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THE BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS NEEDS AND ATTITUDES OF
SELECTED MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL ,

by

Judith Hylton Skjerseth

Bachelor of Science

A Thesis Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Master of Science in Education Degree)

(Department of Education)
in the Graduate School
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Origin of the Problem

"Although different businesses deal in different processes and products, they hold language in common."¹ This language, or business communication, has in recent years attained great magnitude and importance in the business world. The leading writers on management and business organization express their convictions that good communication is not only desirable but essential to a well-administered and successful business enterprise.

Communication should not be considered merely as a technique of management; it is much more than that. "Communication is the way management gets its job done."² The manager's ability to function effectively--to think and to reason and to pass judgment, to perceive and discern and evaluate--are all limited or facilitated by what has been communicated to him. At the same time, employees know the manager and function with him only by what and how he communicates to them.

Thus, communication is management, and as such is deserving of the emphasis, examination, appraisal, and attempted improvement currently under way. The legion of industrial, private, governmental,

¹Mary C. Bromage, Writing for Business (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. vi.

²American Management Association, Effective Communication on the Job (New York: American Management Association, 1963), p. 9.

and academic literature, discussion, and research presently being undertaken gives testimony of this emphasis. This study will hopefully provide further analysis and examination of this area of business communications.

Statement of the Problem

This study was made to determine the business communications needs and attitudes of selected middle management personnel as possible criteria for determining content of the business communication curriculum. To accomplish the major purpose of the study, an effort was made to examine these specific elements of the problem:

1. What are the problem areas of business writing in industry?
2. What is the nature of business communications in industry and how much time do managers spend in communicating?
3. What is the formal business communication training of industrial middle management personnel?
4. What are the suggested areas of remedial communication training for industry?
5. Is the subject matter presently included in the business communication curriculum useful, pertinent, and applicable in industry?
6. Which subject areas should be included in the content of business communication courses on the university level?

Historical Background of the Problem

Since man has engaged in business enterprise, he has sought to accomplish his goals through communication. Supervisors "communicated" with workers in building the pyramids; medieval craftsmen had patterns

of communication with their apprentices; Columbus had verbal jousts with his crews, and so on. Just when and where the first business writing took place is, of course, not known; nor would such information be of any real significance if it were available. It is noteworthy that we have annual reports dating from the 1850's in addition to several other business report forms. From inception the role of business communications has followed closely the growth of organized activity. Thus the trend of our modern society toward industrial giants and complex business organizations has vastly increased the need for business communications.

The first popular treatment of communication to come to the attention of the businessman was that of Dale Carnegie, whose writings and courses achieved nationwide popularity in the 1920's and 1930's. Holding out exciting promises of success in business through the development of wondrous powers of speech, memory, "personality," etc. the Carnegie courses have drawn thousands of hopefuls from a generation of businessmen. Conceding the possible usefulness of the Carnegie "therapy" for some people, professionals in the field of communication have tended to regard such approaches as superficial "gimmickery." Nevertheless, in the mind of the American businessman, Dale Carnegie was probably the first popular figure to link communication skill with managerial success.³

While a few sporadic communications publications appeared in the 1930's and early 1940's, "little systematic attention was given by either plant managers or by professors to the unique problems of communication in industry, until about the time of World War II."⁴ Davis, writing in 1957, could say that "Ten years ago the typical supervisor in industry did not use the word 'communication,' and he did not worry

³W. Charles Redding and George A. Sanborn, Business and Industrial Communication (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 5.

⁴Ibid., p. 30.

about communicating with his personnel."⁵ And McCaffrey speculated in 1958 in his Foreword to Redfield's book that concern with communication, on the part of the average businessman, "goes back not more than twenty-five years and perhaps less."⁶ Thus, the interest, concern, and impact of communication in industry is a recent development, but a well-justified one in view of the scope and importance of this area.

Importance of the Study

The scope of business communications is an interesting and rather staggering consideration to the researcher in this field. Most administrators in most business and industrial organizations spend at least 75 per cent of their time communicating, and not infrequently as much as 95 per cent of their time communicating to others and being communicated to. We may safely infer from these figures that any improvement in the administrator's ability to communicate or receive communication would in fact be an improvement in his ability to administer. The ability to communicate and to be communicated to, is the most used, and the most usable--hence the most valuable--ability any administrator may exercise in his job.⁷

Concern about the cost of organization-related communication

⁵Keith Davis, Human Relations in Business (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1957), p. 228.

⁶Charles E. Redfield, Communication in Management, rev. ed. (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), p. v.

⁷Lee O. Thayer, Administrative Communication (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1961), p. 3.

in organizations is fairly recent but highly relevant in this cost-conscious age. This concern has led to some arresting discoveries about the cost of business communication.

"It behooves a firm to devote a great deal of attention to communication. One reason is that most companies probably spend more money and more manhours on communication--and get less from it per dollar spent--than on any other single activity."⁸ One estimate of the cost of administrative communication was that one-fourth of all money paid out by U.S. companies for salaries in 1953--\$71 billion--went for paper work.⁹ A later estimate of the magnitude of administrative communication by Robert A. Shiff was that three-quarters of a million words--in the form of reports, letters, memos, etc.--are piled atop the typical corporation president's desk every month.¹⁰ This means that the typical corporation president has to spend a minimum of five hours of each day just reading these reports. In terms of cost, this means that about half of every corporation president's salary goes for his reading of this written material. And in many companies, lesser administrators are even more burdened with daily reading and writing. In the same report, it was estimated that these same typical corporation presidents spend about 85 per cent of the remaining time talking to other organization administrators. From

⁸Manley Howe Jones, Executive Decision Making (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1957), p. 174.

⁹Dun's Review and Modern Industry, September, 1954, p. 8.

¹⁰Robert A. Shiff, "Presidents and Paperwork," Dun's Review and Modern Industry, April, 1959, pp. 45-49.

this, it is simple to conclude again that administration is communication.

One of the major direct expenditures for communication in many organizations is for written communications to employees. It has been estimated that U.S. companies spend in excess of \$500 million annually for this one type of administrative communication.¹¹

The growing interest in communication as a business problem has occasioned an annual expenditure of over \$112 million on publications devoted to "communicating."¹²

In 1949, the cost of preparing and mailing the average business letter was 75 cents.¹³ By 1958, the cost had risen to \$1.50 a letter.¹⁴ The cost today is estimated at about \$1.70 per letter.¹⁵ One may compute the cost to an organization of just the letters it sends by simply estimating the average daily mailing. A cost of \$1.60 has been estimated for each written message prepared by each employee in a typical industrial organization. Again, the total cost of a firm's written communications could be computed by knowing approximately how many such messages are originated each day in a typical organization.

Communication does, as Jones said, get a larger slice of the

¹¹Thayer, p. 10.

¹²American Management Association, p. 14.

¹³Robert R. Aurner, Effective Business English, 3d ed. (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1949), p. 300.

¹⁴Robert R. Aurner, Effective Communication in Business (Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Co., 1958), p. 24.

¹⁵J. H. Menning and C. W. Wilkinson, Writing Business Letters (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1960), p. 2.

cost dollar than any other single activity within an organization. These figures, of course, say nothing about the effectiveness, the efficiency, or the quality of the communication. Nevertheless, on a cost basis alone the improvement of communication skills is of great concern to management.

The following quotations are a few of many that illustrate the industrial preoccupation and concern with business communication.

