Denials, Cover-ups, and Apologies: How "Résumé gate" Ended the Once Rising Career of RadioShack's Dave Edmondson, and Lessons for The Rest of Us

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Abstract

Surveys show that numerous corporate crises have eroded public trust in CEOs. So when the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* published a story in February 2006, about the forged academic credentials of Dave Edmondson, CEO of Fort Worth, Texas-based RadioShack, it re-ignited the mistrust. Edmondson and RadioShack officials denied, stalled, and eventually told the truth. Edmondson subsequently resigned. We analyze RadioShack's rhetoric published in the *Star-Telegram* through the use of image restoration discourse, and propose effective strategies that corporations can use to mitigate similar situations in future, especially in an era of 24 hour news cycle and communication technologies.

Introduction

In the wake of numerous corporate crises, trials, convictions, and imprisonment of formerly powerful CEOs, surveys show that public trust in CEOs has diminished. From Martha Stewart's perjury to Enron's Jeff Skilling and the late Ken Lay's trial, CEOs are under more public scrutiny than before. So when a story about the forged academic credentials of Dave Edmondson, CEO of Fort Worth, Texas-based RadioShack, appeared on the front page of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in February 2006, it re-ignited the mistrust the public has about corporate leaders. Edmondson was on a fast track when he was named CEO of RadioShack in May 2005. So, why did his promising corporate success story begin to unravel? The *Star-Telegram* story revealed discrepancies in Edmondson's academic credentials in his biography distributed to the news media and posted on Radio Shack's Web site. It was not just the bogus credentials, but Radio Shack's initial handling of the case that generated widespread criticism both by the media and public. Edmondson and RadioShack officials' use of protective impression management tactics such as denials and stalling did little to clarify the discrepancies. Edmondson waited for a full three days before he acknowledged that he misrepresented his academic record. The board of directors moved quickly to seek independent legal counsel to investigate the issue. Edmondson subsequently resigned.

We examine how RadioShack allowed an ethics issue to quickly turn into a crisis, by not responding promptly with an appropriate corporate and crisis communication strategy. We use image restoration discourse to analyze the communication of Edmondson and Radio Shack officials in an intense one week coverage of the crisis by the *Star-Telegram,*

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the newspaper that broke the story and had the most extensive coverage of the crisis. In light of current public and media scrutiny of CEO malfeasance, we propose effective strategies that corporations can use to mitigate similar situations in future, especially in an era of 24-hour news cycle and communication technologies.

Background

"RadioShack CEO's Resume in Question" read the headline on the front page of the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* on February 14, 2006. Dave Edmondson, the 46-year-old appointed to the post nine months earlier, now faced an embarrassing situation where he had to explain discrepancies in his official resume. Heather Landy, the *Star-Telegram* reporter who broke the story noted in her report that she began investigating Edmondson's background following his arrest for driving under the influence. So, who is Edmondson, and how did misrepresentation on his resume lead to a crisis at RadioShack?

A fan letter to Len Roberts, who was then president of RadioShack, helped Dave Edmondson capture the attention of his future boss and started Edmondson's rise to the top leadership position with the company. Edmondson, whose career path had taken him from churches to the business sector with Advo, a database and marketing firm that worked with RadioShack, sent a letter to Roberts with ideas for RadioShack business (Landy, 2006, p. A13). Edmondson's skills at capturing the attention of the head of the electronics company helped Edmondson gain entrée into the RadioShack executive suite when Roberts hired him in 1994 as vice president of marketing (Landy, 2006, p. A12).

Edmondson's work led to his promotion as president of RadioShack in 2000. After completing a nine-week session in the fall of 2002 at Harvard Business School's Advanced Management Program, Edmondson became more visible in corporate decision making (Landy, 2006, p. A13) . When Roberts announced his retirement in January 2005, he passed the job to Edmondson, a decision confirmed at the annual stockholders meeting in May (Landy, 2006, p. A13).

So, why did Edmondson's promising corporate business success story begin to unravel? Heather Landy, a *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* investigative reporter who broke the story about discrepancies in Edmondson's academic credentials on Feb. 14, 2006, wrote:

> The *Star-Telegram* began looking into Edmondson's background after learning that he is awaiting trial on a charge of driving while intoxicated. He is scheduled to go to court in April on the charge, which carries penalties that may include a fine of as much as $2,000, jail time of three to 180 days and probation. He has two prior arrests in connection with driving while intoxicated, but no convictions (Landy, 2006, p. A13).

Landy's story, which began on the front page and jumped to a full inside page plus three sidebars on another inside page, described how Edmondson's biography distributed to the news media and posted on RadioShack's Web site stated that he earned a BS, or bachelor of science, degree in theology and psychology from Pacific Coast Baptist College in San

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Dimas, California (Landy, 2006, p. A13). Landy's investigation quoted the registrar of the small, unaccredited school (Landy, 2006, p. A12) as saying enrollment records indicated Edmondson completely only two semesters of coursework and the school never offered degrees in psychology (Landy, 2006, p. A14).

It was not just the embarrassing fact that Edmondson lied on his resume, but what was equally troubling was the individual and corporate response to the crisis. While the *Star-Telegram* had daily updates of the story, both in its print edition, website and blogs, lack of response from Edmondson and RadioShack officials did little to clarify the discrepancies uncovered during Landy's investigation. As a result, news coverage continued and seemed to gain momentum each day. Edmondson and RadioShack officials used some techniques of image restoration in their attempt to minimize the damage from the resume scandal.

Theoretical Framework: Image Restoration

The theory of image restoration assumes that maintaining a good reputation is a key goal of communication. Therefore, when an organization's reputation is attacked, it makes every effort to repair its image, and to communicate the repaired image to stakeholders.

As with organizations, a good reputation or image is important to individuals as well, and threats to that image prompt appropriate actions to restore the image (Goffman, 1967; Brown & Levinson, 1978; Benoit, 1995, 1997). Consequently, when one is suspected or charged with any repugnant offense, and the public perceives the individual as having committed the offense, the natural reaction of the alleged suspect is to defend his/her good name.

Benoit (1997) defines image as "the perception of a person (or group or organization) held by the audience, shaped by the words and actions of that person, as well as by the discourse and behaviors of relevant actors." (p. 251). Benoit (1995) argues that image restoration rhetoric implies that when our image is jeopardized, we are more likely to take persuasive actions that include denial of the alleged action, justification, explanation, rationalization, excuses, and apologies for the actions.

While there are many writings on image restoration (Burke, 1970; Ware & Linkugel, 1973, Scott & Lyman, 1968; Rosenfield, 1968), Benoit & Brinson (1994), Benoit (1995) presents the most thorough discussion on the subject. Benoit's image restoration strategies help to explain the defensive acts taken by individuals whose image have been tarnished. Benoit places image restoration strategies in five categories that include denial, evasion of responsibility, reduction of offensiveness, corrective action, and mortification.

Benoit (1995) describes *denial of responsibility* as a denial of alleged offense of which the accused is ashamed. If the denial is accepted, then the chances of restoring the image increase. The denial may be reinforced by shifting the blame or explaining away damaging facts or evidence (Burke, 1970). *Evasion of responsibility* is used when people are unable to deny responsibility for the offensive act; therefore to protect themselves,

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they find excuses to evade responsibility (Benoit, 1995). Scott & Lyman (1968), Tedeschi & Reiss (1981), note that people can argue that their offensive behavior was an answer to another equally offensive act; they could plead lack of information or full disclosure; claim the behavior happened unintentionally; or argue that the conduct was well intentioned. If these arguments are accepted, then the person may be able to repair the damaged reputation. *Reduction of offensiveness* strategy is when the offender attempts to minimize audience's repulsiveness to the act with the intent of neutralizing the damage. The offensiveness is reduced through six forms that Benoit describes as bolstering, minimizing, differentiation, transcendence, attacking the accuser, and compensation (Benoit, 1995, p. 73). *Corrective action* is a defensive strategy in which the accused pledges to rectify the offensive behavior, assures the victim that the specific behavior will never occur again, and takes steps to ensure that the behavior will truly be avoided. Benoit (1995) concludes that corrective action may include an expression of regret or repentance. Burke (1970, 1973) describes *mortification* as a defensive strategy in which the accused rhetor admits wrongdoing and asks for pardon. If the audience perceives the accused as truly contrite, then the likelihood of restoring his/her image increases.

The RadioShack crisis lasted for a little over a week, from February 14 through February 21, 2006. During that period, Edmondson and RadioShack officials used some of the image restoration tactics in their attempt to restore their tarnished reputation. Their response was comprehensively covered by *Star-Telegram* investigative reporter, Heather Landy. We analyze the communication emanating from RadioShack and Edmondson, before, during and after the crisis erupted on the pages of the *Star-Telegram* and national media.

RadioShack's Response To Crisis Communication

Every crisis has three stages: pre-crisis stage, crisis stage, and post-crisis stage. The pre-crisis stage often comes with warnings or indications that a crisis may occur. Early indications that the Edmondson leadership or ability for sound judgment may be called into question were illuminated by his multiple drunken driving arrests in Tarrant County, Texas, and an earlier interview he gave to the *Star-Telegram* in 2005 about his resume. The interview contradicted his account of his 2006 resume (Landy, 2006, p. A1). As Landy aptly pointed out in her article, the Sarbanes-Oxley law mandates that CEOs must verify that their financial reporting is truthful. Thus, if a CEO cannot accurately represent his qualification in his official resume, can he/she be trusted to ensure that corporate financial reporting is accurate? Did RadioShack management pay attention to these warning signs at the pre-crisis stage or simply try to ignore it hoping it would go away?

The crisis picked up steam when the story broke in the *Star-Telegram.* Edmondson was given an opportunity to clarify the discrepancies in his resume. He initially said he had minored only in psychology and was unaware of the error on his corporate biography. Edmondson said he earned a "Thg" degree, completing a three-year program in theology while working at a church in Colorado (Landy, 2006, p. A1). When the investigative reporter pointed out to Edmondson that the "BS" degree listed on his résumé requires

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more courses than a Thg, Edmondson "declined to comment on why the listing varied from the description he offered" (Landy, 2006, p. A13). Other company officials also declined to comment. Landy's story reported:

> Thomas Plaskett, RadioShack's presiding board member and chairman of the company's corporate governance committee, called the *Star-Telegram* inquiry "out of place" and would not discuss the matter. "I speak for the board; there is no comment," said Plaskett, a former chief executive of Continental Airlines and Pan Am Corp. who now heads Fox Run Capital Associates, a consulting firm in Irving. Len Roberts, RadioShack's executive chairman, also declined to Comment (Landy, 2006, p. A13).

While there was no outright denial by Edmondson and RadioShack officials, they assumed the lack of response to questions raised about Edmondson's academic credentials would make the story go away, but it did not. However, Edmondson tried to shift the blame or explain away damaging facts or evidence of his degree. Unfortunately for him, the strategy failed. The *Star-Telegram* carried a follow-up story on the front page again the next day. The story quoted Ron Hoover, the pastor Edmondson said had supervised his academic work through correspondence courses and awarded Edmondson a diploma, as saying he did not remember Edmondson working toward his diploma (Landy, 2006, p. A1).

The school where Edmondson said he earned a degree said its records indicated Edmondson spent the 1977-78 academic year on campus, but the school had no records showing he later enrolled in correspondence classes or that he completed a degree (Landy, 2006, p. A13). Edmondson stood behind an unnamed RadioShack spokesperson with a reply carried in the story. Other officials at the company stood firm without offering explanations. Landy's story included these statements:

> Edmondson, through a spokeswoman, declined to comment Tuesday on Hoover's remarks. He has also declined to comment on why he listed the degree as a B.S., or Bachelor of Science, on the résumé he gave to RadioShack when he joined the company in 1994. Early Tuesday, RadioShack issued a statement saying its board of Directors "reaffirms its support for David Edmondson in fulfilling his role as chief executive officer. The statement also said the board was aware of matters raised in the *Star-Telegram* article "and has previously given due consideration to them." Upon learning about the discrepancy between Edmondson's and Hoover's accounts, RadioShack director Thomas Plaskett, who chairs the company's corporate governance committee, said he would stand by the board's statement of support for Edmondson. Plaskett declined to describe when or how the board previously considered the résumé issues. "I know what the board's responsibility is," he said. I stand by the statement" (Landy, 2006, p. A13).

That Plaskett and other RadioShack officials stood by the statement of support for Edmondson, while refusing to provide substantial answers, fits into the image restoration

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technique of denial. Edmondson and RadioShack officials assumed that by denial, refusing to comment, or Edmondson shifting the blame for the "mistakes" to college officials, the coverage of the story would minimize or cease. Instead, in addition to reporter Landy, others such as *Star-Telegram* business columnist Mitchell Schnurman, called for more disclosure. He wrote about the importance of character and the believability of a CEO:

> Does it matter what occurred with Edmondson more than 20 years ago? He wasn't hired for his academic pedigree, after all. Maybe RadioShack could get past this – if Edmondson quickly acknowledged any errors and apologized. Then we could have a productive discussion about the appropriate punishment (Schnurman, 2006, p. C1).

Additionally, news reports noted that RadioShack sales were slow during Edmondson's first year leading the company. "Disappointing, Lackluster. Still in transition. Wall Street analysts used those words to describe RadioShack's sales performance in 2005, the story stated" (Ahles, 2006, p. C1).

With the continued barrage of negative media coverage, Edmondson and RadioShack realized that they could no longer stall, deny, or make excuses for the glaring discrepancy in Edmondson's resume, the drunk driving arrests, and the downward slope of the stock performance. Something had to be done. Finally, on the third day of front-page coverage, the *Star-Telegram* reported that Edmondson acknowledged that "he misstated his academic record, prompting the board of directors to seek independent counsel to investigate the matter" (Landy, 2006, p.A1).

In separate statements, Edmondson and the board responded to inaccuracies discovered during the *Star-Telegram* investigation. Edmondson, making his most direct statement since the investigation began, said:

> The contents of my resume and the company's website were clearly incorrect. It is my belief that I received a ThG diploma, not a BS degree as I asserted. I clearly misstated my academic record, and the responsibility for those misstatements is mine alone. I understand that I cannot now document the ThG diploma (Landy, 2006, p. A1). I apologize to the board and the employees for the confusion I have created by carrying erroneous information on my resume and mishandling my explanation of it. I will provide all information to the board in order to clarify these issues (Landy, 2006, p.A8).

Edmondson's admission of his responsibility in the misrepresented resume illustrates the use of mortification. His admission prompted RadioShack to act quickly to minimize the hemorrhage caused by the crisis, a clear shift from the board's statement the day before when it reaffirmed its support for Edmondson. Landy story reported that RadioShack's board said in a separate statement, it would retain counsel "to advise the board on the facts and on RadioShack's employment policies" (Landy, 2006, p.A8).

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Even with Edmondson's admission and RadioShack announcement that it would seek legal counsel, the company did not appear to have a clear public relations strategy for dealing with this situation. There was no official statement regarding the admission and the proposed action of the company by a spokesperson or on RadioShack website. Additionally, Landy's reported that Plunkett did not return a telephone call from the *Star-Telegram* late Wednesday (Landy, 2006, p.A8). (It is common practice for reporters to give subjects of a story an opportunity to present their views in stories of this nature.) Landy also reported in her story that RadioShack Chairman Len Roberts declined to comment. As the story dragged on to the third day and beyond, much of the basic information contained in the extensive media coverage about Edmondson was repeated to provide context for understanding. Thus, RadioShack's delay in providing an informative response to the first story intensified the media focus.

The timing of Edmondson's apology to the board and the statement from the board was released at an inopportune time. The two statements were released on the eve of a two-day meeting beginning Friday with Wall Street analysts and investors in Fort Worth where RadioShack was scheduled to release its 2005 financial results.

Meanwhile, the *Star-Telegram* explored other stories related to RadioShack's problems. The paper's business writer, Jim Fuquay, raised the responsibility of RadioShack for checking the accuracy of employee credentials (Fuquay, 2006, C1). He quoted personnel professionals and consultants who said the accuracy of Edmondson's resume should have been determined when he arrived at the company, but Professor Doug Newsom, noted public relations scholar and consultant, said Edmondson had an opportunity to correct his record when he was promoted to CEO a year ago (Newsom, personal communication, February 16, 2006).

Star-Telegram business writer Bob Cox quoted several legal experts and management consultants in a Feb. 17 story who recommended that the RadioShack board act quickly to assure "employees and stockholders that the company will hold its top executives to high ethical standards" (Cox, 2006, p.C1).

Sunday was the sixth day the *Star-Telegram* focused on RadioShack and Edmondson's problems regarding his statements about his academic credentials. Echoing the public dissatisfaction with CEO business ethics, business columnist Schnurman, wrote that:

> Edmondson's divorce won't cost him his job at RadioShack, of course. He's in trouble because he fudged his resume and didn't come clean when confronted about it. It's a credibility and character issue now, and most people think it's cut and dried: A public company has to have a trustworthy leader (Schnurman, 2006, p. F2).

Schnurman's assessment reiterates what public relations practitioners have recommended for years when dealing with a crisis. The best way to put a story to rest is to deal with it truthfully and quickly. However, RadioShack did not appear to have learned that lesson. For instance, at the height of the crisis, company spokeswoman Laura Moore "repeatedly

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tried to steer reporters' questions away from the flap over Edmondson's credentials and keep the conference focused on the company's fourth-quarter results and turnaround efforts" (Landy, 2006, p. C8). This occurred almost one week into the crisis. This lack of a quick response turned what would have been a story for a few days into a continuing headline-making story that was picked up by *The New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Denver Post* and elsewhere as reporters continued to press Edmondson to address ethics-related questions" (Landy, 2006, p. C8). Comedian Jay Leno even joked about the Fort Worth-based company during his opening standup routine on NBC's Tonight Show (Schlacter, et al, 2006, p. C2).

