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## Praeger Publishers

# Book Proposal Guidelines

### **Title and Subtitle:**

***Workplace Communication for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Tools and Strategies that Impact the Bottom Line (Praeger Perspectives, 2 Volumes)***

### **Author and Affiliation:**

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### **Synopsis**

Organizational Communication is a broad field that covers a range of topics related to how people interact within an organization and how organizations interact with various stakeholders (both within and outside the organization).

### **Purpose**

*Workplace Communication for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Tools and Strategies that Impact the Bottom Line* seeks to introduce readers to the latest research in applied organizational communication. In keeping with the Praeger Perspectives tradition, the two volumes will provide perspectives from leading experts to provide a thorough and insightful view of organizational communication for practitioners and academics alike. The first volume of the series will focus on interactions within the workplace, and the second volume will focus on organizations interacting with their external environments.

According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average person spends over one-third of his or her day in the workplace. As such, people spend more time interacting with coworkers and customers than they do with their own families and friends. Unfortunately, going to work does not come with a handbook on how to make these interactions effective. The first volume of this series is going to take on major topics related to how people interact with others within the workplace environment (e.g., conflict management, mentoring, leadership, etc.).

A second major concern for organizational communication scholars and practitioners is how organizations communicate strategically outside the walls of the organization. The second volume of this series is going to take on more macro-level issues of organizational communication by examining how organizations interact with other organizations, the government, and the public.

The creation of these two volumes will be helpful for both practitioners and academics of organizational communication. The focus will be on how the research and theory of organizational communication can be applied within the modern workplace to improve both internal and external organizational communication.

### **Timing**

In a 2001 study conducted by the International Labor Organization ([www.ilo.org/](http://www.ilo.org/)), 40% of workers described their current workplaces as a real life version of CBS's hit television show *Survivor*. With the market crash of 2008, this number has gone up as employee engagement has gone down around the world. Companies are spending less time thinking about communication in the workplace to a great detriment.

The 2010 British Petroleum oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is further indication that many organizations have not learned the basic lessons of communicating with external publics. Whether it's a lack in basic media training or not completely thinking through one's public statements when interacting with government officials, the 2010 crisis is a clear example that organizations still have many lessons to be learned about basic external interactions.

Furthermore, effective communication has been shown to be very important for the bottom line. When communication happens effectively within an organization, that organization will be more productive and prosperous. In a series of studies examining the benefits of effective communication on financial outcomes conducted by Watson Wyatt (2004, 2009, 2010), the researchers found organizations with higher levels of effective communication are more profitable. For example, in the 2003-2004 study the researchers found, "Companies with the highest levels of effective communication experienced a 26 percent total return to shareholders from 1998 to 2002, compared to a -15 percent return experienced by firms that communicate least effectively" (p. 1). This finding was again replicated in the 2009-2010 study, "Companies that are highly effective communicators had 47 percent higher total returns to shareholders over the last five years compared with firms that are the least effective communicators" (p. 3). Both of these studies clearly indicate monetarily why businesses today must be interested in the communication function.

### **Objectives**

This MVS strives to give its readers the following:

- Understand the nature of interpersonal interactions in the workplace;
- Analyze the roles of leader and follower in the modern organization;
- Discuss how communication within an organization can help increase commitment, identity, and productivity;
- Manage the internal communication function of a modern workplace;

- Explain the role of strategy in external organizational communication;
- Examine how communication can be utilized to effectively change how various stakeholders view the organization;
- Learn how technology can be utilized to improve how organizations communicate with various stakeholders; and
- Differentiate among the communication needs of different types of stakeholders.

### **Features**

- This MVS will include chapters by the leading practitioners and scholars in the field of workplace communication.
- The MVS will also include a glossary of terms to assist students and lay readers in understanding the basic concepts within each volume.
- Each chapter will incorporate case studies, vignettes, or stories to help illustrate the content discussed in each chapter.
- Each chapter will contain end-of-the-chapter takeaways to help crystallize how people can use the chapter content.
- Each chapter will also include a series of sidebars to help pull-out important quotations from the chapter.