The manager has a specific tool: information. He does not "handle" people; he motivates, guides, organizes people to do their own work. His tool--his only tool--to do all this is the spoken or written word or the language of numbers. No matter whether the manager's job is engineering, accounting or selling, his effectiveness depends on his ability to listen and to read, on his ability to speak and to write. He needs skill in getting his thinking across to other people as well as skill in finding out what other people are after.--Peter Drucker¹⁶

In almost any field you can name, the men who achieve the greatest eminence are the men best able to communicate their ideas to others.--Ford Vice-President Malcolm L. Denise¹⁷

The biggest untapped source of net profits for American business lies in the sprawling, edgeless area of written communication where waste cries out for management action.--Langley C. Keyes¹⁸

In matters of promotion, and other things being equal, the man who can write has a significant edge on the man who cannot write. He is more valuable to the organization. This is one of the facts of business life.--Robert N. Hilbert¹⁹

¹⁶Peter F. Drucker, The Practice of Management (New York: Harper & Bros., 1954), p. 346.

¹⁷Nation's Business, March, 1960, p. 103.

¹⁸Langley Carleton Keyes, "Profits in Prose," Harvard Business Review, Jan.-Feb. 1961, p. 105.

¹⁹Robert N. Hilbert, "Executives Must Write," The ABWA Bulletin, March, 1957, p. 15.

It is entirely possible to view an organization as an elaborate system for gathering, evaluating, recombining, and disseminating information.

It is not surprising, in these terms, that the effectiveness of an organization with respect to the achievement of its goals should be so closely related to its effectiveness in handling information. In an enterprise whose success hinges upon the coordination of the efforts of all its members, the managers depend completely upon the quality, the amount, and the rate at which relevant information reaches them. The rest of the organization, in turn, depends upon the efficiency with which the managers can deal with this information and reach conclusions and decisions.

This line of reasoning leads us to the belief that communication is not a secondary or derived aspect of organization--a "helper" of the other and presumably more basic functions. Rather, it is the essence of organized activity and is the basic process out of which all other functions derive. The goals an organization selects, the methods it applies, the effectiveness with which it improves its own procedures--all these hinge upon the quality and the availability of the information in the system.--Bavelas and Barrett²⁰

Significance of the Study

Since the collegiate schools of business have as their purpose the education of managers for business, they should endeavor to make this the best and most applicable education possible. In order to teach that which is most necessary and applicable in the area of business communications, we must determine the nature and application of business communications in industry. This study attempts to provide such information. This study also attempts to provide the possible content for remedial communication training for those who have already completed their formal education, but feel the desire or necessity for further training in business communications. This study should thus

²⁰Alex Bavelas and Dermot Barrett, "An Experimental Approach to Organizational Communication," Personnel, March, 1951, p. 368.

be of significance to those in education and industry who are interested and involved in business communications.

Delimitations

The subjects selected for this study are all those participants in the Southern Illinois University Development Program for Middle Management from its inception in September, 1963, through June, 1968.

The Southern Illinois University Development Program for Middle Management is presently conducted by the Technical and Adult Education Division in cooperation with the Business Division, Edwardsville Campus, Southern Illinois University. The program is organized as two sequential courses which begin in October and end in April. The first course examines the fundamentals of management and meets for ten three-hour sessions. The second course examines business conditions and the manager and also meets for ten three-hour sessions.

A businessman who operates his own firm may nominate himself for the program. All other nominations are made by the companies employing the managers. In terms of formal education, the program has no prerequisites for admission. However, business firms are encouraged to screen their own prospective candidates and recommend for admission only those candidates who (1) have completed a reasonable period of successful performance with their company and (2) have demonstrated a desire to participate in the process of management development. Admission is limited to those carrying middle management appointments. The companies bear the cost of the program for their

participants.²¹

The program is now conducted at The Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville Campus, and all of the participants work in the greater St. Louis area. The middle management participants were chosen as the population for this study because of their geographic proximity and because they offer an accessible and good cross section of industrial middle management. It was also the feeling that their demonstrated interest in education and managerial development would make them exceptionally receptive and perceptive in answering the questionnaire. The period of time covered by the study was July, 1966, to July, 1968.

Procedures

Sources.--A canvass of current literature as well as of doctoral dissertations and master's theses was made in order to review studies which dealt with business communications in industry. The studies completed by Arensman at Indiana University in 1955, The Dictation Problems of Business Executives²²; by West at Southern California in 1957, An Analysis of Selected Programs Conducted by Management in Correspondence Improvement²³; and by Knapper at the State University of Iowa in

²¹Personal interview with Mr. E. R. Casstevens, Supervisor, Technical and Adult Education, Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, Illinois on July 25, 1966.

²²Ray William Arensman, The Dictation Problems of Business Executives, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1955.

²³Edna A. West, An Analysis of Selected Programs Conducted by Management in Correspondence Improvement, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 1957.

1961, Written Communication: A Critical Analysis of the Writings of Business Correspondents²⁴ were especially relevant. In addition, the literature and textbooks in the field of business communication provided much information. A detailed review of the pertinent literature is included in Chapter II.

Considerable help and consultation was given by several academic and industrial sources. The administration and Advisory Committee of the Middle Management Development Program gave many helpful suggestions and directions for the study. Faculty members in Management and in Business Writing at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, were also consulted.

Preparation of the questionnaire.--Data for the study were obtained from a questionnaire sent to all participants in the Middle Management Development Program. According to Smith, "Questionnaires should be sent only to those who would have reason to be able to give valid answers to the questions."²⁵ These participants all work and communicate as middle management in industry.

A mail questionnaire was selected as the instrument for obtaining data. According to Koos, a questionnaire rightly used is a proper means of securing information.²⁶ The use of interviews or

²⁴Arno Franklin Knapper, Written Communication: A Critical Analysis of the Writings of Business Correspondents, unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1961.

²⁵Henry Lester Smith, Educational Research, Principles and Practices (Bloomington, Ind.: Educational Publications, 1944), p. 181.

²⁶Leonard V. Koos, The Questionnaire in Education (New York: Macmillan Co., 1928), p. 149.

observations was not feasible because of the length of the question desired, the inaccessibility and lack of time of the participants, and the geographic dispersion of the participants within the greater St. Louis area.

In addition, it was desired that the respondents not feel the pressure of time or presence of the interviewer in completing the questionnaire, but rather that they complete it at their own time and convenience. As Smith has stated, "the purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain the responses and reactions of a large number of individuals who could not possibly be interviewed personally within as short a time as should be used."²⁷

The questionnaire was designed to obtain data from the participants concerning their training, experiences, problems, attitudes, and analysis of business communications in their job. The questionnaire was constructed and submitted by the author to fellow members of the Business Education Research Class in July, 1966 for criticism. After revision, the questionnaire was submitted to the Administration of the Management Development Program and to several Southern Illinois University faculty members for criticism. It was again revised.

As a test for clarity and completeness, the questionnaire was administered to five industrial middle managers. On the basis of their responses, the questionnaire was again revised. Replies from the pilot group are not included in the tabulations since these individuals were not part of the sample.

²⁷Smith, p. 181.

Contents of the questionnaire.--The questionnaire was constructed to obtain information concerning several aspects of business communications in the industrial situation. Of specific interest were: (1) the amount and nature of business writing; (2) the amount and nature of business reading; (3) the amount and nature of formal business communication training during and since school; (4) the areas of difficulty in business writing in industry; and (5) the areas of instruction needed in business communications. Questions which might influence or prejudice the answers to other questions were separated and arranged in the most favorable order for objective reply.