One week after the first story detailed Edmondson's inaccuracies on his resume and massive news coverage about his problems including extensive discussion about damage control (Schlacter, et al, 2006, p. C1, C3), letters to the editor (Schlacter, 2006, p. E2, C3), and an editorial cartoon (Hulme, 2006, p. E2), the headline "RadioShack CEO quits" was the banner story on the front page of the *Star-Telegram* (Landy, 2006, p. A1). Edmondson resigned saying, in a statement released by the company, that it was "in the best interest of the company" for him to step down. He had been CEO for nine months. Executive Chairman Len Roberts said the board cut short an inquiry launched the previous week and promoted Claire Babrowski, the No. 2 executive to president and acting CEO. Roberts said in an afternoon teleconference call with reporters:

> The message to shareholders and the public is, one of the most important things we have as a corporation is integrity and trust, and we know we have to restore that back to our company. I have no question about it that we will be able to do that" (Landy, 2006, p. A1).

Ironically, RadioShack Chief Operating Officer Claire Babrowski, who was selected to as interim CEO to help guide the company at Edmondson's departure, does not have an undergraduate college degree, either. So, why, did that cause a problem for Edmondson, but not for Babrowski? She told the truth and he did not. Edmondson gave false information. Babrowski's resume explains that she dropped out of college to work at McDonald's where she worked her way up from shift manager to store and district manager and later to the executive suite of McDonald's. She was selected in 2001 to run three of McDonald's international operations and in December 2003, Babrowski was appointed senior executive vice president and chief operating officer (Cox, 2006, p. C5). Babrowski never completed her undergraduate degree, but in midcareer she enrolled in an executive MBA program at the University of North Carolina and earned a degree in 1995 (Landy, 2006, p. C6). Roberts said the company had thoroughly vetted Babrowski, including her academic record (Cox, 2006, p. C5).

The lack of Babrowski's undergraduate college degree did not garner a negative focus on RadioShack in the pages of the *Star-Telegram* in contrast to Edmondson's saga, which continued day after day. *Star-Telegram* business writer Schnurman analyzed the Edmondson saga and the moral of this story this way is his column:

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> Questions? There were plenty of ‘em, but Roberts and the RadioShack PR shop headed by Laura Moore were quick to shut down. And where was Tom Plaskett, the board’s presiding director and chairman of its governance committee, who was speaking for the board last week? Three days before the story broke, Heather Landy called Plaskett for comment and offered to tell him what she had learned about Edmondson’s background. He wasn’t interested. Roberts, Plaskett and Moore have to realize that Edmondson isn’t the only one with a credibility problem here. What the board knew, when it knew it and how it responded are all legitimate lines of inquiry. This is the time for RadioShack to clear the air, not clam up (Cox, 2006, p. C5).

John Roach, who led RadioShack for 17 years until retiring as CEO at the end of 1998, said: I usually don’t comment, but I will say that for the many executives and other employees, whose hard work built the company, this has been disappointing to see the performance and integrity issues” (Schlacter, 2006, p. C1).

Edmondson walked away from RadioShack with “$975,000 in severance pay along with accrued vacation pay, four months of health benefits and a revised vesting schedule for his stock options (Landy, 2006, p. C1). The agreement RadioShack’s board reached with Edmondson “closes the book quickly and allows the company to move on,” said Charles Elson, director of the John L. Weinberg Center for Corporate Governance at the University of Delaware (Landy, 2006, p. C6).
Additionally, the appointment of Babrowski to replace Edmondson indicates that RadioShack is ready to move on. These actions illustrate corrective strategies taken to correct the problem cause by the Edmondson “résumé gate” crisis. The corrective actions are part of the image restoration strategies posited by Benoit.

An unintentional consequence of managing crisis in an information age is the role played by a new constituency – blogs, or Web logs. These on line diaries or journals have transformed the way information is disseminated and by whom. Organizations ignore blogs at their own peril as *Star-Telegram* business writer Mitchell Schnurman wrote in his column about the power of blogs in the Edmondson/RadioShack crisis:

> As corporate crises go, the RadioShack affair had some common characters: an embattled CEO, a gung-ho press corps, a flip-flopping board of directors and an ineffectual public relations staff. But a new force, the blogosphere, elbowed into the debate for the first time on a major local story. With the RadioShack story, the blogosphere provided a way for readers and employees to quickly weigh in on events, almost as they happened. In less than a week, more than 300 comments were posted on message boards and blogs at star-telegram.com, and the site became a virtual water cooler for people who wanted to gather anonymously to talk about the company’s troubles. The voice of the people, often unfiltered, gave power to the growing anger about Dave Edmondson’s behavior siding against him by a 14-to-1 ratio, and they were expressing frustration with RadioShack’s response. Len Roberts, RadioShack’s chairman, says he was following the comments closely and wrote to his fellow directors suggesting that

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> they check them out. "I sensed the rage, the pain of a hurt company," Roberts said in a phone interview Tuesday. "And many directors didn't realize the reaction in the community. It was important for all of us to understand the sentiment of the people. Roberts says he doesn't know of any corporate strategy at RadioShack to respond to negative Web postings, but he wondered aloud whether it might make sense. If some employees are trashing the company, why not encourage others to defend it? I asked Laura Moore, RadioShack's chief communication officer, about the company's reaction to all the Web talk, and she declined to comment. "I'm not going to participate in the story," Moore said. So much for the public side of public relations. Roberts is convinced that Edmondson's tale aroused so much emotion because it involved truthfulness, character and integrity – bedrock issues that everyone can relate to. If the problem had been limited to RadioShack's financial performance, he says, there wouldn't have been the same outpouring. I agree, but the incident still shows that the blogosphere represents a constituency that corporations better pay attention to. So how to deal with that world? It doesn't seem too complicated: Tell the truth – immediately – and tell it all. That's long been a maxim of crisis communication, because full disclosure gets out all the bad news within a few news cycles. A company takes its deserved PR hit, but the story doesn't drag on. That didn't happen here (Schnurman, 2006, pp. C1, C6).

While Edmondson's departure has shifted the focus from his problems to the future of RadioShack, there are indications that the closed-mouth corporate culture may continue. *Star-Telegram* writer Mitchell Schnurman wrote in his Feb. 26 column that stock analysts gave Babrowski "high marks for her grasp of the company, but that didn't make up for the sparse details and lack of creativity in the new strategy. "I heard from one store salesman, upset about RadioShack cutting its commission schedule. (I'm not naming him because RadioShack told all employees not to talk to "ANYONE" about the company last weekend, including friends and family (Schnurman, 2006, pp. F1, F8). Thus, RadioShack has shut down one of its most effective communication channels – its internal audience, which often has high credibility with the public.

Lessons for the Rest of Us:

While stories about RadioShack in the *Star-Telegram* tapered off after Edmondson resigned and Babrowski took over, it did not end negative blogs about the company and Edmondson. The fact that Edmondson and RadioShack initially stalled, minimized, and shifted the blame for the "résumé gate" story; their reaction reinforced public impression about CEO and corporate unethical practices.

The consequences for RadioShack has been a tarnished image that came at a time that RadioShack was to announce the closure of over 700 stores and a drop in share price. Whether the crisis affected investor confidence and subsequently share price is yet to be determined, but the fact remains that the crisis raised questions about RadioShack's "lackluster" performance under Edmondson, and indeed RadioShack's corporate strategy.

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Additionally, the crisis exposed a seeming lack of effective crisis management and communication strategy by RadioShack. When a public relations manager of a large public company refuses to respond to media inquiries or issue an official statement to counteract what had been published, chastises the media publicly, and warns her employees under threat of punishment not to respond to the media, she breaks all the rules of effective crisis management and communication. RadioShack and its public relations department had a siege mentality, which was manifest in the denial, stalling, and blaming others.

In addition to appointing Babrowski, RadioShack needs to consider the following:

- Revamp its background evaluation procedure or review entire corporate philosophy

- Develop a crisis management and communication plan. Train and retain a core crisis team that will be responsible for implementing/communicating the plan in the event of a crisis.

- Consider the media allies/channels through which company position or information could be disseminated. Never try to suppress fair information, even if they are deemed scandalous. It is better for the organization to go to the media with information so that they can ably define themselves and their situation.

- Consider the use of new media, such as blogs as adjunct to other channels of communication.

- Seek partners or cooperation from crisis experts that can be called in on short notice to help with communication during a major crisis.

- Keep all stakeholders informed of pertinent information about the company, including crisis, through appropriate channels.

Conclusion

The RadioShack crisis once again reinforces why the public has a mistrust of corporate CEO. While it is important to recognize that a majority of CEOs are ethical, it is the handful of unethical ones that have captured the unflattering attention of the public. The CEOs that have been embroiled in crisis all seem to borrow from the same play book. In the event of a crisis, they tend to react slowly as did RadioShack. Failure to react quickly to a crisis opens the company up to speculation and innuendos. RadioShack's Edmondson learned that lesson the hard way, when he refused to acknowledge the discrepancies in his resume. RadioShack's management also learned that blind support for a CEO without solid evidence as to his or her innocence is unwise.

Secondly, RadioShack did not appear to have a crisis plan in place to deal with this crisis. In the pre-crisis stage, Edmondson, RadioShack management and the public relations

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department seemed unprepared; even though there were clear indications that the story would break. They erred in trying to ignore the gravity of Edmondson's unethical actions. During the crisis, the public relations representative failed the basic lessons of crisis communication by being hostile to the media, suppressing information, and threatening employees not to speak to the media instead of co-opting them. Internal communication was sorely lacking. Given that employees and other stakeholders were not brought into the loop during the crisis, some of them expressed their discontent through blogs that were posted in response to the Star-Telegram's coverage of the crisis.

Thirdly, RadioShack, like other embattled corporations, adapted some of the image restoration strategies described earlier, starting from denial and ending with apologies and mortification. As the coverage of the crisis indicates, some of the strategies were not effective. In the case of RadioShack, Edmondson's resignation was the only way forward. By appointing Babrowski as interim CEO, until July 7, when Julian Day, former CEO of K-Mart Holdings was named as permanent CEO, RadioShack has indicated that it is ready to move forward, and one hopes, has also learned some important lessons in effective crisis communication.

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Corporate Speakers: Neglected Canon, Transitional Oratory and a Theory of Rhetorical Economy

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Abstract

There is an obvious impact of corporate discourse on the social, economic, political and cultural spheres at local, national and global levels. U.S. universities regularly teach courses in professional and business speaking and our corporations regularly affirm that persuasive, strategic and inspirational communication are vital for corporate success for both individuals and their organizations. Oddly, then, there is no canon of great corporate discourse. In spite of regular calls for attention to the discourse of corporate rhetors, the 100 greatest speeches are explicitly limited to political oratory. The speech sites list no business speakers or speeches, and there has never been a collection of speeches, criticism or analysis. Using a nomination list, I examine possible reasons, concluding that some of the neglect stems from a fundamental neglect of rhetorical forms that are collaborative, concrete, or performative.

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Corporate Speakers: Neglected Canon, Transitional Oratory and a Theory of Rhetorical Economy

The discourse of business has had an undeniable impact on the social, economic, and political life of human society in every era and every culture. Further, it is a truism of contemporary business that persuasive, strategic and inspirational communication is vital for both for an individual’s career and for the success of his or her organization. It would seem odd, then, that across the several thousand years of rhetorical study, there has grown up no canon of great corporate, economic or business speech. There has been considerable attention to the influence of corporate organizations in terms of organizational theory or public relations, but virtually no investigation of business speakers in terms of their public discourse or their function as members of a larger rhetorical community.

The lack has not gone unnoticed (Curti, 1944), but two generations later not a single collection of business speeches, criticism or analysis has been created to fill the void (Medhurst, 1989). The last thirty-five years have been called a period of “renewal and recovery” in public address scholarship (Medhurst, 2001), but still, the speeches of only one business figure, Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca, have been studied in any detail (Seeger, 1986). The art of rhetorical biography is “no longer limited to great white men who served in public office” (Medhurst, 2001 500) but the rhetorical history of the United States nevertheless includes virtually no attention to anyone else. A group of public address scholars recently selected the Top 100 Speeches in the twentieth century, but limited the range to “political speeches” and found no speaking of note by any member of the business community (Lucas & Medhurst, 1999).

This study thus has two purposes. The first is to survey the history of business in hopes of identifying a potential realm for rhetorical study. It might be that the lack of disciplinary attention is simply the result of a lack of information. It is not at all uncommon for a speech scholar to have an undergraduate degree in political science, cultural studies, or another liberal arts specialty. Further, even those very few individuals with a business background of any kind are unlikely to have been introduced to a history of business or businessmen. The reality is that even the rhetorically-minded student of business would be hard-pressed to identify key discourses in the discipline. As one business historian has noted, while “aristocrats, dictators and priests have long appreciated the beauties and uses of history” the business man has ignored, if not overtly resisted the exercise (Beard, 1938 1). In spite of their obvious effect on the larger society, “business has no heroes, no folklore, no great myths about its past” (Witzel, 2002 5).

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A second purpose is perhaps more subtle, but no less important. Even with the creation of a potential canon of business rhetoric, the question remains as to the reason such a project has never been previously attempted. Perhaps there is something significant about the rhetors and the rhetoric of the business community that has precluded their study across the several thousand years since Plato invented the discipline. Perhaps even more profoundly, it might be gaps in our understanding of rhetoric that lead us to exclude business discourse from the realm of appropriate study. As individuals are nominated to serve as exemplars of business rhetoric, then, a second question must be asked: what is it about the discourse that has caused scholars never to have considered it worthy of study? To answer that it is because the text lies outside the traditional boundaries of the discipline is to beg the question. How then would it be that a discourse that has had a significant role within the decision-making process of a human community would be defined as not rhetorical?

A Review of Business Rhetors

The method of this project has been simple, perhaps even simplistic. Taking a walk through the history of business, the aim was simply to catalogue individuals whose voices seemed to have a significant impact on the business community's conduct of its own affairs, on the fundamental economic decisions of an era, or on the way in a public makes its decisions in the economic realm. Embedded within this approach are two assumptions: one relatively minor and one with potential significance. First, the design of the historical survey was indiscriminate in its scope. That is, the assumption was that individuals recognized as important by any business historian, by the general public, or by economics scholars must have been engaged in some kind of discursive activity worthy of further investigation. This will undoubtedly lead to errors of both omission and unwarranted inclusion, but the issue seems relatively minor at this stage of the project. This is not meant to be a vetted canon of business rhetors, which would presumably take many years or even centuries of disciplinary attention. Rather, the intent is merely to draw up a list of nominations—individuals whose business significance suggests that they are deserving of further rhetorical study.

On another level, however, the decision to include an individual was based on a definition of business and an understanding of rhetoric that bear some discussion. Individuals were defined as business people when their primary source of income was derived from trade, production, or finance. Clearly there are economic philosophers and organizational theorists who have both influenced rhetorical theory and been the subject of rhetorical study; Karl Marx, Max Weber, Adam Smith, and Niccolò Machiavelli might be obvious examples. Disciplinary attention to these figures, however useful, is not a substitute for attention to the discourse of those who are materially engaged in the

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economic decision making within a community. As with the study of political, religious or legal discourse, full understanding requires a contextualized appreciation for the rhetor's interests, motives, and constraints, as well as sensitivity to the material impact of the rhetorical act.

This focus on those who are materially engaged in the exchange of goods or money offers an important critical perspective, but it is not without theoretical implications. A definition of rhetoric that restricts the field of study to language use, for example, would not easily accommodate the physical trading of goods or money as a proper text, at least not without an accompanying verbal contract or non-verbal connotation. Similarly, a notion of rhetoric as something that is only present, by definition, in the public sphere, might dismiss private business meetings as outside, if not antithetical to rhetorical discourse. Such definitional arguments are the substance of rhetorical theory, of course, but for the purposes of this project, the premature rejection of texts might compromise the attempt to study unfamiliar forms of rhetorical discourse.

Instead, the project embraced a comprehensive definition of rhetorical culture as a community's "working agreement about who is supposed to participate in decision-making, what counts as good decision-making, and when discourse is the appropriate tool for decision-making" (Cyphert, 2001). From this explicitly cross-cultural perspective, it is possible to investigate any mechanism that allows a group to engage in collective decision-making. Whether or not "business" activity fits the Western model of public discourse, if an individual's words or deeds have the material effect of facilitating the community's economic decisions, then they can be studied in terms of their rhetorical function.

The Nominations

Ancient Merchant Philosophers

While it might be useful to consider the ancient discourses of the great trading peoples of Phoenicia or Carthage in more detail, an important first step might simply be to recognize some of the acknowledged philosophers and rhetoricians as business people.

Thales

Known primarily as a mathematician and philosopher, Thales was a rich merchant of Miletus, with trading concessions with Egypt, interests in salt, olive oil, and quite probably other commodities as well. It was his profession and wealth that allowed him to travel widely both learning and sharing his own thoughts to the extent that he became

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known as one of the Seven Sages of Greece (*Thales of Miletus (62?-546)*, ; Turnbull, 1993).

Solon

An associate of Thales, Solon was a merchant at Athens. He also had traveled in pursuit of both gain and wisdom, and has become known as a lawgiver, statesman and political philosopher (Plutarch, 1952 (ancient)). Upon his return to Athens, he gave the city a timocracy, a government of the richest" (Beard, 1938 28).

Cicero

Although not a merchant himself, it might be worth noting that Cicero studied eloquence at Rhodes where the traders "were renowned, like those of Miletus, for love of bombastic oratory, perhaps borrowed from auctions or market chaffering" (Beard, 1938 21).

Crassus

Crassus, although of noble birth, made a fortune buying up executed noblemen's estates and invested the assets in various businesses, speculating in real estate and banking, slave education, and fire companies. He became the richest man in Rome and was "unique" in that he desired political power as well. Although he was "taciturn" and unable to make "the eloquent speeches expected of statesmen in Rome….he found that he could win cases in court easily, because the judges were in debt to him" (Beard, 1938 35).

An Ancient Business Canon

Presumably there would be a number of ancient philosophers and statesmen whose fame was made possible by the wealth and travel offered by business interests. Attention to that aspect of the historical context might offer insights into their rhetoric, of course, but we might also wonder why their philosophical and political activities have so completely overshadowed their commercial roles. Modern scholars must rely heavily on the histories left for us by "Greeks and Romans who despised the trader" and gave us instead a record "of heroes, of institutions, of ideas" (Beard, 1938 2). Granted, the day-to-day affairs of a salt merchant are dull monotony against the tales of battle or the puzzles of mathematics or metaphysics, but there is more. The pragmatic activities of daily life were beneath the exalted activities and interests of the elite classes; traders were scorned by the history-writing aristocracies. Plato decreed that the merchants of his Republic would live with the tradesmen, apart from the aristocracy, and that a citizen could be punished for engaging in a business deal (Beard, 1938).

