed July 15, 2009).

- Crossed arms: discomfort
- Spreading fingers: territorial display
- Mirroring (i.e., mimicking your body position to another’s): comfort
- Drumming or tapping fingers: frustration
- Hands on hips: there is an issue
- Hands behind the back: “leave me alone”
- Hands clasped, thumbs up: positive
- Thumbs down: don’t like
- Hands clasped with fingers forming a steeple: confidence
- Touch neck: insecurity
- Crossed legs: comfort
- Glancing at watch: concerned about time or bored

Body language is not just an interesting topic to consider; it’s a proven science that can help you improve your communication. If you would like to see how body language is used in everyday life, watch this video featuring Tonya Reiman, national television commentator and author of *The Power of Body Language*.

Video Clip

Tonya Reiman, Body Language Expert

(click to see video)

Learn what your body language is communicating.

Source: CBS Interactive

Here are some tips to remember about your body language to be sure you are sending the right nonverbal message to your customer or interviewer.

- **Make eye contact** with the person to whom you are speaking. Eye contact avoidance can be distracting and can prevent you from establishing a relationship as shown in this video.

Video Clip

Eyes Have It

[\(click to see video\)](#)

Eye avoidance can be damaging to your career.

Source: eHow.com

- **Smile** when you meet someone and throughout the conversation. A smile is a positive response to another person and has a significant impact on how people perceive you. A smile can break the ice and help you start a conversation.
- **Dress for success** at all times, which means always dressing appropriately for the situation. The *Selling U* section in this chapter covers how to dress for an interview. But it's best to keep in mind that even after you get the job you want, it's a good idea to dress a little better than the position. Even in very casual work environments, what you wear is a nonverbal communication about who you are. If you don't dress for the next promotion, chances are you won't be considered for it. Be aware of the company policy and dress code, and if in doubt, dress more conservatively. This podcast featuring Peter Post discusses how to handle casual dress in the workplace.

Written Communication

Although verbal and nonverbal communications usually take place in real time, written communication has a longer consideration period. The sender must encode the message in words to be communicated on paper or a screen.[citation redacted per publisher request]. Business reports, proposals, memos, e-mails, text messages, Web sites, blogs, wikis, and more are all examples of written communication. Each of them is created over a period of time and can include collaboration from multiple people. Collaboration is especially important for communicating, planning, and

creating documents so many people use tools such as **wikis**²³ to share documents. To see how a wiki works, watch this video.

Video Clip

Collaborate Online

A wiki can help any team share and collaborate...anywhere, anytime.

http://www.bnet.com/2422-13731_23-187449.html

Written communication is preferred to verbal communication when careful consideration is important or the information needs to be permanent, such as a company policy, sales presentation, or proposal. Written communication can also take place when verbal communication isn't an option, like when you need to respond to an e-mail or text message at 1:00 a.m.

Although verbal communication is faster and more natural than written communication, each has its pros and cons. Generally, written communication is better at conveying facts, while verbal communication is better at conveying feelings. Verbal communication has another significant drawback: consider the fact that humans listen much faster than they speak. For example, the average public speaker speaks at about 125 words per minute. Although this sounds natural, the average person can listen at 400 to 500 words per minute. That means that listeners' minds have time and space to wander, which can impact the effectiveness of verbal communication.[citation redacted per publisher request]. (You may have noticed your mind wandering during a class lecture—even if you found the topic interesting.)

Written communication requires a good command of the English language, including the rules of grammar and spelling. If you think that business exists solely on quick instant messages and text messages, you might be surprised to learn that they are only a portion of the communication within a company and between the company's vendors and other partners. Because the nature of written communication is such that it allows time for consideration and composition, the standards for writing are much higher than for a casual conversation. Customers and colleagues alike expect clear, concise written communications with proper grammar and spelling. And because written communication is long

23. A collaborative Web site that allows multiple people to share information, documents, videos, and pictures.

lasting—whether on paper or on the Internet—errors or misstatements exist for an irritatingly long time. So whether you are writing a proposal, a presentation, a report, a meeting recap, or a follow-up e-mail, it's best to take the time to think about your communication and craft it so that it is effective. Consider using the following tips:

- **Be short and sweet.** Shorter is always better when it comes to business correspondence. It's best to include all pertinent facts with concise information. If you write your communication with the receiver in mind, it will be easier to make it shorter and more effective.
- **Grammar, please.** Sentences should be structured correctly and use proper grammar, including a subject and a verb in each sentence. Business correspondence should always include uppercase and lowercase letters and correct punctuation. Patricia M. Buhler, "Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication," *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009): 19. If writing is not your strong suit, visit your campus student services office or learning center to provide information about upcoming writing clinics and access to other tools that can help improve your writing skills.
- **Check spelling.** Use the spell-check tool on your computer. There is no excuse for a misspelled word. Text abbreviations are not acceptable in business correspondence.
- **Read before you send.** Reread your document or electronic communication before it goes out. Is everything complete? Is it clear? Is it something you will be proud of days or weeks later? Take the extra time to review before you send. It's difficult to revise a communication as revisions cause confusion.
- **Just the facts.** Stick to the facts to maximize the impact of your written communications; leave the emotional topics for verbal dialogue. For example, send an e-mail to confirm meeting time, date, and location; use a verbal communication for the content of the meeting to be discussed, such as a negotiation.

You Are What You Write

You might not think twice about sending a text to your friend. But in the business world, everything you write in an e-mail, text message, letter, or memo is a direct reflection of your personal brand. This video highlights the power of written communication and how it can help you build your personal brand.

<http://www.sellingpower.com/content/video/?date=7/17/2009>.

Source: SellingPower.com

Which Is Best?

Although verbal, nonverbal, and written communication all play a role in your communication with your customers, you might be wondering which one is best. It depends on your customer and on the situation. Some customers want to work day to day using all the latest technology tools, including text messaging, social networking, Web conferences, wikis, and more. Other customers prefer more traditional face-to-face meetings, phone calls, and some e-mail correspondence. Adapt to the method of communication that your customer prefers and not the other way around. In some situations, a face-to-face meeting is best—for instance, if you wish to discuss a complex issue, negotiate, or meet some additional members of the team. Sometimes, a face-to-face meeting isn't feasible, so other verbal communication methods such as a videoconference, phone call, or conference call can be efficient and effective if used properly.

Chances are you will use a combination of communication types with each customer tailored to his particular preferences and situation. Be guided by the fact that you want to keep your communication personal in meaning and professional in content. Think about it from the receiver's point of view, and deliver bad news verbally whenever possible.

Which Is Better: E-mail or Face-to-Face?

It might seem intuitive, but it's not always true that a face-to-face meeting is better than an e-mail. It depends on the type of relationship you have with the person. If you are competitive with her, it's best to use e-mail to communicate. According to a study conducted by Robert B. Cialdini and Rosanna Guadagno in 2002, if you have a more cooperative relationship, a face-to-face meeting is probably a better choice if it's physically possible. "Communicating Persuasively: Email or Face-to-Face," PsyBlog, <http://www.spring.org.uk/2007/03/communicating-persuasively-email-or.php> (accessed July 15, 2009).

