Creating Effective Business Messages

© Digital Vision/Getty Images

Learning Objectives

After studying this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the goals of effective business messages and the process for creating them.
2. Identify the needs of your audience in the AIM planning process.
3. Develop and refine business ideas in the AIM planning process.
4. Develop your primary message and key points in the AIM planning process.
5. Explain and apply positive and other-oriented tone in business messages.

Why Does This Matter?

You will have countless opportunities over your career to communicate important messages. Every situation will be unique and involve an array of business problems and recipients. In all your communications, however, this principle will remain constant: Effective messages emerge from a consistent planning process and a positive and other-oriented tone.

Hear Pete Cardon explain why this matters.

© Jose Luis Pelaez Inc/Blend Images LLC

bit.ly.com/CardonWhy5

This chapter first explains the process of developing business messages. Then, we focus on the most critical stage—planning—followed by a discussion of tone. Although the chapter is concerned particularly with writing, the principles transfer effectively to any type of communication.

Throughout, we will provide examples from the chapter case about a challenging communication task. Not all communication tasks demand such rigorous planning and preparation. In fact, the majority will be fairly routine, meaning they will require less time and encounter little resistance from your readers. However, even routine messages require a strategic focus on planning and tone. As you apply these principles to your communications, you will find that you are far more effective and influential.

Chapter Case: Justifying a Wellness Program at Eastmond Networking

Who's Involved

Latisha Jackson, summer intern

- Working as a summer intern in the human resource department
- Assigned to research options for a wellness program

Jeff Brody, personnel director

- Has held current position for five years
- Trying to develop initiatives that improve employee well-being and morale amid steep budget cuts

Lisa Johnson, finance manager

- Has held current position for three years
- Specializes in developing budgets and financial forecasts

The Situation

Jeff recently asked Latisha to spend around ten hours per week to develop a wellness program as an effort to improve employee morale and productivity. However, since the company is facing major budget constraints, executives are skeptical of resource-intensive initiatives. Jeff wants Latisha to focus her attention on the financial implications of a wellness program first. He wants her to present her preliminary findings within one month.

Latisha was excited about the opportunity to keep working on the wellness program initiative, even on this limited basis. She was also slightly nervous—one month was a short time to analyze how a wellness center would impact the financial well-being of the company, and she wanted to prove she was up to the task. Each week, she gathered information. She talked to HR directors at several local businesses of roughly the same size that had implemented wellness programs in the past few years and also met with several wellness program vendors.

One of the trickiest parts of the project was estimating the financial impact of a wellness program. Latisha had taken a few classes in finance but had no real experience. So, she met with the finance manager, Lisa Johnson, and showed her the information she had collected. Lisa agreed to spend some time estimating the potential return on investment from a wellness program. Later, Lisa emailed the following:

Financial Impact of Wellness Center Estimates 🔸 | X Inbox | X

☆ ⊚ Latisha Jackson   ✎ ↩ Reply ▾

Hi Latisha:

Based on the research about wellness centers you gave me, I've created a 6-year cash flow estimate based on safe and modest assumptions (I've included all of the assumptions and more detail about the estimates in the attached document). I anticipate the following cash flow:

Table of Cash Flow Estimates

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total
Savings in Healthcare Costs	$0	$107,000	$214,000	$428,000	$428,000	$428,000	$1,605,000
Wellness Center Expenditures	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$130,000	$780,000
Net Cash Flow	($130,000)	($23,000)	$84,000	$298,000	$298,000	$298,000	$825,000

I think the case for considering a wellness program is strong. Obviously, there are a lot of ifs about setting the whole thing up. But, even with really modest expectations compared to the success of other companies, we'd come out with a 2:1 return on our investment over six years. Generally, when we look at other investments for our company, we're looking for returns more in the neighborhood of 1.7:1 over that time frame. And, in this case, the savings should continue on well past the six years we've looked at.

Let me know if I can help you out in any further way.

Lisa

📄 **6-Year Cash Flow Estimates for Wellness Center.docx**
13K View Download

Task 1	**Task 2**
How can Latisha address Jeff's and other key decision makers' needs and concerns? (See the "Audience Analysis" section.)	How should Latisha organize the information she has found? (See the "Idea Development" section.)
Task 3	**Task 4**
How should Latisha organize her message? (See the "Message Structuring" section.)	How can Latisha strike the right tone? (See the section on setting the right tone.)

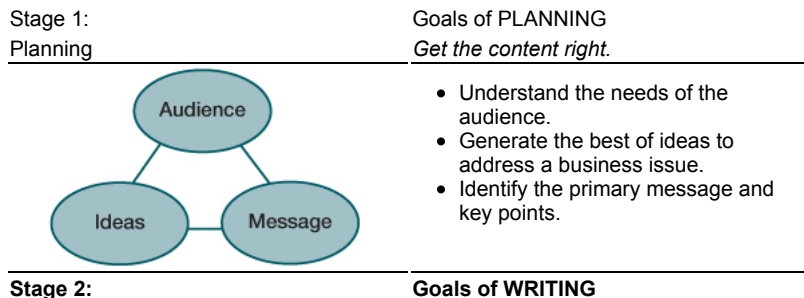## The Process for Creating Business Messages

LO5.1. Explain the goals of effective business messages and the process for creating them.
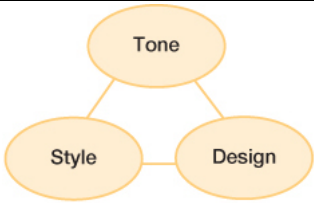
Writing effective business messages involves a process—one that involves examining, developing, and refining business ideas in a way that provides business value to your audience. The very process that we explain in this section drives excellence in business thinking. Furthermore, it drives collaboration and productivity in your work relationships.

The process of developing business messages is fairly straightforward: *plan, draft, and review.* You've likely been trained and coached in a similar process many times during your education. Nearly all business professionals have been trained in this process. Yet few business professionals excel at it and, consequently, few business professionals produce excellent written communication. Making this process a habit requires discipline and scheduling.

Notice Figure 5.1, which depicts the stages and goals for creating effective messages. We will focus on each of the three stages (planning, drafting, and reviewing) in this chapter and the following one. It's worth noting that these stages are not necessarily linear and often overlap one another. Business writers frequently move back and forth between the stages.

Figure 5.1 The Stages and Goals of Effective Message Creation

Stage 1:
Planning

Goals of PLANNING
Get the content right.

- Understand the needs of the audience.
- Generate the best of ideas to address a business issue.
- Identify the primary message and key points.

Stage 2:   **Goals of WRITING**

Drafting	Get the delivery right.
	- Set a positive and other-oriented tone. - Make the message easy to read. - Make the message easy to navigate.
Stage 3: **Reviewing**	**Goals of REVIEWING** *Double-check everything.*
	- Ensure the communication is fair. - Consider whether your message is effective. - Remove any distractions.

Expert writers, however, more carefully and consciously break these stages apart. For example, they are more likely to analyze the needs of the audience, generate the best ideas to tackle a problem, and identify the primary message and key points before starting a formal draft of a business message. On the other hand, poor and average writers are more likely to begin drafting or writing right away. They often address planning issues—audience analysis, ideas for solving a problem, and message organization—as they go. Consequently, they tend to write in a less organized, perhaps even haphazard, manner. They generally produce less strategic and influential messages.

Developing expertise in this process makes you more effective, plus it makes you more efficient. In Figure 5.2, you'll see a chart that contrasts the time that poor, average, and expert business writers commit to planning, drafting, and reviewing. Not surprisingly, poor writers spend less overall time than average and expert writers. They are aimless and sloppy. They generally spend little or no time planning and usually do not review their messages before sending them.[1]

Figure 5.2 Time Spent by Poor, Average, and Expert Writers Developing a Complete Business Message
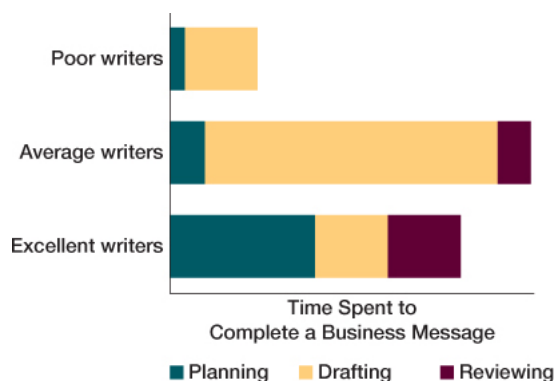
Source: Time estimates based on author's observation of thousands of business students and consistent with decades of research about expertise as described in Michael Pressley and Christine B. McCormick, *Advanced Educational Psychology for Educators, Researchers, and Policymakers* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

The contrast between average business writers and expert business writers is most intriguing. Expert business writers not only produce more-effective written communications, but they also do so more quickly than average writers. Their secret is to devote a much higher percentage of their time to the planning and reviewing stages. In particular, they spend far more time planning than average or poor writers. They take the time to understand the business issues well, piece together great ideas, make sure the ideas meet the needs of their audiences, and structure their messages for greatest clarity and impact. Once they start drafting, the content is essentially in place.

As you craft business messages, maintain a listener-centered approach (as opposed to a message-centered approach as described in Chapter 3). In the listener-centered approach to writing business messages, you seek as much input as reasonably possible from colleagues, clients, and customers. You ask them about their opinions, preferences, and areas of expertise. You find out what those to whom you are writing really want and expect. You adopt a learning, other-oriented approach to writing.

The AIM Planning Process for Effective Business Messages

LO5.2. Identify the needs of your audience in the AIM planning process.

The most important stage of creating effective business messages is planning. Throughout the remainder of the book, we will refer to the three-component AIM planning process for developing influential messages. It focuses on three areas: (1) *A*udience analysis; (2) *I*dea development; and (3) *M*essage structuring (see Figure 5.3). In short, the planning process should include analyzing the needs of your audience, developing sound ideas that meet those needs, and then structuring your message. The *AIM* planning process unleashes your best thinking and allows you to deliver influential messages.

Figure 5.3 The AIM Planning Process for Business Messages
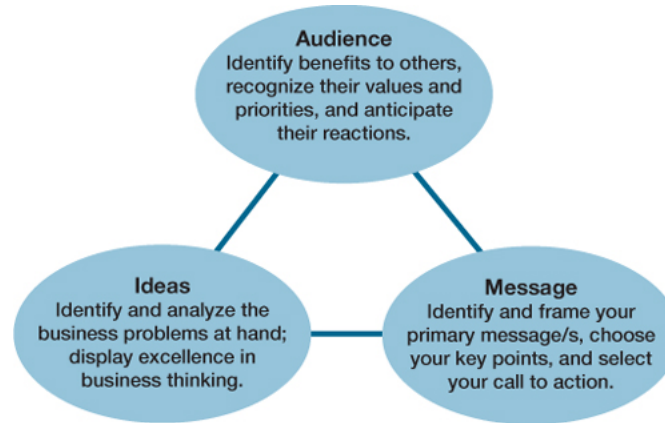
Audience Analysis

Effective business communicators possess an uncanny ability to step into the shoes of their audience members. They think about their audience's needs, priorities, and values. They envision how their readers will respond when getting the message—in thought, feeling, and action. They also consider how the message will impact their working relationships. Effective business communicators regularly take the following actions to tailor their messages to others: identify reader benefits and constraints, consider reader values and priorities, estimate personal credibility, anticipate reactions, and consider secondary audiences.

