Fundamentals of Organizational Communication
Fundamentals of Organizational Communication

Knowledge, Sensitivity, Skills, Values

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DEDICATION

To Charles Zalabak and Leatha and Jim Shockley
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We are in a turbulent time with rapid change in the institutions and organizations with which we are most familiar. *Fundamentals of Organizational Communication: Knowledge, Sensitivity, Skills, Values* was written to help readers experience twenty-first-century organizational challenges within the context of learning about communication and organizations.

The ninth edition of this book presents the concepts of organizational communication within a unique competency-based approach that incorporates personal knowledge, interpersonal sensitivity, communication skills, and ethical values. It blends theory, practice, and analysis with an emphasis on knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values.

Why a competency-based approach? The answer is simple: organizing material by competency components is academically relevant, individually practical, and important to organizations. Favorable responses to earlier editions from both students and faculty support the competency-based mix of theory and application. In addition, studies in the United States of America and internationally describe both human and technological communication as the keys to excellence in the twenty-first century. Numerous employer surveys have found that accurately processing large volumes of information within organizations, although necessary, is not sufficient for excellence; employers need individuals who take personal responsibility for building relationships that contribute to trust, quality communication, innovation, and change.

**New to This Edition**

The twenty-first century presents unprecedented challenges and opportunities, particularly for the discipline of organizational communication. The changes in the ninth edition of *Fundamentals of Organizational Communication* directly address the rapid changes in the field and provide students with the most current information available from which to make both academic and professional choices. A brief overview of some of the most important changes to the ninth edition includes:

- Sixty-five total cases; 14 new cases including a complex case, Hockaday Responders, which can be used for application of material from all 12 book chapters
- New research reviewed and included in all chapters
- New *Your Personal Development Workbook* for students to have all self-assessments and development assignments in one location
- Expanded discussion of socialization and assimilation (Chapter 2)
- New discussion of class theories (Chapter 2)
- Expanded discussion of Communication Constitutes Organization (CCO) (Chapter 2)
- Expanded discussions of the importance of trust throughout the text
- New discussion of importance of voice and participation for ethical communication (Chapter 4)
- Expanded discussion of supervisor–employee relationships (Chapter 5)
- Expanded discussion of teleworker experiences (Chapter 5)
• New discussion of interorganizational groups (Chapter 6)
• New discussion of groups, knowledge sharing, and technology use (Chapter 6)
• Expanded discussion of ethics, failure, chaos, and flux (Chapter 7)
• Expanded discussion of technology use by groups (Chapter 8)
• New discussion of employee dissent (Chapter 9)
• Revised guidelines for productive conflict (Chapter 9)
• New focus on organizational innovation (Chapter 10)
• New discussion of accelerators of innovation and change (Chapter 10)
• Recasting of strategic communication to include risk and crisis communication (Chapter 11)
• New information for informational and employment interview preparation (Chapter 12)

The Competency Framework

Knowledge
Theoretical concepts important to the study of organizational communication are presented so that students can develop personal knowledge. Knowledge competencies are what we come to know about the theory and principles of a particular field of study, in this case organizational communication. Knowledge competencies support sensitivity in organizational life, guide our development of skills, and assist us in understanding the application of ethical standards and our personal values in organizational settings. To this end, this book examines various frameworks for understanding organizational communication, communication implications of major organizational theories, and communication processes in organizations.

Sensitivity
The sensitivity component in the competency framework refers to our ability to sense or become aware of a variety of organizational meanings and feelings. It is related to our ability and willingness to understand what others are feeling and doing. To help students develop the sensitivity competency, this book encourages them to study and analyze various roles and relationships within organizations. Individual sensitivity can be developed by analyzing the impact of personal behaviors in organizational settings, such as individuals in organizations, dyadic relationships (specifically supervisor–employee relationships), group processes, conflict, and leadership and management communication, each examined in the text. In addition, the text emphasizes the importance of the sensitivity component for our increasingly diverse, multicultural, and global organizational world.

Skills
The skills component of the framework focuses on developing important analytical capabilities as well as the ability to communicate effectively in a variety of settings. It is designed to help students develop both initiating and receiving communication skills. Key organizational communication skills (e.g., problem solving, decision
making, fact-finding, interviewing, and using communications technologies) are identified, and analysis and practice opportunities appropriate for each are provided. Also, analysis opportunities provided in case studies and research opportunities contribute to students’ skill development.

