
Communicating to Win

Prepared by

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Bio – Charlie Ragland

● **Lecturer**

- University of Tennessee at Chattanooga College of Business in Management, Marketing, and Entrepreneurship.
- Strategic Management, New Venture Creation, Small Business Entrepreneurship (MBA), International Management (MBA), Business-to-Business Marketing, Selling and Sales Management, and Business Communications.

● **Consulting**

- Strategic plans, business plans, commercialization plans, market assessments, and competitive analysis.
- Clients include GE Plastics, BASF, Bayer Material Science, Saint-Gobain Vetrotex America, Owens-Corning, Avery Dennison, Polymer Group, MicronTN, Ten-Tec, eSpin Technologies, and Microwave Synergy.
- Active in the local angel capital community serving on the steering committee of the Tennessee Venture Forum and the Chattanooga Capital Connection.

● **Industry**

- More than 20 years in sales, marketing, business management, and general management roles with Owens-Corning, GE Plastics, PolyOne, BASF, and Propex.
- Industry knowledge includes engineering plastics, composites, fabrics, and fibers
- Market knowledge includes building & construction, fiber reinforced concrete, computers, business equipment, appliance, automotive, transportation, medical, electrical, optical media, fluid handling, and telecommunications.

● **Education**

- MBA Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio.
- BSBA The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