### **Selling Points**

The following aspects of this set will make it attractive to readers:

- The proposed MVS on Organizational Communication is very current. All organizations face communication challenges on a daily basis, and these two volumes will provide a range of strategies for improving communication;
- The two volumes of the proposed MVS on Workplace communication clearly differentiate the needs of workplace communication practitioners;
- The proposed two volume set is unlike other texts currently on the market, and will be a welcomed addition to the marketplace;
- Authors will utilize real-world case examples to help readers see how the information contained within the chapters can be used in a practical fashion;
- The authors of the chapters in each volume will be highly-respected thinkers and doers in the field; and
- The coverage of these topics will be balanced and thorough.

## **Audience**

The primary audience for this multi-volume set includes students, scholars and practitioners of the fields of workplace communication, business, public relations, management, and industrial psychology. Readers will be attracted to the set by its emphasis on blending theory with practice and its collection of visible and well-respected authors. The students and scholars will like the leading-edge thinking conveyed, while the practitioners will appreciate the fresh, implementable ideas presented. The two volume set could be used for upper undergraduate and applied graduate courses in business communication, organizational communication, management communication, and/or corporate communication. A secondary audience would be individuals working in the business or corporate communication offices in organizations today. Lastly, I also believe this set could be very beneficial for anyone in a position of management trying to get best practices for managing workplace communication.

## **Schedule**

It will likely take 15-18 months to contact and secure the chapter authors, collect draft chapters from the authors, review and edit the chapters, and write introductory and concluding chapters.

## **Length**

600 pages over two volumes (300 pages per volume).

## **Competition**

There are several very good and relatively recent books written about organizational communication. Two of the books are more theoretical and one is more practical:

- ***The New Handbook of Organizational Communication*** (hardback)

Fred Jablin and Linda Putnam – Sage, 2000, 944 pp., \$95.95

This book updates a 1987 text that examined the state of organizational communication research. The 2000 text is the most recent handbook written about the field of organizational communication as a whole. However, this handbook is densely written and intended for graduate students and academics studying organizational communication. While there is clearly applicable information within the text, the focus of the text is on theory and not on application.

- ***Organizational Communication – SAGE Library in Business and Management*** (hardback) Linda Putnam and Kathleen Krone – Sage, 2006, 2048 pp., \$1275

This five-volume set is intended for organizational communication researchers and scholars. The set effectively covers the scope of organizational communication, but is written in an academic and non-applied manner. The text overemphasizes theoretical developments without a clear explanation of the utility of the theories in the modern workplace. Furthermore, a considerable amount of the research involved in this five-volume set is written from a non-

social scientific standpoint and generally viewed negatively by individuals in the modern workplace.

- ***The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication*** (hardback)

Tamara L. Gillis – Jossey-Bass, 2006, 576 pp., \$95.00

This book, published in conjunction with the International Association of Business Communicators, is a guidebook for people specifically working in business or corporate communication. The information contained within this book covers numerous topics specifically related to strategic workplace communication (e.g., communicating trust, public relations, managing communication, etc.), but it does not discuss more of the interpersonal aspects of workplace communication (e.g., mentoring, interpersonal conflict, leadership, etc.).

In the field of workplace communication, these are the three primary texts that attempt to take the field of knowledge and boil it down that are not written as undergraduate textbooks or academic books devoted to a single topic. As such, the proposed MVS is primarily competing against these three books. For individuals in MBA programs or in modern business, only the IABC Handbook would be considered realistic competition for the proposed MVS.

### **Praeger Comparable Books**

*The Psychology of Women at Work*, Michele A. Paludi, 620 pages, \$250

This MVS focuses specifically on women in the workplace. While gender and communication is an important aspect of workplace interactions, it is not the singular purpose of the proposed volumes.

*Gender, Race, and Ethnicity in the Workplace*, Margaret Foegen Karsten, 928 pages, \$250

This MVS has a very specific focus examining gender, race, and ethnicity in the workplace. While all three clearly have an impact on communication within the workplace, there are larger issues in interpersonal interactions within the workplace that are not covered by the singular nature of these volumes.

*Marketing in the 21st Century*, Bruce D. Keillor, 880 pages, \$325

Marketing is an important function of external workplace communication, but communicating with external publics is a broader field including issues related to risk communication, crisis communication, public relations, etc...

*Communication at Work*, Stephen R. Axley, 232 pages, \$110.95

This 1996 text is clearly dated and does not reflect both the internal and external nature of organizational communication.

*Communication and Organizational Crisis*, Matthew W. Seeger, Timothy L. Sellnow, and Robert R. Ulmer, 310 pages, \$75

This 2003 publication focuses on a single issue within external organizational communication, crisis communication. The proposed text is broader in scope than the Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer text.

