

Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VIII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

8. Create a communication strategy that fosters change and innovation.
 - 8.1. Develop a solution that will solve an organizational issue and meet the needs of the people involved.
 - 8.2. Compile a report that includes potential audience analysis, a purposeful message, and a type of channel that could be used for feedback.

Course/Unit Learning Outcomes	Learning Activity
8	Unit Lesson Unit VIII Presentation Article: "Human roles and communication strategies of corporate identity performance: Enhancing global image, leadership, and legacy of a high-tech leader" Article: "Stepping up to the plate: Developing an effective business communication strategy" Unit VIII Mini Project
8.1	Unit Lesson Article: "Stepping up to the plate: Developing an effective business communication strategy" Unit VIII Presentation Unit VIII Mini Project
8.2	Unit Lesson Article: "Stepping up to the plate: Developing an effective business communication strategy" Unit VIII Presentation Unit VIII Mini Project

Reading Assignment

In order to access the following resources, click the links below:

Law, S., & Verville, J. (2011). Human roles and communication strategies of corporate identity performance: Enhancing global image, leadership, and legacy of a high-tech leader. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 15(2), 17-32. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/docview/915080810?accountid=33337>

Neal, K. (2010). Stepping up to the plate: Developing an effective business communication strategy. *Information Management Journal*, 44(2), 38-41. Retrieved from <https://libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/libraryresources.columbiasouthern.edu/docview/227765267?accountid=33337>

Click [here](#) to view the Unit VIII Presentation.

Click [here](#) to view the Unit VIII Presentation transcript.

Unit Lesson

Introduction

Part of the focus of the case study in the Unit VII Lesson centered on how Tim Cook created a communication strategy for Apple that fosters change and innovation in the technical industry. Although it was not the primary focus of Unit VII, the ideas overlapped during the discussion of how Cook addressed the FBI's legal request to create software that would unlock the iPhone encryption and put their customers' data at risk.

This is a theme that has run through the course from the start; none of these ideas exist in isolation. Each unit lesson, each group of readings, and each assignment has been designed to work together. What has been discussed in each unit has a direct and immediate connection to the other seven.

The focus of this unit, therefore, is not the "final" element but, rather, is one part of the whole process of organizational communication.

Understanding and Analyzing Business Communication Situations

In the modern business environment, organizations can experience a distinctive competitive advantage when employees strategically manage a corporate communications strategy (Law & Verville, 2011). The best way to approach any organizational communication situation is to be conscious of the context in which it occurs and the options that are available. Develop a solution that will both solve the organizational issue and meet the needs of the people involved.

In "Stepping Up to the Plate: Developing an Effective Business Strategy," Ken Neal (2010) recommends using strategic and persuasive business techniques to create a communication strategy that fosters change and innovation in an organization. Neal describes a three-step process, which has been outlined below:

1. Show how the recommended change will benefit the personal needs of executives.
2. Create a level of professional standing within the organization.
3. Decide how to construct a message in the most persuasive manner for the audience.

Neal (2010) focuses on influencing one's superiors in the organization, but it is important to know what exactly is at stake in the situation for the entire organization and who will be affected. An employee should think about his or her own personal needs, fellow employees, supervisors, and anyone associated with the company. The message will be most effective if the sender thinks of the entire organizational context and the larger context of shareholders, customers, and regulators.

Neal (2010) recommends communicating strategically: analyzing the audience, being purposeful in the message, and listening to feedback. The first task is audience analysis, which involves determining how much the audience knows about the topic and how they are likely to respond to the message. This leads into being purposeful in how the message is constructed: What must this message do to solve the organizational issue, and what information does it need to include? Finally, with feedback, the sender can learn what he or she needs to do to build support for the message and learn any objections to the information by different members/segments of the audience.

Neal (2010) provides an example of an employee suggesting that his company implement a records retention schedule:

1. *What am I trying to achieve?* The employee wants the senior management in the organization to approve a new schedule for records retention.
2. *How will my audience react to what I am trying to achieve?* The executives do not believe this is an important issue for the organization at the current time.
3. *Will my message be resisted?* The company has other priorities that demand time and resources.
4. *What do I know about my audience that will help me tailor my message?* Senior management does not want the company to be legally liable for failing to be compliant and meet government regulations. To demonstrate the importance of the proposal, examples will be used from other companies that did not have adequate records retention systems.

In the scenario, Neal (2010) points out that the records manager was able to put together a business case that cost \$10,000 but saved the company four million to five million dollars in fines by focusing his message on the need for security. The records manager was able to foster change and innovation in his department because he had the communication skills to “sell” the new records retention schedule program.