The questionnaire was designed for the most part for ease and rapidity of response. In some questions, however, unstructured responses were required in an effort to get free responses from those answering the questionnaire. It was believed that when an answer is suggested, as with structured items, the respondent checks the response which seems to be most appropriate. The item may actually have been given little thought. In attempting to avoid this type of response, the respondent was required to reflect upon the answers before replying. Although this type of response reduces the total number of like replies to any one item, it is believed that the value of the free suggestions of the individuals is more important in these questions.

Administration of the questionnaire.--The questionnaire was mailed to the 159 members of the sample on May 1, 1968. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and requesting co-operation was enclosed with the questionnaire along with a stamped, addressed envelope. (Copies of the questionnaire and the accompanying letter

appear in the Appendix as Appendix A and B.) Of these 159, 5 were returned by the post office as address unknown; and 89 (55.97 per cent) of the questionnaires were returned by the participants.

On June 11, 1968, a second letter (see Appendix C) was sent to the remaining 65 participants along with another copy of the questionnaire with an envelope. Of these 65, 2 were returned as address unknown; and 27 (41.54 per cent) were returned. Thus, a total of 116 (72.96 per cent) of the 159 participants returned their questionnaires.

A work sheet was set up and used to tabulate the data from the various elements of the questionnaire.

Limitations

This study was limited to data secured from the participants of the Southern Illinois University Middle Management Development Program. No attempt was made to explore the business communications experiences and attitudes of all managers in business or even of all middle management. To conduct such a study would be so large, so expensive, and so unwieldy that its implementation would be virtually impossible.

Using the participants in the Middle Management Program limited the study to a restricted group. Nevertheless, it is felt that this group is representative of middle management since the participants have a variety of education, positions, and experience.

The study was limited to information which could be secured by means of a questionnaire. Although different responses might have been obtained had the interview or observation techniques been used, an attempt was made to present questions which were sufficiently

objective so that the personal bias of the respondents was reduced to a minimum.

This study does not attempt to inquire into, or to propose, productivity standards in writing.

This study is not concerned with solving all the ills of business communications; this would indeed be a formidable task. It does attempt, however, to determine and analyze some of the problem areas with the view of possible preventive or remedial instruction.

Definition of Terms Used

Communication.--Communication is any means of transferring information from one person to another.

Business Communication.--Business Communication is any transfer of information found in a business organization. Business Communication also refers to the entire area of business transfer of information, both written and oral.

Middle Management.--Middle Management includes those positions held by intermediate or junior executives--executives with considerable responsibility who are in line for eventual advancement to top management positions. These men are department heads or supervisors of important segments of the company's activities. Examples of middle-management executives are the purchasing agent, head of traffic and transportation, production control superintendent, works manager, department store buyers, or office managers.

Organization of the Study

This chapter has shown the origin of the problem, identification of the problem, the scope of the study, the procedure used, the

limitations of the study, and the importance of the study. In Chapter II, the findings of research studies which contributed data relevant to this study are presented and pertinent literature relating to business communications in industry is reviewed. The presentation and analysis of the data appear in Chapter III. Chapter IV contains the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on the data obtained.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The first section of this chapter presents a review of research dealing with business communication in industry; the second section deals with research concerning the business communication curriculum; the third section deals with literature relating to the application and practice of business communication in industry and its relation to curriculum.

Research Dealing with Business Communication in Industry

Three significant studies have been completed in this area. The Arensman²⁸ study involved the identification of dictation problems, the discovery, and the appraisal of dictation practices, ideas, suggestions, solutions, and points of view pertaining to the solution of those problems.

The Arensman study revealed:

1. The dictation problems are closely related to the attitudes and personalities of the dictators and/or to the dictation competencies of the dictators.
2. Executives are often indifferent to their dictation problems and practices.
3. Many executives are overly fastidious or meticulous about their dictated messages.

²⁸Arensman.

4. Problems sometimes arise because dictators have feelings of inferiority or timidity about their dictation abilities.

5. Many of the dictation problems of executives are related to their lack of knowledge of business communication or to their lack of information about business procedures and practices.

6. The practices and points of view pertaining to dictation problems concern the organization of the dictation task, the planning of the dictation, the mechanics and effectiveness of the written expression, the company environment for dictation, the recording and transcription process, and the relations between the dictator and the reader.

Arensman drew the following conclusions:

1. The process of dictation is both complex and complicated and involves many problems.

2. Most dictation problems pertain to the dictators themselves; a few are concerned with the conditions under which dictation takes place.

3. The problems of dictators frequently revolve around attitudes, points of view, personality traits, work habits, knowledge, and skills.

4. Dictation problems can be resolved primarily through raising the executive level of competency in communication in general and in dictation in particular.

5. The level of competency can be raised by education and training at both the college and the in-service levels.

In her study of 134 companies throughout the United States,

West²⁹ found that:

1. Businessmen were less concerned with the grammatical deficiencies of their employees than with their lack of ability to express ideas effectively in writing.

2. Only 4 per cent of the executives indicated school curriculums adequately met their writing needs.

3. The majority of instructors in the training programs were company employees.

4. Businessmen recommended that effective school training in the fundamentals of writing begin in the early years of schooling and that extensive training be given in the upper grades.

5. Businessmen suggested that college instructors encourage less formality in letter writing and less emphasis on grammatical syntax.

6. All levels of management participated in these training programs.

7. Three-fourths of the respondents indicated their training programs were very helpful.

8. Businesses have their own training programs because employees requested more training.

9. The data indicated that businesses placed a predominant emphasis on the human-relations aspects of letter writing in their correspondence-improvement training programs.

West concluded that:

²⁹West.

1. While these company training programs were no doubt helpful, the recommendations of businessmen suggested immediate curriculum revision in the schools to meet the writing needs of modern business.

2. Effective human relations were more important to the business executives than the mere grammatical correctness of letters.

3. The study indicated a need for a greater degree of active cooperation between business and education; business and education working together can do an infinitely better job than either can do working alone.

4. Educators can be assured of the cooperation of businessmen in promoting closer liaison between education and business.

The Knapper³⁰ study, which used as its population writers in the insurance industry, involved the identification of writing deficiencies and the attempt to determine factors and personal qualities related to competence in business writing. Knapper found that:

1. There is relatively little difference in English competence between the writers who participated in the study and senior students in typical liberal arts colleges.

2. On the whole, the participating writers in the study were adequate writers, though certainly not outstanding.

3. Most of the writing done by the participating companies was done by college graduates.

4. On the average, the writers spent less than three-eighths of their working day writing.

³⁰Knapper.

5. The writers considered the problems of selecting the best words to fit the situation and of using grammar and punctuation correctly as their chief problems in writing.

Knapper drew the following conclusions:

1. The various factors investigated in this study did not correlate significantly to provide worthwhile tools of predicting either English or writing performance.

2. The business writing courses taken by the writers who participated in this study provided little, if any, benefit to them either in English or in writing.

3. The writers' self-appraisals of writing assets and writing liabilities provided no significant patterns of relationships with either English competence or writing performance.

4. The writers' self-concepts as writers were not indicative of their writing performances.

5. If teachers are to help students become better writers, their assistance must include many more things than English usage, spelling, and vocabulary.

