



Chapter 1 Business Communication in the Digital Age

**Business Communication:
Process and Product, 8e**

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Communication Skills: Your Ticket to Work

Traditional abilities

Reading
Listening
Nonverbal
Speaking
Writing

New requirements

Media savvy
Good judgment online:

- Maintaining positive image and presence
- Protecting employer's reputation

Writing in the Digital Age

- Writing matters more than ever; online media require more of it, not less.
- Communicating clearly and effectively has never been more important than it is today.
- Life-changing critical judgments about people are being made based solely on their writing ability.

Tools for Success in the 21st Century Workplace

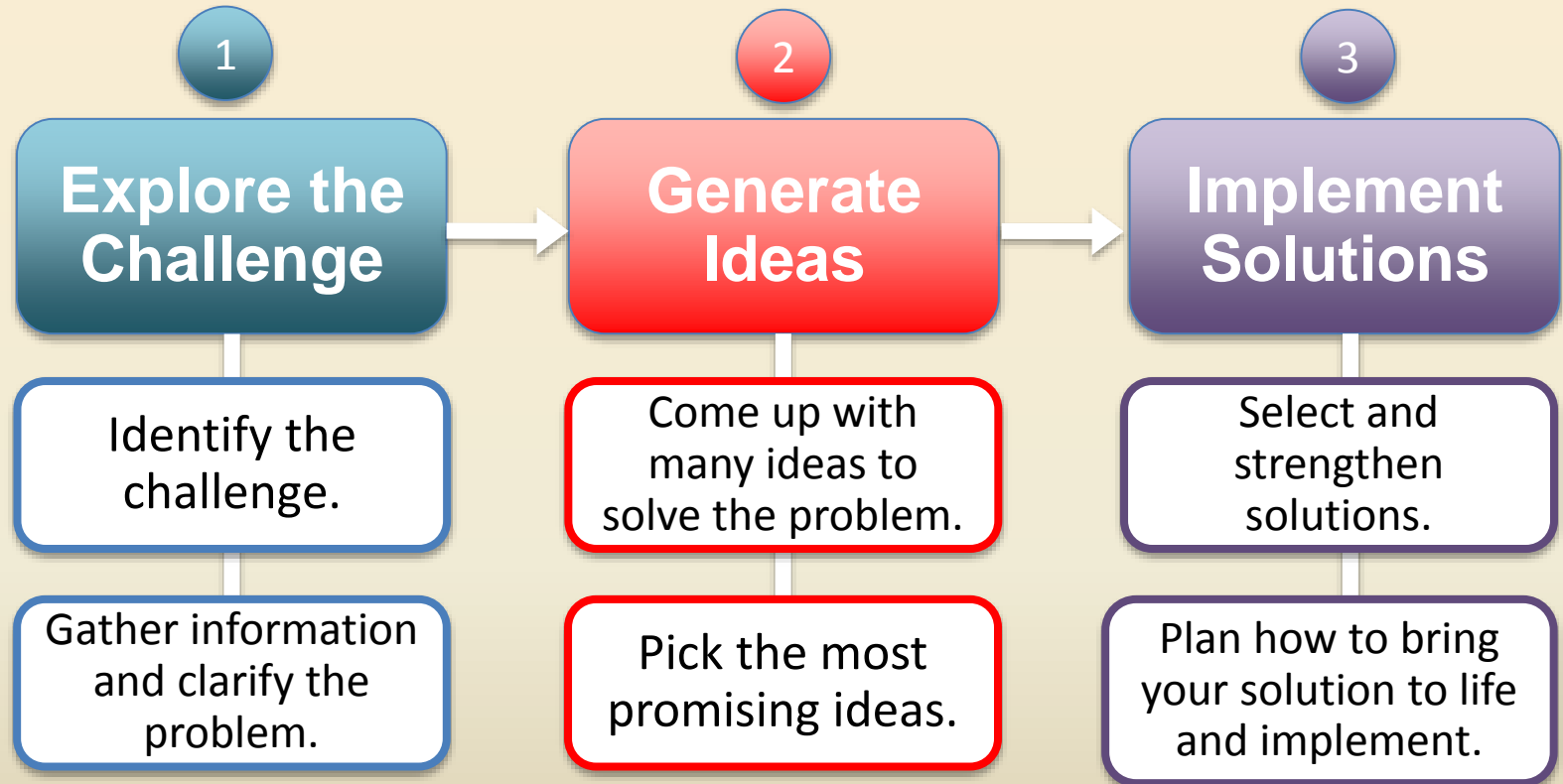
- Knowledge and information workers engage in mind work.
- Workers of the future must make sense of words, figures, and data.
- Knowledge available in the digital universe doubles every year.
- Talent shortages plague even a bleak U.S. labor market.

