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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the conference reported on in this document was to bring insight into the broad area of communication. Contents include the conference program and papers presented at the conference, divided into four parts: research in the field of communication, communication in the organization, insights into the teaching of business communication--workshop, and the importance of communication in marketing. Titles of the papers are: "The Interpersonal/Mass Communication Interface Among Business Executives"; "Measuring the Image of Arkansas with the Professor Semantic Differential"; "Review of Emerging Concepts and Practice in Organizational Communications"; "Effectiveness of Internal Organizational Communication: A Study of Clerical Groups"; "International Scientific and Technical Meetings: Who Go? Who Profits?" "Status Report on a Project on Communication Research"; "Comments on Communications Papers"; "Student Research for Business Communications: Making It Relevant in the Community College"; "Instructing Undergraduate Business Students in Selected Critical Areas of the Research Process"; and "Communication Research in Public Policy for Marketing." (JM)

PROCEEDINGS

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

1974 SOUTHWEST ABCA SPRING CONFERENCE

SAM J. BRUNO, EDITOR

Published by
Center for Business and Economic Research
School of Business
West Texas State University
Canyon, Texas

PREFACE

Recent years have witnessed significant development in communication theory, communication research, and in organizational communication. Similar changes have taken place, also, in the practical aspects of communication. Practitioners and educators have demonstrated to an increasing degree an awareness of the close relationship which exists among disciplines such as sociology, psychology, linguistics, physiology, engineering, and those within the area of business administration.

If college students are to be trained to meet their obligations and responsibilities adequately, and reference is made primarily to those in communication, proper attention should be given to the integration of various disciplines mentioned, teaching materials must be chosen carefully, and effective methods of instruction must be utilized. At no previous time, perhaps, has the need been greater than at present to evaluate critically and constructively communication curricula and the teaching materials and methods being employed. Through such an appraisal should come significant improvements in teaching effectiveness and better prepared students to meet the problems they will encounter in the business world.

In view of the present kinds of pressures on colleges and universities, it seems that the "Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Communication" was an appropriate theme for the 1974 American Business Communication Association -- Southwest Spring Conference. The concern with theory and practice was reflected in the variety and depth of papers presented at the meeting. Its content provided broad coverage within the overall theme. The discussion included a variety of topics ranging from the teaching of communication theory to a review of emerging concepts in organizational communication, to student research in business communication, to communication research in public policy for marketing. An intriguing research technique was ably presented as were applications of familiar methodology to new communication problems. Not to be forgotten is the insightful paper addressing the difficulty of problem definition.

The purpose of the conference was to bring insight into the broad area of communication. It was addressed to all practitioners and communication educators -- whether their teaching be undergraduate or graduate and whether their orientation be communication, management, or marketing. Within these proceedings is a wealth of information on new techniques and findings in the field of communication. For those persons unable to attend the 1974 Spring Conference, a few hours with these proceedings can provide a very meaningful updating of their information and knowledge. For those in attendance, the proceedings can serve as a valuable review or source of information for sessions not attended.

My task as the editor was a totally new experience, interesting, and challenging. For the most part, papers were compiled as presented in their entirety at the sessions themselves. Minor editorial changes were made in an effort to achieve a uniform style and presentation.

The order of presentation in these proceedings corresponds to the conference program. As with any proceedings from a conference of this type, not all the conference speakers are represented, for one reason or another. The complete conference program accompanies this introductory material, and it reflects the broad coverage of theoretical and practical aspects of communication.

These proceedings would not have been possible had it not been for the help of many individuals. Besides the obvious contributions on the part of those who prepared papers, thanks must go to Ann Starr, my most efficient and loyal secretary, for her skillful typing of this manuscript. The Southwest ABCA and I are greatly indebted to the Center for Business and Economics Research, West Texas State University, whose financial support made it possible to publish these proceedings.

A special note of appreciation and acknowledgment is due Dr. Eldon C. Lewis, my dear friend and former Dean at West Texas State University. I am grateful for his generous financial assistance in countless numbers of telephone calls, mailing program information, printing our advance program, publishing a Southwest ABCA Directory, and his personal interest in my professional development and the 1974 Southwest ABCA Conference.

Finally, I am grateful to those who prepared papers and those attending whose participation made the Conference a success.

Sam J. Bruno
Editor and 1974 Program Chairman
ABCA -- Southwest Region

University of Houston at Clear Lake City
July, 1974

PROGRAM

SOUTHWEST ABCA SPRING CONFERENCE

THEORETICAL & PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF COMMUNICATION

Friday, March 29, 1974 Windsor Room

8:45 am WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
Speaker:

William J. Lord, Jr.
President
American Business Communication Association
University of Texas

9:00 am RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

Chairman: John D. Pettit, Jr.
North Texas State University

Speakers:

Teaching Communication Theory: A Suggested Written Assignment and Testing Procedure
Bette A. Stead
University of Houston

The Interpersonal/Mass Communication Interface Among Business Executives
Fred L. Myrick, Jr.
University of Alabama in Birmingham

Measuring The Image of Arkansas With The Professor Semantic Differential
Dale A. Level, Jr.
University of Arkansas

1972 Presidential Campaign Investigation Based on Attitude Measurements of Candidates Images
Carol Ricks
Eastfield and Richland Campuses
Dallas County Community Colleges

Verification of Selected Business Communication Principles Across Cultural Boundaries
Jack Eure, Jr.
Southwest Texas State University

10:15 am MINI-BREAKFAST

10:45 am COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANIZATION

Chairman: W. Jack Duncan
University of Alabama in Birmingham

Speakers:

Review of Emerging Concepts and Practice In Organizational Communications
Dan L. Costley
New Mexico State University

Effectiveness of Internal Organizational Communication: A Study of Clerical Groups
C. William Roe
Nicholls State University

Scientific and Technical Meetings: Why Go? Who Profits?
E. Bruce Peters
International Socitechnical Systems

Status Report on A Project On Organizational Communication Research
John Pocilio, Jr.
Kent State University

Discussants: C. Ray Gullett
University of Texas at San Antonio
William J. Lord, Jr.
University of Texas at Austin

12:00 Noon Lunch

2:00 pm INSIGHTS INTO THE TEACHING OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: WORKSHOP

Chairman: Raymond W. Lesikar
Louisiana State University

Speakers:

Student Research In Business Communications: Making It Relevant in Community College
Marie Dalton
College of the Mainland

The Decision Process In Administrative Communication
Phillip V. Lewis
Oklahoma State University

Instructing Undergraduate Business Students In Selected Critical Areas of the Research Process
Zelda W. Mosley
Texas Southern University

3:15 pm THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN MARKETING

Chairman: Morris E. Massey
University of Colorado

Speakers:

The Role of Communication in Sales Force Management
Dan Robertson
University of Denver

Communication Research in Public Policy for Marketing
Laird Landon, Jr.
University of Colorado/FTC Consultant

4:30 pm BUSINESS MEETING

Presiding: Sam J. Bruno
Program Chairman
West Texas State University

END OF CONFERENCE

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PART 1

RESEARCH IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATION

THE INTERPERSONAL/MASS COMMUNICATION INTERFACE AMONG BUSINESS EXECUTIVES

Fred L. Myrick, Jr.
The University of Alabama in Birmingham

A major theoretical problem for communication research has been to sufficiently join the mass media and interpersonal communication systems. There have been two major attempts to describe the juncture of these two systems. The first attempt was the "two-step flow of communication" theory which implies that the mass media influence "opinion leaders" who in turn influence a set of followers.[1] The more recent orientation, information-seeking behavior, implies that the "information needs generated by interpersonal communication lead to information-seeking in the mass media."[2]

Clark and James distinguish two information-seeking situations:

1. consumer behavior where the information-seeking is for enjoyment, for personal use, to keep informed per se; and

2. co-orientation behavior where the information-seeking has the goal of providing the seeker with material for discussion with others.[3]

The hypothesis tested here is that information-seeking in the mass media on a specific topic is a function of the frequency of interpersonal communication situations involving that topic.[4]

Method

A survey was conducted among business executives attending an annual conference for businessmen in Phoenix, Arizona, in the Spring, 1973. All 84 executives attending the conference were surveyed. These executives represented businesses throughout the state of Arizona.

One topic was studied: proposed legislation before the state legislature to impose ecological controls on business beginning with the banning of the sale of all beverages in non-returnable containers in Arizona.

This combination of survey respondents and topic permitted isolating communication behavior for which recall should be enhanced by the high interest of the topic and for which a small number of specialized mass media, principally state and regional business periodicals, are the dominant information sources.

Specifically, questionnaires were sent to the business executives at the time their advance registrations for the conference were received. The 84 respondents were questioned on the topic about the number of conversations held and number of articles read in state and regional business periodicals during the month preceding the conference. These data were collected as part of a larger survey concerning the conference.

Findings

Results of the survey, reported in Table 1, support the hypothesis. As the data in Table 1 indicate, among business executives as the number of conversations (interpersonal communication situations) on the proposed legislation increased, information-seeking in the mass media increased. Only 8.3% of those who reported no conversations also reported information-seeking. Among those executives who reported three or more conversations, 90% reported seeking information in the mass media.

Table 1
Percent of Executives Seeking Information on the Proposed Ecological Legislation by Number of Conversations

NUMBER OF CONVERSATIONS	INFORMATION SEEKING NO	YES
0 (N = 24)	91.7	8.3
1-2 (N = 40)	55	45
≥3 (N = 20)	10	90

$\underline{x}^2 = 29.37$, 2df, $\underline{p} < .001$

Discussion

These results provide strong support for the hypothesis, but they do not "prove" that frequent conversations involving a specific topic lead to information-seeking on that topic because, strictly speaking, contingency table statistics do not address the question of direction of effect at all. But, although much work remains toward developing a complete theory of information-seeking behavior, the Arizona survey does suggest a way other than the two-way flow theory for viewing the interpersonal/mass communication interface.

Interpersonal communication situations may not always precede information-seeking on a specific topic, but a significant portion of the interpersonal/mass communication interface does seem to conform to that pattern. More research is needed to fully understand the role of information-seeking behavior as it effects the interpersonal/mass communication interface.

REFERENCES

[1]Elihu Katz, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-to-Date Report on an Hypothesis," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. 21 (Spring 1957), pp. 61-78.

[2]Jacqueline J. Harris and Maxwell E. McCombs, "The Interpersonal/Mass Communication Interface Among Church Leaders," The Journal of Communication, Vol. 22 (September 1972), pp. 257-262.

[3]Peter Clark and Jim James, "The Effects of Situation, Attitude Intensity and Personality on Information-Seeking," Sociometry, Vol. 30 (1967), pp. 235-245.

[4]It should be noted that, unknown at the time of the study, the research reported here is a replication of that reported by Harris and McCombs, op. cit., except that they used respondents attending a church conference in Florida and sampled purposively from those attending that conference.

MEASURING THE IMAGE OF ARKANSAS WITH THE SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL

Dr. Dale A. Level, Jr., University of Arkansas

What do you think of when you hear the word, Arkansas? "Watermelons, the unshaven Arkie, the moonshiner, malnutrition and mental debility, hookworms, hogs, the big fat lie, shoelessness, illiteracy, windy politicians and hillbillies and paddlefeet who cannot seem to pronounce correctly the name of their native state?" Arkansas has often been identified with both economic and cultural backwardness. The research to be reported here was an attempt to determine the current image of the state.

During 1972 and 1973, three separate surveys were conducted to determine the image of Arkansas. Specifically, the surveys were designed to determine the image of Arkansas as a potential retirement location as viewed by persons living in middle and upper income residential areas in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Chicago, Illinois, and Dallas, Texas.

A semantic differential type of questionnaire was sent to 3,000 persons--1,000 in each of the three areas. Five hundred were requested to give their evaluations about "an ideal retirement location" and the other five hundred were asked to respond to the same questions on "the State of Arkansas." The categories in the survey were: Medical facilities, Taxes, Shopping facilities, Recreation-Entertainment, Climate, Roads, Cost of living, and an overall State of Arkansas image vs. an ideal retirement location.

Measuring the Image of Arkansas

A total of 308 (20%) of the questionnaires evaluating an "ideal retirement location" were returned; 375 (25%) of those evaluating the "State of Arkansas" were returned. The number of replies received from Dallas was the greatest of the three groups; the Chicago group had the lowest percentage of responses.

Table 1 lists the number and percentage of responses from each of the three areas:

Table 1

	Pittsburgh		Dallas		Chicago		Total	
	Ideal	Ark	Ideal	Ark	Ideal	Ark	Ideal	Ark
# Responses	114	114	120	171	74	90	308	375
% of Total (500 ea)	23	23	24	34	15	18	20	25

Table 2 shows the averages of each category for the three locations and the mean averages of the three groups for an "ideal retirement" vs. the "State of Arkansas." (Note: The lower numbers reflect the more "desirable" adjective; the higher numbers reflect the more "undesirable" adjective. No statistical tests have been computed at this time.)

A cursory examination of the table reveals that Arkansas probably would not be the first choice of the respondents as a potential retirement location. However, it should be noted that the highest average rating of any category was only 3.5--exactly in the middle of the seven-point scale. Thus, it would appear that Arkansas is not viewed as a completely negative possibility for future retirement.

Table 2

	IDEAL RETIREMENT LOCATION				ARKANSAS IMAGE			
Category/ Rating	P	D	C	Id Avg	P	D	C	Id Avg
GOVERNMENT								
calm/agitated	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.0	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.6
honest/dis.	.2	1.0	1.2	.8	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.4
good/bad	.5	1.3	1.5	1.1	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.4
strong/weak	1.5	2.3	2.7	2.2	3.0	3.8	3.9	3.6
	.8	1.4	1.6	1.3	2.9	3.5	3.5	3.3
MEDICAL FAC								
good/bad	.5	.4	.3	.4	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.6
friendly/unf	.5	.4	.4	.4	2.0	2.6	2.1	2.2
honest/dis	.5	1.2	1.4	1.0	2.5	3.0	3.4	3.0
avail/una	.5	1.4	1.4	1.1	3.0	3.3	3.8	3.4
unexp/exp	2.0	2.0	1.9	2.0	3.3	3.5	3.9	3.7
	.8	1.1	1.1	1.2	2.7	3.0	3.2	3.0

Table 2 (cont.)