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Communication** is vital in selling and is the foundation of relationships.
- The **communication model** describes exactly how communication is sent and received and provides clues as to how to improve the effectiveness of communication.
- Empathy is thinking about your communication from the receiver's point of view. Empathy helps build an emotional connection.
- Effective **communication** is clear, concise, brief, specific, and timely.
- Creating your message is only one half of **communication**; listening is the other half. Being a good listener improves your ability to be a good communicator.
- There are three types of **communication**: **verbal**, which involves speaking to one or many people to convey a message; **nonverbal**, which includes body language and other observations about people; and **written**, which includes a message that is read in hard copy, e-mail, text message, instant message, Facebook, Twitter, blog, or other Internet-based written communication.
- **Verbal communication** provides the opportunity to change communication with inflection, or the emphasis put on certain words in a conversation or presentation.
- **Nonverbal communication** provides additional insights into the sending and receiving of a message through gestures, eye contact, proximity, and other elements of **body language**.
- Your handshake can be one of the most powerful elements of nonverbal communication and sets the tone for the meeting or interview ahead.
- **Written communication** includes printed words designed to communicate a message on paper or a screen and is more permanent than **verbal** or **nonverbal communication**.
- **Written communication** is best used for factual information, whereas **verbal communication** is best used for emotional topics or those that require discussion.
- The best method of **communication** depends on your customer's preferences and on the situation.

EXERCISES

1. Choose an advertisement online or in a magazine. Apply the communication model by answering the following questions: Who is the source? What is the message? How is the message encoded? What is the channel with which it is communicated? How is the message decoded? Who is the receiver? What might be an example of potential noise that would interfere with the communication of the message? How can the sender receive feedback from the receiver?
2. Are you a good listener? Complete this online listening activity to see how well you listen. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skills/words/listening/listeningforspecificinformation/activity.shtml>
3. Can you listen to directions accurately? Take this online listening exercise to see how well you listen. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/skills/words/listening/typesoflistening/game.shtml>
4. Test your listening skills. Do this exercise with a partner, one is the speaker and one is the listener. The speaker has three minutes to describe what he is looking for in a vacation destination. The listener has to use active listening skills. Then, the listener has three minutes to “sell” a destination to the speaker, based on what the speaker said he wanted. The speaker has one minute to review how close the listener was to his destination. Reverse roles and repeat.
5. Name the three types of communication and give an example for each one. How might the communication be misinterpreted in each example? How might the communication be made more effective in each example?
6. Visit a local retailer that uses personal selling and ask a salesperson questions about purchasing a product or service. Identify three types of communication the salesperson uses. Were they effective? Why or why not?
7. Identify four examples of nonverbal communication you observe in class. What does each example communicate?
8. Visit your campus student services or learning center and learn about the resources that are available to help you develop your writing skills. What information, classes, or workshops are available? Which ones sound like they might be helpful? Why?
9. Consider this situation: You are a salesperson who has to tell your customers that the original shipping date will not be met and the new date is one week later. What are the four things that your customers would want to know?
10. Visit <http://www.pbworks.com> to set up a wiki for the class. Discuss a situation in which you could use a wiki for class projects, campus activities, or other personal projects. Discuss a situation in which a salesperson might use a wiki with a customer.

5.2 Your Best Behavior

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Understand the appropriate etiquette for business communication.

You probably learned about table manners, thank-you notes, and other forms of etiquette when you were younger. The way you conduct yourself says a lot about who you are in life and, by extension, in business. Although many companies have a casual dress code, don't be quick to assume that protocol and established practices aren't important. It would be easy to misinterpret lack of formality as lack of professionalism. Manners matter in selling, now more than ever.

Never Underestimate the Power of Good Etiquette

How do you make a positive impression when you meet someone? What's the best way to ask for her business card? When is it appropriate or expected to send a thank-you note? Who picks up the bill at a business lunch? It's hard to know the "rules of the road," especially in today's casual, fast-paced selling environment. **Etiquette**²⁴ can make the difference in how your customer perceives you and your personal brand.

Etiquette Tips for Letters and Memos

Despite the use of electronic devices in business, formal written communication such as letters, memos, proposals, reports, and presentations are still major methods of communication in selling. These more official methods of communication reflect factual statements that you are making on behalf of the company. Here are some tips for writing business communications:

- Use company letterhead where appropriate. For example, letters are always written on letterhead, whether in hard copy or in an electronic format that can be sent via e-mail.
- Use the formal elements of a business letter shown in [Figure 5.7 "Business Letter Format"](#).
- For a company memo, use the company format. Most companies have a set format for hard copy and electronic memos. See an example of a company memo in [Figure 5.8 "Company Memo Example"](#).

24. Manners, customs, and protocols that are the norm in specific situation.

- Spell-check and proofread your document carefully before you send it. Be sure it is complete and factually correct and does not include any grammar or spelling errors.
- Use CC to indicate the names of other people who should also receive a copy of the letter or memo. The term “CC” is short for “carbon copy,” which dates back to the days of typewriters when carbon paper was used to make multiple copies of a document. It can also mean “courtesy copy”: an additional copy provided to someone as a courtesy. Mary Ellen Guffey, *Business Communication*, 6th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Publishing, 2008), 175.
- Use BCC (blind carbon copy) to send copies to other people without having the primary recipient see it. Mary Ellen Guffey, *Business Communication*, 6th ed. (Mason, OH: South-Western Publishing, 2008), 175.

Video Clip

Tips for Writing a Business Letter

[\(click to see video\)](#)

Etiquette makes all the difference in the quality of your communication.

Source: eHow.com

Figure 5.7 *Business Letter Format*



Figure 5.8 *Company Memo Example*



Etiquette Tips for Conversations, Meetings, and Presentations

Although common sense should prevail in all business communications, here are some tips that will help make your conversations, meetings, and presentations more effective forms of communication:

- Be prepared; don't waste anyone's time or focus.
- Prepare a written agenda and hand it out at the start of the meeting to keep the group focused on the desired topics.
- Speak clearly and at a volume that is easy to hear, but not too loud so as to be distracting.
- Be professional and respectful; don't interrupt when others are speaking.
- Use eye contact.
- At the end, recap your key points and identify next steps.

In sales, time is money so conducting effective and efficient meetings is critical to your success.

Link

Seven Tips to Make Your Meetings More Effective
 Renee Houston Zemanski, “Seven Ways to Make Your Meetings More Memorable,” Selling Power Meetings eNewsletter, July 7, 2009, <http://www.sellingpower.com/content/newsletter/issue.php?pc=972> (accessed March 16, 2010).

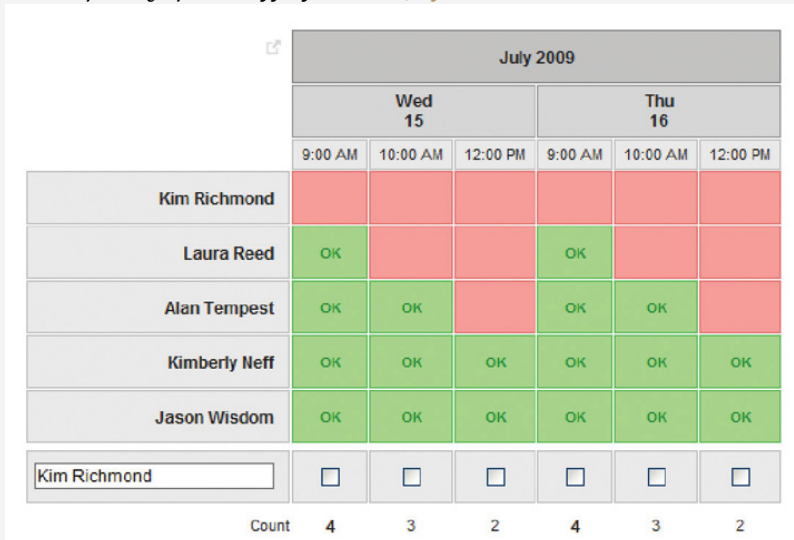
<http://www.sellingpower.com/content/newsletter/issue.php?pc=972>

Doodle to Save Time

If you are setting up a meeting that involves several people and it’s difficult to agree on a meeting date and time, you can use Doodle.com to identify the best date and time to meet. You choose the options and e-mail a link to the participants; when people respond, you see the Doodle.com summary that indicates the best date and time for the meeting. Set up an account at <http://doodle.com>.