Identifying Reader Benefits and Constraints

For many messages, this is the single most important planning step. Simply put, your readers respond when you provide them with something that they value. When you communicate no apparent benefits, your readers are unlikely to engage.

Similarly, think about the constraints your audience faces. Your readers will often see value in your messages but may not be able to respond as you hope because they don't have enough time, resources, or authority to make certain decisions.

In Latisha's case, she can point out to Jeff many potential benefits of the wellness program. Presumably, Jeff cares about the employees and would like them to have better health. Jeff would also like to save money for the company. And, like most employees, Jeff would likely want to be associated with any successful work initiative. In this regard, Latisha's challenge is choosing which reader benefits appeal most to Jeff in this situation.

Latisha should keep in mind that no matter how much Jeff views the wellness program as beneficial, he likely faces a number of constraints. He would certainly need to get agreement for a project of this size from other members of the leadership team. So, he would need to persuade others and risk his own credibility. In addition, since the company faces a financial crisis, any initiative may be viewed with higher-than-usual scrutiny and even skepticism. Latisha should anticipate these constraints and develop her message accordingly.

Considering Reader Values and Priorities

Being an effective business communicator requires that you learn about other people—what they value, prioritize, and prefer. **Values** refer to enduring beliefs and ideals that individuals hold. Since values are at the core of belief systems, appeals to an individual's values can have strong influence. Generally, people hold workplace values—beliefs and ideals about the appropriate way to approach business problems, resolve issues, and choose goals. **Priorities** involve ranking or assigning importance to things, such as projects, goals, and tasks. Priorities tend to shift more often than values.

Latisha has not known Jeff for long, but she can attempt to understand some of his values and priorities. She believes that he is fundamentally invested in the wellness program initiative because of his strong commitment to employees. He seems to value detailed analysis and careful decision making (he leans toward a thinker communicator style). Based on his comments, he seems to prioritize efficiency and cost-cutting. This may be due to the current financial situation or it may be due to deeper, long-held values. He also refers frequently to the "company president," which suggests a respect for the chain of command. Jeff's frequent mention of the company president may mean that Jeff is under a great deal of pressure to perform according to the president's expectations.

Audience Analysis Components

- Identify reader benefits and constraints.
- Consider reader values and priorities.
- Estimate your credibility.
- Anticipate reactions.
- Consider secondary audiences.

Estimating Your Credibility

As discussed in Chapter 1, your readers will inevitably judge your recommendations, requests, and other messages based on their view of your credibility. If your credibility is low, consider how to strengthen your message in ways that overcome your lack of credibility.

Many entry-level professionals face this situation; they have relatively low professional credibility because they are viewed as the newcomers. Establishing a professional reputation takes time. It takes less time, however, if you stay aware of your strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Most important, your reputation

depends on adding value in the workplace. Yet, overcoming a reputation as a newcomer isn't easy. Consider this statement from an entry-level business professional:

> When my bosses first hired me, I was a novice with misguided ideas. They often ignored my suggestions with just cause. As I have learned more about our industry, and gained experience, my ideas have matured. Yet, my bosses continue to ignore my suggestions even when they have proven to be correct and insightful. How can I get my bosses to listen to my opinions and ideas when they still think of me as the young novice?[2]

Changing your reputation will likely take at least six months. To break out of a reputation as an inexperienced newcomer, consider the following options:[3]

- Set up a time to talk with your boss. Explain your growth in various areas and ask for his/her ideas about improving your professional reputation.
- Ask your boss if you can take on any higher-responsibility projects.
- Make sure you fit in with the corporate culture in terms of professional dress and communication style.
- Attend a lot of meetings to get to know as many colleagues as possible. Participate appropriately.
- Create a professional blog about a niche area.

As a newcomer, Latisha recognizes that Jeff has many reasons to doubt her credibility. She is an undergraduate business student without a degree or significant business experience. She has worked for Jeff for only a short time, so he can't make a good judgment about her ability to get things done. But he obviously saw promise in her or he wouldn't have hired her to develop a work initiative that was so important to him. Latisha felt that her credibility would be enhanced by including a trusted, competent voice in her memo. As a result, she sought the opinion of Lisa Johnson. By highlighting Lisa's estimate and opinions, Latisha elevates her own credibility. Lisa is competent in her area (finance) and reliable (she has a track record at Eastmond). Jeff will likely give more credence to Latisha's message because it references Lisa's cash flow estimate.

Anticipating Reactions

In the planning stage, envision how others will respond to your message. Imagine how your readers will think, feel, and act as they read it. Always think about what you want to achieve in terms of workplace relationships. Most business activities cannot be separated from the web of working relationships involved. Sometimes your positions or ideas may displease others. In these instances, consider how you can articulate your views most constructively.

Latisha believes that Jeff will respond sensibly to a clearly articulated, logical justification of the wellness center. Based on the strength of the cash flow estimates, Latisha thinks he will respond favorably. Even if he disagrees, she assumes he will respect her hard work and reward her with challenging assignments.

Keeping Secondary Audiences in Mind

In most situations, you should anticipate that individuals other than your primary recipient will view your messages. In some cases, you will distribute your message to additional individuals whom it will affect. For example, you might copy team members on a correspondence between you and a client so that they are aware of project progress. In other cases, your primary recipient will forward your message or otherwise share the information with others. You should consider which secondary audiences will view your messages and, if necessary, modify them accordingly.

Latisha recognizes that her proposal for developing a wellness program would impact everyone in the organization and would require significant resources. If Jeff finds merit in the proposal, he will undoubtedly share the message with a variety of individuals involved in the decision-making process.

Idea Development

Developing great business ideas involves sorting out the business issues and objectives, collecting as many relevant facts as possible, and making sound judgments about what the facts mean and imply. You are making sense out of often complex and confusing pieces of business information.

Idea Development Components

- Identify the business problems.
- Analyze the business problems.
- Clarify objectives.

Excellent business thinkers possess a number of characteristics. First, they clearly and precisely identify and articulate key questions and problems. Second, they gather information from a variety of sources. Third, they make well-reasoned conclusions and solutions. Fourth, they remain open to alternatives to approaching and reasoning about the business problem—that is, they are mentally flexible. They can hold opposing views, avoid either/or thinking, avoid one-way linear thinking, and are open to nonconventional solutions. Finally, they are skilled at communicating with others to figure out and solve complex problems.[4]

Business professionals use many methods of bringing out their best thinking. Some write notes, some draw diagrams, some brainstorm with colleagues, some write ideas in outline form, and some just examine the ideas in their minds. Generally, for complex problems, such as the opening case, writing ideas down in some form is an important part of developing sound ideas. In this section, we focus on three broad areas: (1) identifying the business problem/s; (2) analyzing the business problem/s; and (3) clarifying objectives.

LO5.3. Develop and refine business ideas in the AIM planning process.

Identifying the Business Problem/s

To remain competitive and profitable, businesses constantly need to identify and overcome problems. One of the best reputations you can gain as a business professional is that of a problem solver. The first step in problem solving is identifying business problems. This involves understanding an organization's business objectives and related challenges. It involves asking many questions from a lot of angles.

In Latisha's case, she has been given a charge: Find out how a wellness program would impact Eastmond. This is a classic business problem. Latisha can break the problem down by asking a variety of questions: How do wellness programs impact health care costs? What benefits do health care programs deliver to employees? How do other businesses measure return on investment for wellness programs? How do wellness programs impact productivity, absenteeism,

morale, retention, and recruiting?

Analyzing the Business Problem/s

Analyzing the business problem typically involves uncovering relevant facts, making conclusions, and taking positions. **Facts** are statements that can be relied on with a fair amount of certainty (most things are not absolutely certain in the business world) and can be observed objectively. **Conclusions** are statements that are reasoned or deduced based on facts. **Positions** are stances that you take based on a set of conclusions. In the workplace, you will often make recommendations, which are a type of position.

   Latisha analyzed the business problem by collecting a variety of facts and making five or six broad conclusions about corporate wellness programs based on those facts (see Figure 5.4). For example, she concluded that the return on investment for wellness programs is substantial (her second-to-last conclusion) based on findings from several academic and corporate studies, listed with bullet points. This form of outlining facts and conclusions can be particularly helpful once Latisha begins writing.

Figure 5.4 Analysis of Facts and Conclusions during Idea Development[5]

Analysis of Wellness Programs

Most Americans suffer poor health due to lifestyle-related issues.

- The U.S. Surgeon General has stated that about 75% of all illnesses are due to lifestyle. (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)
- 68% of Americans are overweight (BMI of 25 or greater); 34% of American adults are obese (A body mass index [BMI] of 30 or greater). (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)
- Overweight and obesity raise the risk for type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, coronary heart disease, stroke, asthma, cancers, and many other illnesses. (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)

Employees with poor health raise health care costs to employers.

- For example, compared to employees with low health risks, employees with the following conditions are associated with costs to the employer that are significantly higher: depression (70.2% higher cost); stress (46.3%); glucose (34.8%); weight (21.4%); tobacco (19.7%); blood pressure (11.7%); exercise (10.4%). (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)

Most employers make wellness programs available to their employees.

- Most companies have created wellness programs. About 73% of large companies, 56% of medium-sized companies, and 44% of small companies currently have wellness programs available to their employees. (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)
- Companies implement wellness programs for a variety of reasons. In a survey of business, the top reasons were to (1) increase employee morale; (2) improve employee health; (3) reduce health care costs; (4) reduce accidents on the job; (5) reduce absenteeism; and (6) increase productivity (8%). (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)
- Mid- to large-sized companies spend on average about 2% of their health care claim costs on wellness programs. (National Business Group on Health, 2010)

Employers benefit significantly from providing wellness programs to their employees, including lower health care costs, lower absenteeism, higher productivity, and higher morale.

- A review of 56 scientific studies about the impact of corporate wellness programs found the following average benefits:
  - % change in sick leave absenteeism: average: –26.8%
  - % change in health costs: –26.1%
  - % change in workers' compensation/disability management costs: –32.0%
- Reduced presenteeism losses. (Chapman, 2005)
- Increased productivity by 2% to 52%. (Chapman, 2005)
- A recent study of 200 people at three major corporations revealed that an employee's quality of life, mental performance, and time management were 15% better on days when they exercised. (Chapman, 2005)
- A Johnson & Johnson study showed that employees who participated in a corporate wellness program reported more positive attitudes in organizational commitment, supervision, working conditions, job competence/security, and pay/benefits. (Chapman, 2005)

The return on investment (ROI) for corporate wellness programs is substantial.