Category/ Rating	IDEAL RETIREMENT LOCATION P	D	C	Id Avg	ARKANSAS IMAGE P	D	C	Id Avg
TAXES								
fair/unfair	.5	1.3	1.4	1.1	2.0	3.0	3.3	2.8
low/high	1.0	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.5	3.0	2.7	2.7
	.8	1.8	1.8	1.5	2.3	3.0	3.0	2.8
SHOPPING FAC								
friendly/unf	1.0	.5	.4	.6	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.7
good/bad	.5	.5	.4	.5	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.2
avail/unavail	1.0	.7	.7	.8	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.4
honest/dishonest	.5	1.3	1.2	1.0	2.2	3.2	3.3	2.9
unexp/exp	1.8	3.0	3.1	2.6	2.6	4.0	3.8	3.5
	.9	1.2	1.8	1.1	2.3	2.6	2.7	2.5
REC/ENTERT								
avail/unavail	1.0	1.0	.9	1.0	2.0	1.6	1.6	1.7
good/bad	1.0	1.4	1.8	1.4	2.3	2.5	3.0	2.6
unexp/exp	1.5	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.0	2.3	1.9	2.1
active/passive	1.8	2.2	1.9	2.0	3.0	2.3	2.6	2.6
	1.3	1.7	1.6	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3
CLIMATE								
good/bad	.3	.6	.8	.6	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.9
clear/hazy	.5	2.0	1.8	1.4	1.5	2.7	2.8	2.3
dry/wet	1.5	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.2	4.1	4.0	3.4
hot/cold	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.5	4.2	3.5	2.8	3.5
	1.5	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.5	3.1	2.9	2.8
ROADS								
good/bad	.5	1.0	.6	.7	2.8	3.0	2.5	2.8
smooth/rough	1.0	1.5	.8	1.1	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.1
clean/dirty	.8	1.9	1.7	1.5	2.2	3.1	3.3	2.9
fast/slow	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.6	3.0	3.8	3.0	3.3
wide/narrow	1.8	2.9	3.1	2.6	3.2	5.0	4.6	4.3
straight/wind	2.0	3.9	4.3	3.4	3.0	5.4	4.9	4.4
	1.4	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.9	3.9	3.5	3.5
COST OF LIV								
falling/ris	1.8	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.5	4.2	4.3	3.7
low/high	1.5	2.5	2.6	2.2	2.2	3.0	2.8	2.7
	1.7	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.4	3.6	3.6	3.2

Measuring the Image of Arkansas

In terms of absolute differences in ranking the "ideal retirement location" vs. the "State of Arkansas" Government had the greatest difference, a 2.0. In other words, of the eight categories on the questionnaire, this factor for Arkansas was viewed as being the greatest (semantic) distance away from an ideal. Medical facilities followed with a 1.8

difference. It would seem that this would certainly be an important factor for persons considering a retirement location. Other differences were: Roads, 1.5; Shopping facilities, 1.4; Taxes, 1.3: Three factors were under a one-point difference: Climate, and Cost-of-Living, .8 each; and, Recreation/Entertainment, .7.

A number of items can be noted from Table 2, among them: Respondents from Dallas were the most critical of Arkansas' climate and roads. No doubt this stems from a mental comparison with their own road system and climate. Also, more respondents from Dallas had been to/through Arkansas than persons from either Pittsburgh or Chicago. Their rankings would tend to be based on more direct contact/experience than the rankings of the others. Respondents from Pittsburgh were the least critical of Arkansas; yet, they were the most idealistic in their rating of "an ideal retirement location." Their (average) ratings for all eight categories for an "ideal retirement location" were the lowest of all three groups. Hence, they might be the hardest to satisfy in locating an "ideal retirement location."

Table 3 shows the results of an overall "ideal retirement location" vs. an overall image of the "State of Arkansas." The average "ideal retirement location" rating is 1.9 while Arkansas scored a 2.6, a difference of only .7. Thus, on the overall rating, Arkansas would seem to be seen in a fairly favorable light; however, on the specific items, Arkansas' government, medical facilities, roads, shopping facilities, and taxes are less desirable than an ideal. Only recreation/entertainment, climate, and cost-of-living would appear to be the most desirable characteristics of Arkansas for those considering the state as a potential retirement location.

As a sidelight, the initial survey results (Pittsburgh) were published in the Arkansas Business & Economic Journal. Several newspaper in the state picked up the information and included parts of it in editorials or feature articles. No less than a dozen "Letters to the Editors" appeared both supporting and condemning the research and the results. Also, the State Tourist Commission and two large real estate promoters in the state have expressed interest in the research.

Table 3

	IDEAL RETIREMENT LOCATION				ARKANSAS IMAGE			
Category/ Rating	P	D	C	Id Avg	P	D	C	Id Avg
pleasant/un	.2	.3	.4	.3	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5
safe/unsafe	.2	.3	.4	.3	2.0	1.5	1.6	1.7
beautif/ugly	.5	.5	.6	.5	2.0	1.2	1.3	1.5
uncrowd/crowd	xx	1.1	1.2	1.2	xx	1.1	1.1	1.1
clean/dirty	.5	1.3	1.2	1.0	2.0	2.7	2.9	2.5
good/bad	.5	1.4	1.5	1.1	2.0	2.7	2.7	2.5
fragrant/foul	.8	1.7	1.7	1.4	2.0	2.7	2.8	2.5
near/far	2.2	3.2	3.3	2.9	4.0	3.0	4.1	3.7
rich/poor	2.2	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.8	2.9	5.2	4.0
slow/fast	3.0	2.4	3.6	3.4	4.2	2.8	2.7	3.2
young/old	2.5	3.8	3.9	3.4	3.2	4.1	4.3	3.9
large/small	2.0	4.5	4.5	3.7	2.5	4.2	4.0	3.6
	1.3	2.1	2.2	1.9	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.6

There is really no conclusion (yet) to this research nor to the problems of measuring an image. Whether you consider Arkansas inhabited by ignorant, lazy, barefoot hillbillies, or "a land of milk and honey where folks from cares are free" is in the eye of the beholder. Or, as one editorial put it: "There is some value, perhaps, in knowing what is the Arkansas image in out-of-way places, particularly if one can repeat such studies in order to evaluate future advertising and promotional campaigns. We tend to agree with (one writer) though, in regard to Pittsburgh. That's like asking Eskimos what they think of Acapulco. Chances are they feel it is too hot, too crowded, and critically short on polar bears."

PART 2

COMMUNICATION IN THE ORGANIZATION

EMERGING CONCEPTS AND PRACTICES IN ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Dan L. Costley, New Mexico State University

Organizations are faced with increasing problems of communication due in part to the following conditions: changes in the values and expectations of individuals entering the work force. The most effective approaches to improving organizational communication go beyond improvement in the form and format of communication. The critical issues in communication involve basic management policies and practices as they are related to the nature of the organizational environment.

There now seems to be agreement among managers that employees are not asking to "do their thing without contributing to the organization" and they are not asking for "nice and polite supervisors." What employees are saying is "let me do responsible and meaningful work." If the orientation of employees toward organizations is changing, then organizational communication policies and practices must change if productivity is to be increased.

Changing Concepts in Organizational Communication

The emerging changes in management concepts will result in long range consequences for the communication practices in organizations. As a result of changing assumptions about the role of management, basic concepts of organizational communications are changing rapidly. Although it would be impossible to predict the final outcome of these changes, some general directions can be identified.

1. Changing from an emphasis on the use of organizational communications for persuasion and control to an emphasis on communication for problem solving and achieving organizational objectives. This involves changing the

management approach from attempting to sell individuals on practices and procedures to involving individuals in planning and controlling at all levels in the organization.

2. Changing from an emphasis on controlling the flow of communication to establishing fluid communication among all individuals in the organization. This involves the development of trust and openness within communication systems.

3. Changing the emphasis of management communication from a downward flow of information, instruction, and orders, to an interaction approach which involves collective efforts in communication to achieve organizational objectives. The emerging orientation emphasizes participation and interaction.

4. Changing the emphasis from verbal communication and message construction to an emphasis on non-verbal communication and management action. Organizations are involving employees in more meaningful work by changing job structures and eliminating barriers to productivity in the organization's environment.

5. A growing emphasis on attitude and feeling components of communication. There is increased recognition that employees behave on the basis of felt needs and that attitudes and feelings affect productivity levels.

Managerial Approaches to Communication

The changes that are taking place involve basic modification in management's communication approach. This involves a movement from what will be referred to as an authority-oriented approach to an achievement-oriented approach to communication.

Authority-Oriented Approach

This approach assumes that it is the responsibility of management to regulate and control the flow of information in the organization. Regulating communication is seen as an efficient method to control the output of the organization.

When defects in work patterns occur, management attempts to manipulate the flow of information as remedial action. With an authority-oriented approach, communication distortions are seen as a basic cause of poor performance.

The authority-oriented manager relies on verbal communication to improve morale and establish stability. Communication becomes a method of coping with problems by sending verbal messages where they are presumed to do the most good. Communications focuses on "remedial" approaches and concentrates on eliminating violations of organizational policies and procedures. Communication in this setting is often focused on getting people to "like" the organization. Information is often distorted in management's attempt to sell people on organizational commitment. This approach often involves "propaganda" attempts which can result in employee suspicion and apathy.

Achievement-Oriented Approach

This approach assumes that effective communication is an intrinsic component of productive work. Communication problems are seen as symptoms or indications of organizational or managerial inadequacy. Communication is not seen as an independent component of the organization, but as a managerial tool that is highly interrelated with all other aspects of management and organization. Information about communication distortions is used to diagnose organizational and managerial problems.

The achievement oriented approach does not require "special communication programs" because direct relevant information is communicated through interaction and involvement of individuals at all levels in the organization as a part of the planning, controlling, and doing functions related to their jobs. The management orientation under an achievement-oriented approach is to develop responsible interaction between individuals on the job under conditions of high trust with a minimum of psychological or hierarchical distance.

The assumption underlying these changes in orientation to organizational communication is that when people have meaningful jobs, and do challenging work that is related to their goals, then effective communication results.

When individuals are in goal-oriented work relationships they tend to communicate relevant feelings and ideas to each other. When they are in an environment where

there are arbitrary and unchallenging goals, confusing and restrictive systems, then communication distortions occur as symptoms of the lack of a goal orientation. In order to improve the communications it is necessary to change the organizational environment. For the increasing number of goal-oriented managers, communication is a direct line responsibility rather than a staff function. As a line responsibility, communication occurs in the processes of planning, controlling and doing work. Communication improvement focuses primarily on the line causes of communication problems. Communication improvement focuses on eliminating communication problems by recomposing work groups, changing organizational patterns, reorganizing jobs, and creating different person-job relationships. To facilitate goal attainment the manager changes his behavior rather than his verbal communication.

Most managers are coming to realize that no matter how eloquent their language usage, how "open" the channels of communication, how well they listen, how effectively they speak, how clearly they write, how much they clarify, or how often they hold meetings that in the end the most powerful communication in an organization is the language of the job. For substantial improvements to be made in an organizational communication changes in the nature of jobs, management styles, and organizational environments are required.

Organizational Communication Practices: Systems and Procedures to Improve Communication

There are numberous management systems that are valuable in improving organizational communication. The following practices are typical of the type of management systems that are being implemented. Although the communication effects of the systems are emphasized, they are examples of broad based management attempts to maximize the utilization of human resources.

Goal Setting

In an organizational environment that lacks goal-orientation, individuals tend to restrict communication, seek security, and protect themselves in the organization. If the organization is not goal oriented individuals tend to look for ways to satisfy the "boss" rather than looking for more effective ways to do the job.

An authority-orientation is often the alternative organizational environment when goal-orientation is not present. Without a goal orientation employees usually see the organization as characterized by arbitrary and unchallenging goals that lead to confusing and restrictive management systems and result in internal conflict. These conditions lead to highly restricted and inaccurate communication.

With a goal-oriented system the conditions for developing cooperation, trust, and respect can exist within an organization. Communications can be open and direct rather than defensive and authority-oriented.

In a goal-setting system individuals are involved in the process of setting specific work goals. Involvement in the process of setting goals facilitates the flow of communication and directs it toward organizational goals. Systematic goal-setting by any individuals in an organization can provide a communication system directly tied to productivity.

Organizations have always planned and set goals. The changes that are occurring are not changes in the functions of planning but in the nature of the approaches and procedures used. Goal-setting has traditionally been viewed as a top level management function. Emerging procedures for goal-setting involve every individual in the organization. As an outline of a goal setting system, the following steps are utilized by many organizations:

1. Beginning at the top of the organization, each individual occupant of a position discusses the position description and areas of responsibility with the supervisor. This discussion deals specifically with the responsibilities of the superior's position. A mutual understanding is reached on the responsibilities of superior and subordinate.

2. After having agreed on position responsibilities the individual then prepares goals that would represent reasonable performance in each area of responsibility. An important aspect of this step is that the subordinate initiates the preparation of goals. The individual plans goals in accordance with the overall goals of the organization.

3. After having outlined goals and objectives the individual discusses them with his immediate superior. In this step is the superior's responsibility to be able to arrive at a position of agreement with the subordinate on goals and on methods to measure achievement of goals. The superior acts in a role of questioner, advisor, trainer, and developer. With this type of goal-setting, discussions usually result in open communication about job related problems and provide a basis for a continual flow of information between superior and subordinate.

4. The results of individual performance are checked against goals. The mere attainment or failure to attain a goal is not significance in itself. The important consideration in this process is to be able to determine what was accomplished under the conditions that existed in the organization. The focus of the manager is to eliminate undesirable results and reward positive accomplishments. The system provides the basis for determining training and development needs and for direct results oriented evaluation of performance.

One of the primary benefits of a goal-setting system that involves all individuals in an organization is that it promotes better communication and understanding between managers and employees. Many management problems originate because of a lack of mutual agreement on goals to be accomplished on the job. Most managers realize that individuals do a better job when they understand the goals to be achieved and how their performance is to be measured.

Research on the differences in perceptions of superiors and subordinates indicates the frequent existence of substantial disagreements in the perceptions of superiors and subordinates concerning the job requirements and the quality and quantity of results to be achieved. When such misunderstanding exists, either individuals may be doing a good job of achieving the wrong goals or management may not be recognizing the important achievement of employees.

Goal-setting does not inherently result in effective communication and understanding between managers and employees, but it does provide a system which can lead to substantial improvements. The requirement that superiors and subordinates mutually review performance provides systematic feedback. Managers are provided with information about individual performance and development. Subordinates obtain information which helps them determine where they stand with management and their strong and weak areas of performance.

Job Enrichment

For effective long term solutions to many of the persistent communication problems in organization, it is necessary to recognize that it is the "language of the job" that most powerfully communicates to employees. The only lasting solution for many communications problems is to make basic changes in the nature of jobs. Probably the most prevalent approach now being taken to solve this problem is the use of job enrichment techniques.

The point that job dissatisfaction has reached and its intense impact on many industries has been carefully studied and documented by scientific research. Classic cases of problems of the work force in boring, demotivating job situations has been highly publicized by the press. Job dissatisfaction is one of the major problems management faces today.

To apply job enrichment, it is necessary to create job conditions that are characterized by increased responsibility, personal advancement and recognition, and individual growth. An enriched job involves providing meaningful feedback and allowing employees to participate in decision making, problem solving, and goal-setting.

Usually, the following principles of job enrichment would be utilized in restructuring jobs.

1. Remove some controls. Restructure jobs by removing some of the day-to-day control over the individual with accountability being retained. For example, one company restructured jobs by allowing employees to decide the manner in which their jobs should be done instead of having job methods dictated to them.

2. Increase personal accountability. Restructure jobs to increase the accountability of individuals for their own work. As an example, the job of employees assembling electrometers at Corning Glass Works was restructured so they also inspected the meters and were personally accountable for quality.

3. Provide complete natural units of work. Natural units of work are ones which are complete enough for workers to relate them meaningfully to worthwhile achievement. This usually involves

combining "before" and "after" operations into complete jobs. For example, Indiana Bell Telephone Company allowed employees to compile the thinner telephone books personally and completely with their own verification. This made one book "owned" by one employee and combined 14 steps of work into one unit.