Research Concerning Business Communication Curriculum

Clark³¹ in his study attempted to resolve some of the basic issues in the teaching of business writing so that evaluative criteria for basic written business communication programs at the collegiate level could be developed. Through a review of articles appearing in the ABWA Bulletin for the last ten years (1950-60), tentative issues

³¹Orolyn Clark, Evaluative Criteria for a Collegiate Program in Basic Written Business Communication, unpublished master's thesis, University of California, 1961.

in the teaching of business writing courses were identified. These issues were worded in question form and submitted to a "jury of experts." After the questionnaire had been revised to incorporate the suggestions made by the "jury of experts," it was sent to a "jury of authorities" who were asked to give a judgment on each of the issues.

Clark found that:

1. Business letter writing and business report writing should be offered as separate courses.
2. Upper division of the collegiate program should be the lowest level at which the basic program in written business communication is offered.
3. An introduction to the communication process should be part of the basic written business communication program.
4. An introduction to the study of semantics should be included in the basic written business communication program.
5. The study of written business communication should be concerned with those business methods, policies, principles, and procedures necessary to write business communiques.
6. Human and public relations principles should be included in the study of written business communications.
7. English fundamentals should be taught only as the need arises in the study of business writing.
8. Readability studies should be included in the study of written business communication.
9. Report writing should be required for all business students.
10. Either the general principles approach or a combination of

the general principles and report-type approaches should be used to teach report writing.

11. One of the assignments in report writing should include a long formal report.

12. Students should be required to write at least one impromptu report in class.

13. Research techniques should be covered in the study of report writing.

14. Primary, secondary, and instructor-supplied data should all be used in the report writing unit.

15. Writing in the third person should be introduced in report writing.

16. The construction and explanation of charts, tables, illustrations, and other graphic aids should be taught in report writing.

17. Annual reports should be covered in the study of report writing.

18. Synopsis writing should be included in the study of report writing.

19. Problem solving and logical thinking should plan a major role in teaching report writing.

20. Letter writing should be required for all business students.

21. A combination of the general principles and the letter-type approaches should be used to teach letter writing.

22. Dictation practice should be included in the study of letter writing.

23. Impromptu class writing assignments should be given in

letter writing.

Literature Relating to Business Communications

Sigband points out the necessity for developing a communications program in our curriculum which is pertinent in this age. "All of the specialized areas of knowledge have a greater need for effective communications today than ever before. And it seems to me that the time will not be too distant when we will recognize that the ability to communicate effectively will be as important in the scheme of collegiate academic training as the exposure of the student to his specialized field of study."³² Sigband proposes that communication be an area of concentration and as such be 15-20 hours in every business student's curriculum.

White puts much of the blame for our business writing predicament back on management. "Writing, like any other task, requires a favorable environment for good results." Management should set and maintain writing standards on the job.³³

Brennan points out the necessity for upgrading our curriculum to make our course content more industry-oriented.³⁴

Janis calls for the implementation of a business communication

³²Norman B. Sigband, "Other Worlds to Conquer," The Journal of Business Communication, March, 1965, p. 31.

³³Myron L. White, "How Badly Does Management Want Good Business Writing," The Journal of Business Communication, March, 1966, p. 17.

³⁴Lawrence D. Brennan, "Upgrading our Classroom Approach," The Journal of Business Communication, March, 1966, p. 53.

course which is "broad in scope, scientifically oriented, and intellectually demanding."³⁵

³⁵J. Harold Janis, "Written Communication in an Upgraded Curriculum," The Journal of Business Communication, October, 1965, p. 2.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the data secured from the 116 responses to the mail questionnaire which was discussed in Chapter I and which is appended to this study as Appendix A. The questions are discussed below in the order in which they appear on the questionnaire.

Question 1 - Name

In accordance with an agreement with the study participants, the names of the respondents will remain confidential.

Question 2 - Amount of working time spent in writing

The amount of daily working time which the 116 respondents ordinarily spent in writing ranged from a high of 5 hours to a low of half an hour. Table I shows the distribution of this range. The most frequent response, 2 hours, was made by 28 (24.13 per cent) of the respondents. The mean was 2.01 hours.

Question 3 - Percentage distribution of total writing time

The respondents were given four possible categories for the percentage distribution of the direction of their total writing time at work: writing to those at higher levels in their company; to those at the same level in their company; to those at lower levels in their company; and to those outside of their company.

TABLE I

DAILY WORKING TIME SPENT IN WRITING

Hours	No. of Responses	Per Cent*
5	2	1.72
4½	1	.86
4	11	9.48
3½	4	3.44
3	7	6.03
2½	10	8.62
2	28	24.13
1½	21	18.10
1	21	18.10
½	11	9.48

*Based on 116 total responses
 Mean: 2.01

Table II shows that the distribution of the responses among these categories ranged from a high of 100 per cent in one category to a low of 0 per cent. In the category, writing directed to those at higher levels, the responses ranged from a high of 100 per cent to a low of 0 per cent of the total writing time. The most frequent response in this category was 25 per cent made by 18 (15.51 per cent) of the 116 respondents. However, 17 (14.65 per cent) of the responses were made in the 50 per cent category; and 16 (13.79 per cent) of the responses were made in the 10 per cent category.

In the category, writing directed to those at the same level, the responses ranged from 80 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was 20 per cent which was made by 21 (18.10 per cent) of the respondents.

In the category, writing directed to those at a lower level, the responses ranged from 80 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was 20 per cent which was made by 17 (14.65 per cent) of the respondents.

In the category, writing directed to those outside the company, the responses ranged from 100 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was 0 per cent, made by 34 (29.30 per cent) of the respondents.

Question 4 - Amount of working time spent reading

The amount of daily working time which the 116 respondents ordinarily spent reading ranged from a high of 5 hours to a low of half an hour. Table III shows the distribution of this range. The most frequent response, 2 hours, was made by 39 (33.61 per cent) of

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL WRITING TIME

Per Cent Of Total Writing Time	Writing Directed To:							
	Higher Levels		Same Level		Lower Levels		Outside	
	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per* Cent
100%	1	.86	--	--	--	--	2	1.72
95	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
90	1	.86	--	--	--	--	--	--
85	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
80	2	1.72	3	2.58	1	.86	--	--
75	4	4.44	2	1.72	3	2.58	3	2.58
70	3	2.58	--	--	3	2.58	1	.86
65	--	--	--	--	3	2.58	--	--
60	4	3.44	--	--	2	1.72	--	--
55	--	--	--	--	--	--	1	.86
50	17	14.65	11	9.48	15	12.93	10	8.62
45	--	--	1	.86	1	.86	--	--
40	11	9.48	7	6.03	14	12.06	--	--
35	3	2.58	2	1.72	--	--	--	--
30	9	7.75	10	8.62	12	10.34	5	4.31
25	18	15.51	16	13.79	12	10.34	2	1.72
20	14	12.06	21	18.10	17	14.65	5	4.31
15	2	1.72	1	.86	6	5.17	3	2.58
10	16	13.79	19	16.37	13	11.20	19	16.37
5	7	6.03	9	7.75	4	3.44	20	17.24
0-5	--	--	1	.86	1	.86	11	9.48
0	4	3.44	13	11.20	9	7.75	34	29.30

*Based on 116 total responses

TABLE III

DAILY WORKING TIME SPENT IN READING

Hours	No. of Responses	Per Cent*
5	1	.86
4½	0	.00
4	1	.86
3½	2	1.72
3	14	12.06
2½	4	3.44
2	39	33.61
1½	18	15.51
1	20	17.24
½	17	14.65

*Based on 116 total responses
 Mean: 1.74

the total respondents. The mean was 1.74 hours.