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From a rhetorical perspective, however, the matter cannot be simply written off as a class struggle. The resource allocation of the ancient world—the economic decision-making that moved commodities around and beyond the Mediterranean—was left to a class of people whose decisions were rewarded in material terms and whose values have become the foundation of a contemporary global economy. Despite theories and philosophies that argued for other rhetorical norms, it has been the traders who made the decisions about where salt or oil could be had. It has been the traders' valuation of commodities, risk, and time that became the epistemological basis for economic decision-making. The tacit discourses of trade have become the public sphere in which resource allocation decisions are made. In short, the contemporary separation of economic decisions from political and social discourse has its roots in the ancient rhetorics of trade.

Merchant Cities

The written history of the West has been predominately a political history, and the contemporary scholar could be forgiven a focus on the rhetorics of politicians, statesmen, and rulers. Those who influenced their communities the most have often been business people, however, and their discourses would seem to offer a rich source of rhetorical study.

Salvestro de' Medici

The fascist Duke of Athens had taken over as "Conservator" of Florence after a string of bankruptcies had disrupted the city's commercial governance system. Salvestro de' Medici rallied the citizens to overthrow the regime with "a stirring oration in which he declared the malice of the mighty prevented him from assisting the people" (Beard, 1938 149). The revolt led to a brief reign of labor although they could not coordinate production, and the bankers and manufacturers quickly restored "bourgeois order" (Beard, 1938 150).

Cosimo Medici

The grandson of Salvestro, Cosimo Medici was the "giant of the Medici" (Beard, 1938 152) with a delightful smile, charming ease, enormous indirect power over both financial and political activities of Florence. "From first to last, a professed friend of the people and champion of democracy, Cosimo remained a private citizen of simple habits and judicious temper, always in the background, often indeed a dark corner. In his retreat, he studied the art of manipulating elections and popular moods" (Beard, 1938 153)

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Gianozzo Manetti

Having been wiped out by Cosimo de Medici, Gianozzo Manetti fled to Naples where he recouped his fortunes by delivering an oration in Latin to King Alfonso "so eloquent …so the story runs, that, although a fly settled on the royal nose during the peroration, the monarch did not even lift a finger to drive it away" and Manetti procured from the king a monopoly on cloth importation for his son" (Beard, 1938 175).

Lorenzo de Medici

The most famous of the Medici earned his notoriety through his lavish spending on architecture and the arts rather than on the business acumen that allowed the display. Even so, "display was a part of economic competition in those times. The successful business men of Florence vied with one another in the extravagance of their robes and jewels…homes and gardens…weddings and funerals" (Beard, 1938 174), not generally as a symptom of vanity, but because "it was necessary for even the busiest man to display his credit upon his person" (Beard, 1938 174). Lorenzo became known as *il Magnifico* as he "brought display to its greatest perfection in Florence" and delighted the populace with spectacles, pageantry and elaborate costume at that "impressed the spectators as much as any yearly statement of his solvency" (Beard, 1938 175).

The Burghermeisters

It is fair to single out a few exemplars, Jordan Pleskow at Lubeck or Heinrich Castorp whose "patience, skill, and eloquence" were tested by the squabbling of the Hanse League (Beard, 1938 78). The point of greater rhetorical interest might be, however, the degree to which the German commercial cities engaged in collective decision making discourse. "Nearly everything the German businessman did was done in a crowd" (Beard, 1938 86) and even the most mundane decisions were made as a group, and the merchants created rules to govern themselves without governments or strong individual leaders.

A Reticent Canon of Performance

In an age of intrigue and mayhem, perhaps the mundane commercial exchange of resources has little to recommend sustained attention. Business men were "the representatives of thrift, temperance, reticence, hard work, domesticity and other qualities which wearied, instead of thrilling readers," says one historian, noting that "the perverts and maniacs who might succeed as monarchs could never …manage a cloth-factory" (Beard, 1938 3). Still, the studied reticence of the commercial classes might offer insights into that community's rhetorical stability. For example, it was largely

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Salvestro's son, Giovanni, who solidified the Medici family power, establishing a graduated income tax and thereby leaving great wealth and power to his own son, Cosimo. His testamentary advice describes a rhetoric of discretion; "Speak not as though giving advice…not puffed up with pride at receiving many votes….Avoid litigation…Be careful not to attract public attention" (quoted in Beard, 1938 152). Political power has often resulted from public discourse, and rhetorical theory has consequently presumed oratorical eloquence to be the source of that power, but for those decisions having to do with the allocation of a community's material resources—its economic decisions—a quieter discourse of performance and perseverance might have more impact.

Financiers of Political Ambition

During the rise of the nation states, the business person has been similarly invisible in the historical record of empires and emperors, even as they financed the campaigns that made possible the consolidations of power. Throughout much of European history, the nominal rulers had far less impact on the material outcomes of resource allocation decisions than did the commercial lenders.

Jacob Fugger

The son of a prosperous businessman, Jacob Fugger took charge of the Innsbruck branch, expanding the company's investments in copper and silver mining such that the family's capital assets ultimately exceeded the Medici with interests in mining, importing, banking, agriculture, and a news service. Fugger supported the Hapsburgs with loans of increasing amounts to the Emperor Maximillian, earning profits from interest or defaulted collateral, as well as a certain amount of security and protection from the Crown (Witzel, 2002), and in the most material way, "the destinies of Europe were decided by the Fugger wealth" (Beard, 1938 231). Although Fugger never held a governmental post, he was consulted before any important political moves, was able to reprove the monarch when he did not act in an acceptable way, and provided the resources for the Emperor's military and exploratory campaigns, including the exploration and exploitation of Vasco de Gama's route to India.

Sir Thomas Gresham

Financial power sometimes took on a more formalized relationship to political power, as when Thomas Gresham, the son of a prosperous mercer and sometime Lord Mayor of London, was sent to Antwerp in 1552 to act as royal agent with his primary task "to manage the huge royal debt run up by King Henry VIII" (Witzel, 2002 162). Gresham retained his commercial interests as a money-lender, munitioneer, and cloth merchant, but served as the financial advisor of all three of Henry VIII's children. He was brought

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in as an advisor to Edward and maintained the only honorable and profitable way to reduce the royal debts was to pay them off. He assisted Mary in maintaining credit in Antwerp, and to Elizabeth, "he laid down certain fundamental principles which made England the only financially sound nation left in Europe by the end of the century" (Beard, 1938 236).

Perhaps most important, Gresham maintained the credit of the Crown by establishing laws that would allow and encourage merchants to lend money to it, and he insisted that the Crown also keep faith with the people. He successfully urged Queen Elizabeth to remove the statutory prohibition against charging interest (Beard, 1938). Further, Gresham saw it in Britain's best interests to wage economic war on the continent and undertook the breaking of the German textile monopolies. Gresham the munitioneer did not limit himself to financial issues, however, offering military proposals for defense as well.

Minister Colbert

Colbert had made a fortune in business enterprise, having been trained by his cloth-dealing father and banker uncle (Beard, 1938) and then became the financial coordinator of France from 1661-1683, holding the departments of administration, finance, the navy, commerce and agriculture, and attempted to organized all of French government along business principles and to encourage French manufacturing as a means of maintaining the country's economic health.

Colbert's persuasive message was generally directly at the Crown, as when he requested that the King set the fashion standards to support the French industry rather than wearing imported waistcoat fabrics (Beard, 1938 369). He was also sensitive to the need to instill in the French citizenry a willingness to engage in production in order to create goods with which to trade. He urged another merchant in his administration, Jacques Savary, to write "Le Parfait Négoçiant" (1674) a tract designed to teach poor youth how to become bourgeoisie gentlemen with rules for apprentices that would encourage thrift and sobriety on which to found a good family.

James Houblon the elder and the younger

James Houblon the elder, the "Father of the London Exchange," was a French emigrant who landed in England in "no mood to finance in his adopted country the same sort of Absolutism which had driven his family into exile" from France (Beard, 1938 387). Houblon the younger became Lord Mayor of London and with his brothers, ran the newly established Bank of England. He played a role in replacing the English kings with a "Dutch King, who knew bookkeeping and had some idea of contracts" (Beard, 1938

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398). Although they were opposed to using the bank's funds for warfare, Houblon demanded that the bank's shareholders assess themselves 20% to fund William's war. And "when Houblon stepped before them, he not only calmed their wrath—he got from them another big loan for William's war. Hypnotized by Houblon's massive presence, every hand in the hall went up in his favor" (Beard, 1938 400).

Jagat Seth

Born 1680, Bengal, India to a family already involved in banking and finance, Jagat Seth built good business relationships with the emperors in both Bengal and Delhi and cultivated relationships with the banking houses in other parts of India. He was successful in "helping to establish a financial structure which covered all of India" (Witzel, 2002 33).

John Law

Not all attempts at state finance resulted in success. John Law, who was probably honorable in his intentions, urged against France's King Louis XV's declaration of bankruptcy in favor of establishing a national bank. "His propaganda was masterly" (Beard, 1938 417) and he created a market for New World investment rights to finance the government. Unfortunately, his persuasive methods were perhaps too successful and his efforts sparked an investment frenzy that drew in the wealth of all classes, only to collapse suddenly, leaving France and many of her subjects bankrupt.

Discovering the Common Interest

Oratory is not the genre of choice for one who plays the role of financial advisor to a monarch, and even the public display of financial solvency has little significance in the context. This is not to say, however, that such individuals did not engage in persuasive communication, or that such communication did not have far-reaching effects on the economic decision making of their communities. Gresham's persuasions, for example, were directed primarily to the Crown. In a "brief note" to Queen Elizabeth's minister, he offered provisions for a "large navy" and as one historian put it, "this little document could do the work which nowadays requires a thousand pamphlets, editorials and speeches" (Beard, 1938 235).

Rather than create arguments that appeal to the lowest common denominator of a public audience, such messages could focus on the issues that mattered. The "frank alliance of business and politics" made for "great intellectual honesty, if not for clear separation of private and public purse" (Beard, 1938 235). Gresham urged the Queen to "aid the Protestant cause in Europe in order to lift the British pound. It was not necessary for him

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to plead patriotic or religious motives, as Cromwell had to do a hundred years later" (Beard, 1938 236). The patriotic and religious arguments of a Cromwell have been recognized as the eloquent invention of a great public speaker, but perhaps it is only the bias of a particular rhetorical culture that sees Cromwell's rhetoric as more relevant to the community's economic decisions than the private notes of Gresham.

Arguments of Self-Interest

With the more complex issues of growing economies, the rhetoric of individual businessmen became advocacy for narrowly defined positions, self-interested proposals that would benefit both the merchant and the community. "All the economic writing, with rare exceptions, was done by interested parties urging specific action on concrete issues; the authors were not professorial theorists" (Beard, 1938 301).

Willem Usselincx

One business rhetor of Holland, Willem Usselincx, urged war against Spain, while proposing himself as the principle director of a corporation to undertake the project. His "most effective argument" to the audience of that community was a straightforward economic calculation; "the best ordinary business adventures paid only ten percent per annum, mortgages yielded four to six and deposits five to six, while agriculture returned but a paltry three per cent—whereas the monopolistic East India Company had paid twenty-four per cent." He concluded, therefore, that "it would be worth while to fight Spain for the purpose of launching a new corporation" (Beard, 1938 301).

Grotius

Grotius was not a businessperson per se, but a "brilliant jurist" of Delft who was hired by the Dutch East India Company to make the case for alien consumption. In "Mare Librum," he appealed to the British audience's respect for moral arguments and created a "superb brief" that became the doctrine of free seas in international law (Beard, 1938 302).

John Wheeler

As Secretary of the Merchant Adventurers, John Wheeler wrote a defense of business in 1601, "A Treatise of Commerce, wherein are shewed the commodities arising by a well-ordered and ruled trade, such as that of the Society of Merchant Adventurers is proved to be, written principallie for the better information of those, who doubt of the necessariness of the said Society in the State of the Realm of England."

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Sir Walter Raleigh

Walter Raleigh, monopolist and state-merchant, prepared a pamphlet for King James that argued for the creation of more positions to perform the same function.

Thomas Mun

Governor of the East India Company, Thomas Mun "produced an impressive defense of that organization," in 1621, "Discourse of Trade from England to the East Indies," which urged the export of bullion to the East as a benefit to the national trade balance (Beard, 1938 476).

A Sphere for Economic Advocacy

Unlike the political or philosophical rhetor, business rhetoric of the day found "an almost complete absence of heart-stirring slogans and imposing abstractions." Instead, "the efforts of the pamphlet-writers were designed…to proclaim the interests of a small party to be the interests of all" (Beard, 1938 300). While the individual business man speaking in his own self-interest is now judged to be acting outside the public sphere of common interest, the rhetorical efforts of these earlier eras suggest there is not a clear, bright line between the two.

When resources are allocated according to rules that are advantageous to both parties, the negotiation is viewed as the technical calculation of profit. These earlier rhetors were no less creative in their persuasive efforts, however, than those who might have made a claim to fear or reason or religious authority. Contemporary theorists make distinctions between public, private and technical spheres of argument (Goodnight, 1982), but the definitions of each realm are not constant across rhetorical communities. The agreement that "profit" is a measure of value, whether for the individual or the community, is an epistemological one. The question of theoretical interest might be why we have ruled discussions of profit to be unacceptable in the public discussions of resource allocation, even as cost/benefit information supports the material decision-making processes that govern the world's resource allocation.

Advocacy of General Principles

As it happens, the English business men of the age of exploration were somewhat freer than German or French merchants, and more personally vocal. Rather than relying on the intellectuals in their communities to speak for them, they "became active and effective propagandists for their own causes" (Beard, 1938 475) and necessitating a broadening of their persuasive appeals.

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William Paterson

William Paterson has been judged "one of the most far-sighted writers of the business world" and he argued extensively on a series of economic and financial topics. He "almost alone stopped one unsound paper-money scheme from going through Parliament" (Beard, 1938 479), and his pamphlet exposing the John Law scheme in France was "publicly burned by infuriated clerks of the English Stock Exchange" (Beard, 1938 479). Paterson is not rememberd as an advocate, however, as much as for his more general arguments. One pamphlet argued for the indemnification of investors in his failed New World trade venture, the Darian Company, but "around this specific proposal, he wove such a general discussion of economics as to render this pamphlet decidedly noteworthy" (Beard, 1938 479). Patterson's work had no direct effect on the English monarchy, which proceeded instead to try save the government's credit by investing in the wildly speculative South Sea Bubble, but his work proposed economic measures we now take for granted such as standardized weights and measures, trade consuls, government purchases to support prices, and government funding for roads, harbors and bridges.

William Ewart Gladstone

William Gladstone is known now as a political rhetor, but that "supreme embodiment of the Victorian bourgeois gentleman" came out of the Liverpool business community (Beard, 1938 382). Gladstone was the son of a wealthy grain merchant and West Indies plantation owner and took seriously the issues of commerce.

Sir Josiah Child

Director of the East India Company, which functioned as the government of India, able to raise an army, coin money, and make laws as well as trade. "Eloquent" in defense of monopolies, and "ensuing writers down to the most modern apologists have, in essence, but repeated the arguments of this remarkable man" (Beard, 1938 477).

John Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill wrote much of *System of Logic* and *Principles of Political Economy* "during office hours" at the East India Company, where his father, James Mill also worked (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 35).

Richard Cantillon

Although the English rhetors might have predominated, they were not unique. French businessman, Richard Cantillon, wrote "Upon the Nature of Commerce in General" in

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1755. Dealing with the production and distribution of wealth, his work has been called one of the most important works to foreshadow the study of political economy, a field now “so generally considered a structure reared by pure theoreticians, whole objective and removed from the strife of the marketplace, that its origins in the disputations of business men are sometimes overlooked” (Beard, 1938 476).

Richard Cobden

Richard Cobden, an industrialist of the British North country, assumed a public role and in the course of campaigning, “elaborated the thesis of laissez faire and business individualism” (Beard, 1938 589). He was one of the organizers of a propaganda campaign to educate the poor toward support of laissez faire business policies and free trade and instrumental in repeal of the British Corn Laws in 1846. Perhaps the rhetoric took over, as one historian claims “the manufacturers who led the charge against the camp of the agrarians had to whip themselves into such orgies of sentiment in order to carry along the masses…that, incessantly proclaiming the holiness of their mission, they converted themselves as well” (Beard, 1938 594). In any case, Cobden exhausted his private fortune in his campaigns, but with the donations of supporters, he went abroad as a spokesman for “Manchesterism.” He “visited royal courts, addressed banquets, cemented trade treaties and everywhere drummed up a tremendous interest in the English industrial experiment and its philosophy” (Beard, 1938 596).

John Bright

After creating a successful income from cotton-spinning, John Bright put business aside and “cleared his decks for political action” (Beard, 1938 594). Campaigning with Cobden, he was apparently sincere in his evangelistic belief that agrarian interest must be overthrown in order to save laborers from abuse. Bright’s “Angle of Death” speech during the Crimean War is said to have “moved the crustiest of Victorians to a sigh or tears” (Beard, 1938 595).

Thomas Attwood

From a business family in Birmingham, Thomas Attwood organized a Political Union in 1830 to agitate for the enfranchisement of propertied men, making the plain argument that trade was falling off and thus taxes needed to be reduced. Along with an equally blunt citizen of Manchester, Richard Potter, he argued for a place in Parliament where there were no “men of business” sitting to do something about taxes (Beard, 1938 594).

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Eloquent Spokesmen for the Economy

As these early men of commerce defended and theorized their practices, they had to address a broader public audience, which directed their arguments in directions we still recognize as the basis for economic theory. One historian describes the business rhetoric in largely agrarian England, for example, as a challenge for the "ambitious man of business" to present a case to "slow-minded country squires" to whom he had to appeal "on a 'commonsense' level, without intricacy" with ideas that were "sensible, national, rational and agreeable to God" (Beard, 1938 476). The arguments—a common good, defense of the seas, and religious values—explained how commercial interests were also those of the nation, and the call to support the "national interest" became a stock argument in political rhetoric as well (Beard, 1938 476).