4. Grant additional authority. Restructuring jobs so employees are provided with more freedom of action in their jobs. For example, Precision Castaparts allows employees to decide what information they need to do the job and to seek out the information for themselves without having to go through all the formal channels.

5. Provide employees with direct timely performance feedback. Restructuring the communication to provide information directly to the employees instead of having them go through the normal, formal channels of their supervisor. Donelly Mirrors, Inc. reports company information on sales, production, inventories and profits direct to employees on a continuing basis.

At a basic level job enrichment is changing the structure of the job so that in addition to doing, individuals are also planning and controlling functions.

The great advantage of job enrichment seems to be that it changes the message communicated to employees by the nature of their job. It basically communicates to employees that they are important and vital assets of the organization. It involves employees in decision making processes and relies on felt needs for responsibility, achievement, and recognition. Many nonenriched jobs appear to communicate to employees that management feels they are irresponsible, lack motivation to achieve and are incapable of learning or growth on the job. The non-verbal communication resulting from the nature of the job, can easily override any verbal messages transmitted by management. A basic starting point for any improvement in organizational communication should be to examine the jobs employees are doing and consider enriching jobs to improve communication.

Attitude Surveys

Most managers are concerned with employee attitudes and most large organizations have used some form of attitude measurement. Attitude surveys are often used without systematic design of procedure to meet specific objective.

Typically attitude surveys have involved administration of a questionnaire to employees and the percentage of favorable and unfavorable responses is tabulated. The report of results is generally sent to top management for their confidential analysis. Often managers find it difficult to understand unfavorable responses and are sensitive to implications of incompetent behavior on the part of management. Even with detailed statistical manipulation of the data, managers find they cannot agree on the nature and cause of problems or courses of remedial action. The survey raw data is considered confidential management information and only a summary of the data is released to employees. In the summary the "negative" results are usually omitted or watered down. With the publication of the "report of results" management has provided the feedback promised to employees. This type of procedure communicates to employees that management does not consider them mature and intelligent human beings.

A major revision of attitude survey procedures is being used by organizations to make far-reaching improvements in communication.

The first steps of administering and tabulating attitude questionnaires are completed as they are with a traditional approach. Instead of just providing results to top management, they are made available to all employees. Representative employee groups selected by the employees then analyze the results and make recommendations.

The employee groups are given the responsibilities to (1) determing what major problems exist, (2) indicate causes of these problems, (3) recommend solutions for the problems, (4) identify successful organizational characteristics, and (5) identify the causes for successes. The employee groups meet during working hours and are provided with a recorder to facilitate making a written report.

The employee group reports are made available to managers and employees when they are completed.

Managers discuss the employee group reports in face-to-face meetings with employees in their department. In these meetings management indicates (1) actions to be taken immediately, (2) the specific time for actions to be taken in the future and (3) the reasons why recommendations cannot be implemented.

Attitude survey procedures that involve employees in survey analysis and action recommendations can achieve the following objectives: (1) provide direct feedback of results unaltered by any editing, (2) build employee confidence in management, (3) utilize persons closest to the problems to provide solutions, (4) afford employees an opportunity to think beyond routines of the job and exercise initiative and creativity and, (5) open channels of communication.

Since the main purpose of this survey procedure is to facilitate communication and problem solving by involvement of employees, the content of the questionnaire is not of primary importance. With this procedure communication flows in all directions as employees discuss results, analyze problems, and recommend courses of action.

Job Orientation and Training Communication

In most organizations staffing operations required a continuous training to meet needs of expansion, transfers, and replacements. After recognizing the problems of anxiety felt by new employees, organizations have adopted job orientation and training programs to reduce anxiety. Systematic attitude research programs have provided the following information:

1. Employees found their first days on new jobs were anxious and disturbing.

2. Initiation practices by peers increased anxiety of new employees.

3. Anxiety interferred with employee learning.

4. Turnover of newly hired employees is primarily the result of anxiety.

5. New employees are very reluctant to discuss problems with their supervisors.

By comparing experimental and control groups it has been found that the anxiety reduction orientation programs increase productivity, reduce turnover, reduce absenteeism, and reduce training time. The impact of anxiety is to inhibit job effectiveness. As anxiety drops, confidence is developed and productivity increases. To accelerate learning, orientation programs to reduce anxiety are utilized.

Anxiety reducing training emphasizes four points:

1. Opportunity to succeed is very good.

2. Disregard hall talk. Employees are told of hazing games that older employees play to scare newcomers. To prevent distortions in communication employees are given facts about both good and bad aspects of their job and exactly what is expected of them.

3. Employees are encouraged to take the initative in communication. Employees are informed of the natural reluctance of many supervisors to be talkative and that it is easier for the supervisor to be effective if employees ask questions.

4. Employees are advised to get to know their supervisor. Employees are informed of personality characteristics of the supervisor. Open and direct comments about the supervisor's likes and dislikes are discussed.

Programs of this type to improve communications with new employees and in the processes of training and transfer have had significant effects in improving organizational communication. This type of program not only accelerates learning but provides the basis for increasingly open communication. By utilizing this type of program it has been found that the sensitivity of supervisors is increased and a climate is developed that is more conducive to effective exchange of information. The very nature of this program communicates through action the importance of listening and maintaining fluid communication channels at all levels in the organization.

"Open Line Programs" to Improve Upward Communication

One technique used by a number of organizations to improve upward communication where employees feel that normal channels of communication are not adequate is the open line program. The open line program establishes a confidential channel that can be utilized by any employee who wants to submit a problem, complaint, opinion, or suggestion to management. The channel is kept confidential by communications being directed to a coordinator who is the only one who knows the writer's identity. The program guarantees a candid written reply from management sent to the employee's home.

The two key elements in the open line program are confidentiality and candor. There are a number of programs of this type now in operation, including such organizations as Sun Oil, IBM, and the Bank of America.

All organizations have something less than ideal communications environments and cannot avoid having at least a few managers who lack some communication capabilities. The open line program provides an organizational means to make up for deficiencies that exist in providing open channels of communication. The open line program offers a channel to employees who have something on their mind that they would like to express to management in a confidential manner and for complaints to be channeled directly to top management. One of the major advantages to this program is that often concrete suggestions for more effective operation are expressed through this channel.

The open line program conveys the non-verbal message that management believes communication is a two way street and should be open and direct. The system also communicates to employees that management realizes that the organization does not currently have a totally open communication system in all areas.

Conclusion

Concepts and techniques of organizational communication are relatively easy to write down, but their effective implementation are difficult and time consuming. Philosophies and theories of communication are much more highly developed than are the procedures and methods for their implementation in organizations.

The effective implementation of any communication system or procedure requires an organizational environment that is supportive of the practices to be installed. As with other management systems, they must have support of top management to be maximumly effective. Effective implementation always requires flexibility so procedures can be adapted to meet requirements of the organization.

The emerging complexion of organizational communication cannot yet be fully seen. The potential rewards of more effective communication are unlimited. For most organizations the traditional and conventional concepts and practices are no longer sufficient to meet current challenges. The future of the richly varied and complex processes or organizational communication will require application of a broad spectrum of new concepts and practices.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL-ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION - A CASE STUDY OF CLERICAL GROUPS

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Organizations may be classified as business, charitable, service, social, military, civic and religious to name a few. But regardless of the classification of organizations, few people, if any at all, would argue that communication network and effective communication is one of the most important operational aspects of an organization. In fact, effective communication may be the most important consideration for any organization. For without communication, there would very likely be no organization at all. Consequently, it may be said that effective communication is the very lifeblood of an organization, and is one of the most important elements determining whether organizational objectives will be accomplished, and how efficiently the accomplishment of these objectives may be realized.

While most people in organizations would be in complete agreement with the previously mentioned viewpoints concerning the importance of organizational communication, there seems to be a great disparity between viewpoints and application to organizational situations. For one of the great paradoxes this writer has encountered in consulting with various organizations deals with the consistency with which organizational members applaud the importance of communications, but fail to initiate effective communication network themselves. That is, in nearly every organization with whom I have provided services, effective communication is recognized as being all-important in the successful functioning of the enterprise. Yet, at the same time, one of the major illnesses prohibiting those same organizations from achieving their full potential is consistently weak communications, or in some cases, a lack of two way information flow up and down the hierarchy of the organization. Further, most people in these same organizations will admit readily that poor communications is one of their biggest problems. Yet, in spite of their recognition of both the importance of communication and their own communication failure, there appears to be a significant inability to resolve the problem internally.

One might raise the question, why, if communications is so important, are there so many communication failures? But, the answer to such a question is not an easy one. Some have suggested that communication is something we take for granted, and thus little emphasis is placed upon initiating communication processes. Others have said that many do not understand that effective communications will not arise spontaneously, but instead requires the conscious effort at the top of the organization to initiate and encourage effective information flows throughout all levels of the organization. However, whatever the problems may be, one factor remains apparent. It is not enough to say, in the words of a recent Paul Newman movie, "What we have here is a failure to communicate", and let it go at that. The aim of this paper is to show how deliberate communication can bring about desired organizational changes. First, an identification of organization communication is necessary.

Classification of Communication

According to Raymond Lesikar, organizational communication falls into three broad categories:[1]

The first category of organizational communications described by Professor Lesikar is internal-operational communication. "Internal-operational communication consists of the structural communication within the organization directly related to achieving the organization's work goals."[2] Thus, such communication is a deliberate type of communication designed into the operation of the organization.

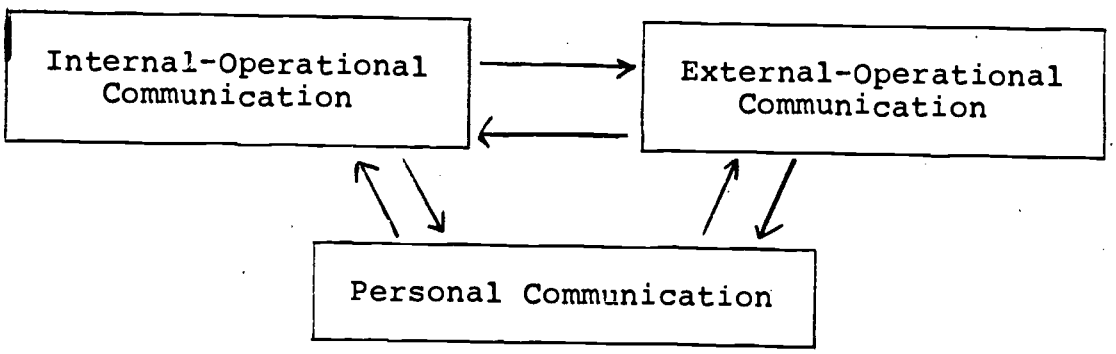
The second category of organizational communication, according to Professor Lesikar, is external-operational communication. "External-operational communication is described as that part of an organization's structural communication which is concerned with achieving the organization's work goals and which is conducted with people and groups outside the organization."[3] Thus, external-operational communication, like internal-operational communication should be deliberately designed to achieve the greatest results outside of the organization. One organization for example has begun a billboard advertising campaign to enlighten the public on the fact that the company is people oriented and it is a good place to work. However, unlike internal communications, it seems that external communications can occur spontaneously. If it is deliberately planned, it should bring desirable results and help achieve the organizations goals. If it is allowed to work spontaneously, external communication may bring unfavorable results and work against the achievement of goals. In other

words, whether it is planned or not, the organization will communicate certain factors to the environment outside the organization.

The third category of organizational communication as seen by Professor Lesikar is personal communication. "Personal communication is all the incidental exchange of information and feeling which human beings engage in whenever they come together."[4] That is, personal communication does not have the organization's operational goals as its basis as do the two other categories of organizational communication. However, deliberate attempts should be made to insure the existence of personal communication to some degree that aids the achievement of organizational goals, but does not interfere with such goals.

Interrelationship of Organizational Communication

Each of the three categories of organizational communication, internal-operational, external-operational and personal, is important and necessary to the achievement of organizational goals. As a result, one area of communication should not be emphasized at the expense of another area. Since there is an interrelationship of the three categories of organizational communication, each will have an impact upon the other. For example, deliberate attempts may be made to effect an internal-operational communication network. But, if the opportunity for personal communication is too little, or too great, internal-operational communication attempts may fail. the interrelationship of organizational communication may be described in the simplified model below:



It is the importance of internal-operational communication and its interrelationship with the other forms of organizational communication that is the focus of the following case study.

Internal-Operational Communication

With Clerical Groups

The study revolves around organizational communication and the performance of clerical groups in a medium size company. The company, which will be referred to as X Company, is a fabricator of metal products in the light metals industry. X Company began about 30 years ago with a labor force of 100 employees. Today X Company employs approximately 600 people and does an annual dollar volume business of approximately 20 million dollars. The company maintains a clerical staff of 20 typists, steno clerks and receptionists.

In the early stages of the company's development operations seemed to run smoothly. The company was small enough to allow everyone to be on a personal basis with everyone else. At this point effective communication networks existed, and periodic meetings were held to keep everyone informed on matters pertaining to the company's operations, as well as the degree of success or failure in attaining company objectives.

Following World War II, the company found itself in a period of prosperity with the post-war demand for industrial and commercial products. As a result of this increased demand, the company was thrust into a period of rapid growth--a condition which has continued even to this point in time.

The increased demand for the company's products saw management in a position of focusing attention on trying to keep up with the pace of business. Such considerations as hiring needed employees, creating new positions, restructuring the organization and expanding production facilities seemed to receive all management's attention. As a result, many of the other--but seemingly not so pressing--considerations of business operations went neglected by management. Among these areas of neglect was lack of emphasis on communication. There was always someone who did not get a message, or there was a failure to carry a message through all the levels of the new organization. And since the company had grown so large so rapidly, there were less personal relationships. To make matters worse, there was no time to hold the periodic information meetings which were so much a part of the "old" company. Consequently, problems began to plague the day-to-day operations of the business. Most of these problems revolved around relationships between people, and one of the biggest problem areas seemed to be within the clerical staff itself.

At this point in time, management realizing that some direct action had to be taken, called in a consultant to analyze the problems and propose solutions.

In conducting interviews with several people, it was determined that communication problems were at the base of the difficulties within the clerical groups. While at one time the clerical staff felt it was an important part of the company and was kept informed on company matters, this was no longer the case. Now the clerical staff felt it was treated as someone to do the little, insignificant jobs. And, it no longer was informed of X Company's organizational goals, and how clerical groups contributed to the achievement of these goals. Further, job assignments were incomplete and confusing. In other words, internal-operational communication was suffering where clerical people were concerned. X Company experienced several undesirable results of its failures to communicate or deliberately establish and maintain internal operation communication with its clerical staff. Sloppy work habits developed. Many job assignments were not communicated or were communicated in a way that caused overlapping of duties and duplication of effort. Turnover among the clerical staff became a problem, as long-time employees left and new ones did not stay around long. Feeling the frustrations of their situation, those who did stay found ways of getting around doing their work. Personal communication became the most important part of their jobs and they did more complaining and talking with each other than they did work. Most of the talking was to criticize company operations or to gossip about matters unrelated to the job.