## Table of Contents

### Table of Contents:

Volume 1, Internal Workplace Communication

Volume 2, External Workplace Communication

### **Volume 1 – Internal Workplace Communication**

1. “Communicating within the Modern Workplace: Challenges and Prospects”  
This chapter will be an introduction to the volume and will connect the other chapters, tying them together.
2. “Ethics Matter: Why Ethical Communication Matters Today”  
This chapter will focus on the National Communication Association’s Credo for Ethical Communication and how it applies in the workplace communication context.
3. “Creating a Productive Workplace Culture and Climate”  
This chapter will explore the nature of organizational cultures and climates and how business managers and executives can utilize this knowledge to make employees more committed and productive.
4. “Communicating Effectively with New Hires to Bring out Their Best”  
This chapter will focus on how employees are brought into an organization and socialized to understand an organization’s unique culture and climate. The chapter will provide specific examples and techniques for ensuring effective employee socialization.
5. “Getting Accurate and Timely Information Communicated Around the Workplace”  
This chapter will focus on the nuts and bolts aspects of creating an internal communication campaign within an organization. The chapter will cover analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation aspects of communication campaigns.
6. “Diversity Matters: Harnessing the Power of Diversity for your Organization”  
This chapter will examine the importance that identity and diversity plays in the modern workplace. Specific attention will be placed on how identity and diversity impacts employee interactions.
7. “Men and Women Communicating in the Workplace: Why Gender Differences Matter and Make Workplaces more Effective”  
This chapter will focus on the research examining female and male communication patterns in the workplace.
8. “Leading through our Words and Behaviors”

This chapter will be an overview of the field of leadership and basic strategies individuals can employ to enhance their leadership abilities.

9. “Leading Only Happens when People Follow: Fostering a Culture of Followership”  
This chapter will discuss what it means to be a follower in a modern organization and the importance of fostering follower-leader relationships.
10. “Managing Workplace Talent through Mentoring and Coaching: Getting Beyond Buzzwords to Practices that Work”  
This chapter will focus on the best practices for mentoring and coaching within the modern workplace. The differences and similarities between mentoring and coaching will be explored along with a discussion of how to implement mentoring and coaching programs within a workplace.
11. “When Coworkers Act Like Kids in a Sandbox: Effectively Getting People to Work Cohesively Effectively as Teams”  
This chapter will overview the research surrounding effective group and team decision making in the workplace. Strategies will also be given for how to run both face-to-face and virtual groups and teams.
12. “Don’t LOL at My E-mail: Using Technology to Enhance Workplace Communication, Not Destroy Workplace Communication”  
This chapter will focus specifically on how individuals are using technology to interact with one another in the modern workplace. From knowledge management to e-mail, best practices will be discussed for managing mediated workplace communication.
13. “Working with You is Killing Me: Learning how to Effectively Handle Workplace Conflict”  
This chapter will focus on how individuals can handle conflict in the modern workplace in a productive manner to ensure harmony and productivity.
14. “Bullies Coming Out of the School Yard and into the Board Room: Combating Abusive Workplace Communication”  
This chapter will focus on the darker side of workplace communication including issues related to sexual harassment and workplace bullying.
15. “Making Sure Your Workplace Communication Works: Determining the ROI on Workplace Communication Campaigns”  
This chapter will discuss how organizations can go about analyzing their internal communication patterns and search for ways to improve internal communication.

## **Volume 2 – External Workplace Communication**

16. “How Strategic Workplace Communication Can Save Your Organization”

This chapter will be an introduction to the volume and will connect the other chapters, tying them together.

17. "Creating a Public Image: The Strategic Use of Issue Management"

This chapter will focus on the range of activities on the part of the modern organization to shape and manage its environment in a direct fashion.

18. "The Science and Art of Business Presentations: Effectively Communicating Before Various Stakeholders"

This chapter will be an explanation of techniques for effective business presentations. Public, oral communication is still one of the primary tools for the transference of information in the corporate world.

19. "Customer Service with a Smile: Creating a Climate Where Customers Come First"

This chapter will focus on the research of communication and customer service specifically in the area of sociality.

20. "Selling Yourself or Your Product Starts with Communication"

This chapter will discuss how basic communication principles can be utilized when trying to increase sales.