Figure 5.9

Sample Poll on Doodle.com
 Kim Richmond, “Poll: Entrepreneurial Series,” Doodle, <http://doodle.com/participation.html?pollid=g9cp9d7bn96yy34y> (accessed July 17, 2009).



Etiquette for Requesting and Giving Business Cards

Business cards are a branding tool for your company and a way to stay in touch with your customers and other people in your network. Miss E, “The Art of Giving Business Cards,” 123etiquette.com, <http://www.123etiquette.com/business-etiquette/business-card-etiquette> (accessed July 17, 2009). In fact, giving out and requesting a business card is considered good etiquette. Ben Preston, “Good Business Etiquette Includes Giving Out Business Cards,” *Businessstoolchest.com*, <http://www.businessstoolchest.com/articles/data/20060201225647.shtml> (accessed July 17, 2009). Here are some tips to exchange business cards in a professional manner:

- Carry your business cards in a case or protective holder; never give anyone a card that is worn, dirty, or out of date. Barbara Bergstrom, “Business Card Tips,” *Orlando Business Journal*, July 3, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/07/06/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- Always put a supply of business cards in your case when you attend a business event. Barbara Bergstrom, “Business Card Tips,” *Orlando Business Journal*, July 3, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/07/06/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- Present your card with the print facing up so the recipient can easily read it. Barbara Bergstrom, “Business Card Tips,” *Orlando Business Journal*, July 3, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/07/06/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- Never force anyone to take your card. Barbara Bergstrom, “Business Card Tips,” *Orlando Business Journal*, July 3, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/07/06/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- When receiving a business card, take a minute to review the information to make sure you remember who gave you the card. Make any notes or comments on it later. Barbara Bergstrom, “Business Card Tips,” *Orlando Business Journal*, July 3, 2009, <http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2009/07/06/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).

Video Clip

The Etiquette of Exchanging Business Cards

[\(click to see video\)](#)

This is the right way to exchange cards.

Source: BNET

Etiquette for Business Meals

The purpose of a business breakfast, lunch, or dinner is to get to know someone and build a relationship. As you learned in **Chapter 3 "The Power of Building Relationships: Putting Adaptive Selling to Work"**, to engage in business entertainment is considered part of the sales job description. Table manners are a form of nonverbal communication, and impolite etiquette can reverse all the effort you have put into a relationship. Business meals are so important that many companies use business lunches or dinners as part of the interview process. Whatever the situation, you want to be prepared with proper etiquette for the occasion.

- A meal is considered a business meeting, no matter where it is held. Louise Lee, "Meet and Eat," *BusinessWeek*, June 5, 2009, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_66/s0906025664520.htm (accessed July 13, 2009).
- To help you remember which dishes and utensils to use, think BMW: Bread plate on your left, Meal in the center, Water goblet on the right. Joe Morris, "Not Knowing Basics Is Simply Impolite," *Nashville Business Journal*, November 21, 2008, <http://www.bizjournals.com/nashville/stories/2008/11/24/focus2.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009). Use silverware starting at the outside and work your way in as the meal progresses.
- As a general rule of thumb, the person who invites pays. If you are invited to lunch for an interview, your host pays. If you take a customer out to lunch, you pay. Joanne McFadden, "Rules of Etiquette Are Important for the Business Lunch," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, October 24, 2008, <http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2008/10/27/focus4.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- If you don't know what to order, ask your host what's good. Order a midpriced entrée rather than ordering the least expensive or most expensive item on the menu. If you are the host, make some suggestions so your customer feels comfortable with her choice. Joanne McFadden, "Rules of Etiquette Are Important for the Business Lunch," *Milwaukee Business Journal*, October 24, 2008, <http://www.bizjournals.com/milwaukee/stories/2008/10/27/focus4.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- Don't order anything messy; stick to food that is easy to eat. Louise Lee, "Meet and Eat," *BusinessWeek*, June 5, 2009, http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/09_66/s0906025664520.htm (accessed July 13, 2009).

- Be courteous to the wait staff. Many people observe how you treat other people, even when you think no one is watching.

Etiquette for Thank-You Notes

There's nothing more personal than a thank-you note. For the most part, you and your customers are very busy, which is why a thank-you note is even more appreciated. Whether it's a handwritten note or an e-mail thank you, it will go a long way in building your relationship. It's a personal touch that sets you apart. It's never inappropriate to say thank you, but it may be inappropriate *not* to say thank you.

Video Clip

When to Say Thank You

Sending a thank-you note is always appropriate in business.

<http://www.videojug.com/interview/gift-giving-etiquette-in-american-business-2#what-is-the-etiquette-of-thank-you-notes-in-a-business-setting>

There are many reasons to send a business thank-you note; this video includes some ideas:

Video Clip

Why to Say Thank You

Here are ideas to keep you top of mind with a thank-you note.

<http://www.videojug.com/interview/gift-giving-etiquette-in-american-business-2#when-is-it-appropriate-to-send-a-thank-you-note>

Here are some tips for writing thank-you notes:

- Start with a clear introduction and let the reader know right away that the purpose of the note or e-mail is to thank him.
- Be specific about the situation, date, or other information surrounding the reason for the thank-you note.
- Make it personal and make it special by including your own sentiments. A generic message such as “thanks for a great job” really doesn’t fill the bill. Think about exactly what moved you to write the note and be sure your reader knows what she did that was special. Terence P. Ward, “Expressing Gratitude in Writing Builds Business Networks,” May 18, 2008, Suite101.com, http://business-writing.suite101.com/article.cfm/business_thankyou_notes (accessed July 17, 2009).

Video Clip

How to Say Thank You

This video includes some guidelines about what to include in a business thank-you note:

<http://www.videojug.com/interview/gift-giving-etiquette-in-american-business-2#what-is-appropriate-to-write-in-a-business-related-thank-you-note>

Power Selling: Lessons in Selling from Successful Brands

SimplySoles

Imagine getting a personalized handwritten thank-you note when you order a pair of shoes online. That's what SimplySoles.com does for each customer. Founder Kassie Rempel feels so strongly about thanking customers for their business that every customer who purchases a pair of shoes receives one; each note even mentions the name of the shoe that was purchased. Justin Martin, "6 Companies Where Customers Come First," *CNNMoney.com*, http://money.cnn.com/galleries/2007/fsb/0709/gallery.where_customers_come_first.fsb/5.html (accessed July 23, 2009).