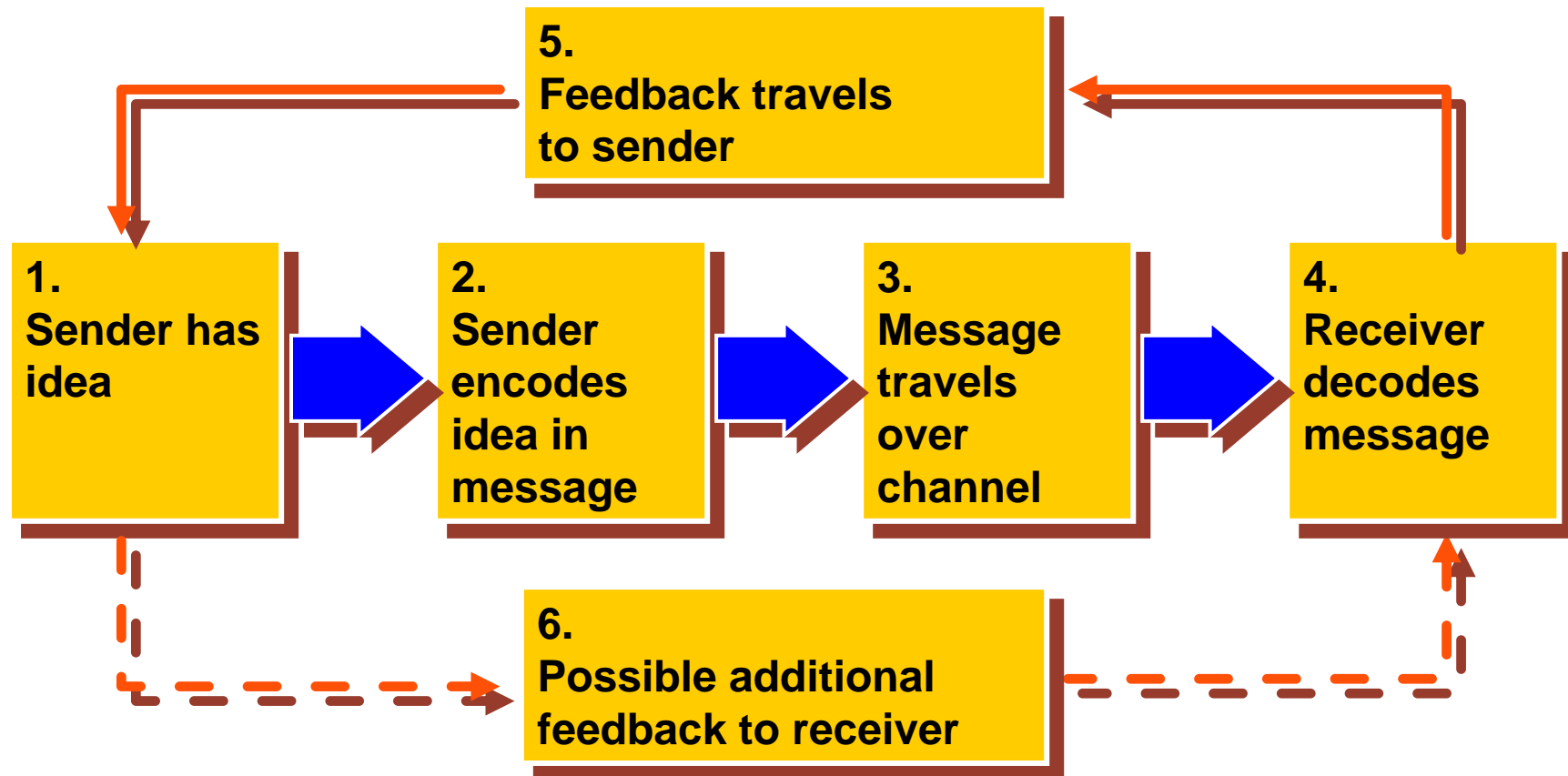
Agenda

- **Communication Foundations**
- **3-x-3 Writing Process**
- **Choosing the Correct Channel**
- **Sample correspondence**