Question 5 - Sources of reading material at work

The respondents were given four possible categories for the percentage distribution of the sources of their total reading material at work: those at higher levels in their company; those at the same level; those at lower levels; and outside of their company.

Table IV shows that the distribution of responses among these categories ranged from a high of 100 per cent in one category to a low of 0 per cent. In the category, reading from those at higher levels, the responses ranged from a high of 95 per cent to a low of 0 per cent of the total reading time. The most frequent response in this category was 25 per cent made by 17 (14.65 per cent) of the 116 respondents.

In the category, reading from those at the same level, the responses ranged from 75 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was 10 per cent which was made by 24 (20.68 per cent) of the respondents.

In the category, reading from those at lower levels, the responses ranged from 75 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was made by 20 (17.24 per cent) of the respondents and occurred in two percentages: 20 per cent and 10 per cent.

The category, reading from outside the company, had the greatest range of responses--from 100 per cent to 0 per cent. The most frequent response in this category was 10 per cent made by 23 (19.82 per cent) of the respondents.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF TOTAL READING TIME

Per Cent Of Total Reading Time	Reading Comes From:							
	Higher Levels		Same Level		Lower Levels		Outside	
	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per* Cent
100%	--	--	--	--	--	--	2	1.72
95	2	1.72	--	--	--	--	--	--
90	3	2.58	--	--	--	--	1	.86
85	1	.86	--	--	--	--	--	--
80	1	.86	--	--	--	--	--	--
75	2	1.72	2	1.72	1	.86	3	2.58
70	4	3.44	1	.86	2	1.72	4	3.44
65	--	--	1	.86	--	--	2	1.72
60	7	6.03	1	.86	1	.86	4	3.44
55	1	.86	--	--	--	--	1	.86
50	13	11.20	6	5.17	8	6.89	8	6.89
45	--	--	1	.86	1	.86	3	2.58
40	12	10.34	6	5.17	5	4.31	5	4.31
35	4	3.44	2	1.72	3	2.58	2	1.72
30	9	7.75	11	9.48	7	6.03	3	2.58
25	17	14.65	16	13.79	16	13.79	6	5.17
20	12	10.34	16	13.79	20	17.24	9	7.75
15	3	2.58	7	6.03	9	7.75	5	4.31
10	11	9.48	24	20.68	20	17.24	23	19.82
5	9	7.75	9	7.75	6	5.17	18	15.51
0-5	1	.86	2	1.72	--	--	3	2.58
0	4	3.44	11	9.48	17	14.65	14	12.06

*Based on 116 total responses

Question 6 - Business communication courses taken in school

The responses to this question were made in two categories: courses taken in high school and courses taken in college.

Of the 116 respondents, 26 (22.41 per cent) had taken some type of business communication course in high school. Of these 26, 1 had taken 3 courses in high school; 11 had taken 2, and the remaining 14 had taken only 1 course. Table V shows that the course most frequently taken was business letter writing which was listed by 25 of the 26 respondents. Of the total 39 courses taken in high school by the respondents, 33 granted 1 semester hour credit; 3, 2 hours credit; 1, 3 hours; 1, 4 hours; and 1, 5 hours.

Of the 116 respondents, 55 (47.41 per cent) had taken at least one business communication course in college. Of these 55, 2 had taken 4 courses; 9, 3 courses; 26, 2 courses; and the remaining 18 had each taken 1 course. Table VI shows that the course most frequently taken was business report writing, which was listed by 32 of the 55 respondents. Of the total 105 courses taken in college by the respondents, 60 granted 3 semester hours credit; 13, 4 hours credit; 12, 2 hours; 7, 1 hour; 5, 5 hours; 4, 6 hours; and 2, no credit.

Question 7 - Business communication courses taken since graduation

Twenty-two (18.96 per cent) of the 116 respondents had taken some type of business communication course since graduation. Of these 22, 7 had taken 2 courses, and the remaining 15 had taken 1 course. Table VII shows that the course most frequently completed since graduation was business report writing which was taken by 8 of the 22 respondents to this question.

TABLE V

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES TAKEN IN HIGH SCHOOL

Course Title	No. Taking	Per Cent*
Business Letter Writing	25	21.55
Business Report Writing	7	6.03
Business Communication	6	5.17
Technical Writing	1	.86

*Based on 116 total responses

TABLE VI

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES TAKEN IN COLLEGE

Course Title	No. Taking	Per Cent*
Business Report Writing	32	27.58
Technical Writing	29	24.99
Business Letter Writing	25	21.55
Business Communication	17	14.65
Other	2	1.72

*Based on 116 total responses

Of the total 29 courses taken by the respondents since graduation, 19 had been taken outside the plant and 10 had been taken in the plant. The duration of the courses ranged from 1 day to 1 year.

Question 8 - Reading improvement courses

Sixty-nine (59.47 per cent) of the 116 respondents had never taken any type of reading improvement course; 47 (40.53 per cent) had taken such a course. Of these 47 who had taken reading improvement, 44 indicated this training had helped them in their work. Only 3 of the 47 felt that reading improvement had not helped them. Twenty-eight of the 47 who had reading improvement had received this training in the plant. Some of the reading improvement courses had been taken as early as 1952; the most recent course was taken in 1967.

Question 9 - Importance of good writing ability to a manager

There were no responses to this question in the categories of unimportant and of no value. As shown in Table VIII, 64 (55.16 per cent) of the 116 responses occurred in the category of very important. However, 36 (31.03 per cent) of the total considered such ability invaluable to a manager.

Question 10 - Status of the amount of writing

Question 10 asked the respondents to indicate whether the amount of writing they must do in their positions was increasing, decreasing, or no change. Table IX shows the distribution of responses to this question. Seventy-one (61.20 per cent) of the 116 respondents indicated the amount of writing was increasing; 41 (35.74 per cent) felt there was no change; and 4 (3.44 per cent) felt it was decreasing.

TABLE VII

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION COURSES TAKEN SINCE GRADUATION

Course Title	No. Taking	Per Cent*
Business Report Writing	8	.07
Business Letter Writing	7	.06
Technical Writing	7	.06
Industrial Report Writing	5	.04
Business Communication	2	.02

*Based on 116 total responses

TABLE VIII

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD WRITING ABILITY TO A MANAGER

Rating	Responses	Per Cent*
Invaluable	36	31.03
Very important	64	55.16
Important	16	13.79
Unimportant	--	--
Of no value	--	--

*Based on 116 total responses

However, 2 of the 4 respondents who indicated their amount of writing was decreasing stated it was because they were training subordinates to do some of their writing.

Question 11 - Status of the amount of reading

Question 11 was similar to Question 10 except it dealt with the status of the amount of reading. Table X shows that 95 (81.89 per cent) of the 116 respondents indicated the amount of reading they must do in their position was increasing. There were no responses in the decreasing category; and 21 (18.10 per cent) indicated no change.

Question 12 - Respondents' problem areas in writing.

Question 12 asked each participant to evaluate himself as a business writer and to give his responses in the order of difficulty, numbering his most difficult area 1, his second most difficult area 2, and so on. Table XI is a tabulation of Question 12, giving the number of responses in order of the difficulty of the problem.

All of the 116 respondents indicated at least 3 responses, and many indicated all 10 in order. Two respondents even indicated other liabilities, listing "writing in proper terms for different levels of readers" and "how to dictate easily."