The obvious solution to the obvious problem was to initiate deliberate efforts to reestablish internal-operational communication. In order to assess the impact of the new communication program, management was persuaded to divide the clerical staff into two groups. Actually such a division already existed as the clerical people in the accounting department were physically isolated from the remaining clerical staff. With one group of ten clerical employees management re-initiated the regular staff meetings. During the staff meetings the employees were informed on matters pertaining to company operations. The employees were also oriented to the objectives and goals of the organization for the coming year. At the same time the importance of each clerical person's performing her job efficiently to help achieve the organizational objectives and goals was emphasized. The employees were encouraged to ask questions or bring up problems related to their jobs, and action was taken on each.

Between regular meetings, the employees received specific, clear-cut job instructions and inter-office memorandas to keep them up-to-date on recent considerations pertaining to their jobs. In essence, an effective internal-operational communication channel was established. With the other ten clerical employees, however, conditions remained the same and no efforts were made to involve them in organizational communication.

The results clearly emphasized the effectiveness of organizational communication. With the group which had received the emphasis of internal-operational communication, turnover was reduced, the excessive personal communication was reduced, efficiency and accuracy of work increased, and morale seemed to reach a new high. With the other clerical group, however, all the problems of turnover, inefficiency, poor work habits and excessive personal communications to the extent of interferring with individual work were prevalent.

After seeing how effective the organization communication program was with the first group, management initiated similar communication programs not only with the second group, but throughout the organization as well. Not only has the emphasis upon internal-operational communication increased overall performance of people in the organization, but external-operational communication and personal communication seem to be oriented toward organizational objectives.

While such actions are not likely to eliminate all communication problems, it is evident that emphasis upon all forms of organizational communication is important to the existence of any organization. Certainly such emphasis can resolve many of the communication problems in organizations today, and minimize the impact of other problems on organizational efficiency.

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[1]Raymond V. Lesikar, Business Communication Theory and Application, Richard D. Irwin, Inc., Homewood, Illinois, Revised Edition, p. 9.

[2]Loc. cit.

[3]Ibid., p. 10.

[4]Ibid., p. 11.

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL MEETINGS:

WHY GO? WHO PROFITS?

E. Bruce Peters

Introduction

How can the researcher or research manager best cope with the information explosion and accelerating technical change, innovation and discovers? How can he best tap the flow of information to remain current and at the frontiers of research activity? Standard answers are improved library facilities and information storage and retrieval systems which often utilize expensive computers. But these costly solutions rarely produce results commensurate with the investment they require.

A growing body of empirical research shows that information which is actually put to use is most often transmitted by personal contact. This paper first examines some of the reasons for the importance of personal contact in the transmission of information and then focuses on scientific and technical meetings as an environment designed to facilitate the transmission of information in this way. The results of recently completed empirical research on information transfer in international scientific and technical meetings are cited to show who is most effective in gaining information. In the author's definition of meeting effectiveness, it turns out that the person who is perhaps giving the most is also the most effective in gaining and utilizing information.

What then are the advantages of personal contact? Why go to a meeting?

Why Go?

Personal Contact

The reason that personal contact is so much more effective in the transmission of information is that enthusiasm, new needs and new capabilities are also transmitted:

"All of a sudden you discover there are problems you didn't know you had." The meetings frequently occur in an unplanned or random pattern, itself a stimulus to creativity through association with dissimilar persons. Then as Nobel winner Watson explains: "Talking makes you think. You try to explain something and then realize you don't understand it."

From the standpoint of psychotherapeutic counseling, a friendly ear willing to listen without evaluation is a stimulus to imagination and creativity. On the other hand, the clash and conflict of ideas can have the same result and bring about increased communication.

Yet another benefit is the ability to focus on information needs, to sort, sift, and determine areas of mutual relevance. This process then leads to speculation and consideration of highly subjective information not at all available in the literature. Feedback from the other person in the form of questions, comments, and counterarguments increases the effectiveness of communication with greater interaction leading to greater linking.

Further, the self fulfilling prophecy seems also to be at work. People go to meetings with the express purpose of communicating. Their conduct is mutually reinforcing, and this, too, leads to better communication.

These advantages of personal contact are rather general, but the value system of scientists and engineers attach a particular role and importance to meetings.

Value in the Scientific Information System

In addition to the exchange of information, meetings have a ritual and psychic reward. The reward of recognition by presenting a paper is looked upon as the correct one for a scientist seeking the judgment of Mother Nature. As one scientist remarks, " The purpose of meetings is to get your abstract out. You give your talk; then you've got your name on it." In addition to recognition, he is also establishing property rights in a given area. And this leads to collaboration or competition with other scientists.

While recognition is an appropriate reward for a basic scientist interested in knowledge for the sake of knowledge, the applied scientist, working perhaps in an interdisciplinary team, is more interested in renewing links to his basic discipline. Meetings then take on the function of

> ...the reaffirmation of the solidarity of the group and the 'sacredness' of its cultural existence. Scientific meetings, then, shore up their participants' morale and conviction that their work is important, even if no information ever gets exchanged; from this perspective, information exchange becomes a bonus rather than a raison d'etre.
>
> (Personal communication from Norman W. Storer)

These observations suggest the psychic and ritual values, but a concrete and specific value is the expected one of an exchange of information. Scientists are faced with an overwhelming quantity of information and narrow specialized needs. Consequently, they find that the majority of information is useless to them. Nonetheless, it is difficult to judge the relevance of a particular item of information, for the implications may be entirely unexpected. Consequently, scientists have two distinctly different approaches to the problem of gathering information. One is a directed search for specific information. The other is a rather diffused random process of searching through a wide area of knowledge with discripant ideas serving as a stimulus and preventing too narrow a specialization. In general, for both engineers and scientists, channel use is dependent on accessibility and ease rather than technical quality. Use of channels depends on these factors, but acceptance depends on technical quality.

There are some clear differences between the information processing patterns of engineers and scientists. First, the literature is of much less importance to engineers.

> One might even conjecture that the traditional motivation of the technologist is <u>not</u> to publish but to produce his artifact or process without disclosing material that may be helpful to his peers and competitors before his claim to the private property of the technological advance can be published.

The technical journals are beyond the reach of the average engineer unless he is willing to spend a large amount of time digesting the material. The articles are well behind current practice and written primarily to enhance the author's reputation. It is of use only to some one wanting to cultivate a broad outlook, a comparatively rare creature among engineers. Consequently, information transfer is primarily oral.

Who Profits?

The preceding discussion has outlined real and potential values of scientific and technical meetings in the context of the information systems of scientists and engineers. The question now is who can profit most from attendance? Who is most effective in obtaining information? Who can best realize these many potential values?

There seems to be a recognizable individual who is the most effective in gaining and transmitting information. The two step flow of communication is the base for a number of concepts which have grown up to describe and explain this person and forms the basis for other studies which provide clues concerning this type of individual, his characteristics and activities.

The Two Step Flow of Communication

The title simply refers to the fact that there are opinion leaders who transfer information from the mass media to their friends and associates. They are of slightly higher rank or social status than their associates but similar in other respects. As a result of their attentiveness to the mass media, they are better informed, and they tend to be more active. They differ according to topic, but they have the common characteristic of bringing information flow into use. Their effectiveness lies partially in the trust they enjoy. As well, their ability to interact to resolve doubts and reward agreement is an important component of their success. The more effective communications are directed to them rather than to ordinary group members.

Diffusion of Innovation-Anthropology

In a review of more than 500 diffusion studies, Rogers confirms and supplements the concept of the two step flow of communication. These diffusion studies are not solely in the field of anthropology, but also include work in the fields of sociology, education, mass communication, public health, marketing, folklore, geography, and archeology.

Here again, the advantages of personal communication are emphasized. The principal advantage is the two way exchange of ideas which permits clarification or obtaining additional information. Personal communication is more

likely to influence behavior as it enjoys greater credibility from sources who are well known and regarded as trustworthy. Similarly, this personal contact is more effective in the face of resistance or apathy.

There is a recognizable type of person who is primarily responsible for dissemination of most of the information and the personal contact just mentioned. He tends to be younger and of higher social status. He is in a more favorable financial position and able to absorb losses. His operations are more specialized, making it easier for him to keep up with what is happening in his field, and he has a different type of mental ability, able to understand and apply complex technical knowledge. He is a cosmopolite who travels widely and exercises opinion leadership in his own community. He also perceives himself, as do others, as an innovator and a deviant. In fact, if he perceives himself as an innovator, he will possibly act like one.

Lacking the support of individuals in his community, he establishes ties with other similar individuals outside his community. He identifies with other reference groups who validate his behavior.

"Scientific Troubadors" and "Technological Gatekeepers"

The study of the diffusion of innovation brought out the peculiar characteristics of the innovator. Many of these same characteristics reappear in the person known as the "scientific troubador" or "technological gatekeeper." The scientific troubador is the person who gives some form and predictability to the informal patterns of scientific information exchange. The strategic mission that these individuals carry out is brought about by their positions as editors of journals, members of boards approving grants, planners of meetings, guest lecturers, and visiting professors as well as their personality characteristics. Although tentative, there are indications that the type of information which they transmit tends to be of the "know how" variety concerning apparatus and procedures, the type of information that doesn't appear in the journals.

The concept of the technological gatekeeper is almost identical to that of the scientific troubador. These important individuals seem to take up their activities spontaneously and are capable of bridging the communications gap to bring knowledge from the external environment into the closed internal environment of the organization; they are proficient in the codes of both.

As well, they show other clear characteristics. They are strong performers, contributing more than their colleagues to the work of the organization. They consult with a much larger number of people, including many outside their own specialty. Their creative ability springs from their ability to link the diverse information received in some usable form. They generally have a PhD and work at the level of first line supervision. There are usually strong ties among these individuals within an organization, and these ties help link the different departments together. Frequently, they seem to specialize in a particular type of information, but they can quickly contact other members of their network for needed information or another information source. Despite their obvious value and key function, they are rarely called on informally because of the psychological cost. Other engineers prefer the use of low cost/low value channels, cost being the determinant, not value.

International

Ironically, those same individuals who are unwilling to go beyond a distance of twenty-five years to converse with their colleagues within an organization are highly susceptible to foreign travel.

> By substituting the technology of transportation for that of publication they keep warm the seats of jet planes and commune with each other at small select conferences and seminars throughout the world.

This greater tendency to travel and the cultural patterns which are at its base are reflected in the comments of a number of European scientists to an American colleague:

> You are always on a trip or on the phone. Americans are very mobile and informal. We Europeans write letters and go to meetings, but we are more formal about these things. You Americans, therefore, make more rapid advances and strides in science.

Research Carried Out

Based on the potential value of meetings and the insights concerning individuals who seemed more efficient or effective in acquiring and transmitting information, the

author conducted a program of research on the transfer of scientific and technical information in international meetings. Nine hundred and thirty-three U. S. and Western European scientists, engineers, and managers who attended one of four major international meetings were queried concerning the most important information they acquired and the circumstances surrounding their acquisition of this information.

On the basis of these responses, an effort was made to isolate those characteristics which would serve as an indicator of effectiveness in gaining and utilizing information. Based on the characteristics of the "scientific troubador," "the technological gatekeeper," the information systems of scientists and engineers, all discussed previously, plus a few intuitive deductions, it appeared that the following personal characteristics or experience would be relevant:

1. Age.

2. Previous experience in domestic or international meetings.

3. Education level.

4. Work or study experience in other countries, in terms of total time and number of other countries.

5. Research activity in terms of patents, journal articles and papers read at meetings.

6. Attitudes toward meetings and communication.

7. Self image as an innovator.

The author then defined meeting effectiveness as the ability to acquire information rapidly through informal conversations with others rather than as a part of the formal program. It was presumed that information acquired in this way would be more current or more sensitive. The person acquiring the information would perceive fewer obstacles to the transfer of information. He would make more use of the information more quickly than others and would also transmit it orally to a greater number of individuals. He would follow up the information received in some way--a letter, visit, promise to cooperate, and he would have a wider network of friends and acquaintances.

Polar values of the personal characteristics and attributes were then compared in turn to each of the criteria of meeting effectiveness. For example, individuals who had worked in many countries and individuals who had no foreign experience were compared to see who gained information more quickly. The result was then compared with each of the other personal characteristics and an ordinal ranking established. After these detailed comparisons, an overall ordinal ranking was determined. Age, number of domestic meetings attended, and the simple fact of work or study experience in another country all dropped out of consideration due to their low rankings. The final ranking of those factors considered important and their ordinal score follows in Table 1. A more detailed presentation is included as Appendix A.

TABLE I

Relationship of Personal Characteristics to Meeting Effectiveness

Rank	Personal Characteristic	Overall Ordinal Score (Low score indicates higher standing)
1.	Papers presented at meetings.	25
2.	Journal articles published.	31
3.	No. of countries in which respondent worked or did research.	34
4.	No. of years spent in work or research in other countires.	38
5.	Attitude: I encounter little difficulty communicating my real thoughts to individuals from other countries.	41
6a.	Attitude: I consider myself an innovator.	42
6b.	No. of international meetings attended.	42
7.	No. of patents held.	45
8.	Educational level.	51
9.	Attitude: Differences in attitudes, feelings, sense of humor, etc. effectively block communications with individuals from other countries.	52

Although the data presented here do not show it, the top ranking personal characteristic is also internally consistent. That is, the persons who had presented the most papers were uniformly more effective than those who had presented no papers. This is the only characteristic with this degree of consistency.

As an example, those with lower educational attainments made greater use of information and used it sooner than those with a doctorate. They also maintained greater subsequent contact with the source of their information. Presumably, this shows a greater orientation toward seeking information to solve an existing problem on their part and towards theoretical or conceptual information seeking of those with a doctorate.

As suggested, the number of journal articles published is also a good indicator, but the information explosion has apparently robbed authors of the degree of instant identity and reknown enjoyed by those who present papers.

Another type of research activity considered was that of patents. In this category, it is particularly noteworthy that those who held no patents were generally more successful in acquiring and using information than those with many patents.

Working in another country is not enough in itself. True internationalism seems to spring from work in a number of other countries or from spending considerable time outside one's own country.

Attitudes were highly inconsistent with little logical relationship between attitudes and actual performance. However, there was enough promise to suggest that this method could be refined and used to select the younger individuals who have not had the opportunity to amass the reputation, published work and presentations of others.

These are the findings. Now what are the implications?

Conclusions

The more obvious conclusion for the manager of a research activity is that he can actually gain more information by sending someone to give information--present a paper--than he can by efforts aimed only at collecting information. The literature of the sociology of science has emphasized the psychic rewards and the prestige of giving papers in the scientific value system. This research shows that there are immediate finite concrete rewards of information as well.

Another insight tends to substantiate this conclusion. Those individuals with a large number of patents could be considered the most avid seekers of information. They could also be considered the ones most anxious to convert information to their own use, unwilling to share their knowledge with others. This is strictly hypothetical, and beyond the data collected. However, the data do show that those persons holding many patents fared poorly in the search for information.

