**Business Communications: Week One Assignment**

**Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**IMPORTANT: Save a copy of this assignment to your PC. All your work should be done in this file. When you have completed the assignment, save and post a copy to Blackboard as an attachment.**

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Part ONE; Read Chapter One: Business Communications in the Digital Age. It is highly recommended that you use the Chapter One Power Points as a guide to reading the chapter and as an aid to note-keeping. Power points are posted in Lectures Week One Assignment. REPEAT FOR CHAPTET TWO: Professionalism: Team, Meeting, Listening, Nonverbal, and Etiquette Skills.

**Part Three: Chapter One Assignment**

In today’s digital, fast-paced workplace, excellent communication skills matter more than ever. As electronic and digital channels of communication continue to expand, today’s working professionals must learn to write and speak effectively and ethically in this information-driven workplace. This requires training, as we are not born with these skills. Moreover, workers need to develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, identified as top priorities among human resource professionals. Employees who master these skills are better equipped to evaluate critically the avalanche of information that flows at great speed, across various media, and in many directions.

In this chapter, we will learn how communication and critical thinking skills fuel career success and understand significant workplace changes including social media, anytime-anywhere availability, global competition, shrinking management layers, and an increased use of teams. In addition, flexible work environments and a diverse workforce are creating dramatic changes in how and where we work.

In this chapter, we will also learn how to compare and contrast internal and external functions of communication, formal and informal forms of communication, and oral and written communication.

This chapter concludes with a summary identifying the goals of ethical business communicators and provides practical guidelines for making ethical decisions and addressing wrongdoing in the workplace.

**Write a short (half page) essay on each of the following learning objectives. After reading your work I should be confidant that you understand the material well enough to explain it in your own words and to give examples.**

**Type your answers immediately after each question:**

1. **Do you consider your daily texting, Facebook updates, blog entries, e-mails, and other informal writing to be “real writing”? How might such writing differ from the writing done in business? (Obj. 1)**
2. **Sharing various digital media impulsively can lead to embarrassment and worse. Have you or has someone you know ever regretted posting a comment, photo, or other digital media online? (Obj. 2)**

**3. How do you feel about the work–life balance in today’s 24/7 “anytime, anywhere” digital workplace? Do you anticipate negative effects on your health and personal life? (Obj. 3)**

**4. Critics complain that e-mail is reducing the amount of face-to-face communication at work and this is bad for business. Do you agree or disagree? (Obj. 4)**

**5. Ethical Issue: Josh in the Accounting Department tells you that he heard from a reliable source that 15 percent of the staff will be fired within 120 days. You would love to share this juicy news with other department members, for their own defense and planning. Should you? Why or why not?**

**Part Four: Chapter Two Assignment**

This chapter emphasizes the importance of soft skills and why they are becoming increasingly important in our knowledge-based economy. Soft skills include oral and written communications, listening proficiency, nonverbal communication, the ability to work in teams, and etiquette expertise. By developing soft skills, students will increase their ability to succeed in today’s digital-age workplace. With the increased use of teams in the workplace, it’s particularly important for students to understand the roles of team members and how to contribute to the productivity of the team. This chapter also describes effective practices for planning and participating in virtual meetings. To familiarize students with the latest technologies used to connect employees around the globe, Chapter 2 describes the tools used to connect virtual teams, including voice conferencing, videoconferencing, Web conferencing, instant messaging, blogs, and wikis.

Because listening is usually the least developed areas of communication, the chapter describes effective listening techniques and stresses that effective listening skills are essential for workplace success. Finally, the chapter stresses the importance of paying attention to and interpreting the meaning of what others are saying, both verbally and nonverbally, and gaining a competitive edge by demonstrating professionalism and business etiquette skills.

**Write a short (half page) essay on each of the following learning objectives. After reading your work I should be confidant that you understand the material well enough to explain it in your own words and to give examples**

**Type your answers immediately after each question**

**1. Author and teamwork critic Susan Cain claims that research “strongly suggests that people are more creative when they enjoy privacy and freedom from interruption.” In her book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking*, in articles, and public appearances, Cain cautions against the current emphasis on teamwork in the workplace. Cain cites studies by the psychologists Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Gregory Feist, according to whom “the most spectacularly creative people in many fields are often introverted. . . . They are not joiners by nature.” How would you, as a critical thinker, respond to these statements? (Obj. 1)**

**2. Evaluate the following humorous analogy between the murder of a famous Roman emperor and the deadening effect of meetings: “This month is the 2,053rd anniversary of the death of Julius Caesar, who pronounced himself dictator for life before running the idea past the Roman Senate. On his way to a meeting, he was met by a group of senators who, wishing to express their unhappiness with his vocational aspirations, stabbed him to death. Moral of the story: Beware of meetings.” Is the comparison fitting? What might the author of the article have wanted to convey? (Obj. 2)**

**3. Why do executives and managers spend more time listening than do workers?  
(Obj. 3)**

**4. What arguments could you give for or against the idea that body language is a science with principles that can be interpreted accurately by specialists? (Obj. 4)**

**5. Ethical Issue: After much discussion and even conflict, your workplace team has finally agreed on Plan B, but you are firmly convinced that Plan A is a much better option. Your team is presenting Plan B to the whole department and company executives are present. A vice president asks you for your opinion. Should you (a) keep your mouth shut, (b) try to persuade the team to adopt Plan A, (c) explain why you believe Plan A is a better plan, (d) tell the VP and all present that Plan B is not your idea, or (e) discuss one or two points you can agree on in Plan B? (Objs. 1, 2, 5)**

**Grading Rubric:**

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| --- | --- |
| **Spelling and Grammar** | **20** |
| **APA Style** | **10** |
| **Clarify of writing style**  **Understanding of the concepts** | **10**  **30** |
| **Gives Examples** | **20** |
| **No paraphrasing** | **10** |