High Tech, High Touch

The year was 1982, and the world was just beginning to realize the amazing potential of computer technology. John Naisbitt wrote a book called *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives*, where he coined the term "high tech, high touch," which he defined as the contradictory state in which people are driven by technology yet long for human interaction. John Naisbitt, *Megatrends: Ten New Directions Transforming Our Lives* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 1998). He wrote about how the United States has been transformed from being comfortable with technology to being intoxicated with technology, a state he calls the "Technologically Intoxicated Zone" in his 1999 book, *High Tech/High Touch*. You probably can't imagine living without your cell phone or personal digital assistant (PDA), iPod, computer, or other electronic devices. In fact, it's likely you can't even remember what communication was like before the Internet.

Technology, with all of its efficiency and benefits, cannot, however, become a substitute for old-fashioned human efforts. "Technology makes *tasks* easier, but it does not make our *lives* easier," according to July Shapiro in a recent article in *Advertising Age*. July Shapiro, "A Digital Myth: Technology Doesn't Make Life Easier," *Advertising Age*, May 11, 2009, http://adage.com/digitalnext/post?article_id=136533 (accessed May 12, 2009). Shapiro's observation is true, especially as it relates to business; sometimes, the crush of technology takes precedence over business etiquette. However, people have begun to rethink the lack of personal interaction and its corresponding etiquette in the workplace. Yes, "there's even an app for that"; a firm named Etiquette Avenue has recently launched an iPod app for business etiquette. The fact is, technology isn't personal and can't behave in the

right way at the right time with your customer or on an interview; that's completely up to you. CommercialKid, "iPhone 3g Commercial 'There's an App for That,'" video, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=szrsfeyLzyg> (accessed July 16, 2009). "Good Advice in Bad Times: New Etiquette Avenue iPhone App Puts Professional Protocol at Fingertips," *Business Wire*, June 29, 2009.

Now, we're seeing a bit of a reverse movement: Technology is so pervasive in selling that salespeople are actually pushing back on their managers and asking them for more face time and less gadget time. One of the best opportunities for sales managers and their salespeople to discuss business problems and build relationships with one another has traditionally been during "windshield time," which is the time in the car driving between sales calls. "Sales reps report that the intrusion of technology has stolen this valuable time from reps and their principals [bosses]," according to a recent article in *Agency Sales*, because as soon as they get into the car to drive to the next call, the sales manager pulls out his BlackBerry. "If there's one thing I could tell my principals [bosses] when they come see me in the field is to ditch the electronic communications and pay attention to me and our customers," said one salesperson quoted in the article. "Reestablishing the Inside Connection: Open Communication with Inside Sales Strengthens the Rep Bond," *Agency Sales* 39, no. 5: 38. It's no surprise that there's a need for business etiquette, especially as it relates to technology.

Being Connected versus Being Addicted

In a recent pitch to a potential client, a marketing executive in Manhattan thought it was strange that his potential customer was so engaged with his iPhone that he hardly looked up from it during the meeting. After ninety minutes, someone peeked over the customer's shoulder and saw that he was playing a racing game on his iPhone. This was disappointing, but not shocking according to the marketing firm that was doing the presentation; they continued with their pitch because they wanted the business. Some are not as tolerant. Billionaire Tom Golisano, a power broker in New York politics, recently announced that he wants to have State Senate majority leader Malcolm A. Smith removed from office because Smith was focused on his BlackBerry during a budget meeting with him. Recently, in Dallas, Texas, a student lost his opportunity for an internship at a hedge fund when he checked his BlackBerry to check a fact during an interview and took an extra minute to check his text messages at the same time. Alex Williams, "At Meetings, It's Mind Your BlackBerry or Mind Your Manners," *New York Times*, June 22, 2009, A1. It's no surprise that BlackBerrys are also called "CrackBerrys." According to Maggie Jackson, author of *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*, we are living in "an institutionalized culture of interruption, where our time and attention is being fragmented by a never-ending stream of phone calls, e-mails, instant

messages, text messages, and tweets.”Patrick Welsh, “Txting Away Ur Education,” *USA Today*, June 23, 2009, A11.

The need to be connected should not overwhelm respect for colleagues and customers. Although texting has become a national pastime, especially among teenagers, it’s important to know the appropriate etiquette for the use of handheld electronic devices when conducting a sales call.

First, it’s best to turn off your electronic devices *before* you enter every meeting. If you think you can’t live without checking your text messages, think about how you would feel if you went on a job interview and the person with whom you were meeting was checking his electronic device during your interview. Just because some people demonstrate bad behavior and check their electronic devices for messages during a meeting doesn’t make it appropriate. In fact, it will help you stand out as a good listener, and you will make your customer feel even more important when you focus exclusively on her, as shown in this video.

Figure 5.10



Etiquette applies to the use of electronic devices.

© 2010 Jupiterimages Corporation

Video Clip

To Text or Not to Text

[\(click to see video\)](#)

Learn about appropriate business etiquette.

Source: eHow.com

Etiquette Tips for Telephone, Cell Phone, Voice Mail, and Conference Calls

Sometimes, however, the use of technology is entirely necessary to conduct business when personal interaction is impossible. It’s important that verbal communication that is not face-to-face is effective and professional. Because you don’t have the benefit of using or seeing the receiver’s nonverbal communication, the challenges for effective and appropriate communication are even greater.

Here are some dos and don'ts of telephone etiquette:

- Do be aware of the volume of your voice when you are speaking on the phone in the office or on a cell phone. Joanna L. Krotz, "Cell Phone Etiquette: 10 Dos and Don'ts," Microsoft, <http://www.microsoft.com/smAllBusiness/resources/ArticleReader/website/>

Figure 5.11



When you communicate by phone, you don't have the benefit of nonverbal communication.

© 2010 Jupiterimages Corporation

[default.aspx?Print=1&ArticleId=Cellphoneetiquettedosanddonts](http://www.microsoft.com/smAllBusiness/resources/ArticleReader/website/default.aspx?Print=1&ArticleId=Cellphoneetiquettedosanddonts) (accessed July 12, 2009).

- Do, when using a speakerphone, conduct the call in an enclosed or isolated area such as a conference room or office to avoid disturbing others in the area.
- Do, when leaving a voice mail message, speak slowly, enunciate, spell your name, and leave your number (this makes it much easier for the recipient to hear your message the first time). John R. Quain, "Quain's Top Ten Voice Mail Tips," *Fast Company*, December 18, 2007, <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/18/topten.html> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Do, when you leave a voice mail message, be specific about what you want: make it easier for the caller to get back to you and include what time you will be available for a callback to avoid playing telephone tag. John R. Quain, "Quain's Top Ten Voice Mail Tips," *Fast Company*, December 18, 2007, <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/18/topten.html> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Do customize your voice mail message: create a different message for each of your customers or prospective customers so the message is personal and relevant. Keith Rosen, "Eight Tips on Crafting Effective Voice Mail Messages," *AllBusiness*, <http://www.AllBusiness.com/sales/selling-techniques-telesales/2975818-1.html> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Do speak with enthusiasm: it's best to convey a smile in your voice, especially if it is the first time you are calling or leaving a message for

someone. Keith Rosen, “Eight Tips on Crafting Effective Voice Mail Messages,” AllBusiness, <http://www.AllBusiness.com/sales/selling-techniques-telesales/2975818-1.html> (accessed July 17, 2009).