But on a broader scale, these findings suggest the need to develop some particular area of special strength. Otherwise, there will be no capability to give information. Although the general rule is subject to some limitations due to commercial development or relationships to other closely held research, you have to give information to get information. It appears to be an illustration of the old adage that "the rich get richer." Or to quote the South American centi-millionaire in The Barefoot Contessa: "To turn $100 into $200, this is work. To turn $1 million into $2 million, this is inevitable." A strong research base in some field or specialty appears to be a pre-requisite to gaining valuable information. Others must want to seek you out because of the potential rewards you are able to give them.

Finally, giving information in the form of presenting a paper appears to be one of the easiest and best means of breaking into the information network of a particular field. It is a means of gaining identity, of establishing ties with others of similar interests, and of circumventing the lags and information search problems of the published literature.

These findings and conclusions reinforce previous studies of the scientific and technical communication systems. In addition, they supplement those studies by illustrating very concrete and practical advantages in utilizing those systems well.

AN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT OF KENT STATE UNIVERSITY: A REPORT OF A PILOT STUDY

John Pacilio, Jr., Ph.D., Kent State University

Introduction

The following is a progress report of a pilot study for a field survey of student and faculty attitudes toward internal communication at Kent State University. The research problem was suggested by Dr. Fay R. Biles, Vice President for Public Affairs and Development at Kent State. The pilot study was designed by Ms. Carole A. Barbato and Mr. William F. Zelen and was conducted as a class term project for the present writer's graduate course entitled, "Seminar in Organizational Communication," during the Winter Quarter 1974.

The study collected information from a survey sample of 177 persons; this sample was composed of 91 faculty members and 86 students randomly selected from the Kent State University name and address list maintained by the organization's Management Information Systems Department. Approximately half of the respondents were interviewed face-to-face (n = 88), either at their home or office, while the remainder (n = 89) were interviewed by telephone. The rationale behind this design will be discussed under the appropriate heading below.

The interview guide employed in this pilot study contained four sections designed to yield the following types of data: (1) demographic (information regarding the respondent), (2) descriptive (information regarding the way the respondent sends and receives messages within the organization), (3) evaluative (attitudes toward the system and its component parts), and finally (4) recommendations (suggestions for improving the internal communication system). The guide contained a total of forty items of various types (e.g., ranking, rating, forced-choice, and open-ended questions).

This report will contain: (1) a statement of the problem, (2) a description of the research procedures, (3) a report of the results obtained, and (4) an interpretation of the results of this pilot study in terms of their implications for future research.

Statement of Problem

As is often the case with pilot studies, the purpose of this study was to determine the practicality and advisability of the research procedures developed for the investigation. More specifically, the pilot study sought to determine the workability of the interviewing guide which was specially designed for this study since most of the other research procedures which were employed had been rather thoroughly tested in a great number of survey research projects. In view of the nature of this report, no attempt will be made to develop the rationale for the study or to review the theoretical and empirical literature consulted by Barbato and Zelen in designing the study. Rather, this report will focus on what they did, how it came out, and what implication those results have for any future investigations of Kent State University's internal communication system.

Procedures

The research procedures employed in the present study were of the sample survey type. Those procedures are probably best discussed under the following headings: (1) sample selection, (2) developing the interviewing guide, (3) training the data collectors, (4) data collection, and (5) data analysis.

Sample Selection

Since the purpose of the pilot study was to determine the workability of the interviewing guide vis-a-vis the members of the university community, the members of that community necessarily represented the parent population for the study. Analysis of the university community revealed the fact that the parent population could be broken into at least four sub-groups: (1) administrators, (2) faculty, (3) students, and (4) non-academic personnel. In view of time, manpower, and other limitations related to the size and importance of the sub-groups, it was decided to limit the pilot survey to a random sampling of the student and faculty

sub-groups. Therefore, a sample of 100 faculty members and 100 students (total n = 200) was drawn from the official University lists using a table of random numbers procedure (Games and Klare, 1967, pp. 485-187). Since there was reason to believe that the official list might contain some problem names (faculty on leave, students who left campus without having their names officially withdrawn, etc.), a fifty name back-up list for each group was also drawn by means of the same random procedures (a decision which proved to be a good one as the data collectors did find it necessary to go to their back-up lists).

Developing the Interviewing Guide

Review of the appropriate body of literature revealed the fact that several studies, both directly and indirectly, related to internal communication at Kent State University had been conducted before or immediately following the May 4, 1970 tragedy (see for example: Goettler and Associates, 1969; Haenle, 1971; Tompkins and Anderson, 1971; Grimmett, 1972; and Silverman, 1972). In addition to these Kent State studies, materials developed by members of the International Communication Association's Communication Audit Committee (of which the present writer is a member) were made available to Barbato and Zelen. Analysis of all of these materials (along with others not mentioned above) revealed the fact that no previously developed instrument could be employed in the present study. Thus, Barbato and Zelen set about developing their own interviewing guide based upon and borrowing from the instruments they had reviewed.

As was noted earlier, the interviewing guide used in the present study contained four sections: (1) demographic, (2) descriptive, (3) evaluative, and (4) recommendations. Each of these sections will be described in turn (a copy of the interviewing guide may be found in Appendix A).

The first (Demographic Data) section of the guide consisted of three questions designed to ascertain the group to which the respondent belonged, the respondent's position within that group, and the number of years the respondent had been at Kent State University. The precise statement of questions used in this section of the guide may be found in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1

Demographic Data Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey

Demographic Data:

1. Are you a (circle one) (A) Faculty Member (B) Student
2. Number of years at present position/class in school _____.
3. Number of years at Kent State University _____.

The second section of the guide required the respondent to describe the ways in which task related messages were sent and received within the organization. The section contained four "ranking" types of items and two open-ended ("free response") items related to these issues. Figure 2 contains the precise statement of the ranking items of the descriptive section of the interviewing guide.

Figure 2

Descriptive Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Ranking Items Only)

Descriptive Section:

This section deals with the ways you send and receive comcunication. The communication we are concerned with deals specifically with your task related activities as a member of the K.S.U. community, as opposed to the communication you send and receive concerning social activities.

4. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of oral messages you send to each during a typical work/school day.
   (a) Administration ____ (c) Students ____
   (b) Faculty ____ (d) Non-Academic Personnel ____

5. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of oral messages you receive from each during a typical work/school day.
   (a) Administration ____ (c) Students ____
   (b) Faculty ____ (d) Non-Academic Personnel ____

6. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of written messages you send to each during a typical work/school day.
   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non-Academic Personnel _____

7. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of written messages you receive from each during a typical work/school day.
   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non-Academic Personnel _____

The "free response" items of the descriptive section of the guide are reproduced in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

Descriptive Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Free Response Items Only)

8. Without using names of specific people, indicate to whom you send most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters.

9. Without using names of specific people, indicate from whom you receive most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters.

The Evaluative section of the interviewing guide required the respondent to: (1) evaluate the amount of task information received on a "forced-choice scale," (2) indicate by means of a "free response" item whatever problems respondent had personally encountered in sending or receiving task messages within the organization, (3) react to twenty-five "Semantic Differential scales" designed (by Shipman, 1973) to evaluate how well the organization was accomplishing its task goals, and (4) list their perception of the five most credible and five least credible sources of information in the University. The "forced-choice scale" used in the guide is reproduced in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4

Evaluative Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Free Response Item Only)

Evaluative Section:

In this section we are concerned with your attitudes toward the KSU internal communication system, as it relates to you in your day-to-day communication regarding job related/ academic matters.

10. How would you evaluate the amount of information you receive regarding your job/academic matters.
    (a) I receive enough information _____
    (b) I receive too much information _____
    (c) I do not receive enough information _____

Figure 5 contains the "free-response" item used in the Evaluative section of the interviewing guide.

Figure 5

Evaluative Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Free Response Item Only)

11. What problems, if any, have you personally experienced in communicating (sending and receiving messages) with the following groups regarding job-related/academic matters:
    (a) Administrators:

    (b) Faculty members:

    (c) Students:

    (d) Non-Academic Personnel

The twenty-five "semantic differential scales" used in the evaluative section of the guide are reproduced in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6

Evaluative Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Semantic Differential Scales Only)

In this section we are concerned with how you feel about the University in relation to accomplishing its goals of teaching the many who want to learn, advancing knowledge, and providing appropriate public service. Think about the university. Do not think about specific people connected with the university. Rank the following concepts on a scale from 1-7 (7 being the ideal). Do you feel the university is:

12.	unskillful	1234567	skillful in accomplishing its task goals
13.	inefficient	1234567	efficient
14.	contemptible	1234567	admirable
15.	unreceptive	1234567	receptive
16.	inexpert	1234567	expert
17.	unqualified	1234567	qualified
18.	not responsible	1234567	responsible
19.	unconcerned	1234567	concerned
20.	not knowledgeable	1234567	knowledgeable
21.	insensitive	1234567	sensitive
22.	not respectable	1234567	respectable
23.	unimpressive	1234567	impressive
24.	impractical	1234567	practical
25.	disloyal	1234567	loyal
26.	inconsiderate	1234567	considerate
27.	unscientific	1234567	scientific
28.	unpleasant	1234567	pleasant
29.	undependable	1234567	dependable
30.	greedy	1234567	not greedy
31.	unfriendly	1234567	friendly
32.	inexperienced	1234567	experienced
33.	unintelligent	1234567	intelligent
34.	remote	1234567	warm
35.	selfish	1234567	unselfish
36.	impatient	1234567	patient

The "free response" item which requests the respondents to list their perceptions of the five most credible and five least credible sources of information within the University is reproduced in Figure 7 below.

Figure 7

Evaluative Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey
(Free Response Credibility Item Only)

37. List the five most credible and five least credible sources of information within the University.

MOST CREDIBLE SOURCES:	LEAST CREDIBLE SOURCES:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The final section of the interviewing guide asked the respondents to indicate any recommendations they might have for improving internal communication in the organization, any additional comments about internal communication they might like to make, and any specific problems they had with the questions in the interview by means of a series of three "free response" items. Those items are reproduced in Figure 8 below.

Figure 8

Recommendations Section of Interviewing Guide
K.S.U. Internal Communication Survey

Recommendations:

In this section we are concerned with your recommendations for improving the internal communication system and any comments you have concerning the questionnaire.

38. What suggestions do you have for improving internal communication at Kent State University?

39. Would you like to make any comments about internal communications which we have not previously discussed?

40. Did you have any specific problems with any of the questions in this interview?

Training the Data Collectors

The data collectors employed in the present study were the previously identified graduate students enrolled in the present writer's course entitled, "Seminar in Organizational Communication" during Winter Quarter 1974. The course was of the "variable credit, variable topic" variety which focused on conducting field research in a complex organization by means of the interviewing method during the quarter in question. Thus, the various assignments in the course were designed to prepare the students to participate in the present study as the major term project for the course.

Data Collection

The method of data collection employed in the present study was the interview. In view of the fact that Zelen was interested in the possibility of a future methodological investigation of various types of interviews, both face-to-face and telephone interviews were employed in this pilot study. Although each of the data collectors were assigned an equal number of subjects per group and an equal number of interviews of each type, one of the data collectors was unable to complete his assignment due to a family emergency. Therefore, the survey sample consisted of 177 persons (of whom 91 were faculty members and 86 were students) rather than 200, and 89 (45 faculty and 44 students) interviews were conducted by telephone with the remaining 88 interviews having been conducted on a face-to-face basis (46 faculty and 42 students) rather than the 50-50-50-50 equal cells which the investigators had planned.

In view of the fact that the data collectors were using an interviewing guide, their task was obviously to get the cooperation of the respondents, collect the data, and thank the respondents for their assistance.

Although the point will be discussed below, it should also be noted at this point that a part of the interviewing guide proved to be unworkable and was dropped out of the data collection procedure after 56 of the 177 interviews had been completed.

Data Analysis

After the interviews had been completed, the data collectors recorded all responses on machine-scoring answer sheets in order that the data could be machine tabulated by

the Examination Aids Center at Kent State University. Data produced by the "free response" items of the interviewing guide necessarily were forced into content categories developed by the data collectors then recorded on the machine-scoring answer sheets. Obviously, the "ranking" and "forced-choice" items presented no recording problem.

The machine tabulation of the answer sheets produced a simple frequency and percentage figure for each of the content categories for each of the items in the interviewing guide. While these tabulations do, in part, represent the data collected in the pilot study, the experience of the data collectors in employing the procedures described to this point represent a highly important set of data which were also analyzed. The results of those analyses will be discussed in the next section of this report.

Results

As was indicated earlier, one of the most important findings of the pilot study was the discovery that one part of the interviewing guide was virtually unworkable and seemed to affect the respondents' willingness to complete the interview. After 56 of the 177 interviews had been completed, the data collectors found that 50 per cent of the respondents had expressed problems in reacting to the section of the interviewing guide which contained the twenty-five semantic differential scales. Since these scales were difficult to present orally and apparently adversely affected half of the respondents who had reacted to them, those twenty-five scales were dropped from the guide at that point.

Frequency and percentage data resulting from the administration of the interviewing guide have been summarized in the form of a series of fifteen tables (one for each item contained in the revised interviewing guide.) Those tables, which may be found in Appendix B, will not be discussed here in view of the fact that they are pretty much self-explanatory and are of limited importance.

The data collectors' experience with the survey procedures was extremely good after the twenty-five semantic differential scales were removed from the interviewing guide. The data collectors reported some informal experimentation with the order in which items on the interviewing guide were presented which seems to suggest

some value in a "free response to forced-choice" sequence of asking questions. The suggested sequency seems to ameliorate the possibility of respondents "parroting" forced-choice alternatives when answering later free response items.

Conclusion

This report has contained: (1) a statement of the problem, (2) a description of the research procedures, and (3) a report of the results of a pilot study for a field survey of student and faculty attitudes toward internal communication at Kent State University. This final section will be concerned with an interpretation of those results in terms of their implications for future research.

Based upon the results of this pilot study, it seems reasonable to conclude that semantic differential scales cannot be as effectively administered orally as they can in written form. Thus, semantic differential scales should probably be reserved for use in written questionnaires.

Since none of the data collectors reported any difficulty in the administration of the ranking and forced-choice items of the guide, it seems reasonable to suggest that those items are workable. Moreover, because of the ease in recording responses, such items may be considered to be highly desirable types of items to be included in future interviewing guides.

The only problem noted with respect to the free response items included in the guide were some reports that respondents may have "parroted-back" some of the ranking and/or forced-choice alternatives in responding to later free response items. Since the extent of this problem is not known, future researchers should seek to determine whether the sequencing of questions in their interviewing guides is affecting responses. The free response followed by forced-choice sequency suggested earlier appears to be one means of ameliorating such problems which might be considered.

Other problems associated with the free response type of item are related to the recording and tabulation of responses. Since these are problems which can be ameliorated by means of electronic equipment and content analysis procedures, they need not be discussed further at this point.

The final implication for future research which results from the pilot study findings has to do with the fact that the content categories produced by free response pilot items may be converted to forced-choice or other limited response types of items in future drafts of the interviewing guide. In some cases, the effect of the pilot free response item was to identify the range of categories which might be used to respond to a given item. Thus, the pilot results should help refine the interviewing guide to be used in future studies, which is, of course, one of the reasons why we conduct pilot studies.