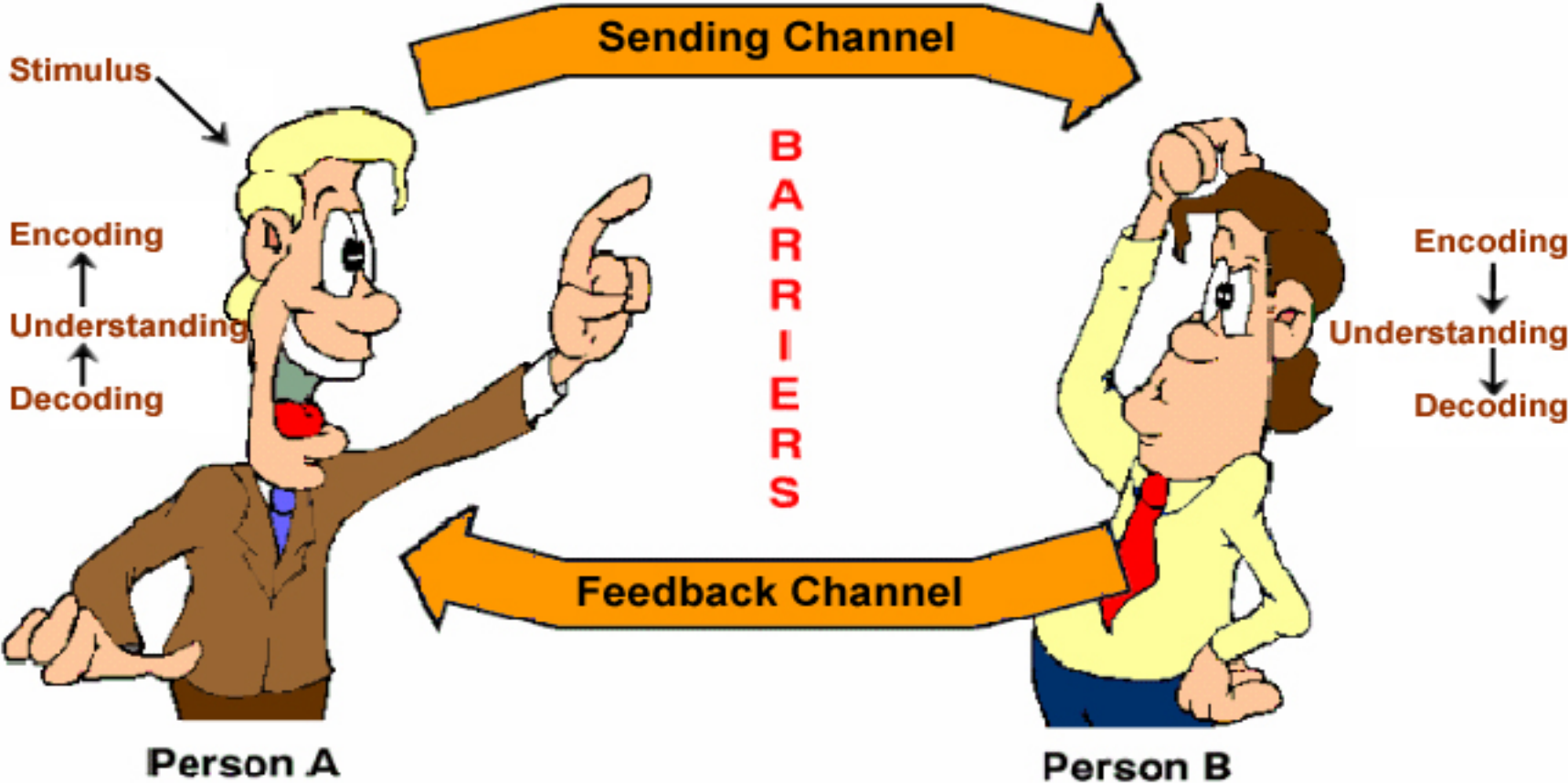
Changes affecting the workplace

- **Heightened global competition**
- **Flattened management hierarchies**
- **Expanded team-based management**
- **Innovative communication technologies**
- **New work environments**
- **Increasingly diverse workforce**

The communication process



The communication process



Barriers to interpersonal communication

- **Bypassing**
- **Limited frame of reference**
- **Lack of language skills**
- **Lack of listening skills**
- **Emotional interference**
- **Physical distractions**

Understanding is shaped by

- **Communication climate**
- **Context and setting**
- **Background, experiences**
- **Knowledge, mood**
- **Values, beliefs, culture**

Overcoming communication barriers

- **Realize that communication is imperfect.**
- **Adapt the message to the receiver.**
- **Improve your language and listening skills.**
- **Question your preconceptions.**
- **Plan for feedback.**

Business writing is

- **Purposeful.** It solves problems and conveys information.
- **Economical.** It is concise.
- **Reader oriented.** It focuses on the receiver, not the sender.

Guffey's 3 x 3 writing process

- **Phase 1: Prewriting**

Analyzing, anticipating, adapting

- **Phase 2: Writing**

Researching, organizing, composing

- **Phase 3: Revising**

Revising, proofreading, evaluating

Prewriting

- **Analyze**: Define your purpose. Select the most appropriate form (channel). Visualize the audience.
- **Anticipate**: Put yourself in the reader's position and predict his or her reaction to this message.
- **Adapt**: Consider ways to shape the message to benefit the reader, using his or her language.