Twenty respondents indicated that they had their greatest difficulty as business writers with their ability to organize information. Twenty-one respondents indicated their second most difficult area was in their ability to present material in the most favorable form. At the other end of the scale, the respondents indicated that they had the least difficulty with the areas of spelling correctly and using

TABLE IX

STATUS OF AMOUNT OF WRITING AT WORK

Status	No. of Responses	Per Cent*
Increasing	71	61.20
Decreasing	4	3.44
No Change	41	35.34

*Based on 116 total responses

TABLE X

STATUS OF AMOUNT OF READING AT WORK

Status	No. of Responses	Per Cent*
Increasing	95	81.89
Decreasing	--	--
No Change	21	18.10

*Based on 116 total responses

TABLE XI

RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF THEIR WRITING PROBLEMS

Problem Area	Responses by Order of Strength*									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Organizing Information	20	16	4	13	10	7	8	4	4	5
Writing in terms of reader's interests	12	7	16	11	13	11	9	7	3	3
Selecting proper words	11	8	10	9	8	16	11	15	3	2
Expressing ideas accurately	12	12	16	6	10	8	11	7	5	5
Writing concisely	14	15	11	15	10	11	9	8	2	1
Writing material which can be read quickly and easily	13	11	16	13	10	6	6	7	4	2
Presenting material in most favorable form	11	21	14	10	9	6	12	4	6	1
Deciding what information to include	7	9	16	7	8	6	9	16	3	4
Spelling correctly	10	7	6	4	4	4	--	5	14	32
Using grammar and punctuation correctly	6	10	7	2	4	3	4	1	33	14

*Each participant evaluated himself as a business writer and gave his responses in the order of difficulty, numbering his most difficult area 1, his second most difficult area 2, and so on.

grammar and punctuation correctly. However, many of the respondents noted that "this is their secretary's responsibility."

Question 13 - Problems of those who write to respondents

Question 13 was similar to Question 12 except it asked the respondents to rate the writing difficulties of those who wrote to them. All 116 respondents rated at least 3 liabilities, and many indicated all 10. One respondent indicated another liability, "summarizing reports or requests." Table XII is a tabulation of Question 13, giving the number of responses by order of the difficulty of the liability.

Thirty of the 116 respondents rated ability to write material which can be read quickly and easily the greatest problem of their correspondents; while 27 rated the ability to express ideas accurately the greatest problem. The ability to organize information received the greatest number of responses, 21, as the second most difficult area. Like Question 12, the ability to spell correctly and the ability to use grammar and punctuation correctly received the greatest responses as the areas with which their correspondents had the least difficulty--again with several notations that "their secretaries take care of this."

Question 14 - Evaluation of business communication subject areas

Question 14 asked the respondents to rate various business communication subject areas which might be offered to students going into industrial management positions in their organizations. As shown in Table XIII, the area, oral communication, received the greatest number of responses in the very important category with 78 (67.23 per cent)

TABLE XII

RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF THEIR CORRESPONDENTS' WRITING PROBLEMS

Problem Area	Responses by Order of Strength*									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Organizing information	17	21	14	15	11	5	6	5	1	1
Writing in terms of reader's interests	9	11	16	13	6	10	13	6	2	5
Selecting proper words	1	6	6	7	12	10	15	17	4	5
Expressing ideas accurately	27	13	15	12	15	9	6	5	1	--
Writing concisely	18	18	14	10	8	11	6	7	1	1
Writing material which can be read quickly and easily	30	19	21	13	7	1	4	--	--	--
Presenting material in most favorable form	5	15	16	10	10	15	8	9	2	--
Deciding what information to include	4	8	13	12	13	10	7	11	4	6
Spelling correctly	2	1	1	2	2	3	3	3	33	24
Using grammar and punctuation correctly	3	4	--	1	3	4	2	6	24	27

*Each participant rated his correspondents as business writers and gave his responses in the order of difficulty, numbering their most difficult area 1, their second most difficult area 2, and so on.

responses. The areas, how to organize material and how to write clearly, received the second greatest number of responses in the very important category with 62 (53.44 per cent) responses each; and the area, how to write concisely, was third with 60 (51.72 per cent) responses.

The area, study of different kinds of business letters, received the fewest responses, 2 (1.72 per cent), in the little importance and no importance categories. The how to evaluate readability area received the next fewest responses, 6 (5.17 per cent), in the very important category and the second greatest total responses, 19 (16.37 per cent), in the little importance and no importance categories.

Four suggested areas were given in the other category: summarizing; how to effectively time reports for best results; how to write safety rules and regulations; and how to write hand down operating instructions.

Question 15 - Self-concept as a business writer

Question 15 asked the participants to rate themselves as business writers in comparison with others at their organizational level. Table XIV shows that most of the 116 participants considered themselves to be above average or average, and no participants considered themselves poor writers.

Question 16 - Writer suggestions

Suggestions as to what teachers might do to better prepare students to meet their needs as business writers were given by 103 of the 116 respondents, and many respondents made suggestions in several

TABLE XIII

RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION SUBJECT AREAS

Subject Areas	Response Ratings									
	Very Important		Important		Moderately Important		Little Importance		No Importance	
	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent	No. of Resp.	Per Cent
Channels of communication	30	25.86	43	37.06	30	25.86	12	10.34	1	.86
Persuasive writing	41	35.34	46	39.65	25	21.55	4	3.44	--	--
Writing to different levels	19	16.37	48	41.37	42	36.20	6	5.17	1	.86
Locating sources and data	36	31.03	48	41.37	21	18.10	11	9.48	--	--
Organizing material	62	53.44	48	41.37	5	4.31	1	.86	--	--
Different kinds of reports	16	13.79	51	43.96	37	31.89	11	9.48	1	.86
Different kinds of letters	2	1.72	34	29.30	54	46.54	25	21.55	1	.86
Tables, graphs, etc.	20	17.24	45	38.79	45	38.79	5	4.31	1	.86
Practice in business writing	15	12.93	50	43.10	37	31.89	13	11.20	1	.86
Writing and human relations	21	18.10	45	38.79	38	32.75	11	9.48	1	.86
Writing correctly	42	36.20	45	38.79	24	20.68	5	4.31	--	--
Writing clearly	62	53.44	47	40.51	6	5.17	1	.86	--	--
Writing concisely	60	51.72	51	43.96	5	4.31	--	--	--	--
Improvement of reading ability	43	37.06	57	49.13	15	12.93	1	.86	--	--
Improvement of reading speed	40	34.48	48	41.37	25	21.55	3	2.58	--	--
Conducting a conference	39	33.61	55	47.41	21	18.10	1	.86	--	--
Participating in a conference	30	25.86	55	47.41	28	24.13	3	2.58	--	--
Oral communication	78	67.23	26	22.41	11	9.48	1	.86	--	--
Employee communications	11	9.48	46	39.65	42	36.20	17	14.65	--	--
Creativity in writing	14	12.06	44	37.92	45	38.79	11	9.48	2	1.72
Evaluating readability	6	5.17	48	41.37	43	37.06	18	15.51	1	.86
Dictating	15	12.93	52	44.82	39	33.61	9	7.75	1	.86

*Based on 116 total responses

categories.

Of these 103, 34 commented on the need to train students to present their subject matter completely, but concisely. Closely allied with this were the 20 suggestions to train students to know their purpose for writing and to write for that purpose. The need for actual writing practice was stressed by 27 of the respondents. There were 19 suggestions stressing the importance of writing ability to business success. The suggestion of a refresher course in business writing every few years was made by 18 respondents. The following quotations present some of the ideas contained in the suggestions. (Others appear in Appendix D.)