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K.S.U. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION SURVEY

Demographic Data:

1. Are you a (circle one) (A) Faculty Member (B) Student
2. Number of years at present position/class in school _____
3. Number of years at Kent State University _____

Descriptive Section:

This section deals with the ways you send and receive communication. The communication we are concerned with deals specifically with your task related activities as a member of the K.S.U. community, as opposed to the communication you send and receive concerning social activities.

4. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of oral messages you send to each during a typical work/school day.

   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non Academic Personnel _____

5. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of oral messages you receive from each during a typical work/school day.

   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non Academic Personnel _____

6. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of written messages you send to each during a typical work/school day.

   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non Academic Personnel _____

7. Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of written messages you receive from each during a typical work/school day.

   (a) Administration _____ (c) Students _____
   (b) Faculty _____ (d) Non Academic Personnel _____

8. Without using names of specific people, indicate to whom you send most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters.

9. Without using names of specific people, indicate from whom you receive most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters.

Evaluative Section:

In this section we are concerned with your attitudes toward the KSU internal communication system, as it relates to you in your day-to-day communication regarding job related/academic matters.

10. How would you evaluate the amount of information you receive regarding job job/academic matters:
    (a) I receive enough information _____
    (b) I receive too much information _____
    (c) I do not receive enough information _____

11. What problems, if any, have you personally experienced in communicating (sending and receiving messages) with the following groups regarding job-related/academic matters:

    (a) Administrators:

    (b) Faculty members:

    (c) Students:

    (d) Non-Academic Personnel

In this section we are concerned with how you feel about the University in relation to accomplishing its goals of teaching the many who want to learn, advancing knowledge, and providing appropriate public service. Think about the university. Do not think about specific people connected with the university. Rank the following concepts on a scale from 1-7 (7 being the ideal). Do you feel the university is:

12.	unskillful	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	skillful in accomplishing its task goals
13.	inefficient	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	efficient
14.	contemptible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	admirable
15.	unreceptive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	receptive
16.	inexpert	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	expert
17.	unqualified	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	qualified
18.	not responsible	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	responsible
19.	unconcerned	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	concerned
20.	not knowledgeable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	knowledgeable
21.	insensitive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	sensitive
22.	not respectable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	respectable
23.	unimpressive	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	impressive
24.	impractical	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	practical
25.	disloyal	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	loyal
26.	inconsiderate	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	considerate
27.	unscientific	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	scientific
28.	unpleasant	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	pleasant

29.	undependable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	dependable
30.	greedy	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	not greedy
31.	unfriendly	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	friendly
32.	inexperienced	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	experienced
33.	unintelligent	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	intelligent
34.	remote	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	warm
35.	selfish	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	unselfish
36.	impatient	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	patient

37. List the five most credible and five least credible sources of information within the University.

MOST CREDIBLE SOURCES:	LEAST CREDIBLE SOURCES:
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Recommendations:

In this section we are concerned with your recommendations for improving the internal communication system and any comments you have concerning the questionnaire.

38. What suggestions do you have for improving internal communication at Kent State University?

39. Would you like to make any comments about internal communications which we have not previously discussed?

40. Did you have any specific problems with any of the questions in this interview?

THIS COMPLETES OUR INTERVIEW, THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

Type of Interview: _____Face-to-Face _____Telephone

Interviewer Signature: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Approximate length of Interview: _____

APPENDIX B
ITEM ANALYSIS TABLES

TABLE I

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

ITEM: Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of ORAL messages you SEND to each during a typical school day.

Sample	Rank	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(nr)	(n)
FACULTY	1st	3	28	51*	7	2	91
	2nd	17	40*	19	12	3	91
	3rd	29*	14	14	29*	5	91
	4th	33	7	6	38*	7	91
STUDENT	1st	2	10	70*	4	0	86
	2nd	2	56*	11	16	1	86
	3rd	21	20	2	35*	8	86
	4th	50*	0	1	23	12	86
COMBINED	1st	5	38	121*	11	2	177
	2nd	19	96*	30	28	4	177
	3rd	50	34	16	64*	13	177
	4th	83*	7	7	61	19	177

LEGEND

(A) = Administration
(B) = Faculty
(C) = Students
(D) = Non-Academic Personnel
(nr) = no response
(n) = number of subjects in sample
*highest group frequency

TABLE 2

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Rank order the following groups in terms of the number of ORAL messages you RECEIVE from each during a typical day.

Sample	Rank	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(nr)	(n)
FACULTY	1st	6	30	50*	3	2	91
	2nd	14	40*	17	17	3	91
	3rd	31*	16	10	30	4	91
	4th	31	2	12	38*	8	91
STUDENT	1st	4	19	62*	1	0	86
	2nd	3	51*	20	12	0	86
	3rd	25	16	2	35*	8	86
	4th	46*	0	1	28	11	86
COMBINED	1st	10	49	112*	4	2	177
	2nd	17	91*	37	29	3	177
	3rd	56	32	12	65*	12	177
	4th	77*	2	13	66	19	177

LEGEND

(A) = Administration
(B) = Faculty
(C) = Students
(D) = Non-Academic Personnel

(nr) = no response
(n) = number of subjects in sample
*highest group frequency

TABLE 3

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Rank order each of the following groups in terms of the number of WRITTEN messages you SEND to each during a typical school day.

Sample	Rank	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(nr)	(n)
FACULTY	1st	20	37*	21	9	4	91
	2nd	26	30*	17	11	7	91
	3rd	22	15	26	28*	9	91
	4th	15	4	20	42*	10	91
STUDENT	1st	12	41*	19	9	5	86
	2nd	21	20	23*	11	11	86
	3rd	18	14	19	22*	13	86
	4th	23	5	13	31*	14	86
COMBINED	1st	32	78*	40	18	9	177
	2nd	47	50*	40	22	18	177
	3rd	40	29	45*	41	22	177
	4th	38	9	33	73*	24	177

LEGEND

(A) = Administration
(B) = Faculty
(C) = Students
(D) = Non-Academic Personnel
(nr) = no response
(n) = number of subjects in sample
*highest group frequency

TABLE 4

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Rank order each of the following groups in terms of the number of WRITTEN messages you RECEIVE from each during a typical school day.

Sample	Rank	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(nr)	(n)
FACULTY	1st	49*	23	13	4	2	91
	2nd	20	43*	12	14	2	91
	3rd	10	15	33*	29	6	91
	4th	9	6	26	41*	9	91
STUDENT	1st	45*	20	10	8	3	86
	2nd	18	39*	13	11	5	86
	3rd	6	15	36*	20	10	86
	4th	15	8	17	34*	12	86
COMBINED	1st	94*	43	23	12	5	177
	2nd	38	82*	25	25	7	177
	3rd	16	30	68*	47	16	177
	4th	24	14	43	75*	21	177

LEGEND

(A) = Administration
(B) = Faculty
(C) = Students
(D) = Non-Academic Personnel
(nr) = no response
(n) = number of subjects in sample
*highest group frequency

TABLE 5

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Indicate to whom you SEND most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters (up to three responses permitted).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	48	11	59
	%	33.8	9.3	22.7
(B)	f	1	42	43
	%	0.7	35.6	16.5
(C)	f	22	14	36
	%	15.5	11.9	13.9
(D)	f	18	7	25
	%	12.7	5.9	9.6
(E)	f	13	9	22
	%	9.2	7.6	8.5
(F)	f	17	1	18
	%	11.9	0.9	6.7
(G)	f	4	7	11
	%	2.8	5.9	4.2
(tr)	f	142	118	260
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = Chairman/Director (Academic Unit)
(B) = Faculty
(C) = Peers
(D) = Deans
(E) = Chairman/Director (Non-Academic Unit)
(F) = Students
(G) = Administration
(tr) = Total Responses to Item

TABLE 6

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Indicated from whom you RECEIVE most of your information regarding job-related/academic matters (up to three responses permitted).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	48	9	57
	%	32.0	7.2	21.5
(B)	f	18	16	34
	%	12.0	12.8	12.4
(C)	f	4	29	33
	%	2.7	23.2	12.0
(D)	f	7	15	22
	%	4.7	12.0	8.0
(E)	f	12	9	21
	%	8.0	7.2	7.6
(F)	f	12	7	19
	%	8.0	5.6	6.9
(G)	f	11	1	12
	%	7.3	0.8	4.4
(tr)	f	150	125	275
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = Chairman/Director (Academic Unit)
(B) = Peers
(C) = Faculty
(D) = Chairman/Director (Non-Academic)
(E) = Administration
(F) = Deans
(G) = Students
(tr) = Total Responses to Item

TABLE 7

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: How would you evaluate the AMOUNT of information you RECEIVE regarding your job/academic matters (forced-choice).

GROUP		(A)	(B)	(C)	(nr)	(n)
FACULTY	f	58	16	16	1	91
	%	63.7	17.6	17.6	1.1	100.0
STUDENT	f	41	1	44	0	86
	%	47.7	1.2	51.2	0.0	100.0
COMBINED	f	99	17	60	1	177
	%	56.0	9.6	33.9	0.6	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = Enough Information
(B) = Too Much Information
(C) = Not Enough Information
(nr) = No Response
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 8

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Problems in communicating with ADMINISTRATORS regarding job-related/academic matters (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	44	46	90
	%	48.4	53.5	50.9
(B)	f	14	4	18
	%	15.4	4.7	10.2
(C)	f	10	5	15
	%	11.0	5.8	8.5
(D)	f	1	6	7
	%	1.1	7.0	4.0
(E)	f	0	7	7
	%	0.0	8.1	4.0
(F)	f	3	3	6
	%	3.3	3.5	3.4
(G)	f	5	1	6
	%	5.5	1.2	3.4
(nr)	f	0	1	1
	%	0.0	1.2	0.6
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None
(B) = Unresponsive
(C) = Availability
(D) = Run Around
(E) = Message Distortion
(F) = Receive Info too Late/Slow
(G) = Unreceptive (Evaluation/Messages)
(nr) = No Response
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 9

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Problems in communicating with FACULTY regarding job-related/ academic matters (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	64	45	109
	%	70.3	52.3	61.6
(B)	f	8	8	16
	%	8.8	9.3	9.0
(C)	f	1	4	5
	%	1.1	4.7	2.8
(D)	f	3	2	5
	%	3.3	2.3	2.8
(E)	f	3	1	4
	%	3.3	1.2	2.3
(F)	f	1	3	4
	%	1.1	3.5	2.3
(G)	f	2	2	4
	%	2.2	2.3	2.3
(H)	f	2	2	4
	%	2.2	2.3	2.3
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None
(B) = Availability
(C) = Inaccurate
(D) = Message Distortion
(E) = Unresponsive
(F) = Unreceptive (Evaluation/Messages)
(G) = Apathetic
(H) = Lack Common Ground
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 10

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Problems in communicating with STUDENTS regarding job-related/ academic matters (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	55	71	126
	%	60.4	82.6	71.2
(B)	f	11	1	12
	%	12.1	1.2	6.8
(C)	f	4	3	7
	%	4.4	3.5	4.0
(D)	f	4	2	6
	%	4.4	2.3	3.4
(E)	f	6	0	6
	%	6.6	0.0	3.4
(F)	f	3	0	3
	%	3.3	0.0	1.7
(G)	f	2	1	3
	%	2.2	1.2	1.7
(H)	f	1	2	3
	%	1.1	2.3	1.7
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None
(B) = Availability
(C) = Message Distortion
(D) = Other
(E) = Lacks Responsibility
(F) = Role Relationship not Understood
(G) = Lack Common Ground
(H) = Too Busy
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 11

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Problems in communicating with NON-ACADEMIC PERSONNEL regarding job-related/academic matters (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	81	63	144
	%	89.0	73.3	81.4
(B)	f	1	3	4
	%	1.1	3.5	2.3
(C)	f	2	1	3
	%	2.2	1.2	1.7
(D)	f	0	3	3
	%	0.0	3.5	1.7
(E)	f	0	3	3
	%	0.0	3.5	1.7
(F)	f	1	2	3
	%	1.1	2.3	1.7
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None
(B) = Lack Common Ground
(C) = Unreceptive
(D) = Run Around
(E) = Too Busy
(F) = Message Distortion
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 12

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: MOST CREDIBLE sources of information within the university (up to five responses.)

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	20	48	68
	%	6.7	16.8	11.6
(B)	f	29	32	61
	%	9.7	11.2	10.5
(C)	f	16	42	58
	%	5.4	14.7	9.9
(D)	f	42	14	56
	%	14.9	4.9	9.6
(E)	f	18	33	51
	%	6.0	11.5	8.7
(F)	f	30	14	44
	%	10.1	4.9	7.5
(tr)	f	298	286	584
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = Faculty
(B) = Peers
(C) = Daily Kent Stater
(D) = Chairman/Director (Academic Unit)
(E) = Other
(F) = Deans
(tr) = Total Responses to Item

TABLE 13

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: LEAST CREDIBLE sources of information within the University (up to five responses).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	46	22	68
	%	21.9	13.2	18.0
(B)	f	15	20	35
	%	7.1	12.0	9.3
(C)	f	22	11	33
	%	10.4	6.6	8.8
(D)	f	17	15	32
	%	8.1	9.0	8.5
(E)	f	20	6	26
	%	9.5	3.6	6.9
(F)	f	15	11	26
	%	7.1	6.6	6.9
(G)	f	5	20	25
	%	2.3	12.0	6.6
(tr)	f	210	167	377
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = Daily State Kenter
(B) = Don't Know/None
(C) = Students
(D) = Administration
(E) = President
(F) = Other
(G) = Peers
(tr) = Total Responses to Item

TABLE 14

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Suggestions for IMPROVING internal communication (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	13	21	34
	%	14.3	24.4	19.2
(B)	f	12	10	22
	%	13.2	11.6	12.4
(C)	f	18	1	19
	%	19.8	1.2	10.7
(D)	f	11	6	17
	%	12.1	7.0	9.6
(E)	f	4	12	16
	%	4.4	14.0	9.1
(nr)	f	2	4	6
	%	2.2	4.7	3.4
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None/Don't Know
(B) = Other
(C) = Create a Centralized Source of Information
(D) = Establish Communication Format
(E) = More Face-to-Face Communication
(nr) = No Response
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

TABLE 15

Kent State University
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AUDIT RESULTS

Item: Additional COMMENTS about internal communication (first response).

		Group		
		FACULTY	STUDENT	COMBINED
(A)	f	48	59	107
	%	52.8	68.6	60.5
(B)	f	11	9	20
	%	12.1	10.5	11.3
(C)	f	4	3	7
	%	4.4	3.5	4.0
(D)	f	6	1	7
	%	6.6	1.2	4.0
(E)	f	3	3	6
	%	3.3	3.3	3.4
(F)	f	5	1	6
	%	5.5	1.2	3.4
(nr)	f	4	4	8
	%	4.4	4.7	4.5
(n)	f	91	86	177
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

LEGEND

(A) = None/Don't Know
(B) = Other
(C) = Feel Isolated
(D) = Reinstate FYI
(E) = Wonder about Other Divisions
(F) = Too Much Red Tape
(nr) = No Response
(n) = Number of Subjects in Sample

COMMENTS ON COMMUNICATIONS PAPERS

C. Ray Gullett, University of Texas at San Antonio

Effective organization communication is a subject that is bound up in the issues of organization climate and employee motivation. This is the position of Professor Costley's paper, and is one with which most of us would agree.