Writing

- **Research**: Collect data formally and informally. Generate ideas by brainstorming and clustering.
- **Organize**: Group ideas into a list or an outline. Select the direct or indirect strategy.
- **Compose**: Write first draft, preferably on a computer.

Revising

- **Revise**: Revise for clarity, tone, conciseness, and vigor. Revise to improve readability.
- **Proofread**: Proofread to verify spelling, grammar, punctuation, and format. Check for overall appearance.
- **Evaluate**: Ask yourself whether the final product will achieve its purpose.

Choosing channels

| Channel | Best use |
|-----------------------|---|
| Face-to-face | To share personal message, be persuasive, or deliver bad news; richest communication channel |
| Telephone call | For convenience when nonverbal cues are unimportant |
| Voice mail | To leave message for response when convenient |
| Fax | To cross time zones, to produce written record, for speedy delivery |
| E-mail | To exchange information conveniently and quickly, but problematic for some messages |

Choosing channels

| Channel | Best use |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Face-to-face group meeting | When group decisions and consensus are important |
| Video or teleconference | To disperse data or elicit consensus from geographically dispersed group |
| Memo | To produce a formal, written record for insiders |
| Letter | To produce a formal, written record for customers and other outsiders |
| Report | To deliver complex data internally or externally |

Developing Reader Benefits

Sender-focused

“We are requiring all staffers to complete these forms in compliance with company policy.”