- *Don't* take another phone call during a meeting. Joanna L. Krotz, “Cell Phone Etiquette: 10 Dos and Don'ts,” Microsoft, <http://www.microsoft.com/smAllBusiness/resources/ArticleReader/website/default.aspx?Print=1&ArticleId=Cellphoneetiquettedosanddents> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- *Don't* discuss confidential or personal issues during business calls.
- *Don't* discuss confidential issues in public areas—you never know who might overhear a conversation in the hallway, on a train, or in other public areas. Barbara Bergstrom, “Good Etiquette Is Recession-Proof,” *Baltimore Business Journal*, April 17, 2009, <http://www.bizjournals.com/baltimore/stories/2009/04/20/smallb3.html?t=printable> (accessed July 12, 2009).
- *Don't* leave a long, rambling voice mail message: be prepared with a message that is no longer than sixty seconds. John R. Quain, “Quain's Top Ten Voice Mail Tips,” *Fast Company*, December 18, 2007, <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/18/topten.html> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- *Don't* multitask during a long phone call or conference call—give the other person or people the courtesy of your full attention.

Etiquette Tips for E-mails, Text Messages, Instant Messages, and Social Networks

Written communication has evolved to include multiple methods, all of which have appropriate places in selling. Notice the operative word here is *appropriate*. E-mail has become an accepted method of communication in most businesses, whereas text messages, instant messages, and social networks are commonplace for only some companies. That's why etiquette is especially important when using any of these methods of communication, and you should take time to choose your method carefully. Letters, memos, proposals, and other written communication are considered formal, whether they are sent on paper or transmitted via e-mail. However, text messages, instant messages, and social networking are considered informal methods of communication and should be used only to communicate less formal information, such as a meeting time when schedules have been adjusted during a factory tour. Text and instant messages should never be used to communicate company policies, proposals, pricing, or other information that is important to conduct business with customers. It's also worth noting that in all these methods your communication is permanent, so it's a good idea to know the dos and don'ts of electronic communication.

- Do use an e-mail subject line that clearly tells the recipient about the content of the e-mail.
- Do create a short, concise message that uses proper grammar and spelling—use spell-check to be sure all words are spelled correctly. “Shouting and Other E-mail Faux Pas,” *BusinessLine*, April 20, 2009.
- Do, in all electronic communications, use uppercase and lowercase letters as grammar dictates. “Shouting and Other E-mail Faux Pas,” *BusinessLine*, April 20, 2009.
- Do use e-mail, text messages, and instant messages when appropriate, according to your company’s practices, and with your customers to communicate factual information such as to confirm meeting date, time, and location. Patricia M. Buhler, “Managing in the New Millennium: Six Tips to More Effective Communication,” *Supervision* 70, no. 7 (July 2009), 19.
- Do use social networking sites to join the conversation and add value—you can build your personal brand by creating a blog or joining a professional conversation on social networking sites such as Twitter or Facebook. Norman Birnbach, “10 Twitter Etiquette Rules,” *Fast Company*, July 2, 2008, <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/norman-birnbach/pr-back-talk/10-twitter-etiquette-rules> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Don’t use all capital letters in an e-mail; it appears that you are shouting or angry. “Shouting and Other E-mail Faux Pas,” *BusinessLine*, April 20, 2009.
- Don’t use “Reply to All” unless it’s absolutely necessary that all the recipients see your response—be selective to avoid mailbox overload.
- Don’t send an e-mail, text message, or instant message when you are angry: take the time to think about what you send because you can’t take it back after it’s sent. Paul Glover, “Why We Need E-mail Etiquette,” *Fast Company*, December 30, 2008, <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/paul-glover/surviving-workquakec/why-we-need-e-mail-etiquette> (accessed July 17, 2007).
- Don’t use abbreviations like “ur,” “2b,” and others—this is not appropriate business communication. Norman Birnbach, “10 Twitter Etiquette Rules,” *Fast Company*, July 2, 2008, <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/norman-birnbach/pr-back-talk/10-twitter-etiquette-rules> (accessed July 17, 2009).
- Don’t use company e-mail, text message, or instant message accounts to send personal correspondence, and don’t check your personal accounts or pages during company time, as all communication that takes place on company hardware and servers is property of the company.

- *Don't* use electronic communication to transmit bad news: talk to the person first, and if follow-up is necessary, reiterate the information in written form.
- *Don't* use text messages, instant messages, or social networks to communicate information such as pricing, proposals, reports, service agreements, and other company information that should be sent using a more formal method.

Video Clip

Telephone and E-mail Etiquette at Work

(click to see video)

Understand what makes a good impression on your customers.

Source: *eHow.com*

Power Point: Lessons in Selling from the Customer's Point of View

When the Customer Tweets

Social media give customers a voice like never before. When companies listen to customers, they can turn a bad situation into a good one; but if they don't respond, customers speak out. For example, a dissatisfied Virgin America passenger posted a tweet on Twitter during a flight to Boston, thanks to the Wi-Fi service onboard. Virgin America monitors Twitter so closely that by the time the plane landed, a ground team met the customer at the gate to be sure his needs were met, and he left the airline with the memory of extraordinary service. Gerhard Gschwandtner, "Wow Your Customers with Twitter in Real Time," *Selling Power*, <http://sellingpower.typepad.com/gg/2009/07/wow-your-customers-with-twitter-in-real-time-.html> (accessed July 23, 2009).

Music to Your Ears

When is an iPod or other MP3 player or a handheld gaming device appropriate at work? Only when it is used for business purposes. "You're isolating yourself," says

Dale Chapman Webb, founder of The Protocol Centre in Coral Gables, Florida. “You are sending a message that my music is more important than the work at hand.” If you feel the need to listen to your iPod or use handheld gaming devices at work, sales may not be the right profession for you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Proper **etiquette** is a necessity in selling. There are etiquette guidelines for virtually every form of communication, including conversations, meetings, business cards, business meals, thank-you notes, e-mails, text messages, and even social networking.
- **Written communication** should always include proper grammar and spelling. This applies to formal business communications such as letters and memos, as well as informal business communications such as e-mails and text messages.
- **Written communication** such as letters, reports, and memos are considered formal methods of business communication; many formal communications are transmitted via e-mail. Text messages, instant messages, blogs, and social networks are considered informal communications and should only be used for informal communications such as confirming a meeting place when noise is an issue, such as on a factory floor.
- It's best to remember that most **written communication** is permanent, so take the time to craft it carefully.
- Professionalism should prevail in all business meetings and communications, including meals. When you are at a restaurant, it's a good idea to remember BMW: **B**read to the left, **M**eal in the middle, **W**ater goblet to the right. Use silverware starting with the utensils on the outside and work your way in throughout the meal.
- You can add a personal touch to a business relationship by sending a thank-you note. Although it is acceptable to send a thank-you note via e-mail, it is recommended to send a personal handwritten note to reflect a sincere sentiment that really stands out.
- It is never appropriate to use an electronic device such as a cell phone, BlackBerry, or iPhone while you are talking with someone else. Turn off your devices before you enter a meeting.
- When talking on the phone, be courteous and use an appropriate volume in your voice. Never discuss confidential or personal topics on the phone when others might overhear.