The viewpoint that trends in approaches to motivation and thus communication are moving in the direction of "Theory Y" or "System 4" approaches is one that can be supported by experiences in many organizations. Job enrichment programs in such well known firms as American Telephone and Telegraph and Texas Instruments are cases in point. The growth of programs of management by objectives in both business and non-business organizations provides further examples.

However, I believe that there is danger in taking a "one best way" approach to problems of motivation and communication. Taking a contingency view of organizations, we can note that the phychosocial system is only one of several subsystems that make up what we call an organization. Technology, formal structure, goals and values, and the managerial subsystems must also be considered. In addition, the environmental suprasystem influences and is influenced by the organization.

The point of these observations is that under certain kinds of environmental configurations, an open, System 4, approach seems to be optimal. These are the organic organizations described by such researchers as Burns and Stalker, and Lawrence and Lorsch. In other sorts of environmental configurations, a more structured and less participative relationship may be optimal.

I hasten to add that this is not an "either-or" kind of choice. Many gradations can exist between highly closed and highly open systems. And the motivational and communication approaches must be tailored to a particular organization and its environment.

But in any case I see no reason why open and honest communication cannot be implemented whatever the type of organization. For example, some of Professor Costley's suggestions would appear to be applicable in more mechanistic organizations. The "open line" grievance procedures that have been in existence in unionized companies in modified form for years provide one illustration. Morale survey and analysis and job orientation and training are further examples.

The approach to improving communication in the organization investigated by Professor Roe seems to reinforce this viewpoint. Here, the organization could probably be classified as on the mechanistic end of the continuum. Accordingly, improvements centered on clearer and more frequent downward communication flows, more precise job definition, and the encouragement to employees to ask questions of management. No where was their emphasis on job enrichment or participative management. Nevertheless, both morale and performance improved.

Thus the key to effective communication relates to the nature of the total organization and its environment. Communication systems must be compatible with the makeup of the entire organization.

With regard to the Peters paper, it would be interesting to know how effective these opinion leaders and centers of information on the outside of the organization are in the transfer of information on the inside. Research on the cosmopolitan-local dichotomy of organization members indicates that they may not be as effective in their internal relationships. Professionally oriented Ph.D.'s, for example, tend to identify less with the organization and more with their peers in their profession. Study of how these professional information sources might be used most effectively within the organization would thus appear to be useful.

PART 3

INSIGHT INTO THE TEACHING OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION: WORKSHOP

STUDENT RESEARCH IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS

MAKING IT RELEVANT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Marie Dalton, College of the Mainland

College of the Mainland is a two-year college whose purpose is to provide educational services that are peculiar to an open-door, public comprehensive community college and that are tailored to the needs of its community and the economy of the service area. There are 1605 students enrolled. Of these students, approximately 40 take Business Communications each semester. On the first day of class, these students are given a student document with behaviorally specified objectives. The broad general objectives of the course are for the students

1) To survey general communication theory to determine its role in the business organization.

2) To apply this theory to business writing.

3) To acquire enough knowledge of reports to be able to obtain data, to organize content, to make use of good techniques of report writing, and to use visual communication in reports.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how the last objective is achieved.

Procedure

Usually during the second or third week of class, students are given a list of topics from which to choose one to research as a group. Groups are usually kept around 8-12 students in size. When class size permits, two or three groups in one section are formed. The list of topics is composed of problems suggested by the Division of Business faculty as problems which need to be studied; in addition, students may suggest their own topics. Faculty problems usually concern the need for information from the Texas City-La Marque/Galveston County-Harris County communities in an effort to update courses and programs. For instance, topics suggested for the fall semester included

1) Identify the different types of management training programs currently being utilized by business and industry in the Texas City, La Marque and Galveston area.

2) Obtain information from credit bureaus in county, out of county and out of state about their industrial and personal uses.

3) Determine how much business research is being done in the Texas City, Galveston and La Marque areas today, how this research is used and whether it is shared with area schools.

4) Determine the most common method of figuring time cards in the community (exact minutes, quarter hour, least-pay, etc); and determine who figures the time cards, a bookkeeper or the employee.

5) Compare College of the Mainland's secretarial curriculum with that of other community and junior colleges.

6) Determine the method of bookkeeping most used by local businesses: computer, posting machine, or manual bookkeeping.

Numbers 1 and 2 were chosen by the two sections of Business Communications 231.

Besides the primary goal of helping students learn to do original research, a secondary goal is to help them become more aware of group dynamics. As a group, they elect a chairperson, decide on the topic, decide on the order in which they will serve as secretary. (Each student does at least once except the chairperson; an agenda and minutes are prepared by the secretary for each group meeting.) Two written progress reports are submitted by each student analyzing project progress and group dynamics. As a group, the students delegate responsibility for the cover letter, questionnaire, and mailing list. When responses start coming in, subgroups analyze various aspects of the report and create visual aids; as a whole, the group writes and submits a formal report as discussed in Raymond Lesikar's Business Communication - Theory and Application. After the report is completed, each student writes a news release about the survey; the best written news release is sent along with a group picture to the local newspapers.

Results

What makes this method of research especially beneficial is that it is relevant to three levels of participants.

The students benefit because it is almost always their first opportunity to do original research; there is no "going to the library and looking it up." They are assured that the problem is an important one; they realize that their information must be correct and their conclusions and recommendations valid since this report will be used by the Division of Business and/or the College.

The Division of Business and the College benefit in that both receive additional input in making decisions about programs, course offerings and course content.

The community benefits; by being able to make known their needs, thoughts and feelings, community members are assured that College of the Mainland is better able to meet their evolving and/or continual educational needs.

Examples

Topics surveyed during the last three years are listed in the appendix.

Some of the ways that this objective has proven relevant can be shown by analyzing this past summer's topic: Compare the course content and teaching methods of College of the Mainland's business mathematics course with that of other community/junior/senior colleges.

Business Mathematics 131 at College of the Mainland had been operating as a completely individualized, self-paced course using the Keller Method for two semesters. While in theory this was great, in practice there were problems; the major ones were the low success rate and the amount of time necessary to complete the minimum objectives. Many of the students in Business Communications had just completed Business Mathematics or were taking it at the same time and thus were interested in seeing whether they "had been overworked." The survey showed how course content varied from school to school. From information gleaned from the survey, the Business Mathematics instructor made up another questionnaire for Business Division faculty to complete; this one had to do with C, B and A objectives. (In other words, which units should be learned by all business students as achievement of minimum course objectives, which should count as outstanding

achievement, and which should count as superior achievement in Business Mathematics.) The course was then revised to incorporate these changes. It appears that College of the Mainland is now turning out students who know the essentials of mathematics applied to business and who are able to learn them within a reasonable time. The Business Communications students who conducted the survey are, of course, following with great interest to see how their recommendations succeed.

ATTACHMENT

Topics Surveyed In
Business Communications 231
College of the Mainland

Survey to Determine Entry-Level Skills for Certain Jobs in Galveston County

Survey of Attitudes and Procedures in Hiring Paraprofessionals in Galveston and Harris Counties

Accounting Program Survey at College of the Mainland

Survey of Duplication Techniques

Survey of the Possibility of Local Employers Allowing Employees to Attend a Self-Improvement Course at College of the Mainland

Survey Study of Non-Business Students at College of the Mainland

Survey to Determine Utilization of Office Machines in Galveston County

Skills, Traits, and Knowledges Necessary for Mid-Managers, Accounting Clerks, and Secretaries

Study to Determine the Types of Computers Business Concerns Use in Harris-Galveston Counties

A Study of Helpfulness of College of the Mainland Associate Degree

A Study of the Current Responsibilities for Selecting Supplies and/or Equipment

Grading System in High Schools in the College of the Mainland District

Most Widely Used Filing Systems in Galveston County

Survey to Determine Utilization of Accounting Machines in Galveston County

Employment Opportunities in Galveston County for Data Processing Graduates

Survey to Determine Student Reaction to College of the Mainland

A Survey of Correction Methods Used by Galveston County Businesses

Follow-up Study of Former Cooperative Training Students at College of the Mainland

Job Opportunities for the Physically Handicapped in Galveston County

Survey of Business Courses and Instructional Machines Used in High Schools in the College of the Mainland District

Undergraduate Programs in Business Administration

A Survey of Child Day Care Facilities in Harris and Galveston Counties

Survey to Determine Telephone Communication Problems in Business and Industry

Comparison of College of the Mainland's Business Law Course with That of Other Schools (Content and Technique)

On-the-Job Clerical Training for the Beginning Office Worker

Recognition of Honor Students

Comparison of College of the Mainland's Accounting Program with That of Other Schools (Content and Technique)

Spring 1974 Topics:

Survey to Determine High School Seniors' Interest in Cooperative Education at College of the Mainland (9 schools)

Survey to Determine Employer Interest in Hiring Cooperative Education Students in Areas Other Than Business

Effect of the Energy Crisis on Local Businesses

SELECTED CRITICAL AREAS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Zelda Mosley

Introduction

Professional literature in business, in research, and in business research stresses two major points: the importance of carefully stating a problem to be solved and the how-to techniques of solution. So the mystery remains--what is a problem?

Empathize, then, with a business communication teacher who has the following two of four objectives to fulfill for and with about ninety sophomores in a core course with no required prerequisites.

> By conducting and reporting an analytical research study, the student will be able to apply logical principles of language to the solutions of business problems.
>
> By collecting, analyzing, synthesizing, and interpreting data, the student will be able to objectively present and defend solutions to business problems.[1]

The responsibility of guiding undergraduate students through an analytical research process requires a set of uniform instructions rigid enough to insure the validity of each completed study and flexible enough to insure the validity of each completed study and flexible enough to accommodate a variety of study types. Preparation for planning the course sequence, however, necessitates a series of decisions that must complement each other or the instructor will begin and end the semester in a state of total confusion.

Three critical areas are identifiable, critical because they are turning points attended with danger or risk: (1) problem identification, (2) instrument design, and (3) the oral defense.

Problem Identification

What is a problem?

> Frequently, the definition of the problem is assumed to be obvious and is taken for granted. Solving the problem is assumed to present the real difficulty, and usually claims our best efforts.[2]

And this inspirational statement:

> No set procedures, certainly none of the standard outlines for reporting writing, are adequate for problem definition. That the process is not reducible to rules-of-thumb, however, does not mean it has to be pure catch-as-catch can.[3]

Several books and journals later, you discover that in attempting to define a problem, you are cautioned to sharply differentiate between a problem and a purpose on the one hand, and to use the terms synonymously on the other. "The purpose of a study is generally understood as the reason why the study has been undertaken; whereas the problem is what the scholar specifically hopes to solve."[4] Recognizing this semantic dilemma, another author states:

> Your work on a report logically begins with your efforts to get the problem (purpose) clearly in mind. As elementary and basic as this step may appear to be, all too often it is the cause of the failure of a report to achieve its mission.[5]

There is agreement, though, that if you do not find out what a problem is, the research will be ". . . a waste of time,"[6] and ". . . a formless mass of information . . . or even . . . complete frustration for the investigator."[7]

An arbitrary definition of a problem can be used to establish standards for a research base and to enable the students to separate the problem from its symptoms. It can also be used as a guideline for determining other major segments of the research study (the purpose, scope, limitations, design, term definitions, and questionnaire and interview content) and act as a safety check so that the recommendations are parallel to the problem as originally stated.

A problem is a barrier that stands between a business (agency, organization, or institution) and its specific goal. The use of a specific goal helps insure that this is an actual rather than a hypothetical problem

and that is is narrow enough in scope to be completed within a semester. Since the course raison d'etre is instruction in the precision and objectivity of data treatment required by the scientific approach, a well-done "mini-study" is preferred to a two- or three-fold purpose requiring the expertise of an experienced research team.

The more specific the goal, the simpler the problem statement. Assume, for example, that XYZ Restaurant serves meals from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. During the rush period from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., service is slow, tables are not cleaned quickly after use, the warm food is cold, the cold drinks are warm, customer lines grow longer, tempers flare, the employee turnover ratio is high, and the owners have estimated a pilferage rate of 7.2 percent of their meats. Does XYZ have a problem or set of problems to be solved? The answer to that depends upon the specific goals.

The slow service is a subjective judgment--how slow is slow? If the specific goal is to serve 85 percent of the customers within seven minutes after the order is placed and 42 percent of the customers are being served within seven minutes after the order is placed, then the specific goal is not being met and XYZ Restaurant has a problem. The clearing of used tables is a problem only if a specific goal concerning minutes, number of items moved, or job description of employee responsible for that duty is stated. The food and drinks, if eaten and drunk, may be only an inconvenience to the customer unless he refuses to pay for them. Customer lines are annoying to those standing in them, but as long as the number served reaches or surpasses the restaurant's goal, this constitutes no problem. If allowances for turnover exceed the actual rate and adjustments for pilferage are added to customer food prices, neither do these present a problem. On the other hand, should there be no allowance or adjustment made for turnover and pilferage, these are both problems according to the arbitrary definition.

Once the specific goal has been verified and the problem stated, the purpose becomes evident. From the prior example, the guidelines are set. The business is XYZ Restaurant; its specific goal is to serve 85 percent of the customers within seven minutes after the order is placed. The problem is that 42 percent of the customers are being served within seven minutes after the order is placed. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to determine how XYZ Restaurant can increase by 43 percentage points the number of customers served within seven minutes after the order is placed. The scope is taken from units of the purpose: personnel, work stations, restaurant layout, partial self-service, food flow, and other factors.

The final test of a goal is that it is measurable in terms of numerical units. Dissuade the researcher from using such words and phrases as better, efficient, effective, profitable, higher, or "to improve," "to justify," "to evaluate" (unless a quantitative restriction is added).

Instrument Design

The instruments (questionnaires and interview schedules) support the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. An error in the question carries all the way through the study. An invalid question means that the answer to that question is invalid, that the conclusion resulting from synthesis of that finding is invalid, and that the recommendation based on an interpretation of that conclusion is invalid. Again, the researcher is faced with a critical point as he designs the data collection instruments.

Three areas of attention are content, sources, and technique: what to ask, whom to ask, and how to ask it. It is suggested that a worksheet be made of the first two items and that the instruments themselves be designed directly from this worksheet.

Content is determined by the scope and limitations. To insure that a complete list of questions is used, each limitation will suggest the information needed to solve the problem. Since the researcher is permitted no input, he must ask questions to elicit the data needed. A numbered list of these questions is written on the worksheet. Any topic outside the scope of the study may not be included.

The source for each question is limited to that person officially responsible for knowing that answer. If more than one person qualifies as a source, each will be asked the same question. While it is a temptation to ask the person who knows rather than the one officially responsible for knowing, the result may be a correct answer that is invalid.

Make a second column on the worksheet for the sources. Place the title of the person or persons officially responsible for each answer beside the number that corresponds to each question.