Receiver-focused

“Please complete these forms so that you will be eligible for health and dental benefits.”

Developing Reader Benefits

Sender-focused

“Because we need more space for our new inventory, we’re staging a two-for-one sale.”

Receiver-focused

“You can buy a year’s supply of paper and pay for only six months’ worth during our two-for-one sale.”

Emphasize the “You” View

“We” view

We are issuing a refund.

“You” view

You will receive a refund.

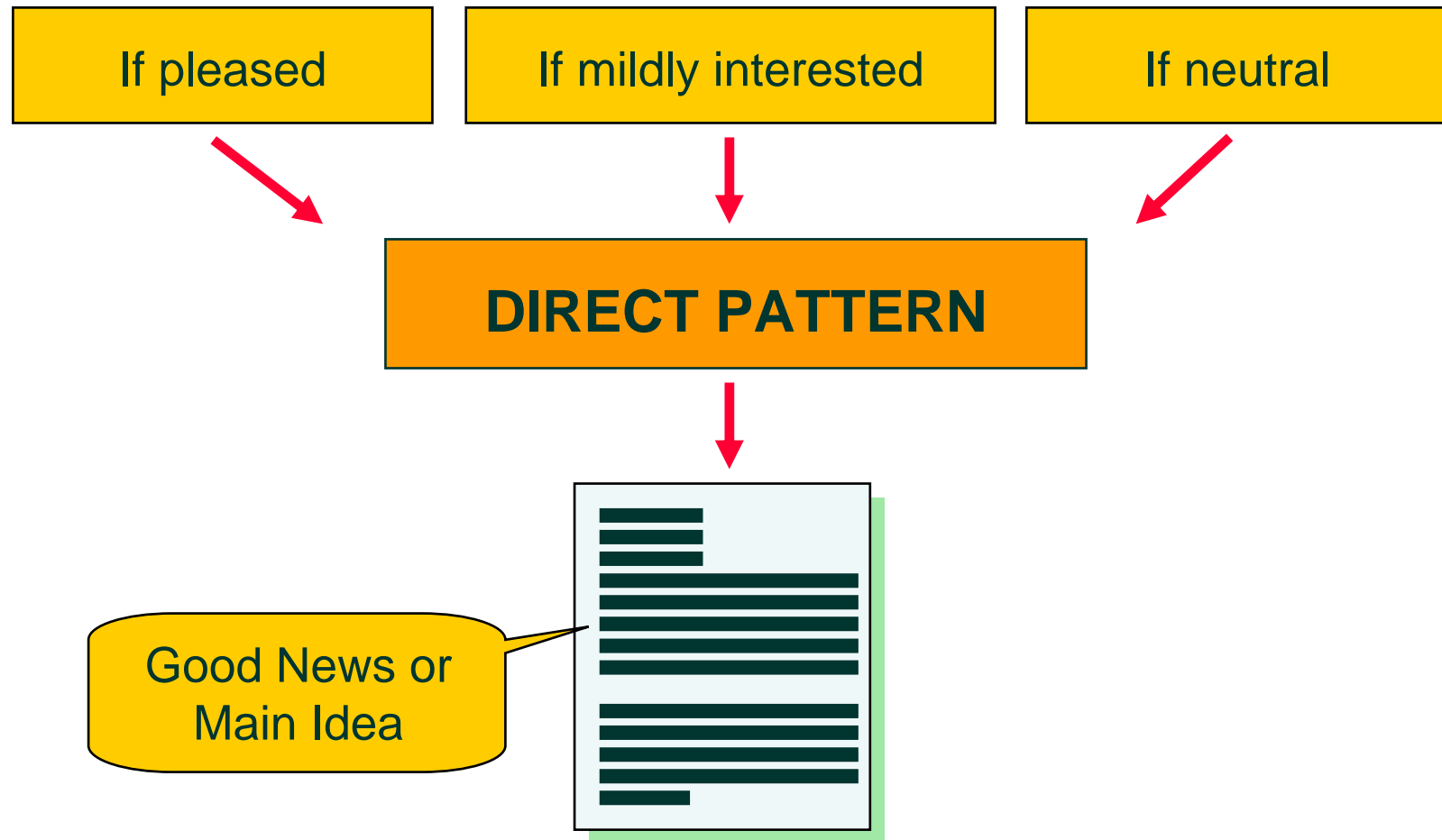
“We” view

We take pleasure in announcing an agreement we made with Hewlett Packard to allow us to offer discounted printers in the student store.