21. "Marketing for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Thinking Through Current Marketing Trends that will Effectively Position your Organization"

This chapter will focus broadly on the purpose of corporate marketing plans and how to think about marketing communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

22. "Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Blogs Oh My! Social Media and Web 2.0: Using Today's Cutting Edge Social Technology to Enhance Your Organization"

This chapter will focus on how modern organizations can utilize Social Media and Web 2.0 technologies to further their interaction with customers and other stakeholders.

23. "You Are What You Brand: Managing Your Image and Reputation"

This chapter will discuss how organizations can manage both how external stakeholders view their brands and an organization's overall reputation.

24. "Building and Keeping Stakeholder Trust"

This chapter will focus on how organizations can use communication to build relationships with external stakeholders that foster trust. Trust has consistently been found to be one of the most important characteristics to develop in organization-stakeholder interactions.

25. "Every Organization Faces Risk, But Effectively Communicating Risk is a Skill"

This chapter will focus on how organizations can go about communicating potential organizational hazards to the public.

26. “Crises Happen, But How You Respond Can Make or Break You”  
This chapter will focus on how to engage various stakeholders when a crisis actually occurs.
27. “I Read it on a Blog: Combating Rumors in the Age of Constant Communication”  
This chapter will focus on one specific common crisis organizations face today: rumors. Rumor management is a necessity for corporate communication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
28. “Strategically Preparing for and Relating with the Media: Why Planning and Training Matter”  
This chapter will be designed to help organizational personnel interact with the media. Media training is important for anyone who will talk to a reporter either in a one-on-one capacity or before a bank of television cameras.
29. “When People Outside the Organization Need Information: Strategically Communicating with External Stakeholders”  
This chapter will focus on specific needs of particular stakeholder groups. The chapter will discuss specifically the needs of investors and government officials.
30. “Stopping the Island Mentality: Harnessing Communication During an Age of Globalization”  
This chapter will be a concluding chapter to the two volumes and look at workplace communication and how it can be viewed on a more global scale.

Many authors have been contacted to work on this project, but have not been signed-on to this project at this project at this time. As authors sign-on to this project, their names will be made available. The authors represent a mix of both academics and communication professionals. I’ve only listed primary author proposals for each chapter, but realize that most will probably be coauthored chapters.

### **About the Editor**

JASON S. WRENCH (Ed.D., West Virginia University) is an assistant professor in the Communication and Media department at the State University of New York at New Paltz. Dr. Wrench specializes in workplace learning and performance, or the intersection of instructional communication and organizational communication. His varied research interests include communibiology, computer-mediated communication, empirical research methods, humor, risk/crisis communication, and supervisor-subordinate interactions. Dr. Wrench regularly consults with individuals and organizations on workplace communication and as a professional speech coach for senior executives.

Dr. Wrench has published five previous books: *Intercultural Communication: Power in Context, Communication, Affect, and Learning in the Classroom* (2000, Tapestry Press), *Principles of Public Speaking* (2003, The College Network), *Human Communication in Everyday Life: Explanations and Applications* (2008, Allyn & Bacon), *Quantitative Research Methods for Communication: A Hands-On Approach* (2008, Oxford University Press), and *The Directory of Communication Related Mental Measures* (Summer 2010, National Communication Association). Dr. Wrench was the editor of the *Ohio Communication Journal* from 2005-2007, and has served as an associate editor for *Communication Research Reports* from 2007-2010. Furthermore, Dr. Wrench has published over 20 research articles that

have appeared in various journals: *Communication Quarterly*, *Communication Research Reports*, *Education*, *Human Communication*, *Journal of Homosexuality*, *Journal of Intercultural Communication*, *Southern Communication Journal*, *The Source: A Journal of Education*, and *The NACADA Journal* (National Association of Campus Advising).

## **Platform**

There are several resources the editor can draw upon to promote this MVS:

- SUNY New Paltz communications staff for reaching the Hudson Valley and New York City markets;
- International Association of Business Communicators, American Society for Training and Development, National Communication Association, and Eastern Communication Association (groups I am a member of) – presentations, workshops at conferences, getting the volumes reviewed in major journals;
- I would also make a specific section for the book on my personal website: <http://www.JasonSWrench.com>.
- Presentations at other relevant conference venues; and
- Professional contacts who teach organizational, business, management, and corporate communication courses in the United States.