EXERCISES

1. Assume you work for a textile manufacturer. Draft a letter to invite your customer to tour your company's factory next month. Choose a specific date, time, and location for your tour to be included in your letter. Who, if anyone, should be included as a CC? Why? Who, if anyone, should be included as a BCC? Why?
2. Create a voice mail message that you would leave on a customer's voice mail if you were calling to set up a meeting to follow up from your first sales call. What information is essential to be included in the voice mail? What information should *not* be covered in the voice mail?
3. You are scheduled to meet your customer for an off-site training meeting. You just realized you are at the wrong meeting location, and you need to contact your customer and let her know that you are on your way to the right location. What is the best method to communicate with your customer? What would your message be?
4. You just learned about a delayed shipment date for your customer's order. What is the best method to communicate this to your customer?
5. You are in a meeting with a customer, but you have a potential problem that is developing with a different customer. You are expecting a phone call about the second situation during your meeting with the other customer. How would you communicate this to the customer with whom you are meeting?
6. You are at a business dinner with your boss and her husband in a very nice restaurant. Watch the following video and answer the following questions.

[\(click to see video\)](#)

Source: BNET

- From which side of the chair do you sit down?
- How do you determine which bread plate is yours?
- When do you put your napkin on your lap?
- When someone asks you to pass the salt, what do you do?
- When you want to excuse yourself, what is the appropriate way to do it?

5.3 Selling U: The Power of Informational Interviews

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Learn about informational interviews and how they can help your career search.

“Find someone who does what you want to do, then go talk to them.” That’s the advice that Ike Richman, vice president of public relations at Comcast-Spectacor consistently tells students when he is a guest speaker. That is the essence of what an **informational interview**²⁵ is: one-on-one communication that helps you learn about different industries and potential careers. You learned about the power of networking in the *Selling U* section of [Chapter 3 "The Power of Building Relationships: Putting Adaptive Selling to Work"](#). And informational interviews are one of the best ways to network. They are the ultimate in business communication because you are “trying on jobs for size to see if they fit you,” according to Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* and the person who coined the term “informational interview.” “Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Background Information about Informational Interviews,” Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_background.html (accessed July 12, 2009).

What Is an Informational Interview?

An informational interview is exactly what it sounds like; it’s an opportunity to learn about a particular profession, industry, or job. “Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Background Information about Informational Interviews,” Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_background.html (accessed July 12, 2009). That means that if you are interested in sales, you might meet with an account manager for a software company and talk to her about what it’s like to be in sales. Or, if you think you want to pursue a job in advertising, you could meet with someone who works at an advertising agency. This gives you the chance to learn the inside story about what it takes to start a career and work in your target industry.

25. A meeting with a professional to learn more about pursuing a career in a specific industry, profession, or job.

You’ve probably learned about several different professions in your classes; you most likely heard from guest speakers. And through your networking activities, chances are you’ve met people who do what you think you want to do. But it’s impossible to know exactly what career you want to pursue without getting some

one-on-one information. What does the job entail? Will you be working with people out in the field or sitting at a desk? What kinds of opportunities are available for personal development? What kind of skills and experience do you need? Is this really a career you will enjoy? What's the best part of the job? What's the worst part of the job? All these are excellent questions to ask during an informational interview. Learn more about informational interviews by watching this video.

Video Clip

Informational Interviews

(click to see video)

Learn how to maximize them.

Source: Susan Ireland

Ask for Information, Not a Job

Informational interviews are an excellent source of information and insight. In fact, you can gain knowledge through informational interviews that you might not be able to gain in any other way. It's important to note that informational interviews are *not* the place to look for an internship or job. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Never Ask for a Job," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_job.html (accessed July 12, 2009). A job or an internship could result from an informational interview because it is a time to make an impression on someone, demonstrate your skills, and network. However, it's best to keep in mind that when you ask for an informational interview, you are asking for someone to take the time to share insights and information with you. If you ask the interviewer for a job, you misled the interviewer about the purpose of the meeting. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Never Ask for a Job," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_job.html (accessed July 12, 2009).

Informational Interviews Made Easy

Informational interviews are an excellent way to gather real-world information about your career direction. Here's a guide to everything you need to know to get the most out of informational interviews using the tenets of journalism. As a guide, remember the five *Ws* and an *H*: who, what, when, where, why, and how.

Why Go on Informational Interviews

You might think that if you shouldn't ask for a job, why bother going on an informational interview? There are plenty of reasons to pursue informational interviews.

- You can learn about what it is like to work in a particular industry, company, or job. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Potential Results of Informational Interviews," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_results.html (accessed July 12, 1009).
- You have the opportunity to get to know key people in the industry. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Potential Results of Informational Interviews," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_results.html (accessed July 12, 1009).
- You can learn about jobs that you didn't realize exist—jobs that are open now or that might be open in the future. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Potential Results of Informational Interviews," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_results.html (accessed July 12, 1009).
- You can learn about where you might fit in a specific organization. "Informational Interviewing Tutorial: Potential Results of Informational Interviews," Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_results.html (accessed July 12, 1009).
- You can ask for referrals for the names of other people in the industry or company with whom you can meet. "Informational Interview Questions," Career Choice Guide, <http://www.careerchoiceguide.com/informational-interview-questions.html> (accessed July 20, 2009).
- You can hone your interviewing skills in a low-pressure environment.
- You can get "insider" information that other job seekers might not get, because informational interviews are an underused approach. Kate Lorenz, "How Does an Informational Interview Work?" CareerBuilder, <http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-481-Getting-Ahead-How-Does-an-Informational-Interview-Work> (accessed July 20, 2009).

Who to Ask for an Informational Interview

Here's where your networking skills come into play. Identify people who do what you want to do or do something that you think is interesting. Make a list of people using the following resources:

- Think of people in professional organizations you may have heard speak or may have met at an event.
- Think of guest speakers you may have heard speak in class or at a campus event.
- Talk to friends and family to get ideas for people they may know in the profession you want to learn more about.
- Talk to your professors about people in the industry they may know.
- Visit the campus career center and alumni office to identify people with whom you can meet.
- Use online professional networking to find people whom you would like to talk with and learn from.
- Read local business journals and professional organization publications to identify people who have jobs that you want to learn more about. You can usually find these publications online or in person at your school library or public library. “Informational Interview Tutorial: Identify People to Interview for Informational Interviews,” Quintessential Careers, http://www.quintcareers.com/information_people.html (accessed July 12, 2009).

How to Ask for an Informational Interview

Informational interviews are usually twenty to thirty minutes long and can take place in person or by phone. Once you identify the people with whom you would like to have an informational interview, it's time to contact each person and ask for a meeting. It's always best to request an informational interview in person because you have the opportunity to communicate verbally as well as nonverbally. Although it's appropriate to send a letter or e-mail to request an informational interview, it's best to call each person to request the interview or talk to him or her in person. If you use your communication skills, a personal conversation will be much more persuasive than a passive e-mail or letter, which could easily go unanswered.