- Studies generally indicate a $4–$6:$1 ROI for wellness programs. In terms of just medical costs: $3.93 (28 studies); absenteeism: $5.07 (18 studies); medical costs, absenteeism, and workers' comp: $5.93 (42 studies); and medical costs and absenteeism: $5.81 (56 studies). (George, 2008)
- Many companies and organizations have reported the impact of their wellness

programs. For example, the following companies reported the following ROIs: Northeast Utilities: 6:1; Motorola: 3.93:1; Wisconsin Education Insurance Group: 4.75:1.; DuPont: 1.42:1 due to reduced absenteeism; Citibank: 4.56:1; Bank of America: 5.96:1; General Mills: 3.50:1; Washoe County School District: 15.6:1; Pfizer: 4.29:1 for fitness centers. (George, 2008)

- For employees who participate in wellness programs, significant savings occur. Just by enrolling in fitness programs, companies can save hundreds of dollars. Coca-Cola reported saving $500 per person who enrolled in a corporate fitness program. Pacific Bell reported $300 in savings. Prudential Insurance reported $262. (George, 2008)
- Savings reach optimal point in years 3 or 4. (George, 2008)
- Reduced health care costs by 20% to 55%. (George, 2008)

Companies have many decisions to make when implementing wellness programs.

- Corporate wellness programs are diverse. Hundreds of national and local companies specialize in providing corporate wellness programs. Many companies, especially large companies, develop in-house wellness programs. The range of services offered is immense. Among mid- to large-sized companies, the average number of wellness programs offered is 21.
- For companies with wellness programs, the most common incentives are: premium reductions (34%); cash/bonuses (20%); merchandise (19%); gift cards (17%); other incentives (17%); and health account contributions (13%). (Capps, 2007)
- For wellness programs, about 45% of corporate expenses are devoted to prevention and lifestyle wellness and about 43% to disease/illness management (after onset of illness). The most common prevention and lifestyle programs include employee assistance programs (92%), on-site flu shots (90%), stress management (68%), preventive-care reminders related to screenings or annual exams (68%), and smoking cessation (66%). The most common condition-management programs include nurse hotlines, diabetes disease management, coronary artery disease management, congestive heart failure management, and asthma disease management. (American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2008)

Latisha also relied on insiders for information. She asked Lisa Johnson, the company's finance manager, to estimate the financial impact a wellness program would have on health care costs and revenues (see details in the opening chapter case). In many cases, you conduct data gathering and analysis within your networks of colleagues and other business partners.

Clarifying Objectives

As you develop the ideas for your message, also clearly identify your goals. You are essentially asking yourself, "Now that I understand the problem, what exactly do I want to accomplish?" Knowing how committed you are to various work outcomes will help you decide how hard to push certain positions. It will also help you balance your preferred work outcomes with your work relationships.

Latisha has carefully thought about her attitudes toward developing a wellness program. She is certain she wants the chance to work on the initiative. She is passionate about this issue and wants to gain experience combining her interests in management and health. Latisha has thought about whether her self-interests are too strong. But, she feels confident that this initiative is good for the company: It will benefit the employees and it will save the company money. She is committed to taking a strong position.

Message Structuring

Once you have analyzed the needs of your audience and developed your ideas for the message, you plan the basic message structure. This includes identifying and framing the primary message and setting up the logic with supporting points and a call to action. The set of questions you will address include the following:

1. *Framing the primary message.*
   a. What is the primary message?
   b. What simple, vivid statement (15 words or less) captures the essence of your message?
2. *Setting up the logic of your message.*
   a. What are your supporting points?
   b. What do you want to explicitly ask your readers to do (call to action)?
   c. How will you order the logic of your message?

LO5.4. Develop your primary message and key points in the AIM planning process.

Message Structuring Components

- Frame the primary message.
- Set up the structure and logic of the message.

Framing the Primary Message

Framing involves showcasing a message from an overarching theme. It focuses a reader or listener on a certain key idea or argument and highlights the

premises and support for this key idea or argument. As one management communication expert said, "No communication skill ... is more critical to the manager than the ability to frame an issue effectively."[6] Your job in framing the message is to help your reader see the issue from a strategic perspective. Just as a frame draws out particular aspects of a painting, the frame you apply to your message can create a unique prism through which your audience will read.

Strategic communicators consider alternative frames before they settle on the one that will be most compelling. Ideally, it should be a vivid statement with rational and emotional appeal. One standard you'll encounter frequently in this book is whether a reader would remember the frame later. Regarding your frame, ask questions such as the following: Will readers remember my primary message two hours from now? What about in two days or two weeks? Will this frame make readers more likely to support my call to action?[7]

The art of creating effective frames involves capturing your primary message in a short, memorable statement of 15 words or less. Eduardo Castro-Wright, president and CEO of Wal-Mart Stores USA, discussed this strategy in the context of organizational communication:

> I've worked 30 years now in management roles, and a number of times I've seen a new CEO come in, and the first act is typically to get the leadership team to an offsite. And you get a consultant—because you can't do it without a consultant—and the consultant then helps the team design a vision. And then you've got all these words, and several thousand dollars and a couple of days of golf later, you go back to the company to actually try to communicate that vision throughout the organization. So you hire another consultant to do that. It shouldn't be like that. We have a very clear view of what we do for consumers around the world. And we can describe our complete strategy in 10 words. And that makes it very easy to get everybody energized and aligned.[8]

As Latisha was thinking about how to justify the wellness program, she came up with three options for framing the message:

Frame A—creating a wellness program is the right thing to do. We are responsible for our employees.

Frame B—creating a wellness program will cut costs and improve morale at the same time.

Frame C—wellness programs will increase our profitability.

She thinks each frame is powerful. She personally relates to Frame A with her passion for physical fitness and personal health. However, she thinks this case is weakest in the current financial situation and with Jeff's apparent budgetary limitations. She believes that Frame B is strong. The company needs to cut costs, and Jeff has explicitly noted the company president's interest in improving morale. She also believes that Frame C is strong. The emphasis on profitability is a broader concept; it is the ultimate measure of strong financial performance and encompasses not just lower expenses but also increased revenues.
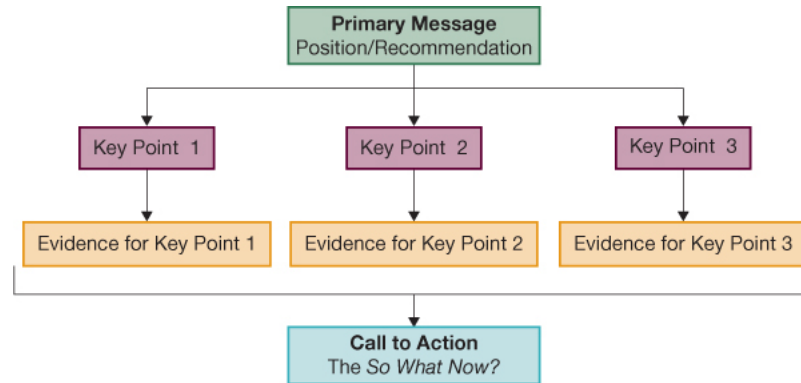
The choice between Frame B and Frame C is difficult. Ultimately, Latisha selects Frame C for several reasons. First, Frame C has stronger external (from other companies) and internal evidence (from Lisa's cash flow estimate). With Jeff's preference for brief, to-the-point, result-oriented, and well-reasoned positions, she believes this frame is best suited for this communication approach. Second, she believes the concept of profitability emphasizes the return on investment for this project more so than any other frame. She wants to emphasize that a wellness program is an asset—not a liability of any sort.

Setting Up the Message Framework

Most business arguments employ a **direct** or **deductive** approach. In other words, they begin by stating the primary message, which is typically a position or recommendation. Then they lay out the supporting reasons. Most business messages conclude with a call to action. The call to action in many cases is a more detailed and elaborate version of the initial position or recommendation.

Figure 5.5 illustrates the framework of most deductive business arguments. Generally, a reader could get the gist of your message—the primary message, rationale, and call to action—simply by reading the opening paragraph, the first sentence of each supporting paragraph, and the final paragraph. In fact, many of your readers, who are generally busy, will do exactly that. They will skim the communication to understand the main ideas and implications. If they see merit in your ideas, they will go back and read the entire message more carefully.

Figure 5.5 Typical Deductive Framework for a Business Argument and Related Paragraph Structure
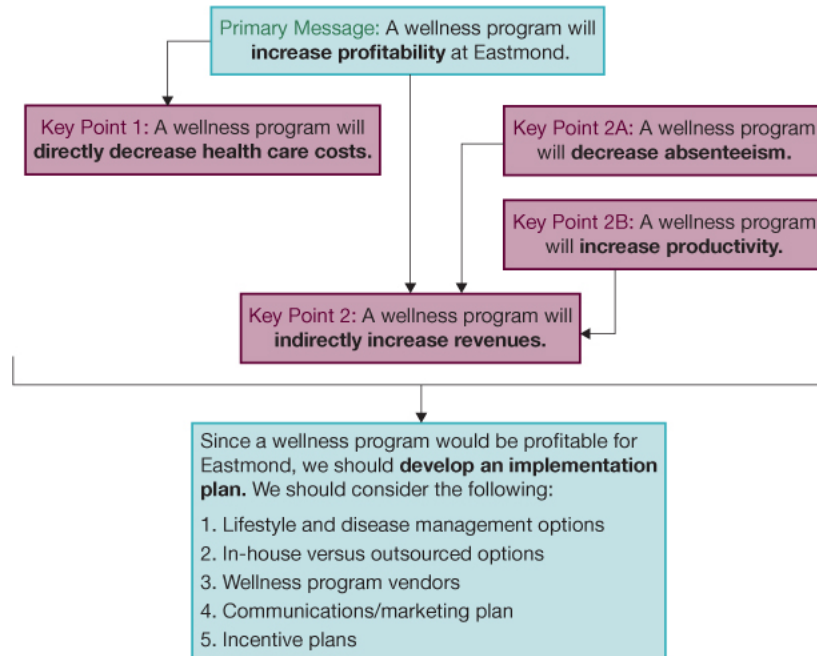
Typical Paragraph Organization in a Deductive Business Message	**Deductive Business Message Components**
Primary message as topic sentence. xx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx. *Preview sentence.* *Key Point 1* as topic sentence. xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxx. *Key Point 2* as topic sentence. xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx. *Key Point 3* as topic sentence. xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxx. *Call to action* as topic sentence. xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.	**Opening Paragraph** • *Primary message* as topic sentence. • *Preview sentence* as concluding sentence: We should do [position] because of Key Point 1, Key Point 2, and Key Point 3. **Body** • *Supporting paragraphs* for each key point. • *Key points* as topic sentences. • Most paragraphs are three to five sentences and 40 to 100 words. **Concluding Paragraph** • *Restates* primary message. • Contains a *call to action*—specific steps to be taken.