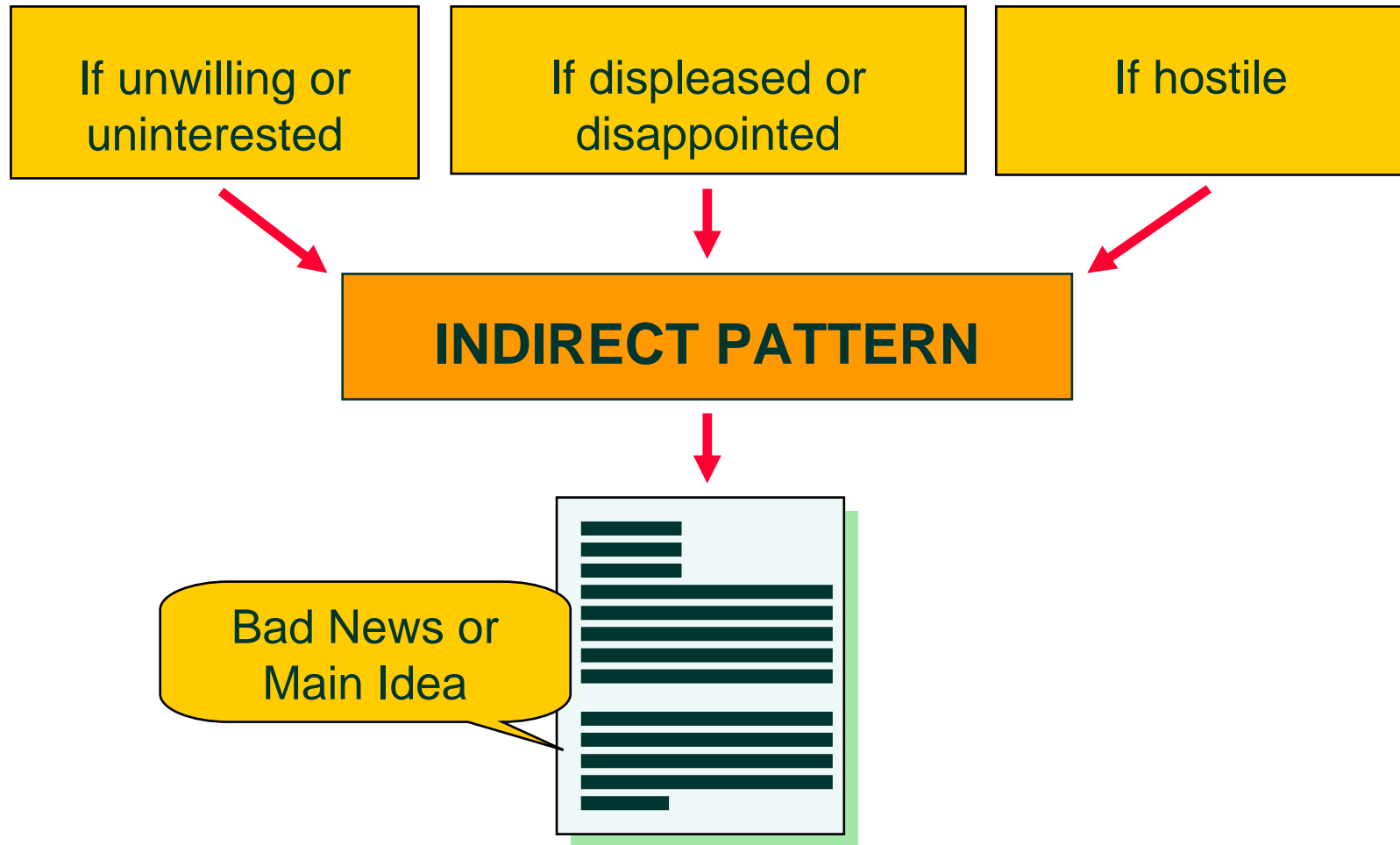
“You” view

An agreement with Hewlett Packard allows you and other students to buy discounted printers at your convenient student store.

Audience Response Determines Pattern of Organization



Audience Response Determines Pattern of Organization



Using Short Sentences

| Sentence Length | Comprehension Rate |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 8 words | 100% |
| 15 words | 90% |
| 19 words | 80% |
| 28 words | 50% |

Source: American Press Institute

Structure of e-mail messages and memos

- **Subject line**
- **Opening**
- **Body**
- **Closing**

Subject Line

- **Summarize the main idea.**

Example: *Budget Meeting June 3, 10 a.m.*

Opening

Start directly; restate and amplify the main idea.

- **Indirect (ineffective) opening:**

This is to inform you that we must complete the annual operating budgets shortly. Over the past two months many supervisors have met to discuss their departmental needs.

- **Direct (effective) opening:**

All supervisors and coordinators will meet June 3 at 10 a.m. to work out the annual operating budgets for their departments.