To complete the worksheet, draw a box for each different source and place within the box numbers of those questions to be asked of that person. This informs the researcher of the number of instruments to be designed (one type for each box) and exactly what questions are to be included on each

one. With content and sources resolved by the worksheet, the techniques of how to ask a valid question are the remaining considerations.

After an appropriate heading (type of instrument, title, location, and date), the background data are established. One three-part question is used to verify that the person is currently affiliated with, or employed by, the business; his official title; and that he is officially responsible for knowing the answers to the questions.

Techniques for asking valid questions generally fall under at least five categories: item pattern, intervals, ambiguity, parallelism, and subjective degree.

Since the first part of the background data is the only place where a yes-no reply is permitted, others must have a series of answers to be checked (with "Other, please specify" at the end of each series). The researcher must be able to identify an objective pattern for the placement of each item to defend against the challenge of leading the respondent. The order can be ascending, descending, alphabetic, or any other. Given the pattern and the items, the order is considered objective if the listing is identical to the researcher's independent of who arranges them. As an example, consider a question requiring an answer for color preference. Red will be first if the pattern is the rainbow from left to right. Blue, however, will be first if the colors are alphabetized.

Intervals, used for quantitative answers, are to be equal, complete, and separate. To be equal, the range must be the same. If the first unit is from one to four, containing four numbers, the next is to be from five to eight. To be complete, the respondent must be able to check from none to larger than the last number (and asked to specify). When you sample a population of a selected group of people between the ages of 18 and 25 years, for example, the intervals that begin at 18 and end at 25 do not permit the respondent outside the population to indicate that he was included by mistake, that he has had a birthday since the selection, or his birth certificate newly acquired indicates his age to be different than the one he originally reported. Overlapping intervals invalidate the answers because the researcher cannot determine the accurate grouping of responses. When obtaining information about annual salary ranges, for instance, included intervals of $1,000 to $2,000 and $2,000 to $3,000 let the respondent truthfully check two different places if his annual salary is $2,000. Data from these inaccurate answers cannot then be analyzed to support the findings.

Ambiguity in a question results in two or more different classifications of answers where one can be analyzed. "Do you drink coffee, orange juice, or milk for breakfast?" is likely to evoke both the yes-sometimes-no type of answer and the coffee-orange juice-milk type of response. Findings based on these invalid data cannot be used in the study.

Parallelism specifies that units to be checked are of the same generic pattern. A listing of automobile ownership that includes Buick, coupe, Ford, Impala, and sportscar is invalid because items represent a brand, two car types, a company, and a model. Should this information be needed to solve the problem, a four-part question must be designed.

The subjective degree, to be minimized in basic research, is acceptable when five or more degrees of judgment are available to respondents. Rather than ask whether a person likes a new regulation, ask to what degree he approves of the new regulation, quote the regulation, and form at least five units to be checked: strongly approve, approve, neutral, disapprove, and strongly disapprove (plus "Other, please specify," for unanticipated responses). This measure, similar to computing average rankings, enables the recording of both a sharper judgment and no judgment at all.

Questions are considered valid if they provide the answers needed (it does not matter what brand of tea the respondent drinks if you need to know the brand he buys) and if they are free of bias, error, and subjectivity.

The Oral Defense

The process is completed by the researcher's ability to objectively defend the study where valid and to graciously accept and correct errors identified by challengers. The limits of the oral defense need to be as scrupulously defined as the scope of the study was to minimize uncertainty and value judgments.

The defense can be divided into two major areas: the presentation and the forum. The rules governing the session are to be given before it begins, and challengers informed of the types of questions to be asked.

The researcher presents the synopsis or abstract: the purpose, major findings, conclusions, and design. It enhances the information flow to use visual aids. At the end of this presentation, the forum is opened, and the researcher accepts questions and challenges.

The defender, restricted to selected queries, is penalized if he answers questions outside the scope, those previously asked, and those that are either multiple, subjective, or confusing. Instead, he is to thank the challenger for the question and indicate why he is not permitted to answer it.

The researcher is to thank the challenger for pointing out a research error if he cannot defend against a charge of having used fallacious reasoning and inaccurate reporting.

Fallacious reasoning detected during the defense usually involves post hoc, the non sequitur, and incorrect synthesis to formulate conclusions. The inexperienced questioner may ignore these errors because he is familiar with their being accepted in formal and informal usage.

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc implies that because A happened before B, A caused B to happen. While more easily identified when superstition is concerned (not throwing spilled salt over your shoulder causes bad luck), it appears more elusive when applied to another situation. It is commonplace to learn the seven causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer and heart disease, that Herbert Hoover caused the depression, or that decreasing the speed limit to 55 m.p.h. has reduced the accident rate. Recommendations must be carefully stated to prevent the researcher from suggesting that they will solve the problem.

The non sequitur, too, is a widely used tool of persuasion unacceptable in research. The second statement is not necessarily true because the first one is. "John Doe received the Ph.D. degree; he must really know his field." Assumptions here are that he received the degree in his field, that there is such a field, that knowledge rather than cunning and good luck enabled him to graduate, that his teachers were competent, that the degree program was designed to provide certain exposure to something, ad infinitum. Being alert to the non sequitur during the defense will prevent erroneous statements to the effect that a student, with an IQ of 120, talent for quantitative computations, and high degree of abstract reasoning ability, should successfully complete the accounting sequence. It sounds correct, but it is not, to say that since XYZ has been in business since 1850, it has given more service to the public than ABC, established in 1950.

Incorrect synthesis of findings results in an incorrect, unsupported conclusion. Combine these two findings: of eighty women sampled, (1) seventy have children and

(2) fifty have a son. Conclusion: more women have a son that have a daughter. This is obviously invalid because a concept (daughters) not in the finding is in the conclusion. It may be that all seventy mothers have daughters. Or another type snythesized from the study findings of the same eighty women: (1) forty women graduated from high school and (2) twenty women received a B.S. degree. Conclusion: twice as many women graduated from high school as graduated from college. Invalid again--the number of women who graduated from college is not in the finding, and there is no evidence to identify the number who may have received other degrees at graduation--the B.A., the B.B.A., and others. Once you judge this triple check of conclusions to be "nit-picking," consider the import placed on statements that begin "Studies show that . . ." or "Research in the field indicates that . . ."

Inaccurate reporting includes bias and subjectivity. Bias is shown both in distortion of facts included and by opposing facts not included. It is expected that the beginning researcher will set out to "prove" that he knows the problem solution before the study is conducted. He is likely, therefore, to select data to support his tentative conclusion and omit those contrary to the informal hypothesis. Subjectivity is evident in the study listing conclusions that cannot be verified because terms are used that reflect the researcher's views. To state that a program is good, a policy is respected, or a procedure is beneficial is making a judgment rather than formulating a conclusion.

Summary

Problem identification, instrument design, and the oral defense are three critical areas of the research process. Professional literature concerning these areas is more definitive for the natural sciences than for the social sciences. The business communication teachers responsible for guiding students through research studies must give instructions that result in reports that are objectively supported by factual evidence.

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PART 4

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION IN MARKETING

COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH IN PUBLIC POLICY FOR MARKETING

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While we all have observed that research on the communication impact of advertising is essential, my recent experiences at the Commission have convinced me that research input is more important now than it ever has been. I would like to share with you today some ideas I have on why research is needed now more urgently than ever before, and my views as to how that research effort can be most beneficially utilized. I will restrict my observations initially to the use of research in the advertising communication process and the product labeling information process. These two areas represent changing thrusts of FTC interest.

Advertising Remedies and Communication Research

The FTC, as you are all aware, has as a major responsibility the prosecution of individuals and businesses engaged in unfair and deceptive trade practices. Deceptive advertising claims have long been held to be unfair under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act. From the beginning, the Commission has wrestled with the problem of determining whether an ad is deceptive. Is an ad which is literally true, but which leads consumers to make a false conclusion about the product deceptive? How many consumers must be misled by an ad before the alleged deception is considered widespread enough to require FTC action? If an advertisement is felt to be deceptive, is a cease and desist order sufficient to remedy the deception? These questions each require an intimate knowledge of mass communications, for the effect of an advertisement cannot be determined without appreciating the impact of the mass media communication on consumers.

Because of the difficulty of measuring the impact of an advertisement on consumers, the FTC Act gave authority to the Commissioners to determine for themselves whether an advertisement is deceptive or not. If the Commissioners rule that an advertisement is deceptive, a respondent has

no recourse. The Commissioners must determine only whether an advertisement has the "tendency or capacity to deceive.". The statute was written this broadly to allow the Commissioners great flexibility in determining which ads are deceptive. The wording of the statute also allowed the Commissioners to rule some ads deceptive without having to prove that consumers were actually misled by the advertisement. This breadth of statute may possibly be attributed to the desire to prohibit a respondent from arguing that some consumers are always misled by an ad but most consumers were not misled by our ad. The Commission must demonstrate only that an advertisement could have misled some consumers.

Little attention has been directed in the past to the question of how many consumers might have been misled by an alleged deceptive ad. If an ad has misled consumers, that ad should be prohibited. The Commission's power to prohibit deceptive advertisements, as you know, is severely limited. The Commissioners in the past have only been able to issue a cease and desist order which prohibits a firm from advertising in a deceptive way. This limited legal remedy has proved in many cases to be ineffective. Since it may take more than three years to fully litigate a case, the ad campaigns on which Commission complaints were based are often obsolete. The remedy to cease and desist running those ads in the future, is of limited deterrent value to advertisers. It is said that advertisers may have a strategy of running questionable ads because enforcement will not be swift enough to present any problems.

A corrective advertising remedy has been proposed. If an advertisement has been demonstrated to mislead consumers say by changing their attitudes based on a misrepresentation in the ad, and if the misrepresentation has been maintained in consumers' minds over a period of time, then it has been argued that the advertiser has the responsibility to correct the deception by running advertisements which dissuade consumers from the mistaken belief. While the cease and desist order is limited because it can only stop a wrongdoing, a corrective advertising remedy has the ability to set right a wrong which is the result of the deceptive ad. The purpose of the corrective advertising remedy is to go beyond the injunction on the deceptive ad, and to reinstate the consumer's attitude to a pre-deception state.

While the merits of a corrective advertisement remedy may be argued at great length, it is my purpose here to focus on the research needs inherent in a corrective advertising remedy which go beyond the research needs of a cease and

desist order. The cease and desist order requires only that an advertisement be proved to potentially mislead consumers. The corrective advertising remedy, however, appears to require the proof that the deception had an impact on attitudes and beliefs, and that the impact is enduring. If the impact of a deception is not sustained over time, it is argued that a cease and desist order is sufficient to eradicate the impact of the deception. The appropriateness of the corrective advertising remedy therefore, rests on the accurate assessment of the residual impact of the alleged deceptive advertisement. This accurate assessment of a residual effect adds another research requirement to the case. The role of communications research in corrective advertising cases becomes much more substantial than in cease and desist order cases.

Once the level of residual effect has been assessed, it remains for the Commission attorneys to propose the specifics of the corrective advertisement. Commission attorneys have found themselves in an unfamiliar role; they have become advertising executives. The standard remedy for corrective advertisement has been to require the firm to commit 25% of its advertising budget for one year to the correction of the advertising deception. Obviously, this remedy will have very different effects with different products and different levels of residual effect.

One solution to the attorney's dilemma is to require the firm to do whatever is necessary to correct the residual attitude change. This remedy has been used in the Hawaiian Punch case. Hawaiian Punch was found guilty of misleading consumers into thinking that Hawaiian Punch contained a larger quantity of fruit juices than it does. The corrective advertising remedy required Hawaiian Punch to run ads affirmatively disclosing that Hawaiian Punch has not less than 10% natural fruit juices. After one year the ads must continually be run until they could prove that 67% of all potential fruit drink purchasers believe that Hawaiian Punch contains 20% or less natural fruit juices. The approach used to the corrective advertising remedy in the Hawaiian Punch case is very desirable in that it takes the Commission out of the advertising agency role; a role for which the Commission is singularly unsuited. Communications researchers are very badly needed, however, in the assessment of the degree to which the firm's corrective advertisements do remove the

deceptive impact. At the present time, the Commission is relying more and more heavily upon survey research data to deal with these questions. While mass communications researchers are far from being able to precisely measure the impact of advertising, your research skills and techniques allow you greater insight than those of Commission attorneys. Survey research is being used more and more heavily than it has been in the past and will continue to play a major role in advertising deception cases.

The Role of Public Interest in Deceptive Practices

The Commission has over the years been criticized because the cases they take on appear to be trivial in nature. The Commission has taken the position that it is a law enforcement agency responsible for the prosecution of statute violations involving unfair and deceptive practices. Critics argue that many of the cases brought, while legally involving a violation, are rather trivial in nature with respect to the need for enforcement of other cases. A distinction which is often overlooked is that the Commission is not franchised to bring cases where deception is involved unless the alleged deception is in the public interest. That is to say, beyond a practice being proven deceptive, it must also be proven that the deception injures the public interest.

I have discussed above the need for the communications researcher's perspective on the marketing process in the determination of deception. It is also of critical importance to have the communications researcher's perspective on the extent of public injury or harm which is a consequency of the alleged deception. There may exist cases where deception is a necessary part of selling the product which results in consumer satisfaction. For an extreme example, consider the selling of a religious cloth with alleged mystical healing powers. The very act of imputing mystical powers to a wool blanket clearly involves deception to the extent that the claims cannot be substantiated in a scientific way. However, if consumers are deceived that the cloth has power, they may in fact receive healing benefit from the cloth. In this case, if the Commission were to prevent the deception, the Commission would be prohibiting some consumers from receiving a real benefit. It seems to me that consumer and communications researchers are particularly well equipped to assess the extent of consumer injury in a given case and to measure the degree of public interest involved. This is particularly critical since all four of the present FTC Commissioners have predominantly legal backgrounds. It is understandable that their interest and concern is on legal violations and generally less on consumer injury.

Product Information Disclosure Programs

Another area which is enjoying considerable attention at the Commission is the disclosure of product information on labels and packages. In this area the Commission, as well as the FDA and the Product Safety Commission, are proceeding as if more information is better. Consumers have a right to know, according to Kennedy's Consumer Bill of Rights, and the Commission is developing program guides to standardize the types of information available to consumers about product ingredients. Programs are well under way in nutritional labeling of cereals, ingredients labeling of detergents, and octane ratings of gasoline. The important questions about product labeling, it seems to me, involve how useful this information is to consumers. There is some tentative evidence that information which overloads the consumer may lead to sub-optimum choices. Consumer and communications researchers need to investigate this phenomenon in more detail so that product labeling programs can be evaluated. We frankly know very little about how consumers process the information they receive from the mass media, their friends, and in-store shopping trips.

It is clear that the changing role of the FTC's activities increases the need for input from communications researchers. Your research efforts can have a large impact on important decisions being presently made at the Commission. The National Science Foundation's Research on National Needs Program is particularly interested in funding some programs which have a direct public policy consequence. As a matter of routine, NFS grant proposals under this program are reviewed by commissions like the FTC to determine the impact of the proposed research on public policy. If you are interested in this kind of funding, you can contact me at the Commission or more directly, George Brosseau at the National Science Foundation in Washington.