In upcoming chapters, we will focus on many types of messages for common business situations. The framework for these various messages may differ slightly from the one illustrated in Figure 5.5. For some messages such as when delivering bad news (see Chapter 10), you may adopt a more **indirect** or **inductive** approach, in which you will provide supporting reasons first followed by the primary message. In all messages, however, the importance of framing and arranging supporting ideas to accentuate the main idea remains the same.

One option for setting up the structure and appearance of various documents is to use templates. For ideas on enhancing the structure and appearance of various types of business messages, see the Technology Tips feature on page 128.

When you are setting up the logic of your message, you may find that sketching out or diagramming it is helpful. Latisha's logic for Frame C involves the claim that a wellness program will increase profitability. It will do so directly through reducing health care costs and indirectly through increasing revenues. To support this frame, she is making the case that a wellness program will directly decrease absenteeism and increase productivity, which will then increase revenues. By diagramming her logic, she tightens her thinking about the problem and transfers her ideas more effectively into written form (Figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 Message Structure for Latisha's Justification of a Wellness Program
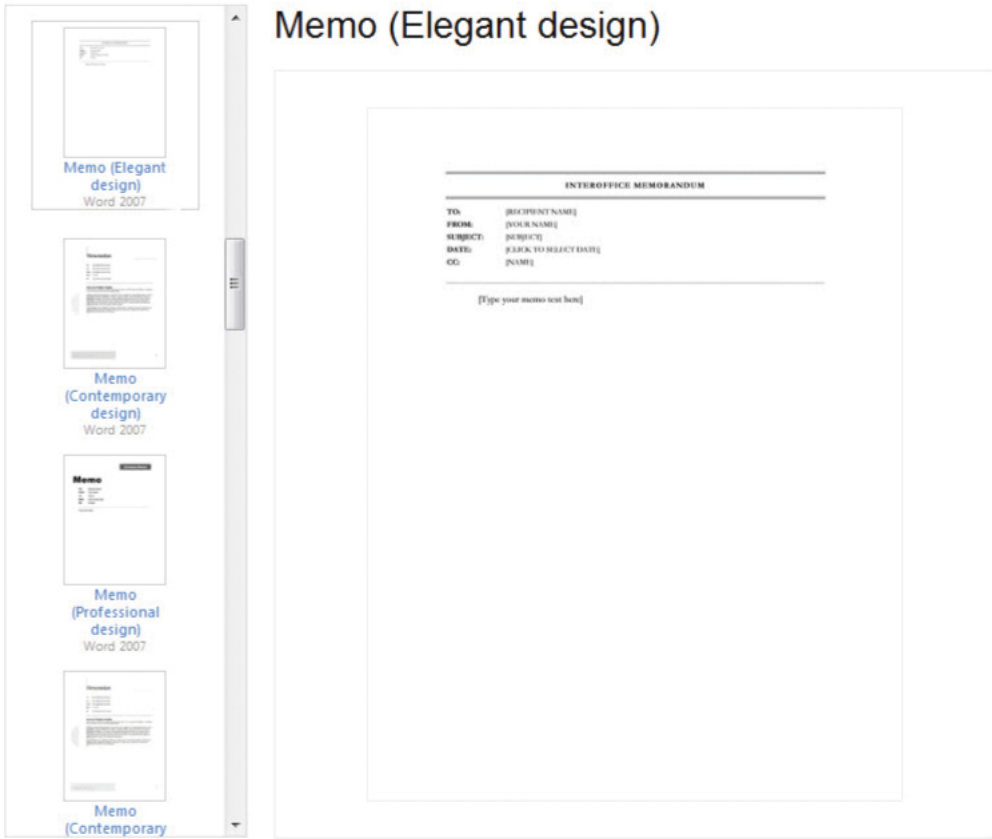
Primary Message: A wellness program will **increase profitability** at Eastmond.

Key Point 1: A wellness program will **directly decrease health care costs.**

Key Point 2A: A wellness program will **decrease absenteeism.**

Key Point 2B: A wellness program will **increase productivity.**

Key Point 2: A wellness program will **indirectly increase revenues.**

Since a wellness program would be profitable for Eastmond, we should **develop an implementation plan.** We should consider the following:

1. Lifestyle and disease management options
2. In-house versus outsourced options
3. Wellness program vendors
4. Communications/marketing plan
5. Incentive plans

Technology Tips: Using Templates

You will set up many types of business messages. One way to help you create a framework and format for some types of business messages is to use templates. Templates can help you organize your messages and make them visually appealing. You can search through hundreds of templates at Microsoft's website as well as other online sources for memos, business reports, cover letters, résumés, and other types of business messages.

As you use templates, consider the following advice:

memo 🔍

Memo (Elegant design)

Memo (Elegant design)
Word 2007

Memo (Contemporary design)
Word 2007

Memo (Professional design)
Word 2007

Memo (Contemporary

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: [RECIPIENT NAME]
FROM: [YOUR NAME]
SUBJECT: [SUBJECT]
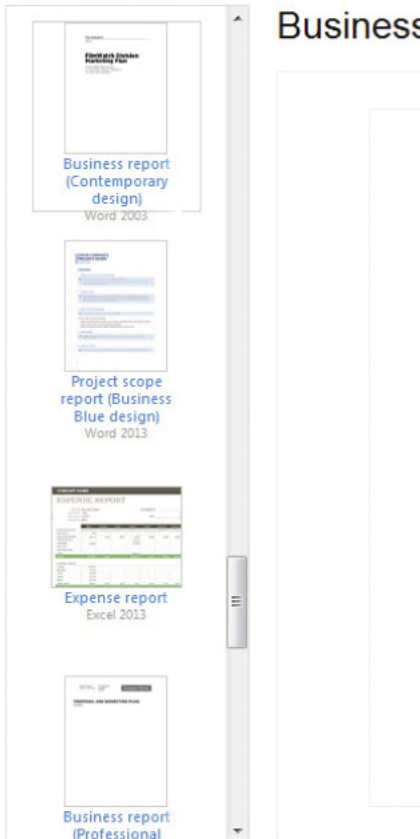DATE: [CLICK TO SELECT DATE]
CC: [NAME]

[Type your memo text here]

Description

Send an interoffice memo with this memorandum template. It features an elegant design with fields for sender and recipient information as well as body text.

business report

Business

Business report (Contemporary design)
Word 2003

Project scope report (Business Blue design)
Word 2013

Expense report
Excel 2013

Business report (Professional

Description

Craft a professiona
and tips to assist i

- Choose templates that help you accentuate your primary message and key points.
- Avoid templates with too much formatting. Ironically, templates that are too heavy in visual design may draw attention away from your message.
- Modify template formatting to make your own unique design. Many templates are used so frequently that they are unoriginal (this is especially the case for PowerPoint templates).

As you set up the structure of the message, carefully test its logic. Business decisions are consequential. Seasoned businesspeople expect solid business logic to support important decisions, and they dismiss ideas that are based on flimsy reasoning. If you ensure that your messages are built on strong reasoning, you will be far more influential because your company will benefit and you will gain credibility.[9] To build well-reasoned business positions, avoid the following types of logical inconsistencies: unsupported generalizations, faulty cause/effect claims, weak analogies, either/or logic, slanting the facts, and exaggeration.

Avoiding Unsupported Generalizations

This issue boils down to providing supporting facts for your claims. As you look at the examples in Table 5.1, notice that the less-effective example is a blanket claim without support. The more-effective example provides a variety of supporting facts.

Table 5.1 Avoiding Unsupported Generalizations

Less Effective	More Effective
A wellness program would reduce absenteeism because our employees would be sick less and feel more energetic.	We can expect that a wellness program will reduce absenteeism. A recent review of 56 scientific studies of corporate wellness programs showed that once the program was in place, sick leave absenteeism was an average of 27 percent lower. In our case, the average employee takes seven sick leave days per year. Assuming a similar reduction in sick leave absenteeism for our 200 full-

	time employees, we could gain approximately 380 additional work days per year from our employees.
Without any supporting facts, this broad generalization will be viewed skeptically by many readers.	This statement confidently states an expectation based on research and shows how findings from the research could apply to this situation.

Avoiding Faulty Cause/Effect Claims

As you analyze business issues, you are often trying to identify causes and effects. For example, when proposing new initiatives, you will generally claim that your actions will *cause* a certain result. The ability to precisely predict effects is always tricky, so choose your language and reasoning carefully. If readers are troubled by one of your cause/effect claims, they will become increasingly picky about your reasoning throughout the message (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Avoiding Faulty Cause/Effect Claims

Less Effective	More Effective
Lisa Johnson's calculations show that Eastmond will definitely save at least $820,000 over the next six years by implementing a wellness program.	Lisa Johnson's initial estimates show that Eastmond could achieve net savings of about $820,000 over the next six years by implementing a wellness program. She emphasized that her estimates are "safe" and "modest." In other words, she used assumptions that projected low-end savings and high-end expenses. She estimated that Eastmond would save approximately $1.6 million in health care costs over six years. It would cost approximately $780,000 to run and manage the wellness program over this time period (see Lisa's attached estimate for assumptions and other details).
This statement assumes that a wellness program will result in a definite result: at least $820,000 in savings. The certainty of this claim would raise skepticism among many readers.	This statement provides facts, assumptions, and calculations to make a confident estimate. The statements are carefully crafted to avoid stating absolute outcomes.
Last year we turned down two major contracts worth nearly $100,000 due to a lack of personnel. This was in large part due to low employee productivity on other projects, which occurs because our employees do not have access to a wellness program.	Last year we turned down two major contracts worth nearly $100,000 due to a lack of personnel. Were we to have our employees working at their highest levels of performance, perhaps we would be able to accept profitable projects such as those. Implementing a wellness program is one approach to improving productivity and potentially gaining more contracts.
This statement casually states several causes that are nearly impossible to demonstrate convincingly. The most unconvincing claim—without strong evidence—is that the lack of a wellness program caused the company to turn down two contracts.	This statement does not attribute low productivity in the past as the single cause of turned-down projects. Rather, it focuses on wellness programs as a possible contributor to increased productivity, which could result in more business opportunities for the company. The language is measured and objective.

Avoiding Weak Analogies

As you make sense of business issues, you will often try to identify analogies with other organizations, people, or things. Strong analogies serve to bolster your arguments. However, weak analogies may lead to inaccurate conclusions and recommendations. Be sure that the analogies you make are based on close and relevant similarities (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3 Avoiding Weak Analogies

Less Effective	More Effective
Since many companies such as Coca-Cola and Prudential have lowered health care costs by up to 55 percent after implementing wellness programs, we can assume similar savings when we start our program.	In studies of wellness programs, small companies such as ours typically achieve savings of 20 to 35 percent within three years. Therefore, in her estimate, Lisa assumed that Eastmond will achieve 20 percent savings by the fourth year of implementation.
This statement is a weaker analogy because it compares a smaller	This statement is a stronger analogy because it makes an analogy to similar-

organization, Eastmond, with large organizations that can take a different approach in terms of personnel, resources, and program options. Readers in smaller organizations would consider this a weak analogy. sized organizations with similar resources and constraints. Readers are far more likely to consider this a credible analogy.