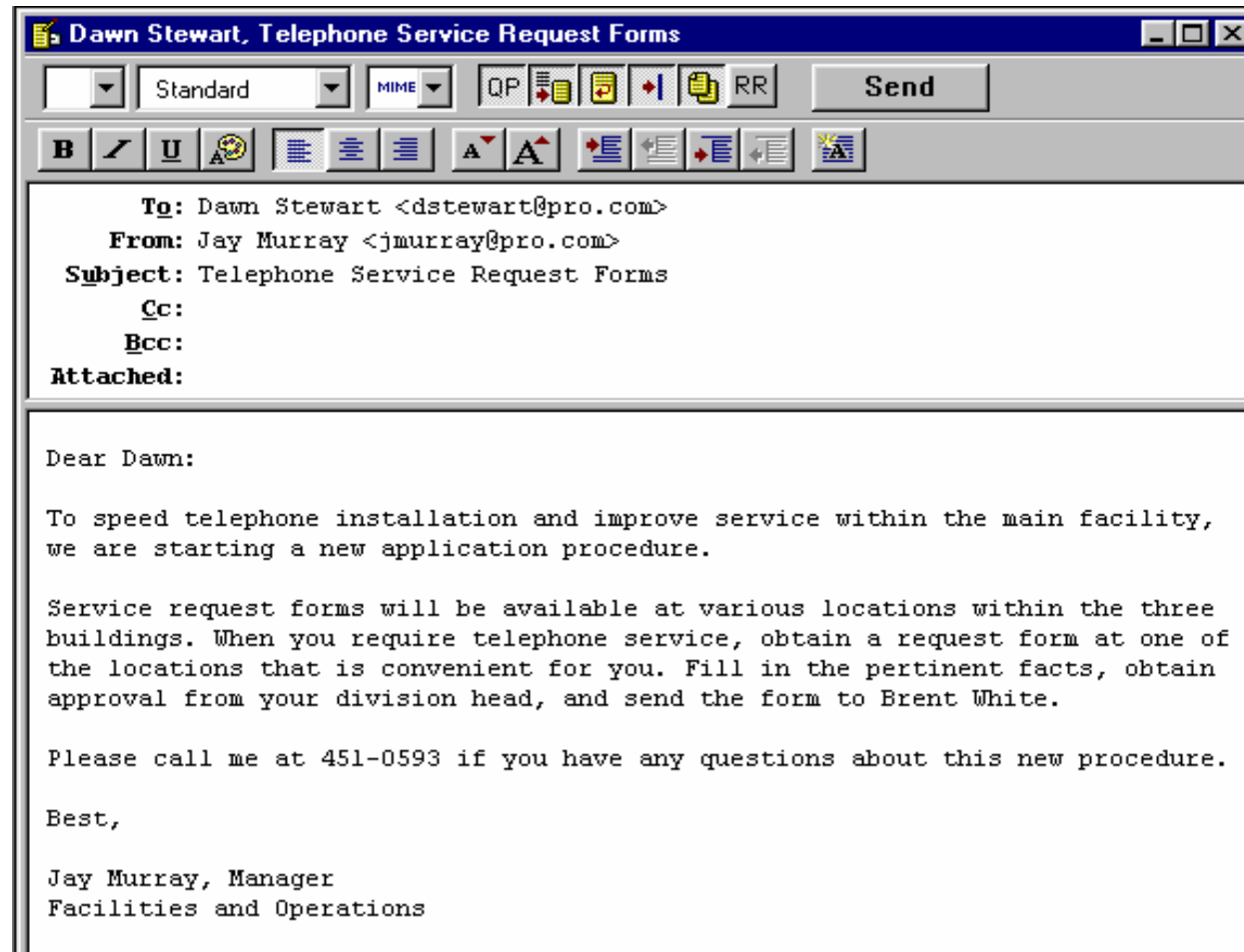
Body

- **Explain and discuss the topic.**
- **Use graphic highlighting to facilitate reading, comprehension, and retention.**
- **Consider columns, headings, enumerations, bulleted lists, and so forth.**

Closing

- **Request action, including an end date.**
- **Summarize the message or provide a closing thought.**

Formatting E-Mail Messages



Document for Analysis



“Before” - Ineffective Request Memo

“Before” - Ineffective Request Memo

DATE: Current

TO: Kim Johnson, Corporate Communications

FROM: Tim Rudolph, CEO

SUBJECT: NEW POLICY

This memo is written to inform you that I continue to receive disturbing reports about the misuse of e-mail by employees. In the course of the past three months I have heard of defamatory messages, downloads of pornography for all the staff to see, and even a basketball pool that turned into a gambling operation.

In view of the foregoing, I am herewith instructing your office that an e-mail policy for the staff is needed. By October 1 a rough draft of a policy should be forthcoming. At the very minimum it should inform each and every employee that e-mail is for business only. Employees must be told that we reserve the right to monitor all messages. No pictures or attachments should be in the e-mail system without there being a valid reason. And we should not be using e-mail to be saying anything about personnel matters--such as performance reviews and salaries.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call.

Critical Thinking Questions

- **What is the purpose of the routine request memo on the previous page?**
- **How effective is the subject line?**
- **Is the opening direct or indirect?**
- **What does the writer want the reader to do? How should the memo begin?**
- **What information should be included in the body?**
- **What graphic highlighting techniques would improve readability? Revise a portion of the body to illustrate your recommendation.**
- **What should be included in the closing?**
- **Should a reason be given along with an end date?**

“After” - Improved Request Memo

“After” - Improved Request Memo

DATE: Current

TO: Kim Johnson, Corporate Communications

FROM: Tim Rudolph, CEO

SUBJECT: DEVELOPING STAFF E-MAIL POLICY

Please draft a policy outlining appropriate e-mail use for employees.

We need such a policy because I have received reports of misuse including defamatory messages, pornography downloads, and even gambling. Here are a few points that the policy should cover:

- E-mail is for business use only.
- E-mail messages may be monitored.
- No pictures or attachments should be sent without a valid reason.
- E-mail should not be used to discuss personnel matters.