Middle Class Democracy

In spite of the fine language of liberty and democracy, it is no secret that the revolutions against various aristocracies around the world have had an economic basis. The democratic nature of the American colonies, for example, was largely the result of their origins as commercial ventures, and British restrictions against manufacturing and trade restrictions led to an American Revolution that was sparked by smugglers. Attention to the ideological rhetoric of the era should not preclude attention to the economic discourse as well.

Sir Edwin Sandys

Sir Edwin Sandys, as treasurer of the Virginia Company, "earned the wrath of James I" when he spoke before the British House of Commons to question the legitimacy of any government not based on a mutual contract between ruler and ruled. His organization effectively introduced representative democracy into the colonies, authorizing a General Assembly in which members elected the company's officers" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 34).

John Winthrop

John Winthrop introduced democracy to Massachusetts in 1630 when the General Court of the Massachusetts Company "transformed itself into a commonwealth, redefining "freemen" from stockholders in a commercial venture to citizens of a state" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 34).

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Ishida Baigan

In the early eighteenth century, a former apprentice with the business house of Kuroyanagi in Kyoto developed an ethical system called *sekimon shingaku*, which "had at its heart an appreciation of the role of the merchant and businessman" (Witzel, 2002 43). The philosophy became widespread among both the samurai and the middle classes, and "from thenceforth trade and industry were increasingly seen as powers for social good" in Japan (Witzel, 2002 43).

David Hansemann

David Hansemann was a Prussian businessman who retired to political office. Becoming Prussian Minister, he tried to steer the state toward liberalism and compromise, although in that nation the effort did not prevail.

Jacques Necker

Jacques Necker, France's "great merchant and banker, theorist and all-around business success of the day" (Beard, 1938 543) had made a huge impression in the best salons and written *The Administration of the Finances of France* (1788), which sold well to both the business community and the nobility, who demanded he be returned to a ministerial position. Faced with a depression, however, Necker took no action, believing it was "his duty let the people speak themselves out" (Beard, 1938 545). The ensuing public discussion and subsequent lack of leadership in both the elections and the management of the Estates-General ultimately resulted in the French Revolution.

Samuel Johnson

Although Samuel Johnson's active management role was short, but his writings reflect commentary on economic issues, and his "interest in the practical business of the world illuminates many of his attitudes as a writer and as a person" (Mathias, 1978 264).

Benjamin Franklin

Often recognized as a consummate politician, inventor or raconteur, Benjamin Franklin was also a proud businessperson who had earned a large part of his wealth from land investments and denigrated by Europeans critics as "the very embodiment of the Puritan entrepreneur mentality (Beard, 1938 518). A leader among the "middle-class artisans and mechanics who outlined the objectives, set the pace, provided the leadership, and reaped the benefits of the Revolutionary turmoil" (Olton, 1975), he refused to turn his back on his background as a business owner and signed himself "Benjamin Franklin, Printer" throughout his political career.

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Frederick Engels

Frederick Engels was “perhaps…the only truly happy and confident business man in that dreadful time [during the panic following the collapse of American gold rush]. As a representative of his German father’s cotton firm in Manchester, Engles welcomed the ‘downfall of the capitalist system’” (Beard, 1938 600). He wrote the first draft of is friend, Karl Marx’s Communist Manifesto, furnishing “both practical advice and descriptive material” (Beard, 1938 600) based on his own industrial experience.

Benjamin Disraeli

Descended from a Venetian family that earned its business fortune in England, Disraeli “entered the Stock Exchange and merrily gambled on Spanish-American mining shares” (Beard, 1938 603). He went bankrupt but gained a respect for those with business acumen. He maintained that business prepared him for politics.

Joseph Chamberlain

A screw manufacturer from Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain “retired to try orchid-fancying and statesmanship (Beard, 1938 604). He became a Colonial Minister, then Mayor of Birmingham, where he “remade the community” by initiating municipal control of light and water, cleared slum areas, reduced the death rate by 30%, founded an art gallery and university, and “strove to heal the scars left by the lawless anarchy which his forebears had proclaimed as the will of Nature” (Beard, 1938 605).

William Gregg

A Virginian who had made a fortune in the jewelry business, William Gregg later “devoted his days to breaking down the prejudices of Southerners against industrialism. Pamphleteering, fighting in the legislature, seeking to arouse interest in the problem of educating and employing the idle poor whites, he finally crushed Charleston’s opposition to the steam engine [it had been prohibited within the city to prevent pollution] and opened mills” (Beard, 1938 610).

Edmund Ruffin

“…subduing all men by his fierce eyes and the dignity of a hoary mane floating to his shoulders” (Beard, 1938 612), Edmund Ruffin preached “enmity to nearly everything Gregg had advocated” and after years of crusading, was delighted to be given permission to participate in the attack on Fort Sumter, the “symbol of Yankee commercial despotism” that lead to the Civil War.

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Robert McNamara

With the introduction of managerial science to the business community, and them to government organizations (Drucker, 1973), the discourses of business became, in many respects, the discourse of government. The revolution was demonstrated when "Bob McNamara's Whiz Kids moved all too effortlessly from managing Ford to running the Vietnam War" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 119).

No Memory for Figures

Any complete history of Western politics will recognize that business individuals and economic factors have shaped national boundaries, conflicts and political systems. But, while "the average citizen can name explorers and despots, few can name even one person from business who has had a significant impact on history" (Witzel, 2002 4). Perhaps the reason is simple; history students find the economic background and context to be tedious, while the resulting war is inherently exciting and easy to remember. Slightly less simple is the cultural bias that finds institutions and ideas to be more important than the mundane job of moving provisions into the community. The business man's labors have "lacked significance as well as eccentricity" (Beard, 1938 4), but the very definition of significant behavior warrants a rhetorical examination. How is it that the orator espousing a new political system is deemed to have more impact on the community than the merchant whose discourse has resulted in new food sources for the population?

The theoretical demarcation between business and political rhetoric also implies that the business man who goes into politics is crossing an inviolate line. Both business (Friedman, 1970) and rhetorical critics (Goodnight, 1982) will argue that the line protects their preferred discourse from contamination, but the separation of business and social decision-making has not always been seen as desirable. A lack of business involvement in political and cultural activities has been the more common complaint since the ancient times (Beard, 1938). In purely practical terms, focus on the political results without attention to the commercial context, actions, and values of the rhetors who achieved those results might cause us to miss important rhetorical insights. More fundamentally, arbitrary distinctions between those discourses might be reconsidered.

Industrial Revolution

In many ways, the contemporary business environment is the product of technological developments that allowed standardization and growth of production processes. National wealth mushroomed with production, as did the wealth of those individuals who controlled the production and thus the economic decision making of the community.

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Emil Rathenau

A technological genius, Emil Rathenau was "one of the men who revolutionized the surroundings of the human race," but took no public role in politics or civic life. Nevertheless, he was an influential figure for the many who "came from far to ask him what would come out of this technique, that form of communication, this economic structure" (Beard, 1938 570) and built on the ideas they gleaned from him in private conversation.

Alfred Krupp

Born in Essen in 1812, Alfred Krupp inherited a bankrupt steel business from his father, rebuilding it slowly until the 1860's when railroads became widespread and his steel rails and components were in great demand (Witzel, 2002 90). Apparently from sincere concern for the welfare of the country, he used his great fortune to manufacture guns and "did more to upset the balance of Europe and the budgets of nations, destroy the whole political set-up of the world, and endanger the future of capitalism itself, than the soldiers and politicians put together" (Beard, 1938 575). Krupp was not an orator, but as a businessman "had built up a relationship network with key clients. Rather than charm (he had none), Krupp employed an unshakeable faith in his own products combined with a dour persistence; he laid siege to the Prussian government for more than twenty years before the latter finally caved in and agreed to test his new designs for cannon" (Witzel, 2002 89).

John D. Rockefeller

John D. Rockefeller formed Standard Oil and "set about rationalizing the oil industry" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 67). He "encouraged the creation of the refiners' association [the National Refiners Association] and became its first president. The association failed to maintain control of price or production" and Rockefeller came to believe that such associations "were 'mere ropes of sand.' He and his associates then decided to obtain the cooperation of its rivals by relying on the economic power provided by their high-volume, low-cost operation" (Chandler, 1977 321). By 1881 the cartel had forty members and controlled 90% of the country's refining capacity, maintaining control over the alliance by holding each others' stock as well as coordinated production practices that "could easily crush the remaining few small refiners" if they didn't cooperate. (Chandler, 1977 322).

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Robert Owen

Purchasing the New Lanark Mill upon his marriage to its owner's daughter, Robert Owen "made the mill and community into a model of enlightened capitalism." In this case, the rhetoric was a material performance that was aimed toward "improving the quality of life and the physical conditions of work …contributing to the good of society" while insuring that their work in the mill would be more efficient as well (Witzel, 2002 244).

Henry Ford

Clearly Henry Ford had a major impact on subsequent economic behaviors around the world, and his standardized production processes have become a significant *topoi* in the material rhetorics of resource allocation that have determined global fuel consumption and pollution as well as the working class' standard of living (Lewis, 1976). The "folk hero" image that Ford nurtured in interviews and media stories was also a rhetorical technique; he was astute at creating situations that generated news and took advantage of those opportunities to express his opinions on cultural and political issues as well as business interests.

Daniel Guggenheim

Born in 1856, Daniel Guggenheim joined is father's lace-importing business as a buyer in Switzerland. The firm expanded into silver and lead-mining in the U.S. west, and after taking it over from his father, Guggenheim greatly expanded the operations. He took over ASARCO in 1899, making him the largest mine owner in the world. "In 1915 he stunned the United States Industrial Relations Commission, before which he was testifying, when he said that employees were justified in organizing, as many capitalists were too arbitrary in their treatment of their workers" (Witzel, 2002 219).

Lord Salisbury

Robert Cecil, the third Marquess of Salisbury was forced to "earn his own living" and tried to give up his political seat in order to find "paid" government service. With no position available, he turned to writing. The insolvent Great Eastern Railway, in need of someone with sufficient social standing to provide it credibility, asked him to chair. Lord Salisbury brought the company back to economic health with his involvement in the day-to-day operations (Barker, 1978). Later, as Prime Minister, his experiences as a "railway chairman" probably influenced the passage of the "Railway Act of 1888 and the wholesale revision of railway rates which followed it" (Barker, 1978 100).

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Lord Beaverbrook

A British businessman, Lord Beaverbrook was asked to take over the office of Minister of Aircraft Production from May 1940 to May 1941 and judged to be an "industrial miracleworker." His managerial methods were instrumental in maintaining aircraft production levels that had a significant impact on Allied success in the Battle of Britian (Robertson, 1982).

The Persuasiveness of Production

No discussion of business discourse is complete without a recognition of the influence of the actions of the Fords, GM's and Duponts. The most fundamental choices about the world's resource allocation have been made largely on the basis of administrative and technical innovations, seldom as the consequence of articulated arguments for or against a given course of action. For that matter, in a business context, no decision is complete without its implementation (Drucker, 1973), and it is largely meaningless to choose a course of action unconnected to its material performance. Rhetorical studies have recognized the influence of performative acts across a range of political issues (Bowers & Ochs, 1971; Brummett, 1991; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Finnegan & Kang, 2004), but have yet to consider the inducements of production as a rhetorical performance.

Meaningful Money

For many in the 21st century, business is often synonymous with the financial markets. The image of "Main Street" as the community's backbone of civic engagement is distinguished from "Wall Street" where corporate enterprises conduct business. Certainly that sphere of global financial exchange was built by some key figures.

Jay Gould

Jay Gould, a 19th century speculator, was instrumental in building the who "forced the Pennsylvania [Railroad] to abandon its long-held territorial strategy and to build the nation's first interterritorial railroad empire. And it was Gould who finally convinced William Vanderbilt to transform the New York Central into a similar giant system" (Chandler, 1977 148) and ten years later "pushed the top managers of the Burlington, the Chicago and Northwestern, and other western lines into a strategy of expansion and consolidation." His campaign began with negotiations he had to resort to the more novel method of purchasing proxies, which allowed him to appoint directors and arrange for the sale of the assets he desired. Ultimately, his campaign failed, but his actions did have a lasting impact on the railroad companies involved. "It required a speculator with the

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imagination and talent of Jay Gould to mount a serious competitive challenge" to the communication networks of Western Union (Chandler, 1977 149).

Henry Varnum Poor

The potential for profit fueled much of the investment in the railways, of course, but it was at least in part the discourse surrounding those investments that created the investor culture that we now recognize as Wall Street. The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* and the *Wall Street Journal* covered railroad stocks in depth, and Henry V. Poor edited the *American Railroad Journal* and then *Poor's Manual of Railroad Securities* before giving his name to the ratings agency, Standard & Poor's.

J.Pierpoint Morgan

His father, Junius Morgan had been a wealthy banker, and J.P. Morgan held immense power over the US economy. Without a Federal Reserve to control the money supply, he sometimes operated as the nation's one-man central bank. "By withdrawing his approval from a shaky deal, he could cause a panic. By pouring millions into tottering banks, he could end one" (Lacayo, 2006). The Morgans' alliance with the great British banking houses of the Rothschilds and Barings, allowed J.P. Morgan to work closely with them in later years to bail out the US Treasury (Witzel, 2002), and he was instrumental in transforming the market, which then traded only a few manufacturers, mostly associated with railroads. Market capitalization expanded from $33 million in 1890 to more than $7 billion in 1903 as a consequence of Morgan's promotion of stock purchases.

Morgan believed in free enterprise, but had seen enough of unbridled competition." (Lacayo, 2006) and he advocated monopolies as a means of setting "fair" prices that afforded producers the full value for their labor. His rhetoric might have been "private" by the standards of contemporary rhetorical theory, but he was clearly effective, "a supreme manipulator, arbiter and king of kings…in 1889 he invited eighteen railway presidents and bankers to dinner, at which he told these mighty magnates that they could no longer 'take the law into their own hands,' and sent armed trainmen to gun-play in the battle over lines….Morgan's fiat, tremblingly accepted by his satraps, closed the era of rough-and-tumble individualism" (Beard, 1938 635).

A Discourse of Interest

The bias against money lending and speculation can be traced to ancient texts. After the collapse of the Roman empire, the Christian church continued "subduing the profit-maker" with moral strictures on earning interest that officially lasted until 1830 (Beard, 1938 30). The money-lender was condemned, along with the "middleman" who profited

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from the work of tradesman "who did nothing to improve an article" but charged a higher price than did its maker (1938 51). The bias against greedy speculators and shysters is easily observed today, and it is probably no wonder that the persuasive efforts that make the manipulation of money possible are seldom considered as legitimate functions of the public sphere. Nevertheless, the contemporary economy functions as a consequence of its monetary tools, and that economy, in turn, is the mechanism by which resources are valued, allocated and moved around the globe. Interest itself might even be considered a *topoi* in the material rhetoric of economic transactions, but surely the discourse of those who have created and used the system deserve scrutiny by rhetorical scholars.

The Language of Accounting and Control

Just as science has been formed through the discourses of objectivist rationalism, business as we know it today is a product of discourses of accounting and control. In the history of business, key figures have created methods that defined, located, recorded, and ultimately communicated types of information that are now the "taken for granteds" of business discourse.

Luca Pacioli

Luca Pacioli's *Summa de arithmetica,* published in Venice in 1494. is the earliest known written account of how the double-entry bookkeeping system works, although it seems likely that the system goes back to around 1300.

William Deloitte

Born in London in 1818, William Deloitte established an accountancy practice, served as external auditor for many large companies, and "continued to be an innovator in accounting practice" he developed "a number of accounting and auditing methods which have had lasting impact on management reporting and control" (Witzel, 2002 173).

Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie organized his steel company with a structure similar to that of his former employer, the Pennsylvania Railroad. His general manager, William P. Shin, also a former railroad executive, applied the voucher system of accounting, previously unused in manufacturing, to provide Carnegie with monthly costs of materials and operations. Carnegie used these reports as his primary means of control, declaring, "watch the costs and the profits will take care of themselves.' He compared costs with previous periods, and when possible with competitors' operations (Chandler, 1977 267).

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Henry R. Towne

Senior executive and major stockholder of the Yale and Towne Lock Company, Henry Towne made the presidential address, “The Engineer as an Economist,” to the annual meeting of the recently formed American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1886. The prolonged depression of the 1870’s was turning attention from technology to organization, and Towne’s speech, along with two significant papers on cost accounting and capital accounting led to “long discussion” at the meeting as manufacturers realized they “were developing comparable control and accounting methods” (Chandler, 1977 274) that then came into common use.

Frederick W. Taylor

In his position at the Midvale Steel Company, Frederick Taylor had been working on control and accounting methods for several years, and in 1895 he delivered his first paper (Taylor, 1895) on what he called “scientific management” (Chandler, 1977) and “his efforts to determine scientifically standard time and output helped Taylor to become the nation’s best known expert on factory management” (Chandler, 1977 276), testifying before congress with great impact.

Control of Information as Control of Business

In the history of business management, there are countless examples of information control as the basis of success. Jacob Fugger, for example, personally kept the books for the entire Fugger enterprise, which extended across Europe, and it was “this combination of intense monitoring of information and a flexible, far-flung network gave Fugger the ability to respond quickly to crisis” (Witzel, 2002 161). With an ability to catalogue and communicate key facts having to do with a business, managers have found themselves more persuasive and more successful, of course. The elements that are defined as “facts” also become the focus of further activities, structuring not only the immediate enterprise, but those that follow as well. The rhetorical study of either stage of the discursive process would seem to promise a richer understanding of business and of the world’s economic decision-making processes.

Publicists, Advertisers, and Salesmen

Advertising and public relations are business functions that have received considerable rhetorical attention. Clearly these overt attempts at persuasion deserve study in general, but some instances of personal persuasiveness have created whole industries and markets.

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Phineas Taylor Barnum

P.T. Barnum failed in a series of more conventional business ventures before he realized "that in order to draw crowds he needed publicity" for which he proved to have "a natural flair" (Witzel, 2002 91). Barnum used advertising, but found media publicity cheaper so he cultivated newspaper editors in hope of placing favorable stories. Ultimately, he became the news himself, a legend that was built on his own personal flamboyance.