A telephone conversation should include an introduction along with the reason you are calling. Be clear that you are seeking information; don't frame your request as a veiled strategy for a job offer. If you are honest about learning about the industry, most people will take the time to help you. You might consider a telephone conversation like this:

You:	My name is Jorge Ebana, and I am a student at State University majoring in business administration. I was in Dr. Wolf's Creative Selling class on Thursday when you were a guest speaker. I really enjoyed your presentation. I especially enjoyed hearing about how you landed the XPress account.
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Interviewer:	Jorge, thank you so much for calling. I'm really glad to hear that you found my presentation interesting. I enjoyed speaking to your class very much. Yes, the XPress account took a lot of work to land, but it's been a great relationship for all parties involved.
You:	As you were speaking, I realized that as you described the research, preparation, presentation, and follow-up, what you do daily is something that I would really enjoy, too. You made me realize that sales could be the career I might want to pursue.
Interviewer:	Jorge, that's so good to hear. I always like to share my experiences with young people so that they understand the rewards and the challenges involved in selling. Personally, I enjoy selling so much that I can't imagine doing anything else.
You:	I would really like to learn more about how you got into sales. It sounds like you had some very interesting positions at Intuit and CreditSys. I'd like to hear about what's it's like to sell for a major corporation compared to a start-up company, and their differing advantages. Would it be possible to get together for twenty minutes or so? I'd really like to learn more about your background in the field.
Interviewer:	Why don't you drop by on Thursday morning at 8 o'clock. We can touch base, and I can give you a quick tour of the office.
You:	That would be perfect. I really appreciate your taking the time to help me.
Interviewer:	It's my pleasure. I'll see you on Thursday morning.

If you use this type of approach when you are speaking with someone with whom you would like to meet, you increase your chances of getting a positive response. If you don't know the person or have a connection to him, it's still appropriate to call him directly to request an informational interview.

What to Wear, Bring, and Ask on an Informational Interview

Just like any sales call, business meeting, or job interview, you should always be prepared for an informational interview. Treat it as if it were a job interview and dress in a conservative, professional suit. Katharine Hansen, "Informational Interviewing Do's and Don'ts," *Quintessential Careers*, http://www.quintcareers.com/informational_interviewing-dos-donts.html (accessed July 20, 2009). Men should wear a white or light shirt, conservative tie, and dark-colored suit. Women should wear a skirt or pants with a blazer in a dark color. Some things the interview "fashion police" would tell you to avoid: too much

aftershave or cologne, low-cut blouse or short skirt, wrinkled anything, and athletic-looking shoes or sandals.

Link

What Employers Want

Learn about what employers expect when someone comes in for an informational interview or job interview.

<http://www.blinkx.com/watch-video/testimonial-from-an-employer-dressing-for-a-job-interview-myjobpath-video-series/oy8-P3FAHjEbV1lhQKudcw>

Source: Bay Area Video Coalition

Come prepared as if it were a job interview, even if you already know the person with whom you are interviewing. That means doing research on the industry, company, and person before you arrive. Visit the company's Web site as well as those of competitors, research the industry on databases such as Hoovers.com, and do a search on Google to learn more about the person with whom you are interviewing. Also, look her up on LinkedIn, Plaxo.com, Ryze.com, or other professional social networking Web sites to learn more about her professional background before your meeting.

Bring extra copies of your résumé printed on twenty-four-pound paper (this is also called résumé paper; you can buy it at your campus bookstore or at any office supply store or Web site). It's best not to use regular copy paper as it is lightweight and doesn't provide strong nonverbal communication about your brand. You never know when the person with whom you are meeting will ask for an extra copy of your résumé. And, even if she already has a copy, she may not have it handy. Kate Lorenz, "How Does An Informational Interview Work?" CareerBuilder, <http://www.careerbuilder.com/Article/CB-481-Getting-Ahead-How-Does-an-Informational-Interview-Work> (accessed July 20, 2009).

This is a perfect opportunity to bring samples of your work. See the *Selling U* section in [Chapter 6 "Why and How People Buy: The Power of Understanding the Customer"](#) for some tips about how to put together a portfolio that helps you show and sell

yourself. If you have had an internship, bring clean samples of any projects you worked on; the same is true for any student organizations, volunteer work, or community service that you have done. You should also include a few key class projects to demonstrate your versatility.

Now prepare for the questions. Unlike a regular job interview, you have requested this meeting so you should be prepared to ask the questions. Keep the questions focused on learning about how your interviewer broke into the business and what he can share as a result of his experience. Here are some questions you might consider:

- How did you decide to go into this field?
- What was your first job?
- How did you get to your current position?
- What was your favorite job?
- What is the best thing about your current job?
- What is your least favorite part of your job?
- What is the single most important attribute someone needs to have to be successful in this industry?
- What is the typical salary range for an entry-level job in this industry?
- What advice would you give to someone starting out in the industry?
- What is the outlook for the industry? “Informational Interview Questions,” Career Choice Guide, <http://www.careerchoiceguide.com/informational-interview-questions.html> (accessed July 20, 2009).

In addition to having your questions ready, also be ready to talk about your brand positioning points (review this concept in the *Selling U* section in **Chapter 1 "The Power to Get What You Want in Life"**). Use your communication skills to make your experience and interest come alive in the interview. It's a good idea to offer to show the samples of your work while you are talking about why you are interested in pursuing a career path in the industry.

Take the time to print out your questions so you are organized during the interview. Put your questions and spare copies of your résumé in a professional portfolio or folder. Don't be afraid to refer to your questions and take notes during the interview; it's an excellent nonverbal cue that you think what the interviewer has to say is important.

Wrap up your informational interview by asking for your interviewee's business card. Also, ask for the names of some other people that you might be able to learn from; for example, "I really enjoyed our conversation today, and I learned so much about the industry. You have helped me realize that I would like to pursue a career

in sales. Can you give me the names of some other people I might be able to learn from?”

You’ve Got the Power: Tips for Your Job Search

Keep in Touch

What about after the informational interview? Keep in touch. People who take the time to help students also want to know what is going on with the young job-seeking population. Send an e-mail or touch base by phone at least every four to six weeks. It’s a great way to develop a relationship and network, even after you land your internship or job. Part of networking is providing exchange, and keeping in touch is your part of the bargain. When you keep in touch, your interviewer might be able to help you in the future; or better yet, you might be able to help her and return the favor.

When to Ask for an Informational Interview

It’s always a good time to meet and learn from experienced people in the industry in which you are interested. However, you should actively pursue informational interviews when you are prepared with your résumé and have compiled some samples of your work. Keep in mind that every contact you make is a selling opportunity for your personal brand so it’s best to be ready as early as possible in your academic career. It’s never too soon to prepare your résumé even as you are building your experience with internships and other jobs. Whenever you meet someone interesting, follow up and ask him for an informational interview so you can learn more about how he got into the business.

Where to Have an Informational Interview

Your interviewee will most likely suggest a location for your meeting; it might be in her office, or you might meet for breakfast or lunch. Some informational interviews might take place by phone. The objective is to connect, learn, and network.

Whatever the location, always prepare and dress for each informational interview as if it were a job interview. Also, always send a thank-you note to thank your interviewer for his time. You should send a thank-you e-mail and a handwritten thank-you note on the same day, so your interviewer will receive your e-mail

followed by your handwritten note. That way, you leave a lasting impression and demonstrate your good etiquette.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- An **informational interview** is an underused career search method that includes a meeting with a professional to learn more about pursuing a career in a specific industry, profession, or job.
- You go on **informational interviews** to learn what it's like to work in a particular industry, company or job, connect and network with people in the industry, and hone your interviewing skills.
- One thing you should *never* do on an **informational interview** is ask for a job or internship. If the opportunity presents itself and your interviewer asks if you might be interested, it's appropriate to say yes. However, you should not be the one to initiate dialogue about the possibility of a position with the company.
- You should ask anyone who is in the industry or profession that you would like to pursue. It's a good idea to use your networking skills to identify people with whom you can have an informational interview. Professionals such as guest speakers in class, prominent executives, and those in local professional organizations are ideal people to ask for an informational interview.
- It's best to request an **informational interview** in person or by phone because you increase your chances for a positive response. You can also request an **informational interview** by letter or e-mail.
- Prepare for an **informational interview** as if it were a job interview, even if you already know the person. Research the company, bring extra copies of your résumé and samples of your work, and prepare questions that you would like to discuss.