Thinking Critically in the Digital Age

Thinking creatively and critically means:

- Having opinions backed up by reasons and evidence
- Anticipating and solving problems
- Making decisions and communicating them effectively

Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving Process



Social Media and Changing Communication Technologies

Savvy organizations are “plugged in” and use both old and new media

- To connect with consumers
- To invite feedback
- To improve products and services
- To announce promotions and events
- To draw traffic to blogs, tweets, the company website, and online communities
- To respond to crises

Word of mouth, positive and negative, can travel instantly at the speed of a few mouse clicks.

Anytime, Anywhere: 24/7/365 Availability

**The challenges of relentless connectedness
across time zones and distances:**

- Working long hours without extra compensation
- Being available practically anywhere and anytime
- Living with an increasingly blurry line between work and leisure
- Remaining tethered to the workplace with electronic devices around the clock

Anytime, Anywhere: 24/7/365 Availability

The challenges of relentless connectedness across time zones and distances:

- The physical office extending its reach by becoming mobile and always “on.”
- Americans work 50 percent more than their colleagues in other industrialized nations while enjoying the shortest paid vacations.
- A networked, information-driven workforce never goes “off-duty” in an organization that “never sleeps.”

The Global Marketplace and Competition

Factors that prompted companies to move to emerging markets around the world:

- Rise of new communication technologies
- Removal of trade barriers
- Advanced forms of transportation
- Saturated local markets

The Global Marketplace and Competition

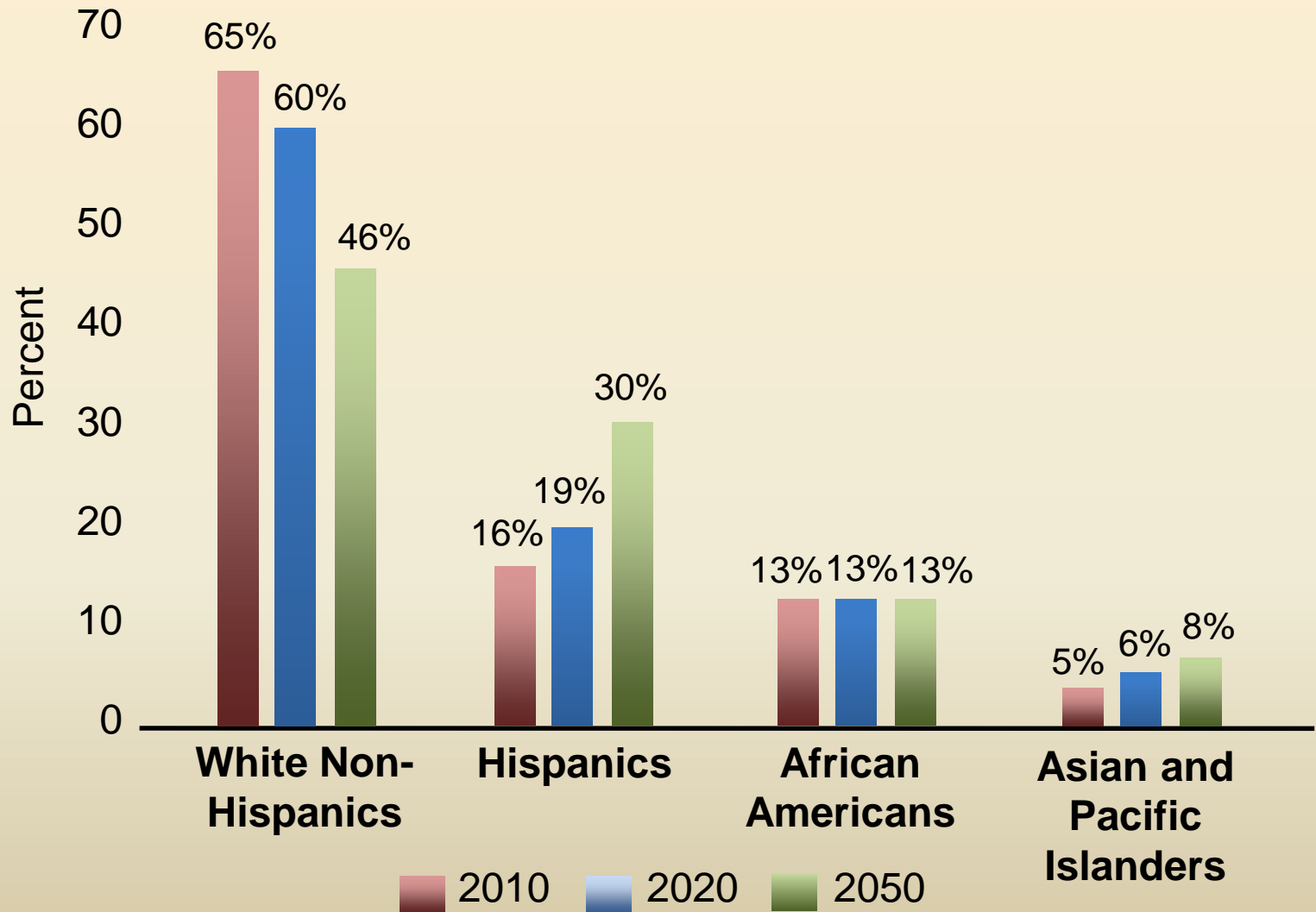
Requirements for successful communicators in new markets:

- Understanding different customs, lifestyles, and business practices
- Coping with challenges of multiple time zones, vast distances, and different languages
- Developing new skills and attitudes
- Practicing cultural awareness, flexibility, and patience

Shrinking Management Layers: Advantages

- Cost savings and efficiency
- Fewer layers between managers and line workers
- Shorter lines of communication
- Faster decision making
- Quick response to market changes

Growing Population Diversity



Growing Workforce Diversity

Benefits consumers, work teams, and businesses

- A diverse staff is better able to respond to increasingly diverse customer base locally and globally.
- Team members with various experience are more likely to create products that consumers demand.
- Consumers want to deal with companies respecting their values.

Virtual and Nonterritorial Offices

- Mobile and decentralized workspaces
- Flexible work arrangements
- “Work shifters,” a new breed of telecommuter
- “Coworking,” sharing communal office space as needed
- Anytime, anywhere office enabled by technology

The Networked Office in a Hyperconnected World

- Smart electronic devices => Mobility
- Social media networks, Web 2.0 => Interactivity
- Biggest Shift: one-sided, slow forms of communication (hard-copy, memos, and letters) => interactive, instant, paperless communication (e-mail, instant messaging, texting, social media)

Media Richness

The more helpful cues and immediate feedback the medium provides, the richer and less ambiguous it is:

RICH: Face-to-face and telephone conversation
=> complex issues, sensitive subjects

LEAN: Written media (e-mail, letter, memo, note, report) => routine, unambiguous problems

Social Presence

Definition: How much awareness of the sender is conveyed with the message. Media with high social presence convey warmth and are personal.

HIGH in synchronous communication: face to face, video conference, live chat

LOW in asynchronous communication: e-mail, social media post

Informal Communication Channels

The grapevine: gossip from the break room to the water cooler to social media

- Carries unofficial messages
- Flows haphazardly
- Can be remarkably accurate
- Is mostly disliked by management
- Thrives where official information is limited

Goals of Ethical Business Communicators

- Abide by the law
- Tell the truth
- Label opinions
- Be objective
- Communicate clearly
- Use inclusive language
- Give credit

Overcoming Obstacles to Ethical Decision Making

Common ethical traps to avoid on the job:

The false necessity trap– convincing yourself that no other choices exist

The doctrine-of-relative-filth trap– comparing unethical behavior with someone else's even more unethical behavior

Overcoming Obstacles to Ethical Decision Making

Common ethical traps to avoid on the job:

The ends-justify-the-means trap— using unethical methods to accomplish a goal

The self-deception trap— persuading yourself, for example, that a lie is not really a lie

The rationalization trap— justifying unethical actions with excuses

Choosing Tools for Doing the Right Thing

Five questions to guide ethical decisions:

1. Is the action legal?
2. Would you do it if you were on the opposite side?
3. Can you rule out a better alternative?
4. Would a trusted advisor agree?
5. Would family, friends, employer, or coworkers approve?