Avoiding Either/Or Logic

One of the main characteristics of critical thinking is to remain flexible and open to alternative explanations and options. In business, you will always want to stay aware of alternative ways of solving the same problem. Furthermore, most of your readers will respond better to you when they view you as flexible and open to other ideas (including their own). In the less-effective example in Table 5.4, the claim is that wellness programs are the only way to increase employee morale—that is, *either we provide a wellness program and improve employee morale, or we don't provide a wellness program and continue to have low morale.* In the more-effective claim, providing a wellness program is still identified as a way of increasing employee morale. However, this claim does not eliminate other options for improving employee morale.

Table 5.4 Avoiding Either/Or Logic

Less Effective	More Effective
Without providing a wellness program, employees will continue to suffer from low morale.	Providing a wellness program is one option for improving employee morale.
This logic is either/or: without a wellness program, employees will have low morale; with a wellness program, they will have high morale.	This statement does not imply that a wellness program is the only option for improving employee morale. Readers will perceive this statement as confident but grounded and measured.

Avoiding Slanting the Facts

Slanting means only presenting those facts that are favorable to your position. To maintain your credibility, avoid slanting in all cases. While slanting may provide short-term benefits, many executives and managers have lost a lifetime of credibility when their gross misrepresentation was exposed. At a minimum, when readers notice that you have slanted the facts, they will be skeptical of the logic and reasoning of your entire message (see Table 5.5).

Table 5.5 Avoiding Slanting the Facts

Less Accurate	More Accurate
Many studies have been conducted about improved productivity due to wellness programs, with productivity increases of up to 52 percent.	Many studies have been conducted about improved productivity due to wellness programs, with productivity increases ranging between 2 and 52 percent.
This statement leaves out the bottom of the range to imply higher productivity increases.	This statement provides the bottom of the range and thus provides complete information.

Avoiding Exaggeration

As with slanting, exaggeration impacts readers' perceptions of your overall credibility as well as the credibility of the message. Be careful not to make exaggerated claims, as illustrated in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6 Avoiding Exaggeration

Less Effective	More Effective
A wellness program would completely change our work environment for the better, allowing us to reach levels of performance previously unimagined.	A wellness program could significantly improve morale, an issue that our company president is particularly interested in.
Many readers would view this statement with skepticism since the language seems exaggerated and unbelievable. This would lead some readers to call into question the credibility of the writer and the entire message.	This statement projects confidence but does not contain exaggerated, unrealistic, or overly ambitious language.

Setting the Tone of the Message

Principles for Setting the Right Tone

- Demonstrate positivity.
- Show concern for others.

How many times have you heard phrases such as these? "It's not what he said, but how he said it," or "She said one thing but meant another." People often

build resistance not to the content of a message but to the way it is delivered. One of your primary goals as a communicator is to express your messages in ways that respect and inspire others. Readers judge a message partially by its **tone**—the overall evaluation the reader perceives the writer to have toward the reader and the message content. Readers will judge your message based on how positive and concerned they think you are.

Business communicators generally aim to project positivity and concern for others in all business messages. By following the suggestions in this section, you will more effectively project messages with these tones. Many of the examples provided focus on the sentence level (primarily due to space constraints). However, tone is generally perceived across an entire message. Applying these principles across an entire message will dramatically alter the overall tone of the message.

LO5.5. Explain and apply positive and other-oriented tone in business messages.

Positivity

A positive attitude in the workplace improves work performance, allows more creativity, provides more motivation to excel, facilitates more helpfulness between co-workers, and gains more influence on clients and customers.[10] Bottom line, your ability to remain positive and exude optimism in your communications can strongly influence others. You can adopt a number of techniques to make your messages more positive.

Display a Can-Do, Confident Attitude

Focus on actions you can accomplish, and demonstrate a realistic optimism, as illustrated in Table 5.7. At the same time, be careful not to exaggerate or set unrealistic expectations.

Table 5.7 Displaying a Can-Do, Confident Attitude

Less Effective	More Effective
Let me know if you want me to keep working on the implementation plan.	I look forward to putting together a detailed implementation plan.
This statement is weak—it expresses little enthusiasm or passion for pursuing this project.	This statement is strong. It expresses an enthusiasm for putting together a successful plan.
Based on the information I have access to, and if everything goes according to Lisa's analysis, I think that a wellness program might increase profitability at Eastmond.	Based on a cash flow estimate from Lisa Johnson in Finance and other studies about corporate wellness programs, we can be confident that a wellness program here at Eastmond would increase profitability.
This statement is qualified with too many weak words—*based on ..., if, think, might.* Collectively, these words display a lack of confidence in the program.	This statement expresses confidence that the program will be profitable based on well-developed estimates. It does not seem exaggerated.

Focus on the Positive Rather Than Negative Traits of Products and Services

Emphasize what products and services are rather than what they are not (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Focusing on Positive Traits

Less Effective	More Effective
A wellness program is not just an exercise program.	A wellness program is a comprehensive approach to preventive health care.
Without any additional elaboration, this sentence does not provide any positive information about a wellness program.	This sentence effectively frames the positive and total impacts of a wellness program. It is a strategic statement.
A wellness program is not a perk.	A wellness program would be an asset to our company, bringing in a strong return on investment.
Without any follow-up sentences, this statement falls short of what it could accomplish with positive phrasing.	This positive statement effectively frames the wellness program as an asset.

Use Diplomatic, Constructive Terms Related to Your Relationships and Interactions

Find ways to avoid terms that unnecessarily focus on differences and may imply opposing or even adversarial relationships or positions (see Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Using Diplomatic, Constructive Terms

Less Effective	More Effective
I would like to present my argument for why we should continue with the wellness program initiative.	Thank you for giving me a few weeks to provide you with some additional information about how wellness programs could benefit Eastmond.

The term *argument* unnecessarily implies contention and difference of opinion.	This statement prefaces the goal of the communication with a compliment, which is a show of solidarity.
Your characterization of the wellness program as a perk is inaccurate since the wellness program would actually save the company money.	The wellness program would feel like a perk to employees, which could boost morale. Yet, unlike most perks, it would actually save us money.
The phrase *your characterization* immediately creates a me-versus-you tone.	By stating the perception of the wellness program being a perk in neutral terms, the statement would not be perceived as confrontational or divisive.

Concern for Others

In every facet of business communication, focusing on others is important. It is a basic component of your credibility (caring). In content and form, your message should show that you have the interests of your audience in mind. Therefore, avoid any sense of self-centeredness. Also aim for a tone that is inviting—that implies your interest in your readers' opinions, feelings, needs, and wants. The following guidelines will help you demonstrate concern for others (also referred to as *other-oriented language* in some parts of the book).

Avoid Relying Too Heavily on the I-Voice

The subject of a sentence almost always becomes the focus or emphasis. Generally, place the focus on your reader (you-voice), your shared interests with the reader (we-voice), or simply the business issue at hand (impersonal voice). Table 5.10 provides guidelines for selecting appropriate subjects for sentences.

Table 5.10 Using You-Voice, We-Voice, Impersonal Voice, and I-Voice Appropriately

	Appropriate Situations	Examples
You-Voice	*Use when focus is solely on the reader.* It is particularly well suited to describing how products and services benefit customers, clients, and colleagues.	**Effective:** You will receive regular updates about preventive health care workshops and other opportunities after you enroll in the wellness program.
	Avoid when pointing out the mistakes of others or when the statement may be presumptuous.	**Effective:** You may be interested in Lisa's cash flow analysis. She found that a wellness center would save approximately $825,000 over six years.
We-Voice	*Use when focus is on shared efforts, interests, and problems.* It is particularly well suited to messages within a company (i.e., work team).	**Effective:** Were we to have our employees available more often and working at their highest levels of performance, we might not be forced to turn down lucrative projects such as those.
		Effective: We could further discuss the estimates for how a wellness program could impact Eastmond.
Impersonal Voice	*Use when rational and neutral analysis is expected.* It is well suited for explaining business ideas, plans, and reports.	**Effective:** A wellness program would directly reduce health care costs and indirectly increase revenue through lower absenteeism and higher productivity.
		Effective: The implementation plan would include five components.
I-Voice	*Use with nonthreatening verbs (i.e., think, feel) when there is bad news, difference of opinion, or even blame involved.* It is well suited for situations that could result in personal disappointments. Used most often in oral communication.	**Effective:** I think right now is not the right time to focus on a wellness program.
		Effective: I think your ideas about the wellness program make a lot of sense, but the company is not in a position to make the initial investments to get it started.

Typically, readers sense tone over an entire message. The guidelines for choosing appropriate subjects for your sentences influence tone—for good or bad—over the entirety of a paragraph or message. Notice in Table 5.11 how the repeated use of the I-voice amplifies the self-centered tone, whereas the repeated use of we-voice and you-voice amplifies a tone that reflects other-orientation.

Table 5.11 Ineffective Use of I-Voice

Less Effective	More Effective

I would like to know as soon as possible when you could meet. I want to go over the estimates with you to show you how strong the case is for pursuing this option. Also, I have developed a timeline for writing the implementation plan that I want to show you right away.	Please let me know when there is a convenient time to meet. We could further discuss the estimates for how a wellness program could impact Eastmond. Also, if you think we should pursue the wellness program initiative, we could discuss the timeline for developing an implementation plan.
The repeated use of I-voice may be perceived as self-centered, inconsiderate, or pushy.	The repeated use of we-voice will likely be perceived as team-oriented and flexible.
I've set up the wellness program so that you will have access to exercise programs, health workshops, immunization shots, preventive care checkups, and disease management options. I'm especially proud of the exercise programs that I have set up. In my experience, I always work better when I've gotten exercise. I'm more productive and worry-free. I also want you to know that there are incentives to participate in the wellness program. For example, I've made sure that you will get $200 taken off your annual deductible if you enroll in the wellness program.	The wellness program will provide you with many options for managing your personal health, including exercise programs, health workshops, immunization shots, preventive care checkups, and disease management options. Ideally, participation in the various exercise programs will take some of your stress and worries away. You will have a variety of incentives available for enrolling in the program. For example, you will get $200 taken off of your annual deductible as soon as you enroll.
The repeated use of I-voice may come off as self-absorbed or insincere.	The repeated use of you-voice frames everything in terms of reader benefits.