You can often tell what a person knows or does not know by the manner he expresses his thoughts in correspondence. The actual form is relatively unimportant as long as the contents are complete and the reader does not have to search for what he wants. The avoiding of being too breezy and not saying a thing is important.

Practice

Much of my time is spent in word of mouth communication. I recommend that more time be spent in teaching the art of speech to students of the art of Business Management.

Stress the effects of good communications (or lack of) in the business place, primarily in interaction between levels of authority.

A good manager is as identifiable by his writing work as by his fingerprints - if not he is a copier and doesn't excel as a communicator.

Industry must make a profit. Goods and/or service are the means for profit. The interdependence of all workers who team together to provide a good or service requires excellent communications. That is the name of the game.

Visit various types of businesses to try to understand the purpose that written communications will serve in the next decade or two.

TABLE XIV

RESPONDENTS' SELF-CONCEPT AS BUSINESS WRITERS

Concept	No. of Responses	Per Cent*
Among the best	7	6.03
Above average	60	51.72
Average	44	37.92
Below average	5	4.31
Poor	--	--

*Based on 116 total responses

Say what is needed and stay all other verbage.

Eliminate rambling verbiage. Teach dictation. It is easy to understand a letter that contains poor grammar, misspelling, or incorrect punctuation, but many times it is necessary to search in some obscure paragraph to find the reason for the correspondence.

Emphasize communication. The best engineer is only as good as he can communicate ideas and direction.

Motivate student by trying to illustrate how lack of skill will or may tend to limit their advancement. Require lots of practice.

Stress that nothing happens until good communications are established.

Practice empathy. Place yourself in the other person's shoes and ask yourself the question "would I understand and be motivated by this communication?" If students could be instilled with this one thought, they would have pride of accomplishment as writers of business correspondence.

Write

Teach them to think before they write. Teach them the importance of communications - and then lets teach them to spell.

Explain to them that time means everything, but clearness of verbal and written communication can save or make anyone's job career.

The best reports are the shortest reports which cover the subject.

Have students read everything they can get their hands on.

A business communication is written for one reason only-- to get action desired by the writer. The writer should be guided by this thought; always judge the finished communication in the eyes of the person to whom it was written.

Summary

This chapter has presented the data secured from the 116

responses to the mail questionnaire and a discussion of these responses. Chapter IV presents the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Thirty years ago, business communication was a virtually unknown and unpracticed quantity. Today, however, the magnitude and scope of business itself and the development of the art and science of management have made business communication the very essence of modern management.

The collegiate schools of business, with their avowed purpose of educating managers for business, must endeavor to make this the best and most applicable education possible. The importance of business communications today makes it imperative that this area be included in such an education. However, in order to teach that which is most necessary and applicable in the area of business communications, we must determine the nature and application of business communication in industry today.

Thus, this study was devised in an attempt to determine the business communications needs and attitudes of selected middle management personnel as possible criteria for determining the content of business communication curriculum. Specifically, these special areas were examined:

1. What are the problem areas of business writing in industry?
2. What is the nature of business communications in industry and how much time do managers spend in communicating?

3. What is the formal business communication training of industrial middle management personnel?

4. What are the suggested areas of remedial communication training for industry?

5. Is the subject matter presently included in the business communication curriculum useful, pertinent, and applicable in industry?

6. Which subject areas should be included in the content of business communication courses on the university level?

The subjects of this study were all the participants in the Southern Illinois University Development Program for Middle Management from its inception in September, 1963, through June, 1968. A mail questionnaire was used as the tool of research. Questionnaires were returned by 116 of the 159 participants, and the responses were then tallied and tabulated for each question. The results were then analyzed for relationships, patterns, and significant meanings.

Conclusions

1. On the average, the respondents spent 3-3/4 hours, or almost half of their working day, writing and reading business communications.

2. The respondents indicated that the time they must spend at communicating, both reading and writing, is increasing.

3. Although there were individual exceptions in general the respondents wrote to and read communications from all levels in their companies as well as outside the company.

4. Although the respondents now spend almost half their working time communicating, they have actually received very little

training in business communication.

a. Less than one-fourth of the respondents had business communication training in high school; less than half had such training in college; and less than one-fifth had received such training since graduation.

b. Of those respondents who had received some form of business communication training, the majority had taken only one course in this area.

c. Thus, in general the respondents had received only one course, or less, in preparation for an activity which occupies nearly half of their working time.

5. Over half of the respondents felt that good writing ability was very important to a manager, and nearly one-third felt it was invaluable. None of them felt it was unimportant or of no value.

6. The respondents considered their greatest liabilities as business writers were their inability to organize information and their inability to present material in the most favorable form.

7. The respondents considered the ability to write material which can be read quickly and easily, the ability to express ideas accurately, and the ability to organize information as the greatest problems of those who wrote to them.

8. The respondents felt that oral communication was the most important subject area in the business communication curriculum, followed by how to write clearly, how to organize material, and how to write concisely.

9. On the whole, the respondents considered themselves at

least as good business writers as others on their organizational level, while over half of them considered themselves above average.

Recommendations

1. Business communications should be included in the business curriculum at the university level.
2. Business communications should be emphasized and practiced in all disciplines as well as in specialized business communications courses.
3. The scope of business communication courses should be broadened to include such areas as oral communications, reading training, communicating for human relations, etc.
4. Business is much more concerned with the ability to express oneself clearly, concisely, and effectively than it is with grammatical form and correctness.
5. Present business communication courses should be critically analyzed in terms of content, purposes, and objectives.
6. Remedial and refresher training in business communications for those in industry should be provided by the universities as part of their curriculum.
7. There is a definite need for greater cooperation between education and business in determining and offering appropriate business communications training for present and future managers.

APPENDICES

BUSINESS COMMUNICATION QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____

How much of your daily working time do you ordinarily spend composing memos, reports, letters, and other types of writing? (Include the time you spend organizing thoughts, dictating, and editing. Do not include the time you spend gathering information.) Please circle the appropriate number.

Hours: ½ 1 ½ 2 ½ 3 ½ 4 ½ 5 ½ 6 ½ 7 ½ 8

What percentage of your total writing is directed to
 Those at higher levels in your company _____
 Those at your same level in your company _____
 Those at lower levels in your company _____
 Outside of your company _____

How much of your daily working time do you ordinarily spend reading?
 Please circle the appropriate number.

Hours: ½ 1 ½ 2 ½ 3 ½ 4 ½ 5 ½ 6 ½ 7 ½ 8

What percentage of your reading material comes from
 Those at higher levels in your company _____
 Those at your same level in your company _____
 Those at lower levels in your company _____
 Outside of your company _____

Please complete the following information for any writing courses you have taken in school.

Course Title	Semester Hours Credit	Grade Level	
		H.S.	College
Business Report Writing	_____	_____	_____
Business Letter Writing	_____	_____	_____
Business Communication	_____	_____	_____
Technical Writing	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify)	_____	_____	_____

Please complete the following information for any writing courses you have taken since graduation.

Course Title	Length of Course	Where Taken	
		In-Plant	Outside the Plant
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Have you ever taken any type of reading improvement course? _____

Where did you take it? _____

Year Taken? _____ Did you feel it helped you in your work?

Yes _____ No _____

How important do you feel good writing ability is to an individual in a management position?

Invaluable _____ Very Important _____ Important _____

Unimportant _____ Of No Value _____

Is the amount of writing you must do in your position increasing _____ decreasing _____ no change _____?

Is the amount of reading you must do in your position increasing _____ decreasing _____ no change _____?