EXERCISES

1. Identify three people with whom you would like to have an informational interview. Write down each person's name, company, title, and phone number. Write a phone script that you would use when you call to ask for the interview. Discuss your approach.
2. Write down a list of six to eight questions that you would like to ask on each informational interview. Which questions would you ask on all informational interviews? Which questions would be specific to a particular interview? Why?
3. How would you answer the following question on an informational interview: "Why do you want to pursue a career in (name of industry)?"
4. Identify at least four samples of your work that you would include in a binder when you go on informational interviews. Why would each one be included? What would you tell an interviewee about each sample? How would each sample demonstrate one of your brand positioning points?
5. Write a thank-you e-mail and a handwritten thank-you note that you would send after an informational interview. Would you send both? Why or why not?

5.4 Review and Practice

Power Wrap-Up

Now that you have read this chapter, you should be able to understand how to communicate effectively and with proper etiquette in business.

- You can **discuss** the communication model and how it works.
- You can **compare and contrast** the different types of communication: verbal, nonverbal, and written.
- You can **recognize** the strengths and weaknesses of each type of communication and when each is appropriate to use.
- You can **understand** the role of listening in effective communication.
- You can **recognize** the impact of nonverbal communication.
- You can **practice** how to shake hands properly.
- You can **discuss** the appropriate etiquette for business situations, including the use of electronic devices.
- You can **understand** the role that informational interviews may play in your career search.

TEST YOUR POWER KNOWLEDGE (ANSWERS ARE BELOW)

1. Describe the difference between soft skills and hard skills.
2. Discuss two ways to demonstrate active listening.
3. Name the three types of communication. Identify at least one pro and one con for each one.
4. Which type and method of communication would you use to tell your boss that your car broke down and you can't make it to the customer presentation?
5. If you invite a customer to lunch, who should pay? If your customer invites you to lunch, who should pay?
6. When is it appropriate to write a thank-you note in sales?
7. Identify three situations in which it would be appropriate to have your electronic device such as a cell phone turned on in a meeting.

POWER (ROLE) PLAY

Now it's time to put what you've learned into practice. The following are two roles that are involved in the same selling situation—one role is the customer, and the other is the salesperson. This will give you the opportunity to think about this selling situation from the point of view of both the customer and the salesperson.

Read each role carefully along with the discussion questions. Then be prepared to play either of the roles in class using the concepts covered in this chapter. You may be asked to discuss the roles and do a role-play in groups or individually.

Safe and Secure

Role: Sales rep for Sun Security Systems for retail stores

You are meeting with a potential customer who is responsible for purchasing security systems for over two hundred retail stores. He is convinced that your company's security system is the one he wants to use, but he has to convince his boss. The key selling point in his mind, he mentions to you, is the fact that the system carries a money-back guarantee so that if anything happens, the company will be protected. You realize that he has misinterpreted the terms of the guarantee. It is a money-back guarantee only on the security system itself, not for any other loss. It appears that there was some miscommunication between all the meetings and follow-up e-mails.

- How would you tell this customer about the correct terms of the guarantee, even though it might be the sale at risk?
- Since you are meeting in person, what type of follow-up would you consider to ensure that the information is clearly understood? Why?
- What do you think caused this miscommunication?
- Using the communication model, describe what happened with the communication.

Role: Security manager at Argon Retail, Inc.

You have been looking at security systems for several months and reviewing the offering from different suppliers. Sun Security Systems appears to offer the best performance at the best value. The key selling feature is the money-back guarantee. It's a strong statement about how the company stands

behind its products. This kind of low-risk investment is important to you and your company.

- Do you assume that what you heard or saw about the money-back guarantee is true? After all, it's up to the salesperson to be sure you're informed, right?
- If you probe the details with the salesperson, what questions will you ask to be sure you understand the terms of the guarantee?
- What type of communication will be best to learn about this information?

PUT YOUR POWER TO WORK: SELLING U ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss at least three reasons why informational interviews are good to do. Then watch this video to see if you named the reasons mentioned.

http://www.blinkx.com/video/what-is-an-informational-interview-myjobpath-video-series/6dugA0wq_-PRAk4EeUVjdA

Source: Bay Area Video Coalition

2. Invite someone on your informational interview list to come to class to speak about why he or she gives informational interviews.
3. Invite three people on your informational interview list and ask them to participate in a panel discussion in class about how to use informational interviews as an effective career search tool.

TEST YOUR POWER KNOWLEDGE ANSWERS

1. Soft skills include communication, relationship building, emotional intelligence, and the ability to interact with people. Hard skills are the technical skills required to perform your job, such as analytical skills in the finance area.
2. The sender is Axe (Clix); Nick Lachey acts as the spokesperson in this commercial. The message is that Clix is such a great scent that it attracts lots of women. The message is encoded in video: a commercial. The receiver is the viewer of the commercial, and the target audience is young men. The decoding occurs when a young man sees that Clix is so good that it can attract more women than Nick Lachey. The sender (Clix) gets feedback in several ways: when people view the video, when people post comments about the video or the product, and when people buy the product.
3. Repeat the information that you heard by saying, “Let me be sure I understand what you’re saying...,” nodding your head, and taking notes.
4. Verbal communication is best for communicating emotions because you can use or hear intonation. It is also natural and fast and provides instant feedback. However, verbal communication is gone in an instant (unless it’s recorded), and people remember what was said differently. Also, we speak at about 125 words per minute, but listen at about 400 to 500 words per minute, so people’s minds wander during a good amount of verbal communication. Nonverbal communication includes body language and any other type of communication that can be observed. Nonverbal communication can underscore a message, such as hand gestures, or can send a different signal than the spoken words, such as crossed arms or physical proximity. But sometimes people don’t realize the messages they are sending when they use nonverbal communication because it can be more difficult to interpret. Written communication is the most permanent of all communication types. It is usually considered and is used for formal business communication such as policies, pricing, and other information. Written communication lacks intonation and is best used for communicating factual information. Grammar and spelling are critical for written communication to be effective.
5. It would be best to call him to let her know. This would allow you the opportunity to demonstrate a high sense of urgency, explain the situation, and discuss possible options. It’s always best to communicate bad news (especially to your boss) verbally, whether in person or by phone.
6. You should pay when you invite. Although it is appropriate to let your customer pay for a meal once in a while, it’s usually expected that the salesperson’s company will pick up the tab.

7. Whenever someone does something that is worth noting—referring you to a new prospect, hosting a productive meeting, being a great business partner, providing some information that was difficult to get, or any other situation that is worth a thank you—then note it. People rarely send thank-you notes, so it's an excellent way to set yourself apart. A thank-you e-mail is always appropriate, but a handwritten thank-you note is more personal.
8. The only time it is appropriate is if you are waiting for an *urgent* phone call. If that is the case, you should mention it before the meeting starts, put your cell phone on vibrate, and step out of the meeting to take the call. If you are waiting for a text, only check your device occasionally as to not send the message that the other matter is more important than the meeting you are in.