John Patterson

So impressed with the technology of the newly invented cash register, John Patterson raised capital and bought the inventor's company to establish National Cash Register (NCR). Knowing the task of selling a high-tech machine to small retailers would be difficult, he provided his sales force with intensive training and instructed them "first to learn about the customer's business and its needs, and only when they could see a genuine use for the cash register that would benefit the customer were they to make a pitch" (Witzel, 2002 95).

John North Willys

John Willys had been a bicycle retailer, then an agent for Pierce-Arrow and Rambler cars. He bought out the bankrupt Overland Car Company and established one of the first large-scale car dealership networks, "backing up his dealers with promotions, advertising and credit plans which helped them attract customers and made it easier for them to sell cars." He was a "sales genius" with an "almost instinctive understanding of his market; what is more, he knew how to apply his understanding of psychology to his sales force" (Witzel, 2002 96).

William Hesketh Lever

William Lever had followed his father into the grocery business, but with the rising affluence of the British working class, he "realized that there were opportunities to break through to this group by offering them products which had formerly been unaffordable. The greatest opportunity, he believed, lay in soap. The task was to convince working-class housewives that soap, which they had regarded as a luxury, was in fact a necessity" (Witzel, 2002 97). Lever first invented a brand name (Sunlight), but unable to find suppliers who could provide consistent quality, he purchased his own soap works. None of the various promotional tools he used was new, his innovation was "their combined deployment as part of a larger brand strategy" (Witzel, 2002 97), introducing a new brand every two years (2002 98)

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George Eastman

George Eastman invented a cheap camera, but more importantly for both his business and U.S. culture, "also the idea of the amateur photographer to find a market for his photographic film" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 66). In order to market the new cameras, Eastman "immediately created a worldwide marketing network of branch offices with managers to supervise salesmen and demonstrators and coordinate the flow of cameras, films, and funds" (Chandler, 1977 297). By the early twentieth century, Eastman Kodak began to build retail stores in major cities.

Thomas Edison

Edison could not interest banks or Wall Street to finance the production of the light bulb he had invented, so he supplied 90 percent of the capital needed to go into manufacturing himself. The plants eventually became the nucleus of GE. "He would use the press for instant credibility and communication for his projects…His ability to charm the world as the great technological problem-solver was truly charismatic" (Landrum, 1993 17).

George Francis Train

"With the shrewdness of a Barnum he united the mellifluous oratorical periods of a Southern Senator, and could sway any audience into a mad stampede for subscriptions" in his various land speculation schemes (Beard, 1938 618).

Mark Hanna

Not all publicity was strictly for business purposes. Mark Hanna "left a business career in Cleveland's coal and iron region to organize the Republican Party on a business basis. Hanna's machine was stupendous. Bringing advertising methods into politics, Hanna used clever slogans, distributed tons of 'boilerplate' to local newspapers, set up posters and conducted local canvasses….he was the most effective business personality in politics" (Beard, 1938 642).

Fred Smith

Fred Smith invented the first overnight delivery service and formed Federal Express in 1972, an enterprise built on a "charismatic magnetism" that convinced employees and formed a market that others were convinced was non-existent (Landrum, 1993 88). His persona is fundamental to the success of Federal Express, where "the founder/leader and the organization have become 'one and the same' "(Landrum, 1993). The result has been "…widespread business changes and opportunities have been made possible by the new

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mentality of Fred Smith's 'absolutely positively overnight'—anywhere in the world" (Landrum, 1993 94).

Richard Sears

We take the rhetoric of mail order catalogs for granted, but it took Richard Sears, "a copywriter of genius," (along with the organizational talent of Julius Rosenwald, to create an economic revolution with the Sears, Roebuck catalog (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 57).

Akio Morita

The charismatic father of the transistor radio, which spawned the consumer electronics revolution, Akio Morita cofounded Sony and earned a "reputation as one of the Western world's greatest salespeople" (Landrum, 1993 189). It was Morita's "burning desire to reverse the image of 'Made in Japan' as a cheap copy," and "more than any other individual or company in Japan, Morita has been responsible for achieving that objective" (Landrum, 1993 191).

Marcel Bich

Marcel Bich is credited with creating the contemporary "throwaway culture" with the BIC pen in 1953, followed by BIC shavers and lighters. Marketing emphasized the reliability of the product, and distribution reached 93 % of U.S. retailers in the rollout (Landrum, 1993). Bich's business innovations have had a lasting impact on multinational conduct of contemporary business, and his "highly focused ingenuity changed the buying habits of society" (Landrum, 1993 142).

Steve Jobs

By nurturing Steve Wozniak's invention, Steve Jobs transformed the personal computer from niche product for the technologically inclined hobbyist to a mass marketed commodity appliance that "forever changed the way the world works, writes, and computes"(Landrum, 1993 77). Job's single-minded design focus has been cited as the source of Apple's success, but his ability to articulate a vision was key in creating both the organization and the market.

Creating a Consumer Audience

Marketing communication is clearly intended to be persuasive, and most scholars would include advertising, sales and public relations communication as legitimate, if mundane, rhetorical discourse. Some might view the advertiser as an unscrupulous rhetor,

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persuading audiences to act in undesirable ways and the salesman hypocritical in his or her willingness to feign a relationship with a customer. The nominations here suggest, however, that key individuals have not merely created messages for existing audiences. These eloquent business voices have created markets, "called forth audiences," to use Charland's terminology (1987), to constitute a market: a group of individuals who find value in a product, consumer identity, or a lifestyle. At least some of the bias against the merchant classes has been traced to the discourse of status-conscious aristocrats who jealously guarded their ability to purchase the baubles that signified rank (Beard, 1938). The more far-reaching impact of business discourse might be in the rhetoric that defines social classes by the baubles they value.

The Corporate Evolution

As the size and complexity of business enterprises grew beyond what a single person or even a single family could manage, "the actual work of management fell increasingly to the lot of the business bureaucrats" (Beard, 1938 727). Some business historians trace the history of management to the Medici's practice of placing salaried professionals at the head of each division of their financial empire (Witzel, 2002). Others will point to the industrial age (Beard, 1938), and still others to the creation of contemporary corporate structures. In any case, an interesting rhetorical study would consider the impetus and implications of the evolution of business person to industry leader to corporate spokesperson to corporate citizen as the primary voice in business discourse.

Nelson B. Aldrich

Nelson B. Aldrich served in the U.S. Senate for many years in alliance with other business men and "through his skillful maneuvers he managed to win for big industry the protection it sought" (Beard, 1938 643). "Not being skilled in forensics" and taciturn, he didn't even reply to attacks, but resorted to "shrewd arguments and dry jests. He could not sway masses. His true genius lay in back-stage strategy" (Beard, 1938 643).

Elbert Gary

"As early as 1902 [J.P.] Morgan himself had suggested a man-to-man understanding to Roosevelt, but it was left to Elbert Gary, chairman of the board of U.S. Steel, to fashion comprehensive agreements with the executive….his legal training, his ability to articulate the case for bigness and price stability, and above all his position as head of U.S. Steel, made him an impressive public figure" (Wiebe, 1962 46).

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Takafusa

A member of the Mitsui trading family, Takafusa wrote “Chonimnko” to urge “merchants to unite in order to make their associations as strong as the clans of their hereditary foes, the sword-bearers.” The result was the “creation of such organizations as the Wholesale Merchants’ Association to sweep away corruption in the Buddhist churches and the Shogunate, leading to the business triumph in the Japanese Restoration” (Beard, 1938 677).

Mitsui Takatoshi

Hachirobei Mitsui, founded the first fixed price dry-goods store, Echigo-ya, in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1673 (Witzel, 2002). He wrote the constitution of the family [*zaibatsu*], which still governs itself with a family council and dominated, with the Mitsubishi family, Japan’s textile, shipping, and banking industries into the twentieth century (Beard, 1938).

Solomon Price

Sol Price created the first warehouse club, Price Club, in 1977 innovating “the fundamental precept of offering high-quality *brand* merchandise at wholesale prices” (Landrum, 1993 147).

Warren Buffett

Warren Buffett, Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., delivers a report to shareholders, which is read closely by financial professionals and the business media. Buffett’s messages have had an enormous influence on investment behavior as well as the contemporary view of the stock market as a mechanism through which every citizen can participate in growth and prosperity (Iden, 2005).

Aurelio Peccei

Aurelio Peccei, senior manager at Fiat and president of the business executives’ Club of Rome, successfully argued for global perspectives on ecological, political and economic problems during the 1970s (Elichirigoity, 2005).

Bill Gates

Of course, Bill Gates created the first PC software and formed Microsoft in 1978, but his rhetoric has also envisioned and guided the internet revolution and had a lasting impact on the multinational conduct of contemporary business(Landrum, 1993). By framing his vision in context, interpreting reality for listeners and giving meaning to events, Gate has

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built on utopian themes and demonstrated leadership strategies commonly associated with social movement leaders (French, 2005).

Lee Iaccoca

Giving more than 600 formal speeches to both internal and external audiences, Lee Iaccoca became the voice of his company and his industry and became the model of proactive corporate leadership as a business statesman and ambassador (Seeger, 1994).

Oprah Winfry

Oprah Winfrey is a media personality, but also an entrepreneur and savvy businessperson. Winfry's ability to bridge rhetorical spaces, merging the social, economic, and political spheres to result in unprecedented political power (Hart & Coopman, 2006).

Industry Spokesman as Public Rhetor

Selecting contemporary business individuals for their rhetorical impact is complicated by the media's role in recognizing key figures on the basis of their high business profile independently of their public discourse. Organizational success increases the assessment of a CEO as "charismatic" rather than charisma leading to organizational performance (Agle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld, & Srinivasan, 2006). Further, media attention often focuses on raiders and moguls such as T. Boone Pickens, Carl Icahn, Ted Turner, or Donald Trump, regardless of any long term social or economic effect. These issues are themselves of rhetorical interest, however, in the demonstration of contemporary media's role in defining a significant political voice.

Outside the Realm of Rhetorical

It would take considerable study and debate to create a canon of exemplary business rhetors, and this list of 81 individuals is no more than a first slate of nominees. Some figures are clearly influential in the history of business; others have displayed discursive skill that bears examination. As an exercise in rhetorical history, it is just a list—and a somewhat arbitrary list at that—of potential paper-topics. The more interesting question is whether this list can offer some explanation for the scholarly inattention to economic discourse. Arranged chronologically, there are some hints that business discourse has simply been too boring, too technical, and too sordid to interest the scholar of public address. Still, political speakers have been, more often than not, boring or technical or sordid, and their discourse remains respectably within the parameters of the discipline.

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A more subtle cause might be the degree to which Western rhetorical scholars have defined their own scope in terms of the Western political discourse. Any alternative decision-making methods are deemed arhetorical on the circular grounds that they do not conform to the normative rules that define rhetorical discourse. Thus the poets were banned, along with their narrative and lyrical forms of discourse, and theorists have only admitted in the last century the rhetorical importance of narrative , image , and performance . Similarly, the narrow epistemological grounds of Western rhetoric's "good reason" have been exploded to acknowledge alternate ways of knowing . The business discourse listed here suggests that these theoretical biases might have blinded scholars to the rhetorical functions of both business discourse and business individuals. Because their methods do not fit the normative model of rhetorical discourse, the reality of their decision-making role has been ignored.

The Collaborative Voice in Rhetorical Agency

While it is not difficult to name individuals who have played significant roles in business or political affairs, it is clear that most business discourse functions as a collaborative process (Wiebe, 1962). Individuals engaged in a corporate venture are seeking consensus; seldom is the stubborn defense of an idiosyncratic perspective a virtue. By contrast, public address has been traditionally understood in terms of the individual speaker. Further, the unique vision is an important element of eloquence and significance is judged on the basis of an individual's ability to sway others, for better or for worse, from the course they preferred. Thus, especially since the industrial revolution, business rhetoric is often characterized in terms of the collective behavior or voice of a corporate entity, which lacks theoretical standing as a rhetorical being. It is possible, as this list suggests, to trace the cause of many business events to the visionary, motivational or structuring words of single individuals as they call forth and address organizational or consumer publics. In many more cases, however, the impact of an individual pales against the economic clout of a Dutch Royal Shell or the social impact of a Walt Disney Company.

Clearly it is important for rhetorical scholars to understand the ways in which human communities actually do make their collective decisions. Western culture's resource allocation decisions have been made almost exclusively by traders, merchants, and multinational corporate entities; the inconsequence of individual agency in the process should not prevent attention to its rhetoricity. Instead, scholars might consider communicative dynamics of "distributed cognition" to explain the rhetorical results of collective decision-making processes. The teleological presumption that a single rhetor "causes" a certain outcome might be set aside to consider the intricate communicative networks, relationships and technology that allow complex organizations to "act" as

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viable units (Chandler, 1977; Yates, 1989). A consideration of the group itself as a rhetor might allow theories of group or organizational behavior to enhance our understanding of the nested and overlapping publics that seem to comprise the rhetorical process .

Decision-making Attention to Concrete Data

While it is possible to find business discourse that makes the abstract argument for economic policy or national interest or legal rules, such texts are the exceptions. The mass of business discourse is the fine-grained record of transactions, values, agreements and day-to-day minutia of commercial exchange. Such mundane details have seldom been the stuff of rhetorical study, and even when the texts are not numeric, careful attention to the intricacies of a discourse is problematic . Business scholars have begun to realize, however, the degree to which accounting practices and reporting requirements guide the decision-making behavior of both individuals and organizations. The notational form of the data—rows of number rather than words and sentences—does not reduce its potential for meaningfulness.

The iconoclastic nature of rhetorical scholarship has been challenged , as has the Western presumption that language symbolically represents reality in any important way . Some exploratory work in the rhetoric of mathematics and graphic design suggests that notational discourses allow modes of thinking outside the range of language. Analysis of business texts that embraces rather than discounts their form might serve to illustrate the epistemological and rhetorical potential of both numeric and graphical communication.

A Rhetoric of Material Effect

It might seem that the most relevant measure of a community's decision-making process would be its material outcome. A reasonable measure of a community's rhetorical success would be the degree to which the decision benefits its immediate or long-term interests. Instead, critical measures of both rhetorical process and rhetorical texts have been largely divorced from the materiality of their outcome . It is possible to talk about the "rhetoric" of a private journal, never read or heard by any audience. It is possible to judge a rhetor to be "eloquent" on the basis of his or her ideas, irrespective of any attempt (much less success) in implementing those ideas. A telling feature of the historical businessman is the frequency with which he is "indicted for taciturnity" (Beard, 1938). It seems that material outcomes are not only irrelevant to the rhetoricity of words, but material outcomes without words lie outside the boundaries of rhetorical consequence.

This is not to discount the potential of business discourse to affect the political, social and economic choices of a community; its study would offer much to our rhetorical understanding. Beyond that, however, expanding the scope of "rhetorical" to include

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whatever human behavior results in a collective choice can be instructive. Such a perspective would allow the study of human behaviors across the multiple cultures that have not embraced the West's focus on articulated reason-giving as the only legitimate source of collective action. Further, removing an arbitrary and artificial distinction between legitimate rhetorical processes and their material outcome suggests a more useful means of understanding how communities manage—or don't—their own sustainability.

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Corporate Speakers: Neglected Canon, Transitional Oratory and a Theory of Rhetorical Economy

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Abstract

There is an obvious impact of corporate discourse on the social, economic, political and cultural spheres at local, national and global levels. U.S. universities regularly teach courses in professional and business speaking and our corporations regularly affirm that persuasive, strategic and inspirational communication are vital for corporate success for both individuals and their organizations. Oddly, then, there is no canon of great corporate discourse. In spite of regular calls for attention to the discourse of corporate rhetors, the 100 greatest speeches are explicitly limited to political oratory. The speech sites list no business speakers or speeches, and there has never been a collection of speeches, criticism or analysis. Using a nomination list, I examine possible reasons, concluding that some of the neglect stems from a fundamental neglect of rhetorical forms that are collaborative, concrete, or performative.

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The discourse of business has had an undeniable impact on the social, economic, and political life of human society in every era and every culture. Further, it is a truism of contemporary business that persuasive, strategic and inspirational communication is vital for both for an individual's career and for the success of his or her organization. It would seem odd, then, that across the several thousand years of rhetorical study, there has grown up no canon of great corporate, economic or business speech. There has been considerable attention to the influence of corporate organizations in terms of organizational theory or public relations, but virtually no investigation of business speakers in terms of their public discourse or their function as members of a larger rhetorical community.

The lack has not gone unnoticed (Curti, 1944), but two generations later not a single collection of business speeches, criticism or analysis has been created to fill the void (Medhurst, 1989). The last thirty-five years have been called a period of "renewal and recovery" in public address scholarship (Medhurst, 2001), but still, the speeches of only one business figure, Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca, have been studied in any detail (Seeger, 1986). The art of rhetorical biography is "no longer limited to great white men who served in public office" (Medhurst, 2001 500) but the rhetorical history of the United States nevertheless includes virtually no attention to anyone else. A group of public address scholars recently selected the Top 100 Speeches in the twentieth century, but limited the range to "political speeches" and found no speaking of note by any member of the business community (Lucas & Medhurst, 1999).

This study thus has two purposes. The first is to survey the history of business in hopes of identifying a potential realm for rhetorical study. It might be that the lack of disciplinary attention is simply the result of a lack of information. It is not at all uncommon for a speech scholar to have an undergraduate degree in political science, cultural studies, or another liberal arts specialty. Further, even those very few individuals with a business background of any kind are unlikely to have been introduced to a history of business or businessmen. The reality is that even the rhetorically-minded student of business would be hard-pressed to identify key discourses in the discipline. As one business historian has noted, while "aristocrats, dictators and priests have long appreciated the beauties and uses of history" the business man has ignored, if not overtly resisted the exercise (Beard, 1938 1). In spite of their obvious effect on the larger society, "business has no heroes, no folklore, no great myths about its past" (Witzel, 2002 5).

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A second purpose is perhaps more subtle, but no less important. Even with the creation of a potential canon of business rhetoric, the question remains as to the reason such a project has never been previously attempted. Perhaps there is something significant about the rhetors and the rhetoric of the business community that has precluded their study across the several thousand years since Plato invented the discipline. Perhaps even more profoundly, it might be gaps in our understanding of rhetoric that lead us to exclude business discourse from the realm of appropriate study. As individuals are nominated to serve as exemplars of business rhetoric, then, a second question must be asked: what is it about the discourse that has caused scholars never to have considered it worthy of study? To answer that it is because the text lies outside the traditional boundaries of the discipline is to beg the question. How then would it be that a discourse that has had a significant role within the decision-making process of a human community would be defined as not rhetorical?