Respect the Time and Autonomy of Your Readers

The business world can be a hectic, deadline-filled environment. In many situations you will want fast responses. If you show consideration for others' time as well as for their sense of autonomy, you will often achieve your intended results more effectively than if your words sound bossy and demanding (see Table 5.12). Keep in mind that statements you can say with a nonpushy tone may be decoded as pushy when in written form.

Table 5.12 Showing Respect for Time and Autonomy

Less Effective	More Effective
Call me as soon as you get out of your meeting.	Please give me a call when it's convenient.
This abrupt and demanding sentence would sound bossy to some people.	Using the courteous term *please* and focusing on the message recipient's convenience (rather than your own) shows respect.
We need to meet before Monday to go over the proposal. Have your administrative assistant set up a time for us and get back to me as soon as you know a time.	I think discussing the proposal with you before Monday would give us a chance to include your ideas in the proposal before we submit it on Wednesday. I'm available anytime before noon on Thursday or Friday. Is there a time that works for you? We could meet at your office or talk by phone.
These sentences will be interpreted as overly demanding to some readers. In written form, these statements can easily be misinterpreted.	These statements focus on achieving results together by a deadline while still respecting the time of the message recipient.

Give Credit to Others

What comes around goes around is a maxim that holds true in many situations in the business world. Show your genuine appreciation and sincere recognition for the efforts of others (see Table 5.13), and it will pay off in many ways, including through improved camaraderie and willingness of others to give you ample and deserved credit in other situations. In short, make sure not to take credit for the work of others.

Table 5.13 Giving Credit to Others

Less Effective	More Effective
The wellness program could also impact revenues at Eastmond.	Lisa also helped me understand how a wellness program could impact revenues at Eastmond.
This statement implies that the writer is responsible for this analysis.	This statement implies that Lisa was instrumental in the analysis.
I gave Lisa information about wellness	Lisa Johnson's initial estimates of

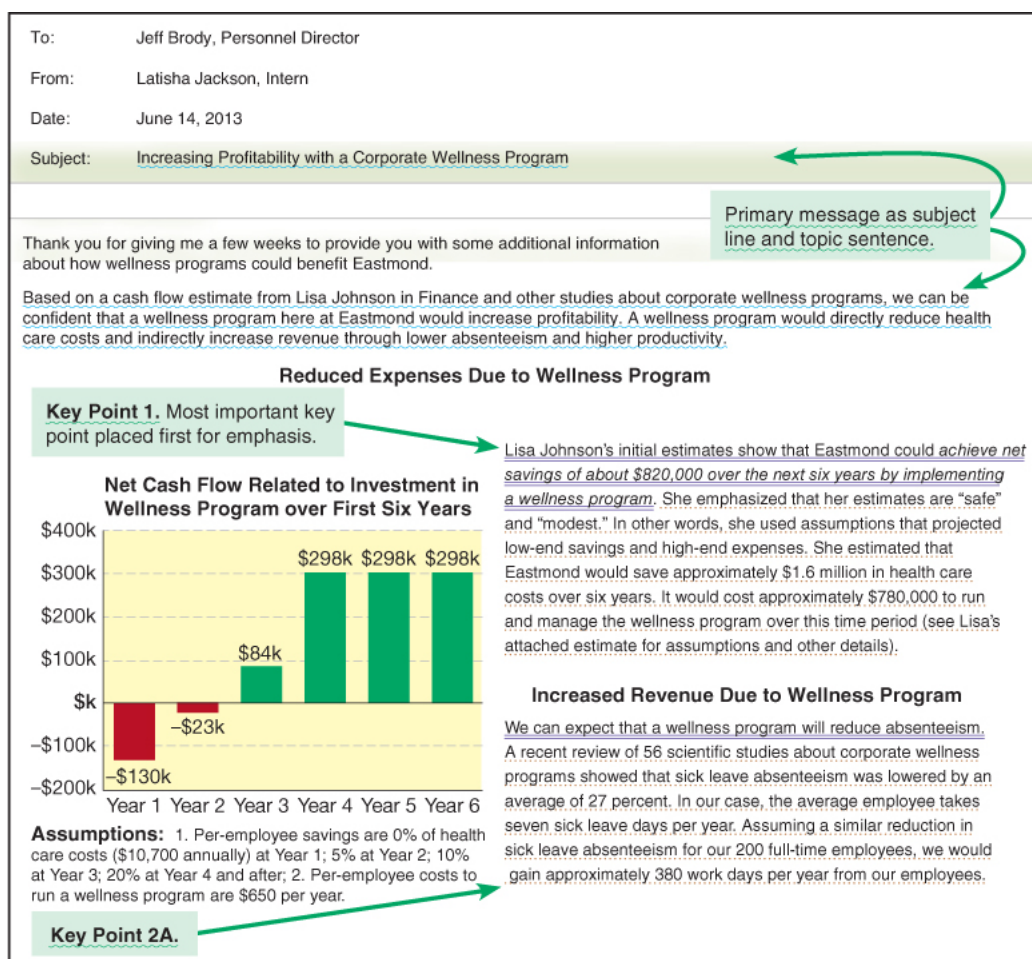|	
programs so she could plug the numbers in and see what it meant for Eastmond. As I anticipated, the estimate showed that Eastmond would save about $825,000 over six years.	potential savings due to a wellness program show that Eastmond could save about $825,000 over the next six years by implementing a wellness program.
These statements give credit to Lisa yet imply that the *real* analysis was conducted by the writer.	This sentence gives full credit to Lisa for her time-consuming, thorough, and insightful work.

Sending the Right Meta Messages

A related notion to tone is that of meta messages. Whereas tone relates to the overall attitudes or feelings that writers convey toward a message and its recipients, **meta messages** are the overall but often underlying messages people take away from a communication or group of communications. Meta messages are encoded and decoded as a combination of content, tone, and other signals.

In your written and oral communications, think about the lasting meta messages you send. Over the course of many communications—conversations, email exchanges, content on user profiles, comments on social networking websites, discussions during meetings—you send meta messages that become the basis for your reputation. These meta messages form others' impressions of your credibility: your competence, caring, and character. Some positive meta messages that business professionals might hope to send include "I'm skilled in my area" (competence), "I want you to succeed on this project" (caring), and "I will follow our corporate code of conduct" (character).

Mixed signals occur when the content of a message conflicts with the tone, nonverbal communication, or other signals. Sending mixed signals is not only confusing, but it also frequently results in negative meta messages. Even if a business message is well reasoned and justified, if readers perceive a selfish or manipulative tone, they may decode meta messages such as "I'm not being straight with you" or "I'm opportunistic." In a job interview, an applicant may say the right things but because of unprofessional dress send meta messages such as "I'm not serious about this job" or "I don't understand the culture of this company."

Notice Latisha's final memo in Figure 5.7. It is well analyzed, positive, and other-oriented. She intends the memo to appeal logically and emotionally to Jeff and others who read it. Ideally, it will send meta messages such as "I can be trusted with important projects" or "A wellness program makes financial sense for this company, and I'm the right person to continue working on it."

Figure 5.7 Latisha's Memo to Justify a Wellness Program

To: Jeff Brody, Personnel Director

From: Latisha Jackson, Intern

Date: June 14, 2013

Subject: Increasing Profitability with a Corporate Wellness Program

Primary message as subject line and topic sentence.

Thank you for giving me a few weeks to provide you with some additional information about how wellness programs could benefit Eastmond.

Based on a cash flow estimate from Lisa Johnson in Finance and other studies about corporate wellness programs, we can be confident that a wellness program here at Eastmond would increase profitability. A wellness program would directly reduce health care costs and indirectly increase revenue through lower absenteeism and higher productivity.

Reduced Expenses Due to Wellness Program

Key Point 1. Most important key point placed first for emphasis.

Net Cash Flow Related to Investment in Wellness Program over First Six Years

$400k
$300k — $298k $298k $298k
$200k
$100k — $84k
$k
–$100k — –$23k
–$200k — –$130k
Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6

Assumptions: 1. Per-employee savings are 0% of health care costs ($10,700 annually) at Year 1; 5% at Year 2; 10% at Year 3; 20% at Year 4 and after; 2. Per-employee costs to run a wellness program are $650 per year.

Key Point 2A.

Lisa Johnson's initial estimates show that Eastmond could *achieve net savings of about $820,000 over the next six years by implementing a wellness program*. She emphasized that her estimates are "safe" and "modest." In other words, she used assumptions that projected low-end savings and high-end expenses. She estimated that Eastmond would save approximately $1.6 million in health care costs over six years. It would cost approximately $780,000 to run and manage the wellness program over this time period (see Lisa's attached estimate for assumptions and other details).

Increased Revenue Due to Wellness Program

We can expect that a wellness program will reduce absenteeism. A recent review of 56 scientific studies about corporate wellness programs showed that sick leave absenteeism was lowered by an average of 27 percent. In our case, the average employee takes seven sick leave days per year. Assuming a similar reduction in sick leave absenteeism for our 200 full-time employees, we would gain approximately 380 work days per year from our employees.

Underlining is added to distinguish between facts, conclusions, and positions. Refer to Figure 5.6 to see how the planned message structure matches the final document.

Communication Q&A: Conversations with Current Business Professionals

Kim Asbill *is the owner of Asbill Public Relations and a public relations manager at SCANA. She has worked in public relations for various businesses and organizations for over two decades.*

Courtesy of Peter Cardon.

Pete Cardon: For important written business messages, what process do you go through?

Kim Asbill: First, I listen. I also ask a lot of questions. The more, the better! Sometimes I brainstorm and come to a meeting prepared with a list of questions. Some clients communicate better verbally, and they tell you their business message. That's when you take really good notes and try to repeat and rephrase what they are saying to demonstrate understanding. Other clients respond best to written information. In that case, I often craft a message on my own based on my knowledge of the situation and use the written document to communicate back and forth until the message is correct.

PC: What strategies do you use to get the right tone in your writing?

KA: You have to know your audience to get the right tone. When I worked at an ad agency, one of our clients was Nickelodeon cable TV network. We worked on a campaign called "The Big Help" designed to encourage kids to volunteer in their communities. For that client, the tone was very informal and fun. You weren't allowed to use the word *child*. You had to use *kid*. You can imagine, writing for a bank or an electric utility would be much more formal. You have to know what your goal is too. Are you trying to get more customers to eat at a local restaurant? Maybe you are using a persuasive tone. Are you informing young mothers about how to install a car seat properly? Maybe your tone is focused

on a step-by-step process.

PC: How do you think business writing is changing?

KA: I think the digital media age has changed business writing profoundly. Email was the first thing to change the way people communicate in business. The need for good writers in the workplace is more important than ever. The ability for these writers to communicate correctly for different audiences in a variety of mediums, traditional and digital, is what will set them apart in this new age of technology.

PC: What advice would you give young professionals about writing effective messages in the business world?
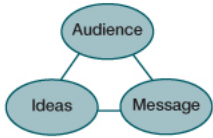
KA: Write. Write all the time! Think before you write. Use outlines. Remember your audience. Less is more. Read good writing. Attend workshops on writing; even webinars are great. Volunteer your writing skills to organizations you care about. Don't be shy about asking someone to proof your work. And never stop learning!