In evaluating yourself as a writer of business reports, letters, memos, etc., in what areas do you feel you have the most difficulty? (Please number your most difficult area 1, your second most difficult 2, and so on.)

Ability to organize information _____

Ability to write in terms of reader's interests _____

Ability to select proper words _____

Ability to express ideas accurately _____

Ability to write concisely _____

Ability to write material which can be read quickly and easily _____

Ability to present material in most favorable form _____

Ability to decide what information to include _____

Ability to spell correctly _____

Ability to use grammar and punctuation correctly _____

Other (Identify): _____

In evaluating those who write to you, in what areas do you feel they have the greatest difficulty? (Please number their most difficult area 1, their second most difficult 2, and so on.)

- Ability to organize information _____
- Ability to write in terms of reader's interests _____
- Ability to select proper words _____
- Ability to express ideas accurately _____
- Ability to write concisely _____
- Ability to write material which can be read quickly and easily _____
- Ability to present material in most favorable form _____
- Ability to decide what information to include _____
- Ability to spell correctly _____
- Ability to use grammar and punctuation correctly _____
- Other (Identify): _____

From your experience please give me your evaluation of these business communication subject areas which might be offered to students going into industrial management positions in your organization.

	Very Impor- tant	Impor- tant	Moder- ately Impor- tant	Of Little Impor- tance	Of No Impor- tance
Study of channels of commu- nication in industry	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Techniques of persuasive writing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Writing to different levels in an organization	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to locate sources and data	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to organize material	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Study of different kinds of reports - their format and best usage	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Very Impor- tant	Impor- tant	Moder- ately Impor- tant	Of Little Impor- tance	Of No Impor- tance
Study of different kinds of business letters (sales, application, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Study of tables, graphs, etc. and how to choose best one for data	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Actual practice in differ- ent kinds of business writing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Effects of writing on human relations in industry	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to write correctly (grammar, spelling, etc.)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to write clearly	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to write concisely	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Improvement of reading ability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Improvement of reading speed	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to conduct a conference	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to participate in a conference	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Oral communication	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Employee communications (house organs, bulletin boards, etc.) what they can and can't do	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Creativity in writing	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to evaluate readability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
How to dictate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify):	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

As a business writer, how do you feel your writing compares with the writing of others at your organization level?

Among the best _____ Above average _____ Average _____ Below Average _____
Poor _____.

What would you suggest that teachers do to better prepare students to meet their needs as business writers? _____

Check here if you desire a summary of the study results _____

Thank you for your cooperation in answering this questionnaire.

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198 South Clearview Drive
East Alton, Illinois 62024
May 1, 1968

In order to complete the thesis requirement for a masters degree at Southern Illinois University, I am examining the nature of business communication as it is performed by today's management. Through this study I hope to reach some conclusions regarding appropriate curriculum in this area of instruction.

The Division of Adult and Technical Education of Southern Illinois University has given me permission to solicit the cooperation of the participants in the Development Program for Middle Management as my sample for this study. You can help me by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

All information will be kept entirely confidential, and no participant's name will appear in the study. I will be happy to send you a summary of the results of the study if you will indicate this desire at the conclusion of the questionnaire.

Your assistance will make possible a reliable and meaningful study. Please complete the questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope before May 21, 1968.

Sincerely yours

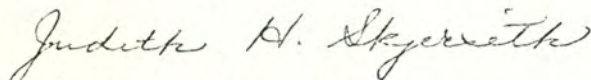
Judith H. Skjerseth
(Mrs. Paul J. Skjerseth)

198 South Clearview Drive
East Alton, Illinois 62024
June 11, 1968

On May 1, 1968, I sent you a questionnaire to be completed for my thesis study. Since I have not yet received a reply from you, I am once again asking for your cooperation in completing the questionnaire.

For your convenience, I am enclosing another questionnaire and a stamped, addressed envelope. Would you please return them to me before June 25, 1968.

Sincerely yours



Judith H. Skjerseth
(Mrs. Paul J. Skjerseth)

APPENDIX D

RESPONDENTS' SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Drill into students that they are selling themselves by selling their ideas.

One of the most discouraging aspects of interviewing a college graduate is the terrible and almost unreadable handwriting of the average graduate be it high school or college.

Most managers are critical of beginning writers--over writing and not staying with a concise outline form report.

Doubly emphasize the need for both oral and written communications and continually stress their importance both in and out of business.

Stress the fact that the person initiating the communication usually is the person who needs the communication to be understood and acted upon, so that his objectives can be met. In other words, as a practical thing communications is not a divided responsibility with a sender and a receiver, but is the responsibility of the sender, because the sender usually is the one who suffers if proper communication isn't completed. This is a frustrating philosophy and is often rejected by persons who want to do their part only and will not assume the responsibility of making (by hook or crook) the receiver, receive. Nevertheless, I think it does represent the world as it exists. The technical side of writing should then be studied as a means of achieving the end of making the receiver receive the communications.

Teach: Brevity in writing. Determine what the writing is designed to accomplish. Present only information required to do this in the simplest possible terms answering reader's questions that will be stimulated. Know your reader, if possible.

Make the student practice his skills by writing, and writing, and writing, etc.

Teach communication understandable to anyone regardless of educational level.

Prepare students to write brief, concise, and meaningful reports and letters.

The best reports are the shortest reports which cover the subject.

Emphasize the importance of communications in that most errors or problems result from poor, or lack of, communications.

Do a lot of reading. Read and re-write letters or reports. Study subject matter thoroughly and pretend to be the recipient to insure subject matter will be understood by anyone.

Stress importance of concise, accurate reporting presented graphically and briefly.

Teachers need to work in industry or business to gain first hand experience in addition to the education they have acquired.

All teachers should require all writing by students meet higher criteria in terms of clarity, degree of communication, and conciseness.

Stress the need for this training at both the high school and college level. The ability to effectively communicate, both orally and in written form, is a must for every individual. Lack of this ability is very costly to industry.

(1) Must hold reader's interest (2) must be concise and to the point (3) must decide what information to include.

Stress accuracy, brevity; avoid suppositions; do not present opinion as fact. Use simple words. Be sure you will be understood.

Stress importance of writing only that which has to be communicated. Be courteous and cordial, but do not put a lot of verbose, meaningless information into the writing.

In business writing, the main fault I find is that college students use words that are not understood by people with high school education or less.

Be demanding. Write and evaluate letters in classes. Let actual practice be the educator. Don't talk about the proper way, do it.

Measure writing performance by getting the job done well with the fewest number of words.

Stress importance of concise, clear, well-organized writing. Brevity when writing to higher levels of management.

I see business writing as consisting of three usually concurrent areas of organization. (1) organizing for results. The first result to be getting the reader to read and understand which includes maintaining the reader's interest--which includes his being able to read quickly and easily--which means writing concisely and expressing ideas accurately.

(2) Organizing for information--which means keeping area 1 in mind while deciding what information to include and what words to use. (3) Organizing for decision, which needs areas 1 and 2 in mind while presenting material in most favored form to influence the reader's decision to get (back to area 1) the results you want.

When I was in college, the net results of the diverse writing instructions I received were that maybe the form was just a little more important than what was said. After graduation, it took a while to realize that results impress a boss much more than form or punctuation, and it took longer to get out of the habit of stressing form.

If this situation hasn't changed, I would like to suggest that writing instruction be more matter of fact about form and punctuation. They should begin immediately teaching something akin to the 3 areas above and make form merely a tool, a means to an end.

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