Please submit a draft to me by October 1 since we hope to have a final policy completed by November 1. Call if you have questions.

“Before” - Ineffective Routine Request

“Before” - Ineffective Routine Request

Dear Sir:

Because we are one of the largest banking systems in the country, we receive hundreds of résumés from job candidates every day. We need help in sorting and ranking candidates by categories, such as job classification, education, work history, skill, and experience.

Recently, I was reading a Workforce magazine article, and the March issue has a story about your new software program called Resumix. It sounds fascinating and may be the answer to our problem. We would like more information about this program, which is supposed to read and sort résumés.

In addition to learning if the program can sort candidates into the categories mentioned earlier, I’m wondering if the program can read all the different type fonts and formats that candidates use on their résumés. Another important consideration for us is training and troubleshooting. If we need help with the program, would you supply it?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Critical Thinking Questions

- **What is the purpose of the routine request on the previous page?**
- **What do you think the receiver's reaction will be to this letter?**
- **Should the letter be developed directly or indirectly?**
- **How is it currently developed?**
- **What information should be included in the body? How could it be organized for improved readability? Revise a portion or all of the body.**
- **How could the closing be worded to ensure that you get a response by a specific date? Write an appropriate closing.**
- **How will you know whether the sender has communicated successfully?**

“After” -- Improved Request

“After” -- Improved Request
Dear Resumix Product Manager:

Please send me information about your Resumix software program, which I read about in the March issue of Workforce magazine.

My company receives hundreds of résumés daily; and, frankly, we need assistance in processing them. Answers to the following questions would help us determine whether Resumix could solve our problem.

- In terms of fonts and formats, what kinds of résumés can your software program read?
- Can the program help us sort and rank candidates by categories such as job classification, education, work history, skill, and experience?
- How does your company provide training and trouble-shooting service for your software?

Thanks for answering these questions and for providing any other information about Resumix. I would appreciate your response by April 1 so that we can study the program before the rush of job applications in June.

Sincerely,

Top Ten E-Mail Mistakes That Can Sabotage Your Career

- **Responding when angry**
- **Making address goofs**
- **Forgetting a subject line or failing to change it to match “thread”**
- **Not personalizing your message**
- **(such as skipping the salutation and closing identification)**
- **Including inappropriate content (such as instant indiscretions, off-color jokes, and statements you will later regret)**
- **Forgetting to check for spelling and grammar**
- **Thinking no one else will ever see your e-mail**
- **Copying and forwarding recklessly**
- **Completing the “To” line first (A slip of the fingers can send a message before its time, and you can never take it back)**
- **Expecting an instant response.**

Hidden Negative Meanings



Writers are sometimes unaware of the hidden messages conveyed by their words.

Hidden Negative Meanings

You overlooked

(You are careless.)

You failed to

(You are careless.)

You state that

(But I don't believe you.)

You claim that

(It's probably untrue.)

Hidden Negative Meanings

You are wrong

(I am right.)

You do not understand

(You are not very bright.)

Your delay

(You are at fault.)

You forgot to

(You are not only inefficient but also stupid and careless.)

Requesting Information and Action



Opening

- **Ask a question or issue a polite command (*Will you please answer the following questions. . . ?*).**
- **Avoid long explanations that precede the main idea.**

Body

- Explain your purpose and provide details.
- Express questions in parallel form. Number them if appropriate.
- To elicit the most information, use open-ended questions (*What training programs do you recommend?*) rather than yes-or-no questions (*Are training programs available?*).
- Suggest reader benefits, if possible.

Closing

- **State specifically, but courteously, the action you wish to be taken.**
- **Set an end date, if one is significant, and explain why.**
- **Avoid cliché endings (*Thank you for your cooperation*). Show appreciation but use a fresh expression.**
- **Make it easy for the receiver to respond.**