Values
The values component in the competency framework is key to the integration of knowledge, sensitivity, and skills. To understand the realities of organizational life, we must first examine how individual and organizational values or ethics can shape organizational communication behavior. Students develop values and ethics through case studies that present ethical dilemmas and value issues in organizational settings. We adopt different value positions and ethical perspectives to analyze cases, recommend courses of action, and predict outcomes.

Features of Fundamentals of Organizational Communication
Each chapter of Fundamentals of Organizational Communication attempts to contribute to competency development through the constant interaction of theory, practice, and analysis. Chapters begin with a statement of objectives and a short case study illustrating the concepts to be studied. Key terms and concepts are identified in margins, and chapters end with highlights, communication tips, and a workshop posing questions and issues in each of the competency areas: knowledge, sensitivity, skills, and values. The Putting It All Together section includes Your Personal Development Workbook and provides additional cases and essays for analysis.

Chapters 1 through 3 develop students’ knowledge through an understanding of what contributes to comprehensive communication competency and how we can understand this phenomenon called organizational communication. These chapters emphasize major organizational theories and their communication implications.

Chapter 4 focuses on the interaction of personal, organizational, and professional ethics and values. It presents the values component of communication competency, placing particular emphasis on how organizational values contribute to organizational culture and effectiveness.

Chapters 5 through 9 develop the sensitivity component of communication competency. These chapters describe individuals in organizations and their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and small-group experiences. In addition, they emphasize the increasing diversity and multiculturalism of organizations as well as the study of conflict and leadership. Research indicates that conflict and leadership may well be the focal processes for effective communication in organizations. Texts in organizational communication frequently treat these topics mechanically, without emphasizing underlying subtleties such as organizational climate or the complex interactions of individual predispositions, strategies, and tactics. This book supports understanding of individual preferences in these crucial areas of organizational behavior by using self-assessment instruments.
Chapters 10 through 12 develop competency in the skills component, identifying key applications and career options for organizational communication skills and making specific suggestions for skill development.

The **Putting It All Together** section contributes to the comprehensive development of all four competency components through an interaction of theory, practice, and analysis. Materials in the appendix are to be used in conjunction with all chapters and as supplements to the concepts learned through practical and realistic examples.

This text is available in a variety of formats—digital and print. To learn more about our programs, pricing options, and customization, visit www.pearsonhighered.com.

**Supplemental Resources For Instructors**

**Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank**

For each chapter in the text, the *Instructor’s Manual and Test Bank* provides a chapter focus, learning objectives, key terms, and discussion activities and exercises. The Test Bank portion offers hundreds of test questions in multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay formats. Available only online on our Instructor’s Resource Center at www.ablongman.com/irc (please contact your Pearson representative for an access code).

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The user-friendly interface enables instructors to view, edit, and add questions; transfer questions into tests; and print tests in a variety of fonts. Search and Sort features allow instructors to locate questions quickly and arrange them in a preferred order. Available only online on our Instructor’s Resource Center at www.ablongman.com/irc. (please contact your Pearson representative for an access code).

**PowerPoint Presentation Package**

A PowerPoint presentation provides lecture slides based on key concepts in the text. Available only online on our Instructor’s Resource Center at www.ablongman.com/irc (please contact your Pearson representative for an access code).
I wrote this book for four primary reasons: my experiences with students who appreciate the importance of the study of organizational communication, my research interests in organizational communication, my years of organizational experience in both the private and public sectors, and my fundamental belief that organizations and the discipline of organizational communication must undergo significant change as the world around us changes. When taken together, these experiences and beliefs have been invaluable to me in relating theory to practice and in projecting competency needs for the future.

I am grateful for the help and support of many individuals in the development of this manuscript. My colleagues from the Aspen Engaged Scholars Conference along with my colleagues in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (Sherry Morreale, Lauren Bregarths, and Mike Hackman), have stimulated my thinking. I also want to thank the many special students at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, who reviewed and critiqued most of the exercises and cases contained in the text.

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On a personal note, I wrote this book with the continuing guidance, love, and support of my family. My father and mother, Jim and Leatha Shockley, provided the foundation for a special pursuit of learning. Without my husband, Charles, the professional years simply would not have occurred. His continuous love and encouragement made all dreams possible. Our daughter and granddaughter, Yvonne and Carissa, continue in his light.

This book was written for students who want to change and improve organizations and themselves, who are willing to risk excellence, and who love engaging in human communication. Therefore, to students (past, present, and future) and to my family (Charles, Yvonne, Carissa, Mom, and Dad), I dedicate this book.