A Review of Business Rhetors

The method of this project has been simple, perhaps even simplistic. Taking a walk through the history of business, the aim was simply to catalogue individuals whose voices seemed to have a significant impact on the business community's conduct of its own affairs, on the fundamental economic decisions of an era, or on the way in a public makes its decisions in the economic realm. Embedded within this approach are two assumptions: one relatively minor and one with potential significance. First, the design of the historical survey was indiscriminate in its scope. That is, the assumption was that individuals recognized as important by any business historian, by the general public, or by economics scholars must have been engaged in some kind of discursive activity worthy of further investigation. This will undoubtedly lead to errors of both omission and unwarranted inclusion, but the issue seems relatively minor at this stage of the project. This is not meant to be a vetted canon of business rhetors, which would presumably take many years or even centuries of disciplinary attention. Rather, the intent is merely to draw up a list of nominations—individuals whose business significance suggests that they are deserving of further rhetorical study.

On another level, however, the decision to include an individual was based on a definition of business and an understanding of rhetoric that bear some discussion. Individuals were defined as business people when their primary source of income was derived from trade, production, or finance. Clearly there are economic philosophers and organizational theorists who have both influenced rhetorical theory and been the subject of rhetorical study; Karl Marx, Max Weber, Adam Smith, and Niccolò Machiavelli might be obvious examples. Disciplinary attention to these figures, however useful, is not a substitute for attention to the discourse of those who are materially engaged in the

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economic decision making within a community. As with the study of political, religious or legal discourse, full understanding requires a contextualized appreciation for the rhetor's interests, motives, and constraints, as well as sensitivity to the material impact of the rhetorical act.

This focus on those who are materially engaged in the exchange of goods or money offers an important critical perspective, but it is not without theoretical implications. A definition of rhetoric that restricts the field of study to language use, for example, would not easily accommodate the physical trading of goods or money as a proper text, at least not without an accompanying verbal contract or non-verbal connotation. Similarly, a notion of rhetoric as something that is only present, by definition, in the public sphere, might dismiss private business meetings as outside, if not antithetical to rhetorical discourse. Such definitional arguments are the substance of rhetorical theory, of course, but for the purposes of this project, the premature rejection of texts might compromise the attempt to study unfamiliar forms of rhetorical discourse.

Instead, the project embraced a comprehensive definition of rhetorical culture as a community's "working agreement about who is supposed to participate in decision-making, what counts as good decision-making, and when discourse is the appropriate tool for decision-making" (Cyphert, 2001). From this explicitly cross-cultural perspective, it is possible to investigate any mechanism that allows a group to engage in collective decision-making. Whether or not "business" activity fits the Western model of public discourse, if an individual's words or deeds have the material effect of facilitating the community's economic decisions, then they can be studied in terms of their rhetorical function.

The Nominations

Ancient Merchant Philosophers

While it might be useful to consider the ancient discourses of the great trading peoples of Phoenicia or Carthage in more detail, an important first step might simply be to recognize some of the acknowledged philosophers and rhetoricians as business people.

Thales

Known primarily as a mathematician and philosopher, Thales was a rich merchant of Miletus, with trading concessions with Egypt, interests in salt, olive oil, and quite probably other commodities as well. It was his profession and wealth that allowed him to travel widely both learning and sharing his own thoughts to the extent that he became

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known as one of the Seven Sages of Greece (*Thales of Miletus (62?-546)*, ; Turnbull, 1993).

Solon

An associate of Thales, Solon was a merchant at Athens. He also had traveled in pursuit of both gain and wisdom, and has become known as a lawgiver, statesman and political philosopher (Plutarch, 1952 (ancient)). Upon his return to Athens, he gave the city a timocracy, a government of the richest" (Beard, 1938 28).

Cicero

Although not a merchant himself, it might be worth noting that Cicero studied eloquence at Rhodes where the traders "were renowned, like those of Miletus, for love of bombastic oratory, perhaps borrowed from auctions or market chaffering" (Beard, 1938 21).

Crassus

Crassus, although of noble birth, made a fortune buying up executed noblemen's estates and invested the assets in various businesses, speculating in real estate and banking, slave education, and fire companies. He became the richest man in Rome and was "unique" in that he desired political power as well. Although he was "taciturn" and unable to make "the eloquent speeches expected of statesmen in Rome….he found that he could win cases in court easily, because the judges were in debt to him" (Beard, 1938 35).

An Ancient Business Canon

Presumably there would be a number of ancient philosophers and statesmen whose fame was made possible by the wealth and travel offered by business interests. Attention to that aspect of the historical context might offer insights into their rhetoric, of course, but we might also wonder why their philosophical and political activities have so completely overshadowed their commercial roles. Modern scholars must rely heavily on the histories left for us by "Greeks and Romans who despised the trader" and gave us instead a record "of heroes, of institutions, of ideas" (Beard, 1938 2). Granted, the day-to-day affairs of a salt merchant are dull monotony against the tales of battle or the puzzles of mathematics or metaphysics, but there is more. The pragmatic activities of daily life were beneath the exalted activities and interests of the elite classes; traders were scorned by the history-writing aristocracies. Plato decreed that the merchants of his Republic would live with the tradesmen, apart from the aristocracy, and that a citizen could be punished for engaging in a business deal (Beard, 1938).

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From a rhetorical perspective, however, the matter cannot be simply written off as a class struggle. The resource allocation of the ancient world—the economic decision-making that moved commodities around and beyond the Mediterranean—was left to a class of people whose decisions were rewarded in material terms and whose values have become the foundation of a contemporary global economy. Despite theories and philosophies that argued for other rhetorical norms, it has been the traders who made the decisions about where salt or oil could be had. It has been the traders' valuation of commodities, risk, and time that became the epistemological basis for economic decision-making. The tacit discourses of trade have become the public sphere in which resource allocation decisions are made. In short, the contemporary separation of economic decisions from political and social discourse has its roots in the ancient rhetorics of trade.

Merchant Cities

The written history of the West has been predominately a political history, and the contemporary scholar could be forgiven a focus on the rhetorics of politicians, statesmen, and rulers. Those who influenced their communities the most have often been business people, however, and their discourses would seem to offer a rich source of rhetorical study.

Salvestro de' Medici

The fascist Duke of Athens had taken over as "Conservator" of Florence after a string of bankruptcies had disrupted the city's commercial governance system. Salvestro de' Medici rallied the citizens to overthrow the regime with "a stirring oration in which he declared the malice of the mighty prevented him from assisting the people" (Beard, 1938 149). The revolt led to a brief reign of labor although they could not coordinate production, and the bankers and manufacturers quickly restored "bourgeois order" (Beard, 1938 150).

Cosimo Medici

The grandson of Salvestro, Cosimo Medici was the "giant of the Medici" (Beard, 1938 152) with a delightful smile, charming ease, enormous indirect power over both financial and political activities of Florence. "From first to last, a professed friend of the people and champion of democracy, Cosimo remained a private citizen of simple habits and judicious temper, always in the background, often indeed a dark corner. In his retreat, he studied the art of manipulating elections and popular moods" (Beard, 1938 153)

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Gianozzo Manetti

Having been wiped out by Cosimo de Medici, Gianozzo Manetti fled to Naples where he recouped his fortunes by delivering an oration in Latin to King Alfonso "so eloquent …so the story runs, that, although a fly settled on the royal nose during the peroration, the monarch did not even lift a finger to drive it away" and Manetti procured from the king a monopoly on cloth importation for his son" (Beard, 1938 175).

Lorenzo de Medici

The most famous of the Medici earned his notoriety through his lavish spending on architecture and the arts rather than on the business acumen that allowed the display. Even so, "display was a part of economic competition in those times. The successful business men of Florence vied with one another in the extravagance of their robes and jewels…homes and gardens…weddings and funerals" (Beard, 1938 174), not generally as a symptom of vanity, but because "it was necessary for even the busiest man to display his credit upon his person" (Beard, 1938 174). Lorenzo became known as *il Magnifico* as he "brought display to its greatest perfection in Florence" and delighted the populace with spectacles, pageantry and elaborate costume at that "impressed the spectators as much as any yearly statement of his solvency" (Beard, 1938 175).

The Burghermeisters

It is fair to single out a few exemplars, Jordan Pleskow at Lubeck or Heinrich Castorp whose "patience, skill, and eloquence" were tested by the squabbling of the Hanse League (Beard, 1938 78). The point of greater rhetorical interest might be, however, the degree to which the German commercial cities engaged in collective decision making discourse. "Nearly everything the German businessman did was done in a crowd" (Beard, 1938 86) and even the most mundane decisions were made as a group, and the merchants created rules to govern themselves without governments or strong individual leaders.

A Reticent Canon of Performance

In an age of intrigue and mayhem, perhaps the mundane commercial exchange of resources has little to recommend sustained attention. Business men were "the representatives of thrift, temperance, reticence, hard work, domesticity and other qualities which wearied, instead of thrilling readers," says one historian, noting that "the perverts and maniacs who might succeed as monarchs could never …manage a cloth-factory" (Beard, 1938 3). Still, the studied reticence of the commercial classes might offer insights into that community's rhetorical stability. For example, it was largely

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Salvestro's son, Giovanni, who solidified the Medici family power, establishing a graduated income tax and thereby leaving great wealth and power to his own son, Cosimo. His testamentary advice describes a rhetoric of discretion; "Speak not as though giving advice…not puffed up with pride at receiving many votes….Avoid litigation…Be careful not to attract public attention" (quoted in Beard, 1938 152). Political power has often resulted from public discourse, and rhetorical theory has consequently presumed oratorical eloquence to be the source of that power, but for those decisions having to do with the allocation of a community's material resources—its economic decisions—a quieter discourse of performance and perseverance might have more impact.

Financiers of Political Ambition

During the rise of the nation states, the business person has been similarly invisible in the historical record of empires and emperors, even as they financed the campaigns that made possible the consolidations of power. Throughout much of European history, the nominal rulers had far less impact on the material outcomes of resource allocation decisions than did the commercial lenders.

Jacob Fugger

The son of a prosperous businessman, Jacob Fugger took charge of the Innsbruck branch, expanding the company's investments in copper and silver mining such that the family's capital assets ultimately exceeded the Medici with interests in mining, importing, banking, agriculture, and a news service. Fugger supported the Hapsburgs with loans of increasing amounts to the Emperor Maximillian, earning profits from interest or defaulted collateral, as well as a certain amount of security and protection from the Crown (Witzel, 2002), and in the most material way, "the destinies of Europe were decided by the Fugger wealth" (Beard, 1938 231). Although Fugger never held a governmental post, he was consulted before any important political moves, was able to reprove the monarch when he did not act in an acceptable way, and provided the resources for the Emperor's military and exploratory campaigns, including the exploration and exploitation of Vasco de Gama's route to India.

Sir Thomas Gresham

Financial power sometimes took on a more formalized relationship to political power, as when Thomas Gresham, the son of a prosperous mercer and sometime Lord Mayor of London, was sent to Antwerp in 1552 to act as royal agent with his primary task "to manage the huge royal debt run up by King Henry VIII" (Witzel, 2002 162). Gresham retained his commercial interests as a money-lender, munitioneer, and cloth merchant, but served as the financial advisor of all three of Henry VIII's children. He was brought

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in as an advisor to Edward and maintained the only honorable and profitable way to reduce the royal debts was to pay them off. He assisted Mary in maintaining credit in Antwerp, and to Elizabeth, "he laid down certain fundamental principles which made England the only financially sound nation left in Europe by the end of the century" (Beard, 1938 236).

Perhaps most important, Gresham maintained the credit of the Crown by establishing laws that would allow and encourage merchants to lend money to it, and he insisted that the Crown also keep faith with the people. He successfully urged Queen Elizabeth to remove the statutory prohibition against charging interest (Beard, 1938). Further, Gresham saw it in Britain's best interests to wage economic war on the continent and undertook the breaking of the German textile monopolies. Gresham the munitioneer did not limit himself to financial issues, however, offering military proposals for defense as well.

Minister Colbert

Colbert had made a fortune in business enterprise, having been trained by his cloth-dealing father and banker uncle (Beard, 1938) and then became the financial coordinator of France from 1661-1683, holding the departments of administration, finance, the navy, commerce and agriculture, and attempted to organized all of French government along business principles and to encourage French manufacturing as a means of maintaining the country's economic health.

Colbert's persuasive message was generally directly at the Crown, as when he requested that the King set the fashion standards to support the French industry rather than wearing imported waistcoat fabrics (Beard, 1938 369). He was also sensitive to the need to instill in the French citizenry a willingness to engage in production in order to create goods with which to trade. He urged another merchant in his administration, Jacques Savary, to write "Le Parfait Négoçiant" (1674) a tract designed to teach poor youth how to become bourgeoisie gentlemen with rules for apprentices that would encourage thrift and sobriety on which to found a good family.

James Houblon the elder and the younger

James Houblon the elder, the "Father of the London Exchange," was a French emigrant who landed in England in "no mood to finance in his adopted country the same sort of Absolutism which had driven his family into exile" from France (Beard, 1938 387). Houblon the younger became Lord Mayor of London and with his brothers, ran the newly established Bank of England. He played a role in replacing the English kings with a "Dutch King, who knew bookkeeping and had some idea of contracts" (Beard, 1938

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398). Although they were opposed to using the bank's funds for warfare, Houblon demanded that the bank's shareholders assess themselves 20% to fund William's war. And "when Houblon stepped before them, he not only calmed their wrath—he got from them another big loan for William's war. Hypnotized by Houblon's massive presence, every hand in the hall went up in his favor" (Beard, 1938 400).

Jagat Seth

Born 1680, Bengal, India to a family already involved in banking and finance, Jagat Seth built good business relationships with the emperors in both Bengal and Delhi and cultivated relationships with the banking houses in other parts of India. He was successful in "helping to establish a financial structure which covered all of India" (Witzel, 2002 33).

John Law

Not all attempts at state finance resulted in success. John Law, who was probably honorable in his intentions, urged against France's King Louis XV's declaration of bankruptcy in favor of establishing a national bank. "His propaganda was masterly" (Beard, 1938 417) and he created a market for New World investment rights to finance the government. Unfortunately, his persuasive methods were perhaps too successful and his efforts sparked an investment frenzy that drew in the wealth of all classes, only to collapse suddenly, leaving France and many of her subjects bankrupt.

Discovering the Common Interest

Oratory is not the genre of choice for one who plays the role of financial advisor to a monarch, and even the public display of financial solvency has little significance in the context. This is not to say, however, that such individuals did not engage in persuasive communication, or that such communication did not have far-reaching effects on the economic decision making of their communities. Gresham's persuasions, for example, were directed primarily to the Crown. In a "brief note" to Queen Elizabeth's minister, he offered provisions for a "large navy" and as one historian put it, "this little document could do the work which nowadays requires a thousand pamphlets, editorials and speeches" (Beard, 1938 235).

Rather than create arguments that appeal to the lowest common denominator of a public audience, such messages could focus on the issues that mattered. The "frank alliance of business and politics" made for "great intellectual honesty, if not for clear separation of private and public purse" (Beard, 1938 235). Gresham urged the Queen to "aid the Protestant cause in Europe in order to lift the British pound. It was not necessary for him

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to plead patriotic or religious motives, as Cromwell had to do a hundred years later" (Beard, 1938 236). The patriotic and religious arguments of a Cromwell have been recognized as the eloquent invention of a great public speaker, but perhaps it is only the bias of a particular rhetorical culture that sees Cromwell's rhetoric as more relevant to the community's economic decisions than the private notes of Gresham.

Arguments of Self-Interest

With the more complex issues of growing economies, the rhetoric of individual businessmen became advocacy for narrowly defined positions, self-interested proposals that would benefit both the merchant and the community. "All the economic writing, with rare exceptions, was done by interested parties urging specific action on concrete issues; the authors were not professorial theorists" (Beard, 1938 301).

Willem Usselincx

One business rhetor of Holland, Willem Usselincx, urged war against Spain, while proposing himself as the principle director of a corporation to undertake the project. His "most effective argument" to the audience of that community was a straightforward economic calculation; "the best ordinary business adventures paid only ten percent per annum, mortgages yielded four to six and deposits five to six, while agriculture returned but a paltry three per cent—whereas the monopolistic East India Company had paid twenty-four per cent." He concluded, therefore, that "it would be worth while to fight Spain for the purpose of launching a new corporation" (Beard, 1938 301).

Grotius

Grotius was not a businessperson per se, but a "brilliant jurist" of Delft who was hired by the Dutch East India Company to make the case for alien consumption. In "Mare Librum," he appealed to the British audience's respect for moral arguments and created a "superb brief" that became the doctrine of free seas in international law (Beard, 1938 302).

John Wheeler

As Secretary of the Merchant Adventurers, John Wheeler wrote a defense of business in 1601, "A Treatise of Commerce, wherein are shewed the commodities arising by a well-ordered and ruled trade, such as that of the Society of Merchant Adventurers is proved to be, written principallie for the better information of those, who doubt of the necessariness of the said Society in the State of the Realm of England."

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Sir Walter Raleigh

Walter Raleigh, monopolist and state-merchant, prepared a pamphlet for King James that argued for the creation of more positions to perform the same function.

Thomas Mun

Governor of the East India Company, Thomas Mun "produced an impressive defense of that organization," in 1621, "Discourse of Trade from England to the East Indies," which urged the export of bullion to the East as a benefit to the national trade balance (Beard, 1938 476).

A Sphere for Economic Advocacy

Unlike the political or philosophical rhetor, business rhetoric of the day found "an almost complete absence of heart-stirring slogans and imposing abstractions." Instead, "the efforts of the pamphlet-writers were designed…to proclaim the interests of a small party to be the interests of all" (Beard, 1938 300). While the individual business man speaking in his own self-interest is now judged to be acting outside the public sphere of common interest, the rhetorical efforts of these earlier eras suggest there is not a clear, bright line between the two.