In addition to reviewing the final memo for its tone and meta messages, take a few moments to notice its logic and structure. It contains color-coded underlining to distinguish between facts, conclusions, and positions. Immediately following the final memo, you'll find the Communication Q&A, which offers additional insights as it provides one business professional's ideas and approaches to crafting effective messages.

Chapter Takeaway for *Creating Effective Messages*

LO 5.1. Explain the goals of effective business messages and the process for creating them. (pp. 118–120)

The Stages and Goals of Effective Message Creation

LO 5.2. Identify the needs of your audience in the AIM planning process. (pp. 120–123)

Audience Analysis		
• Identify reader benefits and constraints. • Consider reader values and priorities.	• Estimate your credibility. • Anticipate reactions.	• Consider secondary audiences.

LO 5.3. Develop and refine business ideas in the AIM planning process. (pp. 123–125)

Idea Development		
• Identify the business problems.	• Analyze the business problems.	• Clarify objectives.

See an *example of idea development* in Figure 5.4.

LO 5.4. Develop your primary message and key points in the AIM planning process. (pp. 125–132)

Message Structuring
• Frame the main point.   • Set up the structure/logic of the message.

Testing Logic	
Avoid the following: • Unsupported generalizations • Faulty cause/effect claims • Weak analogies	• Either/or logic • Slanting of facts • Exaggeration

See an *example of a deductive framework* in Figure 5.5.

See *typical paragraph structure* in a deductive business message in Figure 5.6.

LO 5.5. Explain and apply positive and other-oriented tone in business messages. (pp. 132–138)

Setting the Right Tone	
Demonstrate positivity	Show concern for others
• Display a can-do, confident attitude. • Focus on positive rather than negative traits. • Use diplomatic, constructive terms.	• Avoid relying too heavily on I-voice. • Respect the time and autonomy of your readers. • Give credit to others.

Key Terms

conclusions (p. 123)
deductive (p. 126)
direct (p. 126)
facts (p. 123)
indirect (p. 127)
inductive (p. 127)
meta messages (p. 136)
positions (p. 123)
priorities (p. 121)
tone (p. 132)
values (p. 121)

Discussion Exercises

5.1 **Chapter Review Questions** (LO 5.1, LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

    A. Describe each of the three components in the AIM planning process for business messages: audience analysis, idea development, and message structuring.
    B. Explain the general nature of excellence in business thinking and how it applies to the idea development stage of planning messages.
    C. Discuss basic considerations in the audience analysis stage of planning messages.
    D. Describe the nature of framing for business messages.
    E. Explain common types of logical inconsistencies in business messages.
    F. Discuss the importance of achieving positive and other-oriented tone in business messages.

5.2 **Communication Q&A Discussion Questions** (LO 5.1, LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

    Read the comments and advice of Kim Asbill in the Communication Q&A section. Respond to the following questions:

    A. What does Asbill say about the process of writing messages? What two strategies will you better incorporate into your approach to writing?
    B. She also mentions tone several times. According to her, what is the importance of tone? What type of tone does she try to project?
    C. In what ways does she say that business writing is changing? How will you adapt to some of these changes?
    D. What pieces of advice that she gives are most relevant for your writing? Explain.

5.3 **Worst Words to Use at Work? Displaying Confidence with Words** (LO 5.5)

    In a recent *Forbes* magazine article called "Worst Words to Say at Work," business consultant and psychotherapist Linnda Durre listed nine words or phrases that show someone is not confident.[11] These phrases, according to Durre, cause others to perceive you as undependable and untrustworthy. To read the article, go to www.forbes.com/2010/04/26/words-work-communication-forbes-woman-leadership-career.html. Then respond to each of the following, which are excerpted from her article, with four to five sentences about whether you agree or disagree with her point of view:

    A. *Try* is a weasel word. "Well, I'll try," some people say. It's a cop-out. They're just giving you lip service when they probably have no real intention of doing what you ask.
    B. *Whatever*—this word is a trusted favorite of people who want to dismiss you, diminish what you say, or get rid of you quickly. ... It's an insult and a verbal slap in the face. It's a way to respond to a person without actually responding.
    C. *Maybe* and *I don't know*—People will sometimes avoid making a decision and hide behind these words. Sometimes during a confrontation people will claim not to know something or offer the noncommittal response "maybe," just to avoid being put on the spot.
    D. *I'll get back to you*—When people need to buy time or avoid revealing a project's status, they will say, "I'll get back to you," and they usually never do.
    E. *If*—Projects depend on everyone doing his or her part. People who use *if* are usually playing the blame game and betting against themselves. They like to set conditions rather than assuming a successful outcome.
    F. *Yes, but*...—This is another excuse. You might give your team members suggestions or solutions and they come back to you with "Yes, but ..." as a response. They don't really want answers, help, or solutions.
    G. *I guess*...—This is usually said in a weak, soft-spoken, shoulder-shrugging manner. It's another attempt to shirk responsibility—a phrase is only muttered when people half agree with you, but want to leave enough leeway to say, "Well, I didn't really know. ... I was only guessing."
    H. *We'll see*...—How many times did we hear our parents say this? We knew they were buying time, avoiding a fight or confrontation, or really saying no.

Evaluation Exercises

5.4 **Evaluating Latisha's Proposal for an Implementation Plan of a Wellness Program** (LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

Based on the completed message from Latisha in Figure 5.7, answer the following questions:

A. How effectively is this message framed? Would you suggest any changes?
B. How effective is the business logic? Would you suggest any changes?
C. How effective is the tone? Would you suggest any changes?
D. What adjustments would you make if Jeff had a different preferred communication style? For example, what adjustments might you make if he was primarily a feeler, thinker, and/or intuitor?

5.5 **Evaluating a Business Message** (LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

Choose a business message to evaluate. You could find a recent letter you have received from a business, go to a website and choose a message for customers or stockholders, or use a message specified by your instructor. Select a message that contains at least three or four paragraphs. Evaluate the message in the following ways:

A. How effectively are facts and conclusions written?
B. How effectively is the message targeted to its audience? Do you have any suggestions for how it could have been better adapted for the audience?
C. Does it have any logical inconsistencies? Explain.
D. Does the message portray a tone of positivity? Other-orientation? Describe your viewpoint with examples.

5.6 **Self-Assessment of Approach to Writing** (LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

Evaluate yourself with regard to each of the practices listed in the table below. Circle the appropriate number for each.

Before sending important written messages, I ...	1 – Rarely/Never	2 – Sometimes	3 – Usually	4 – Always
Make sure I gather all the facts.	1	2	3	4
Think carefully about what the facts mean.	1	2	3	4
Take time to think about what my audience wants and needs.	1	2	3	4
Spend time envisioning how my audience will respond.	1	2	3	4
Think about how the gist of my message could be captured in one short statement.	1	2	3	4
Map out the main supporting ideas for my primary message.	1	2	3	4
Check the message for logical consistency.	1	2	3	4
Make certain the tone is positive (as appropriate).	1	2	3	4
Ensure that the tone is other-oriented.	1	2	3	4
Reread the message to make sure everything is correct.	1	2	3	4

Add up your score and consider the following advice:

35–40: You are a strategic writer. You nearly always think carefully about the strength of your message and its intended influence on your audience. Keep up the great work. 30–34: You are a careful writer. You have many good habits in writing preparation. Identify the areas where you need to improve. By preparing slightly more in these areas, you will become a powerful, strategic writer in the workplace. 25–29: You are a somewhat careful writer. Sometimes and in some ways you are careful about your writing. You occasionally ask the right questions about getting your message right for your audience. You are inconsistent, however. Focus on preparing carefully for all important messages.

Under 25: You are a casual writer. You rarely take enough time to think carefully about your written messages. Even if you are a gifted and savvy writer, at some point, your lack of preparation will harm your work achievements. Make a habit of spending more time in the preparation stage asking questions about how to construct your message to appropriately influence your audience.

Once you've completed the short assessment, write about three areas of writing preparation in which you intend to improve. Describe specific steps you will take to improve and benchmarks for checking your progress.

Application Exercises

5.7 **Avoiding Logical Errors** (LO 5.4)

For each of the following sentences, identify what you consider to be logical inconsistencies. Explain whether these inconsistencies relate to unsupported generalizations, faulty cause/effect claims, either/or logic, slanting the facts, or exaggeration. Then revise the sentences to eliminate the logical inconsistencies.

A. Jim's Old Fashioned Burgers provides the best management training program in the industry.
B. The training consists of five stages: manager-in-training, second assistant manager, first assistant manager, restaurant manager, and regional director. The training places you on the fast track to success; advancing from one stage to the next takes from as few as three months up to just two years.
C. Many trainees eventually become upper-level executives, showing that hands-on training is better than getting a business degree.
D. Eventually, approximately 10 percent of trainees become regional directors. Employees from this elite group are those who show perseverance and determination to reach their professional goals.

    E. Since just 5 percent of Jim's employees are selected for the training program, your acceptance in the program shows that you have great leadership potential.
    F. We encourage you to apply for the training program so that you avoid staying in the same position without making career progress.
    G. Restaurant managers make approximately $35,000 to $40,000 per year. The annual salary has grown at approximately 5 percent per year during the past three years, far outpacing income growth for restaurant managers at McDonald's or Burger King. So reaching the restaurant manager stage places you in a better economic position than you would be in at competing restaurants.

5.8 Displaying a Can-Do, Confident Tone (LO 5.5)

For each of the following items, rewrite the sentences to achieve a better can-do, confident tone.

    A. Even though I do not have any supervisory experience, I think I have excellent leadership skills.
    B. I have excellent leadership skills and will certainly increase profitability as I am promoted through the ranks of the training program.
    C. I might be a good candidate for the training program since I work so hard.
    D. We feel that next year's annual profits could increase if the economy picks up and if we are able to fill all of our management positions.
    E. We believe that improving customer service is one way of driving increased revenues.

5.9 Focusing on Positive Traits (LO 5.5)

For each of the following items, rewrite the sentences to achieve a more positive tone.

    A. All employees who show commitment and strong leadership skills are eligible for the management training program, even if they lack any higher education.
    B. None of the training requires you to go through a traditional, business-like educational program.
    C. You will begin as a manager-in-training and will do far more than flip burgers.
    D. Those employees who do not show exceptional leadership skills at the manager-in-training stage do not advance to the next stage of training.
    E. We are seeking individuals who do not settle for average customer service.
    F. You will lose your opportunity to be considered for the program unless we receive your application by July 1.
    G. Employees who have not done poorly on their performance reviews are eligible to apply for the program.

5.10 Using Diplomatic, Constructive Terms (LO 5.5)

For each of the following items, rewrite the sentences to achieve a more positive, constructive tone.