Case Study: How Microsoft Created a Communication Strategy that Fosters Change and Innovation

In “Human Roles and Communication Strategies of Corporate Identity Performance: Enhancing Global Image, Leadership, and Legacy of a High-Tech Leader,” Sweet Law and Jacques Verville (2011) discuss the way that corporations establish their identities through strategic communication and codes of conduct. The authors focus on Microsoft’s Unlimited Potential website and the communication strategies that the company utilizes. Communication experts Balmer and Gray explain in the article that creating a communication strategy for managing the identity of an organization can create a competitive advantage (as cited in Law & Verville, 2011).

In order to function within the process, the message needs to be clear, complete, and correct. It has to save the readers’ time and build goodwill. The Unlimited Potential website has a neat, orderly, and user-friendly interface with access to videos, transcripts, news articles, press releases, and blog entries. The company solicits feedback from visitors through social media, such as Twitter (Law & Verville, 2011). This strategy offers an organized approach to the organization’s “collective voice” and helps to maintain Microsoft’s image, reputation, and identity (Law & Verville, 2011).

The setup of the website fulfills Neal’s (2010) recommended communication strategy of determining what the audience needs, creating a purposeful message, and listening to feedback. The change and innovation comes from some of the projects that Microsoft’s Unlimited Potential program is trying to fund.

One example Law and Verville (2011) discuss is a blog-style entry about a Microsoft employee’s experience with iCafes in China and the impact that Microsoft’s shared access strategy can have on the nation. Although the iCafe PCs have advanced software and a web service infrastructure in place, people in China are not using the iCafes for social and economic opportunity. Instead, they are using the shared computers to play online games, such as World of Warcraft, or to stream movies.

The breakdown of the information in the blog-type entry fits Neal’s (2010) categories as well:

1. *What am I trying to achieve?* The PCs are economic and educational tools that are not being used to their potential. Right now, people use the iCafe PCs for social activities. Adding elements, such as skill training and education, will be part of the strategy (Law & Verville, 2011).
2. *How will my audience react to what I am trying to achieve?* A large market already exists for the social aspect of the iCafe PCs in China. According to a report in Euromonitor, 300 million people already use iCafes. Each iCafe in China holds, on average, just over 100 PCs (Law & Verville, 2011).
3. *Will my message be resisted?* There is a potential for cultural backlash in China because of the social aspect already associated with the iCafes: Certain parents may not want their daughters to visit the iCafes to learn business software in an atmosphere where others are gaming or watching movies. In addition, iCafe owners may not want to give up revenue from their established customer base to promote business training and education. Incentives for the owners would have to compensate for this loss and potential alienation of their core customers (Law & Verville, 2011).
4. *What do I know about my audience that will help me tailor my message?* Unemployment is an issue in China. A Microsoft employee in China, Nigel Burton, explains that approximately 400 million citizens of China have relocated from the countryside into the cities over the last 20 years. This shift from an agrarian lifestyle to one where people depend upon jobs in manufacturing and construction has created difficulties because of the global recession. With less call for manufactured goods, more people are losing their jobs in manufacturing. This recession also has decreased the need for new construction. The Chinese government views iCafes as a potential asset to retrain the workforce, and the government has requested aid from companies such as Microsoft (Law & Verville, 2011).

It is important to note that this information is not being presented by employees simply to corporate executives; this scenario and justification are being laid out for any interested individuals who read the website. As Law and Verville (2011) explain, Microsoft’s Unlimited Potential website is probably the first of its kind to link the corporate identity and performance to both philanthropic and business goals in this manner. Each blog entry, each video, and each press release is designed to highlight the organization’s

communication strategy, but it also shows how the employees are engaged in the process of creating and maintaining a corporate identity through communication. The stories about iCafes in China and bringing technical solutions to non-electrified classrooms in Africa indicate the way the company puts its employees, partners, and potential customers in the middle of its operations, and the company fosters global change and innovation.

References

- Law, S., & Verville, J. (2011). Human roles and communication strategies of corporate identity performance: Enhancing global image, leadership, and legacy of a high-tech leader. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 15(2), 17-32.
- Neal, K. (2010). Stepping up to the plate: Developing an effective business communication strategy. *Information Management Journal*, 44(2), 38-41.

Learning Activities (Nongraded)

Nongraded Learning Activities are provided to aid students in their course of study. You do not have to submit them. If you have questions, contact your instructor for further guidance and information.

Apply What You Have Learned

In your current (or past) place of employment, reflect on any projects within your company that has fostered change and innovation. How did the company communicate that change to their employees, to their customers, or to their stakeholders or partners?