When resources are allocated according to rules that are advantageous to both parties, the negotiation is viewed as the technical calculation of profit. These earlier rhetors were no less creative in their persuasive efforts, however, than those who might have made a claim to fear or reason or religious authority. Contemporary theorists make distinctions between public, private and technical spheres of argument (Goodnight, 1982), but the definitions of each realm are not constant across rhetorical communities. The agreement that "profit" is a measure of value, whether for the individual or the community, is an epistemological one. The question of theoretical interest might be why we have ruled discussions of profit to be unacceptable in the public discussions of resource allocation, even as cost/benefit information supports the material decision-making processes that govern the world's resource allocation.

Advocacy of General Principles

As it happens, the English business men of the age of exploration were somewhat freer than German or French merchants, and more personally vocal. Rather than relying on the intellectuals in their communities to speak for them, they "became active and effective propagandists for their own causes" (Beard, 1938 475) and necessitating a broadening of their persuasive appeals.

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William Paterson

William Paterson has been judged "one of the most far-sighted writers of the business world" and he argued extensively on a series of economic and financial topics. He "almost alone stopped one unsound paper-money scheme from going through Parliament" (Beard, 1938 479), and his pamphlet exposing the John Law scheme in France was "publicly burned by infuriated clerks of the English Stock Exchange" (Beard, 1938 479). Paterson is not rememberd as an advocate, however, as much as for his more general arguments. One pamphlet argued for the indemnification of investors in his failed New World trade venture, the Darian Company, but "around this specific proposal, he wove such a general discussion of economics as to render this pamphlet decidedly noteworthy" (Beard, 1938 479). Patterson's work had no direct effect on the English monarchy, which proceeded instead to try save the government's credit by investing in the wildly speculative South Sea Bubble, but his work proposed economic measures we now take for granted such as standardized weights and measures, trade consuls, government purchases to support prices, and government funding for roads, harbors and bridges.

William Ewart Gladstone

William Gladstone is known now as a political rhetor, but that "supreme embodiment of the Victorian bourgeois gentleman" came out of the Liverpool business community (Beard, 1938 382). Gladstone was the son of a wealthy grain merchant and West Indies plantation owner and took seriously the issues of commerce.

Sir Josiah Child

Director of the East India Company, which functioned as the government of India, able to raise an army, coin money, and make laws as well as trade. "Eloquent" in defense of monopolies, and "ensuing writers down to the most modern apologists have, in essence, but repeated the arguments of this remarkable man" (Beard, 1938 477).

John Stuart Mill

John Stuart Mill wrote much of *System of Logic* and *Principles of Political Economy* "during office hours" at the East India Company, where his father, James Mill also worked (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 35).

Richard Cantillon

Although the English rhetors might have predominated, they were not unique. French businessman, Richard Cantillon, wrote "Upon the Nature of Commerce in General" in

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1755. Dealing with the production and distribution of wealth, his work has been called one of the most important works to foreshadow the study of political economy, a field now "so generally considered a structure reared by pure theoreticians, whole objective and removed from the strife of the marketplace, that its origins in the disputations of business men are sometimes overlooked" (Beard, 1938 476).

Richard Cobden

Richard Cobden, an industrialist of the British North country, assumed a public role and in the course of campaigning, "elaborated the thesis of laissez faire and business individualism" (Beard, 1938 589). He was one of the organizers of a propaganda campaign to educate the poor toward support of laissez faire business policies and free trade and instrumental in repeal of the British Corn Laws in 1846. Perhaps the rhetoric took over, as one historian claims "the manufacturers who led the charge against the camp of the agrarians had to whip themselves into such orgies of sentiment in order to carry along the masses…that, incessantly proclaiming the holiness of their mission, they converted themselves as well" (Beard, 1938 594). In any case, Cobden exhausted his private fortune in his campaigns, but with the donations of supporters, he went abroad as a spokesman for "Manchesterism." He "visited royal courts, addressed banquets, cemented trade treaties and everywhere drummed up a tremendous interest in the English industrial experiment and its philosophy" (Beard, 1938 596).

John Bright

After creating a successful income from cotton-spinning, John Bright put business aside and "cleared his decks for political action" (Beard, 1938 594). Campaigning with Cobden, he was apparently sincere in his evangelistic belief that agrarian interest must be overthrown in order to save laborers from abuse. Bright's "Angle of Death" speech during the Crimean War is said to have "moved the crustiest of Victorians to a sigh or tears" (Beard, 1938 595).

Thomas Attwood

From a business family in Birmingham, Thomas Attwood organized a Political Union in 1830 to agitate for the enfranchisement of propertied men, making the plain argument that trade was falling off and thus taxes needed to be reduced. Along with an equally blunt citizen of Manchester, Richard Potter, he argued for a place in Parliament where there were no "men of business" sitting to do something about taxes (Beard, 1938 594).

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Eloquent Spokesmen for the Economy

As these early men of commerce defended and theorized their practices, they had to address a broader public audience, which directed their arguments in directions we still recognize as the basis for economic theory. One historian describes the business rhetoric in largely agrarian England, for example, as a challenge for the "ambitious man of business" to present a case to "slow-minded country squires" to whom he had to appeal "on a 'commonsense' level, without intricacy" with ideas that were "sensible, national, rational and agreeable to God" (Beard, 1938 476). The arguments—a common good, defense of the seas, and religious values—explained how commercial interests were also those of the nation, and the call to support the "national interest" became a stock argument in political rhetoric as well (Beard, 1938 476).

Middle Class Democracy

In spite of the fine language of liberty and democracy, it is no secret that the revolutions against various aristocracies around the world have had an economic basis. The democratic nature of the American colonies, for example, was largely the result of their origins as commercial ventures, and British restrictions against manufacturing and trade restrictions led to an American Revolution that was sparked by smugglers. Attention to the ideological rhetoric of the era should not preclude attention to the economic discourse as well.

Sir Edwin Sandys

Sir Edwin Sandys, as treasurer of the Virginia Company, "earned the wrath of James I" when he spoke before the British House of Commons to question the legitimacy of any government not based on a mutual contract between ruler and ruled. His organization effectively introduced representative democracy into the colonies, authorizing a General Assembly in which members elected the company's officers" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 34).

John Winthrop

John Winthrop introduced democracy to Massachusetts in 1630 when the General Court of the Massachusetts Company "transformed itself into a commonwealth, redefining "freemen" from stockholders in a commercial venture to citizens of a state" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 34).

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Ishida Baigan

In the early eighteenth century, a former apprentice with the business house of Kuroyanagi in Kyoto developed an ethical system called *sekimon shingaku*, which "had at its heart an appreciation of the role of the merchant and businessman" (Witzel, 2002 43). The philosophy became widespread among both the samurai and the middle classes, and "from thenceforth trade and industry were increasingly seen as powers for social good" in Japan (Witzel, 2002 43).

David Hansemann

David Hansemann was a Prussian businessman who retired to political office. Becoming Prussian Minister, he tried to steer the state toward liberalism and compromise, although in that nation the effort did not prevail.

Jacques Necker

Jacques Necker, France's "great merchant and banker, theorist and all-around business success of the day" (Beard, 1938 543) had made a huge impression in the best salons and written *The Administration of the Finances of France* (1788), which sold well to both the business community and the nobility, who demanded he be returned to a ministerial position. Faced with a depression, however, Necker took no action, believing it was "his duty let the people speak themselves out" (Beard, 1938 545). The ensuing public discussion and subsequent lack of leadership in both the elections and the management of the Estates-General ultimately resulted in the French Revolution.

Samuel Johnson

Although Samuel Johnson's active management role was short, but his writings reflect commentary on economic issues, and his "interest in the practical business of the world illuminates many of his attitudes as a writer and as a person" (Mathias, 1978 264).

Benjamin Franklin

Often recognized as a consummate politician, inventor or raconteur, Benjamin Franklin was also a proud businessperson who had earned a large part of his wealth from land investments and denigrated by Europeans critics as "the very embodiment of the Puritan entrepreneur mentality (Beard, 1938 518). A leader among the "middle-class artisans and mechanics who outlined the objectives, set the pace, provided the leadership, and reaped the benefits of the Revolutionary turmoil" (Olton, 1975), he refused to turn his back on his background as a business owner and signed himself "Benjamin Franklin, Printer" throughout his political career.

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Frederick Engels

Frederick Engels was “perhaps…the only truly happy and confident business man in that dreadful time [during the panic following the collapse of American gold rush]. As a representative of his German father’s cotton firm in Manchester, Engles welcomed the ‘downfall of the capitalist system’” (Beard, 1938 600). He wrote the first draft of is friend, Karl Marx’s Communist Manifesto, furnishing “both practical advice and descriptive material” (Beard, 1938 600) based on his own industrial experience.

Benjamin Disraeli

Descended from a Venetian family that earned its business fortune in England, Disraeli “entered the Stock Exchange and merrily gambled on Spanish-American mining shares” (Beard, 1938 603). He went bankrupt but gained a respect for those with business acumen. He maintained that business prepared him for politics.

Joseph Chamberlain

A screw manufacturer from Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain “retired to try orchid-fancying and statesmanship (Beard, 1938 604). He became a Colonial Minister, then Mayor of Birmingham, where he “remade the community” by initiating municipal control of light and water, cleared slum areas, reduced the death rate by 30%, founded an art gallery and university, and “strove to heal the scars left by the lawless anarchy which his forebears had proclaimed as the will of Nature” (Beard, 1938 605).

William Gregg

A Virginian who had made a fortune in the jewelry business, William Gregg later “devoted his days to breaking down the prejudices of Southerners against industrialism. Pamphleteering, fighting in the legislature, seeking to arouse interest in the problem of educating and employing the idle poor whites, he finally crushed Charleston’s opposition to the steam engine [it had been prohibited within the city to prevent pollution] and opened mills” (Beard, 1938 610).

Edmund Ruffin

“…subduing all men by his fierce eyes and the dignity of a hoary mane floating to his shoulders” (Beard, 1938 612), Edmund Ruffin preached “enmity to nearly everything Gregg had advocated” and after years of crusading, was delighted to be given permission to participate in the attack on Fort Sumter, the “symbol of Yankee commercial despotism” that lead to the Civil War.

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Robert McNamara

With the introduction of managerial science to the business community, and them to government organizations (Drucker, 1973), the discourses of business became, in many respects, the discourse of government. The revolution was demonstrated when "Bob McNamara's Whiz Kids moved all too effortlessly from managing Ford to running the Vietnam War" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 119).

No Memory for Figures

Any complete history of Western politics will recognize that business individuals and economic factors have shaped national boundaries, conflicts and political systems. But, while "the average citizen can name explorers and despots, few can name even one person from business who has had a significant impact on history" (Witzel, 2002 4). Perhaps the reason is simple; history students find the economic background and context to be tedious, while the resulting war is inherently exciting and easy to remember. Slightly less simple is the cultural bias that finds institutions and ideas to be more important than the mundane job of moving provisions into the community. The business man's labors have "lacked significance as well as eccentricity" (Beard, 1938 4), but the very definition of significant behavior warrants a rhetorical examination. How is it that the orator espousing a new political system is deemed to have more impact on the community than the merchant whose discourse has resulted in new food sources for the population?

The theoretical demarcation between business and political rhetoric also implies that the business man who goes into politics is crossing an inviolate line. Both business (Friedman, 1970) and rhetorical critics (Goodnight, 1982) will argue that the line protects their preferred discourse from contamination, but the separation of business and social decision-making has not always been seen as desirable. A lack of business involvement in political and cultural activities has been the more common complaint since the ancient times (Beard, 1938). In purely practical terms, focus on the political results without attention to the commercial context, actions, and values of the rhetors who achieved those results might cause us to miss important rhetorical insights. More fundamentally, arbitrary distinctions between those discourses might be reconsidered.

Industrial Revolution

In many ways, the contemporary business environment is the product of technological developments that allowed standardization and growth of production processes. National wealth mushroomed with production, as did the wealth of those individuals who controlled the production and thus the economic decision making of the community.

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Emil Rathenau

A technological genius, Emil Rathenau was "one of the men who revolutionized the surroundings of the human race," but took no public role in politics or civic life. Nevertheless, he was an influential figure for the many who "came from far to ask him what would come out of this technique, that form of communication, this economic structure" (Beard, 1938 570) and built on the ideas they gleaned from him in private conversation.

Alfred Krupp

Born in Essen in 1812, Alfred Krupp inherited a bankrupt steel business from his father, rebuilding it slowly until the 1860's when railroads became widespread and his steel rails and components were in great demand (Witzel, 2002 90). Apparently from sincere concern for the welfare of the country, he used his great fortune to manufacture guns and "did more to upset the balance of Europe and the budgets of nations, destroy the whole political set-up of the world, and endanger the future of capitalism itself, than the soldiers and politicians put together" (Beard, 1938 575). Krupp was not an orator, but as a businessman "had built up a relationship network with key clients. Rather than charm (he had none), Krupp employed an unshakeable faith in his own products combined with a dour persistence; he laid siege to the Prussian government for more than twenty years before the latter finally caved in and agreed to test his new designs for cannon" (Witzel, 2002 89).

John D. Rockefeller

John D. Rockefeller formed Standard Oil and "set about rationalizing the oil industry" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 67). He "encouraged the creation of the refiners' association [the National Refiners Association] and became its first president. The association failed to maintain control of price or production" and Rockefeller came to believe that such associations "were 'mere ropes of sand.' He and his associates then decided to obtain the cooperation of its rivals by relying on the economic power provided by their high-volume, low-cost operation" (Chandler, 1977 321). By 1881 the cartel had forty members and controlled 90% of the country's refining capacity, maintaining control over the alliance by holding each others' stock as well as coordinated production practices that "could easily crush the remaining few small refiners" if they didn't cooperate. (Chandler, 1977 322).

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Robert Owen

Purchasing the New Lanark Mill upon his marriage to its owner's daughter, Robert Owen "made the mill and community into a model of enlightened capitalism." In this case, the rhetoric was a material performance that was aimed toward "improving the quality of life and the physical conditions of work …contributing to the good of society" while insuring that their work in the mill would be more efficient as well (Witzel, 2002 244).

Henry Ford

Clearly Henry Ford had a major impact on subsequent economic behaviors around the world, and his standardized production processes have become a significant *topoi* in the material rhetorics of resource allocation that have determined global fuel consumption and pollution as well as the working class' standard of living (Lewis, 1976). The "folk hero" image that Ford nurtured in interviews and media stories was also a rhetorical technique; he was astute at creating situations that generated news and took advantage of those opportunities to express his opinions on cultural and political issues as well as business interests.

Daniel Guggenheim

Born in 1856, Daniel Guggenheim joined is father's lace-importing business as a buyer in Switzerland. The firm expanded into silver and lead-mining in the U.S. west, and after taking it over from his father, Guggenheim greatly expanded the operations. He took over ASARCO in 1899, making him the largest mine owner in the world. "In 1915 he stunned the United States Industrial Relations Commission, before which he was testifying, when he said that employees were justified in organizing, as many capitalists were too arbitrary in their treatment of their workers" (Witzel, 2002 219).

Lord Salisbury

Robert Cecil, the third Marquess of Salisbury was forced to "earn his own living" and tried to give up his political seat in order to find "paid" government service. With no position available, he turned to writing. The insolvent Great Eastern Railway, in need of someone with sufficient social standing to provide it credibility, asked him to chair. Lord Salisbury brought the company back to economic health with his involvement in the day-to-day operations (Barker, 1978). Later, as Prime Minister, his experiences as a "railway chairman" probably influenced the passage of the "Railway Act of 1888 and the wholesale revision of railway rates which followed it" (Barker, 1978 100).

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Lord Beaverbrook

A British businessman, Lord Beaverbrook was asked to take over the office of Minister of Aircraft Production from May 1940 to May 1941 and judged to be an "industrial miracleworker." His managerial methods were instrumental in maintaining aircraft production levels that had a significant impact on Allied success in the Battle of Britian (Robertson, 1982).

The Persuasiveness of Production

No discussion of business discourse is complete without a recognition of the influence of the actions of the Fords, GM's and Duponts. The most fundamental choices about the world's resource allocation have been made largely on the basis of administrative and technical innovations, seldom as the consequence of articulated arguments for or against a given course of action. For that matter, in a business context, no decision is complete without its implementation (Drucker, 1973), and it is largely meaningless to choose a course of action unconnected to its material performance. Rhetorical studies have recognized the influence of performative acts across a range of political issues (Bowers & Ochs, 1971; Brummett, 1991; DeLuca & Peeples, 2002; Finnegan & Kang, 2004), but have yet to consider the inducements of production as a rhetorical performance.

Meaningful Money

For many in the 21st century, business is often synonymous with the financial markets. The image of "Main Street" as the community's backbone of civic engagement is distinguished from "Wall Street" where corporate enterprises conduct business. Certainly that sphere of global financial exchange was built by some key figures.

Jay Gould

Jay Gould, a 19th century speculator, was instrumental in building the who "forced the Pennsylvania [Railroad] to abandon its long-held territorial strategy and to build the nation's first interterritorial railroad empire. And it was Gould who finally convinced William Vanderbilt to transform the New York Central into a similar giant system" (Chandler, 1977 148) and ten years later "pushed the top managers of the Burlington, the Chicago and Northwestern, and other western lines into a strategy of expansion and consolidation." His campaign began with negotiations he had to resort to the more novel method of purchasing proxies, which allowed him to appoint directors and arrange for the sale of the assets he desired. Ultimately, his campaign failed, but his actions did have a lasting impact on the railroad companies involved. "It required a speculator with the

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imagination and talent of Jay Gould to mount a serious competitive challenge" to the communication networks of Western Union (Chandler, 1977 149).

Henry Varnum Poor

The potential for profit fueled much of the investment in the railways, of course, but it was at least in part the discourse surrounding those investments that created the investor culture that we now recognize as Wall Street. The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* and the *Wall Street Journal* covered railroad stocks in depth, and Henry V. Poor edited the *American Railroad Journal* and then *Poor's Manual of Railroad Securities* before giving his name to the ratings agency, Standard & Poor's.