    A. You probably won't be accepted into the management training program because you haven't worked here long enough to show any commitment.
    B. Your contention that you have enough supervisory experience to make you qualified is questionable.
    C. I think you must reconsider your views on the management training program if you expect it to succeed. You're just not in touch with reality if you expect to get quality managers without paying them higher salaries sooner in the program.

5.11 Using Appropriate Voice (LO 5.5)

For each of the following items, rewrite the sentences in you-voice, we-voice, or I-voice to achieve a more effective tone.

    A. I'm happy to offer you a spot in the manager-in-training program.
    B. I'm positive that this opportunity will help your career.
    C. You must turn in the application before July 1.
    D. I will lead the first orientation session for the program, and then I'll turn the remainder of the afternoon meetings over to my colleague.
    E. I've come up with some ideas for the training program, and I'd like to meet as soon as possible to get some discussion going. I want us to focus on a conversation about the salaries and benefits that would motivate more employees to apply for the program.

5.12 Respecting the Time and Autonomy of Others (LO 5.5)

Rewrite each of the following items twice. Rewrite the first time assuming that you are writing to a peer. Rewrite the second time assuming that you are writing to a subordinate.

    A. Get back to me before Friday afternoon about your availability for an interview.
    B. I think we should review the manager-in-training applicants. Please come to my office on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m.
    C. I have chosen the five applicants who are most strongly suited for the training program. Could you send me an email confirming that you agree with my selections?
    D. I'm swamped with other projects, and we need to make the selections for the training program. Please take care of it yourself before this Friday at noon. You can count on me agreeing with your selections.

Case for Problems 5.13 through 5.15: Learning about Stress Management Programs for Eastmond Networking

When Jeff arrived back at the office, he spent 15 minutes reading Latisha's proposal to work on a wellness program. He found the work impressive and insightful. If only more of his employees had the same drive, initiative, and analytical skills as Latisha, thought Jeff, Eastmond would be far more successful. If Latisha kept up this level of analysis in her work, Jeff would definitely find a way to employ her full-time at Eastmond. Her thorough and thoughtful approach to this business problem showed she could excel in many of the entry-level management positions at the company.[12]

However, Jeff wasn't quite ready to move forward on implementing her plan. He was concerned about the expense. Although he trusted the estimates on returns, he was worried about the cash investments needed in the first few years before Eastmond would see returns. Before Latisha worked on a plan, he wanted her to do some more background work and investigate a more modest investment. He was especially interested in learning more about how a disease-management program could impact the company.

Jeff approached Latisha and explained what he wanted, and he asked her to write a brief report similar to the one she had already done.

He said, "I'd like you to focus on just the biggest problems. You know, programs to help with diabetes or heart health. Maybe we could help employees lower their cholesterol levels and their blood pressure. I'm thinking that we should learn how we can get the biggest bang for our buck—focus on say four or five of the costliest health problems and go from there. Also, I'd like to get a sense of the best way to prioritize our limited dollars to invest in disease management."

"If you're looking for some specific interventions that can make the biggest difference," Latisha answered, "we should start with stress. Stress costs us more in terms of health care costs and lower productivity than any other health care risk covered in a wellness or disease management program. Stress management programs are fairly inexpensive and deliver results pretty quickly."

"Really?" he said. "Stress costs more than heart disease or diabetes? OK, then how about you focus on stress management programs for the next week or two and write up what you find out. We'll go forward from there."

Latisha spent the next week learning about corporate stress management programs. She learned the following:

- Health care costs of people suffering chronic, extreme stress are 46% higher than those who are not.
- According to the American Medical Association, stress is as bad for your heart as smoking and high cholesterol.
- Forty percent of job turnover is due to stress.
- Stress reduction programs can have major impacts. In one company, 42% of 5,900 employees suffered moderate to severe stress. In fact, 80 percent of doctor visits for these employees were related to stress. After a stress reduction program, employee physician services dropped from $7.4 million annually to $5.3 million annually.
- Employees with various health risks directly increase health care costs to employers. For example, compared to employees with low health risks, employees with the following conditions significantly increase costs to the employer: depression (70.2% higher cost); stress (46.3%); glucose (34.8%); weight (21.4%); tobacco (19.7%); blood pressure (11.7%); exercise (10.4%).
- According to the Department of Health and Human Services, employees suffer the following risk factors: stress, 44%; overweight, 38%; use alcohol excessively, 31%; high cholesterol, 30%; have cardiovascular disease, 25%; don't exercise, 24%; smoke, 21%; don't wear seat-belts, 20%; are asthmatic, 12%; are diabetic, 6%.
- One study showed the annual per-employee absenteeism costs for the following conditions as follows: stress, $136; weight issues, $70; tobacco use, $44; glucose problems, $29.
- The Canadian Institute of Stress showed the following results for corporate stress management programs: work stress: 32% improvement; work satisfaction: 38% improvement; absenteeism: 18% reduction; disability days: 52% reduction; grievances: 32% reduction; productivity: 7% improvement; quality measures: 13% improvement; work engagement: 62% improvement.
- Stress management programs are most effective when offered in conjunction with broad wellness programs.
- Setting up stress management programs is challenging. Other disease management programs are more easily defined in terms of who has conditions and how to treat them (i.e., diabetes, heart disease).
- Most employees do not enroll in stress management programs unless there are incentives.
- Stress management can be achieved through workplace policies that alleviate work and personal stress. Some companies have tried flextime, allowing work at home, child care initiatives, sick child care, and other incentives to help employees reduce stress and be more productive.
- Stress management can also involve training through workshops and professional coaching.
- Lisa estimates that hiring a full-time professional coach for the workplace would cost approximately $60,000 per year (salary plus benefits and other related costs). The coach would run workshops, distribute educational materials, and also offer one-to-one coaching in stress relief. The coach would be qualified to work on other wellness areas such as weight loss, exercise, and dietary improvements. Assuming that Eastmond offered $150 reductions on health care premiums per year, Lisa estimates the company could achieve 90 percent participation (about 175 employees) in a basic stress management program. She thinks it's reasonable to assume that Eastmond could save about $500 per enrolled employee between health care and absenteeism costs.

5.13 **Idea Development by Organizing Facts into Conclusions and Recommendations** (LO 5.2)

Assume you are Latisha and you will write a proposal to Jeff asking that Eastmond develop a stress management program. You can use any of the facts she has discovered and even search for some online (there's lots of information about stress management), but your task is to make sense of the facts you've gathered. Organize them into groups that support three or four major conclusions (in a format similar to Figure 5.4). Then write three or four recommendations you would make based on your conclusions.

5.14 **Writing a Proposal in Support of Developing a Stress Management Program** (LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

Assume the role of Latisha. Write a proposal to develop a stress management program. Use well-justified logic to support your conclusions and recommendations.

5.15 **Writing a Proposal to Broaden the Focus of a Wellness Program** (LO 5.2, LO 5.3, LO 5.4, LO 5.5)

Assume the role of Latisha. You have concluded that although a stress management program would be beneficial, focusing on stress management without a comprehensive wellness program is shortsighted and less cost-effective. Use well-justified logic to support your conclusions and recommendations.

Endnotes

[1] These time estimates are based on observing thousands of business students and are consistent with decades of research about expertise as described in Michael Pressley and Christine B. McCormick, *Advanced Educational Psychology for Educators, Researchers, and Policymakers* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

[2] Elizabeth Garone, "How to Escape a Reputation as a Novice," *The Wall Street Journal* (October 8, 2008).

[3] Ibid.

[4] Roger Martin, "How Successful Leaders Think," *Harvard Business Review* (June 2007): 72–83; Richard Paul and Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools* (Dillon Park, CA: Foundation for Critical Thinking Press, 2008); David Carrithers and John C. Bean, "Using a Client Memo to Assess Critical Thinking of Finance Majors," *Business Communication Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 10–26.

[5]Statistics and other information came from a variety of sources, including the following: American Institute for Preventive Medicine, *The Health & Economic Implications of Worksite Wellness Programs* (Farmington Hills, MI: Author, 2008); Elizabeth Mendes, "Americans Exercise Less in 2009 Than in 2008; Having a Safe Place to Exercise Contributes to Exercise Frequency," *Gallup Poll Briefing,* January 15, 2010; Katherine Capps, *Employee Health & Productivity Management Programs: The Use of Incentives* (Lyndhurst, NJ: IncentOne, 2007); Pamela Kufahl, "America's Obesity Rate at a 10-Year Plateau, Study Finds," *Club Industry,* February 1, 2010; Larry Chapman, "Meta-evaluation of Worksite Health Promotion Economic Return Studies: 2005 Update," *The Art of Health Promotion* (July/August 2005): 1–15; Michael George, *Corporate Fitness and the Bottom Line* (Petaluma, CA: Inspired Fitness, 2008); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Prevention Makes Common "Cents"* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, September 2003); American College of Sports Medicine, *ACSM's Worksite Health Promotion Manual* (Champaign, IL: American College of Sports Medicine, 2003); Buck Consultants, *Working Well: A Global Survey of Health Promotion and Workplace Wellness Strategies* (San Francisco: Buck Consultants, 2008); National Business Group on Health, "New Study Finds Most Employers Spend Nearly 2% of Health Care Claims Budget on Wellness Programs," January 25, 2010, retrieved April 21, 2010, from http://www.businessgrouphealth.org/pressrelease.cfm?ID=149.

[6]Melissa Raffoni, "Framing for Leadership," *Harvard Management Communication Letter* 5, no. 12 (2002): 3–4.

[7]Lyle Sussman, "How to Frame a Message: The Art of Persuasion and Negotiation," *Business Horizons* 42, no. 4 (1999): 2–6; Raffoni, "Framing for Leadership."

[8]New York Times Corner Office Blog, "Simplicity," retrieved June 15, 2010, from http://projects.nytimes.com/corner-office/Communication.

[9]Jane Thomas, *Guide to Managerial Persuasion and Influence* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2004).

[10]Timothy A. Judge and Remus Ilies, "Is Positiveness in Organizations Always Desirable?" *Academy of Management Executive* 18, no. 4 (2004): 151–155.

[11]Linnda Durre, "Worst Words to Say at Work," *Forbes* online (April 26, 2010), retrieved August 5, 2010, from www.forbes.com/2010/04/26/words-work-communication-forbes-woman-leadership-career.html.

[12]This case problem uses information from several additional resources, including the following: American Institute for Preventive Medicine, *A Worksite Wellness White Paper* (Farmington Hills, MI: American Institute for Preventive Medicine, 2009), retrieved August 5, 2010, from www.healthylife.com/template.asp?pageID=75; Catherine Calarco and Bruce Cryer, *Return on Investment Paper* (Boulder Creek, CA: HeartMath, 2009); HealthAdvocate, *Setting Up a Stress Management Program: A Checklist for Success* (Plymouth Meeting, PA: HealthAdvocate, 2010).

Business Communication. Developing Leaders for a Networked World