J.Pierpoint Morgan

His father, Junius Morgan had been a wealthy banker, and J.P. Morgan held immense power over the US economy. Without a Federal Reserve to control the money supply, he sometimes operated as the nation's one-man central bank. "By withdrawing his approval from a shaky deal, he could cause a panic. By pouring millions into tottering banks, he could end one" (Lacayo, 2006). The Morgans' alliance with the great British banking houses of the Rothschilds and Barings, allowed J.P. Morgan to work closely with them in later years to bail out the US Treasury (Witzel, 2002), and he was instrumental in transforming the market, which then traded only a few manufacturers, mostly associated with railroads. Market capitalization expanded from $33 million in 1890 to more than $7 billion in 1903 as a consequence of Morgan's promotion of stock purchases.

Morgan believed in free enterprise, but had seen enough of unbridled competition." (Lacayo, 2006) and he advocated monopolies as a means of setting "fair" prices that afforded producers the full value for their labor. His rhetoric might have been "private" by the standards of contemporary rhetorical theory, but he was clearly effective, "a supreme manipulator, arbiter and king of kings…in 1889 he invited eighteen railway presidents and bankers to dinner, at which he told these mighty magnates that they could no longer 'take the law into their own hands,' and sent armed trainmen to gun-play in the battle over lines….Morgan's fiat, tremblingly accepted by his satraps, closed the era of rough-and-tumble individualism" (Beard, 1938 635).

A Discourse of Interest

The bias against money lending and speculation can be traced to ancient texts. After the collapse of the Roman empire, the Christian church continued "subduing the profit-maker" with moral strictures on earning interest that officially lasted until 1830 (Beard, 1938 30). The money-lender was condemned, along with the "middleman" who profited

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from the work of tradesman “who did nothing to improve an article” but charged a higher price than did its maker (1938 51). The bias against greedy speculators and shysters is easily observed today, and it is probably no wonder that the persuasive efforts that make the manipulation of money possible are seldom considered as legitimate functions of the public sphere. Nevertheless, the contemporary economy functions as a consequence of its monetary tools, and that economy, in turn, is the mechanism by which resources are valued, allocated and moved around the globe. Interest itself might even be considered a *topoi* in the material rhetoric of economic transactions, but surely the discourse of those who have created and used the system deserve scrutiny by rhetorical scholars.

The Language of Accounting and Control

Just as science has been formed through the discourses of objectivist rationalism, business as we know it today is a product of discourses of accounting and control. In the history of business, key figures have created methods that defined, located, recorded, and ultimately communicated types of information that are now the “taken for granteds” of business discourse.

Luca Pacioli

Luca Pacioli’s *Summa de arithmetica,* published in Venice in 1494. is the earliest known written account of how the double-entry bookkeeping system works, although it seems likely that the system goes back to around 1300.

William Deloitte

Born in London in 1818, William Deloitte established an accountancy practice, served as external auditor for many large companies, and “continued to be an innovator in accounting practice” he developed “a number of accounting and auditing methods which have had lasting impact on management reporting and control” (Witzel, 2002 173).

Andrew Carnegie

Andrew Carnegie organized his steel company with a structure similar to that of his former employer, the Pennsylvania Railroad. His general manager, William P. Shin, also a former railroad executive, applied the voucher system of accounting, previously unused in manufacturing, to provide Carnegie with monthly costs of materials and operations. Carnegie used these reports as his primary means of control, declaring, “watch the costs and the profits will take care of themselves.’ He compared costs with previous periods, and when possible with competitors’ operations (Chandler, 1977 267).

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Henry R. Towne

Senior executive and major stockholder of the Yale and Towne Lock Company, Henry Towne made the presidential address, "The Engineer as an Economist," to the annual meeting of the recently formed American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1886. The prolonged depression of the 1870's was turning attention from technology to organization, and Towne's speech, along with two significant papers on cost accounting and capital accounting led to "long discussion" at the meeting as manufacturers realized they "were developing comparable control and accounting methods" (Chandler, 1977 274) that then came into common use.

Frederick W. Taylor

In his position at the Midvale Steel Company, Frederick Taylor had been working on control and accounting methods for several years, and in 1895 he delivered his first paper (Taylor, 1895) on what he called "scientific management" (Chandler, 1977) and "his efforts to determine scientifically standard time and output helped Taylor to become the nation's best known expert on factory management" (Chandler, 1977 276), testifying before congress with great impact.

Control of Information as Control of Business

In the history of business management, there are countless examples of information control as the basis of success. Jacob Fugger, for example, personally kept the books for the entire Fugger enterprise, which extended across Europe, and it was "this combination of intense monitoring of information and a flexible, far-flung network gave Fugger the ability to respond quickly to crisis" (Witzel, 2002 161). With an ability to catalogue and communicate key facts having to do with a business, managers have found themselves more persuasive and more successful, of course. The elements that are defined as "facts" also become the focus of further activities, structuring not only the immediate enterprise, but those that follow as well. The rhetorical study of either stage of the discursive process would seem to promise a richer understanding of business and of the world's economic decision-making processes.

Publicists, Advertisers, and Salesmen

Advertising and public relations are business functions that have received considerable rhetorical attention. Clearly these overt attempts at persuasion deserve study in general, but some instances of personal persuasiveness have created whole industries and markets.

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Phineas Taylor Barnum

P.T. Barnum failed in a series of more conventional business ventures before he realized "that in order to draw crowds he needed publicity" for which he proved to have "a natural flair" (Witzel, 2002 91). Barnum used advertising, but found media publicity cheaper so he cultivated newspaper editors in hope of placing favorable stories. Ultimately, he became the news himself, a legend that was built on his own personal flamboyance.

John Patterson

So impressed with the technology of the newly invented cash register, John Patterson raised capital and bought the inventor's company to establish National Cash Register (NCR). Knowing the task of selling a high-tech machine to small retailers would be difficult, he provided his sales force with intensive training and instructed them "first to learn about the customer's business and its needs, and only when they could see a genuine use for the cash register that would benefit the customer were they to make a pitch" (Witzel, 2002 95).

John North Willys

John Willys had been a bicycle retailer, then an agent for Pierce-Arrow and Rambler cars. He bought out the bankrupt Overland Car Company and established one of the first large-scale car dealership networks, "backing up his dealers with promotions, advertising and credit plans which helped them attract customers and made it easier for them to sell cars." He was a "sales genius" with an "almost instinctive understanding of his market; what is more, he knew how to apply his understanding of psychology to his sales force" (Witzel, 2002 96).

William Hesketh Lever

William Lever had followed his father into the grocery business, but with the rising affluence of the British working class, he "realized that there were opportunities to break through to this group by offering them products which had formerly been unaffordable. The greatest opportunity, he believed, lay in soap. The task was to convince working-class housewives that soap, which they had regarded as a luxury, was in fact a necessity" (Witzel, 2002 97). Lever first invented a brand name (Sunlight), but unable to find suppliers who could provide consistent quality, he purchased his own soap works. None of the various promotional tools he used was new, his innovation was "their combined deployment as part of a larger brand strategy" (Witzel, 2002 97), introducing a new brand every two years (2002 98)

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George Eastman

George Eastman invented a cheap camera, but more importantly for both his business and U.S. culture, "also the idea of the amateur photographer to find a market for his photographic film" (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 66). In order to market the new cameras, Eastman "immediately created a worldwide marketing network of branch offices with managers to supervise salesmen and demonstrators and coordinate the flow of cameras, films, and funds" (Chandler, 1977 297). By the early twentieth century, Eastman Kodak began to build retail stores in major cities.

Thomas Edison

Edison could not interest banks or Wall Street to finance the production of the light bulb he had invented, so he supplied 90 percent of the capital needed to go into manufacturing himself. The plants eventually became the nucleus of GE. "He would use the press for instant credibility and communication for his projects…His ability to charm the world as the great technological problem-solver was truly charismatic" (Landrum, 1993 17).

George Francis Train

"With the shrewdness of a Barnum he united the mellifluous oratorical periods of a Southern Senator, and could sway any audience into a mad stampede for subscriptions" in his various land speculation schemes (Beard, 1938 618).

Mark Hanna

Not all publicity was strictly for business purposes. Mark Hanna "left a business career in Cleveland's coal and iron region to organize the Republican Party on a business basis. Hanna's machine was stupendous. Bringing advertising methods into politics, Hanna used clever slogans, distributed tons of 'boilerplate' to local newspapers, set up posters and conducted local canvasses….he was the most effective business personality in politics" (Beard, 1938 642).

Fred Smith

Fred Smith invented the first overnight delivery service and formed Federal Express in 1972, an enterprise built on a "charismatic magnetism" that convinced employees and formed a market that others were convinced was non-existent (Landrum, 1993 88). His persona is fundamental to the success of Federal Express, where "the founder/leader and the organization have become 'one and the same' "(Landrum, 1993). The result has been "…widespread business changes and opportunities have been made possible by the new

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mentality of Fred Smith's 'absolutely positively overnight'—anywhere in the world" (Landrum, 1993 94).

Richard Sears

We take the rhetoric of mail order catalogs for granted, but it took Richard Sears, "a copywriter of genius," (along with the organizational talent of Julius Rosenwald, to create an economic revolution with the Sears, Roebuck catalog (Micklethwait & Wooldridge, 2003 57).

Akio Morita

The charismatic father of the transistor radio, which spawned the consumer electronics revolution, Akio Morita cofounded Sony and earned a "reputation as one of the Western world's greatest salespeople" (Landrum, 1993 189). It was Morita's "burning desire to reverse the image of 'Made in Japan' as a cheap copy," and "more than any other individual or company in Japan, Morita has been responsible for achieving that objective" (Landrum, 1993 191).

Marcel Bich

Marcel Bich is credited with creating the contemporary "throwaway culture" with the BIC pen in 1953, followed by BIC shavers and lighters. Marketing emphasized the reliability of the product, and distribution reached 93 % of U.S. retailers in the rollout (Landrum, 1993). Bich's business innovations have had a lasting impact on multinational conduct of contemporary business, and his "highly focused ingenuity changed the buying habits of society" (Landrum, 1993 142).

Steve Jobs

By nurturing Steve Wozniak's invention, Steve Jobs transformed the personal computer from niche product for the technologically inclined hobbyist to a mass marketed commodity appliance that "forever changed the way the world works, writes, and computes"(Landrum, 1993 77). Job's single-minded design focus has been cited as the source of Apple's success, but his ability to articulate a vision was key in creating both the organization and the market.

Creating a Consumer Audience

Marketing communication is clearly intended to be persuasive, and most scholars would include advertising, sales and public relations communication as legitimate, if mundane, rhetorical discourse. Some might view the advertiser as an unscrupulous rhetor,

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persuading audiences to act in undesirable ways and the salesman hypocritical in his or her willingness to feign a relationship with a customer. The nominations here suggest, however, that key individuals have not merely created messages for existing audiences. These eloquent business voices have created markets, “called forth audiences,” to use Charland’s terminology (1987), to constitute a market: a group of individuals who find value in a product, consumer identity, or a lifestyle. At least some of the bias against the merchant classes has been traced to the discourse of status-conscious aristocrats who jealously guarded their ability to purchase the baubles that signified rank (Beard, 1938). The more far-reaching impact of business discourse might be in the rhetoric that defines social classes by the baubles they value.

The Corporate Evolution

As the size and complexity of business enterprises grew beyond what a single person or even a single family could manage, “the actual work of management fell increasingly to the lot of the business bureaucrats” (Beard, 1938 727). Some business historians trace the history of management to the Medici’s practice of placing salaried professionals at the head of each division of their financial empire (Witzel, 2002). Others will point to the industrial age (Beard, 1938), and still others to the creation of contemporary corporate structures. In any case, an interesting rhetorical study would consider the impetus and implications of the evolution of business person to industry leader to corporate spokesperson to corporate citizen as the primary voice in business discourse.

Nelson B. Aldrich

Nelson B. Aldrich served in the U.S. Senate for many years in alliance with other business men and “through his skillful maneuvers he managed to win for big industry the protection it sought” (Beard, 1938 643). “Not being skilled in forensics” and taciturn, he didn’t even reply to attacks, but resorted to “shrewd arguments and dry jests. He could not sway masses. His true genius lay in back-stage strategy” (Beard, 1938 643).

Elbert Gary

“As early as 1902 [J.P.] Morgan himself had suggested a man-to-man understanding to Roosevelt, but it was left to Elbert Gary, chairman of the board of U.S. Steel, to fashion comprehensive agreements with the executive….his legal training, his ability to articulate the case for bigness and price stability, and above all his position as head of U.S. Steel, made him an impressive public figure” (Wiebe, 1962 46).

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Takafusa

A member of the Mitsui trading family, Takafusa wrote “Chonimnko” to urge “merchants to unite in order to make their associations as strong as the clans of their hereditary foes, the sword-bearers.” The result was the “creation of such organizations as the Wholesale Merchants’ Association to sweep away corruption in the Buddhist churches and the Shogunate, leading to the business triumph in the Japanese Restoration” (Beard, 1938 677).

Mitsui Takatoshi

Hachirobei Mitsui, founded the first fixed price dry-goods store, Echigo-ya, in Edo (now Tokyo) in 1673 (Witzel, 2002). He wrote the constitution of the family [*zaibatsu*], which still governs itself with a family council and dominated, with the Mitsubishi family, Japan’s textile, shipping, and banking industries into the twentieth century (Beard, 1938).

Solomon Price

Sol Price created the first warehouse club, Price Club, in 1977 innovating “the fundamental precept of offering high-quality *brand* merchandise at wholesale prices” (Landrum, 1993 147).

Warren Buffett

Warren Buffett, Chairman of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc., delivers a report to shareholders, which is read closely by financial professionals and the business media. Buffett’s messages have had an enormous influence on investment behavior as well as the contemporary view of the stock market as a mechanism through which every citizen can participate in growth and prosperity (Iden, 2005).

Aurelio Peccei

Aurelio Peccei, senior manager at Fiat and president of the business executives’ Club of Rome, successfully argued for global perspectives on ecological, political and economic problems during the 1970s (Elichirigoity, 2005).

Bill Gates

Of course, Bill Gates created the first PC software and formed Microsoft in 1978, but his rhetoric has also envisioned and guided the internet revolution and had a lasting impact on the multinational conduct of contemporary business(Landrum, 1993). By framing his vision in context, interpreting reality for listeners and giving meaning to events, Gate has

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built on utopian themes and demonstrated leadership strategies commonly associated with social movement leaders (French, 2005).

Lee Iaccoca

Giving more than 600 formal speeches to both internal and external audiences, Lee Iaccoca became the voice of his company and his industry and became the model of proactive corporate leadership as a business statesman and ambassador (Seeger, 1994).

Oprah Winfry

Oprah Winfrey is a media personality, but also an entrepreneur and savvy businessperson. Winfry's ability to bridge rhetorical spaces, merging the social, economic, and political spheres to result in unprecedented political power (Hart & Coopman, 2006).

Industry Spokesman as Public Rhetor

Selecting contemporary business individuals for their rhetorical impact is complicated by the media's role in recognizing key figures on the basis of their high business profile independently of their public discourse. Organizational success increases the assessment of a CEO as "charismatic" rather than charisma leading to organizational performance (Agle, Nagarajan, Sonnenfeld, & Srinivasan, 2006). Further, media attention often focuses on raiders and moguls such as T. Boone Pickens, Carl Icahn, Ted Turner, or Donald Trump, regardless of any long term social or economic effect. These issues are themselves of rhetorical interest, however, in the demonstration of contemporary media's role in defining a significant political voice.

Outside the Realm of Rhetorical

It would take considerable study and debate to create a canon of exemplary business rhetors, and this list of 81 individuals is no more than a first slate of nominees. Some figures are clearly influential in the history of business; others have displayed discursive skill that bears examination. As an exercise in rhetorical history, it is just a list—and a somewhat arbitrary list at that—of potential paper-topics. The more interesting question is whether this list can offer some explanation for the scholarly inattention to economic discourse. Arranged chronologically, there are some hints that business discourse has simply been too boring, too technical, and too sordid to interest the scholar of public address. Still, political speakers have been, more often than not, boring or technical or sordid, and their discourse remains respectably within the parameters of the discipline.

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A more subtle cause might be the degree to which Western rhetorical scholars have defined their own scope in terms of the Western political discourse. Any alternative decision-making methods are deemed arhetorical on the circular grounds that they do not conform to the normative rules that define rhetorical discourse. Thus the poets were banned, along with their narrative and lyrical forms of discourse, and theorists have only admitted in the last century the rhetorical importance of narrative , image , and performance . Similarly, the narrow epistemological grounds of Western rhetoric's "good reason" have been exploded to acknowledge alternate ways of knowing . The business discourse listed here suggests that these theoretical biases might have blinded scholars to the rhetorical functions of both business discourse and business individuals. Because their methods do not fit the normative model of rhetorical discourse, the reality of their decision-making role has been ignored.

The Collaborative Voice in Rhetorical Agency

While it is not difficult to name individuals who have played significant roles in business or political affairs, it is clear that most business discourse functions as a collaborative process (Wiebe, 1962). Individuals engaged in a corporate venture are seeking consensus; seldom is the stubborn defense of an idiosyncratic perspective a virtue. By contrast, public address has been traditionally understood in terms of the individual speaker. Further, the unique vision is an important element of eloquence and significance is judged on the basis of an individual's ability to sway others, for better or for worse, from the course they preferred. Thus, especially since the industrial revolution, business rhetoric is often characterized in terms of the collective behavior or voice of a corporate entity, which lacks theoretical standing as a rhetorical being. It is possible, as this list suggests, to trace the cause of many business events to the visionary, motivational or structuring words of single individuals as they call forth and address organizational or consumer publics. In many more cases, however, the impact of an individual pales against the economic clout of a Dutch Royal Shell or the social impact of a Walt Disney Company.

Clearly it is important for rhetorical scholars to understand the ways in which human communities actually do make their collective decisions. Western culture's resource allocation decisions have been made almost exclusively by traders, merchants, and multinational corporate entities; the inconsequence of individual agency in the process should not prevent attention to its rhetoricity. Instead, scholars might consider communicative dynamics of "distributed cognition" to explain the rhetorical results of collective decision-making processes. The teleological presumption that a single rhetor "causes" a certain outcome might be set aside to consider the intricate communicative networks, relationships and technology that allow complex organizations to "act" as

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viable units (Chandler, 1977; Yates, 1989). A consideration of the group itself as a rhetor might allow theories of group or organizational behavior to enhance our understanding of the nested and overlapping publics that seem to comprise the rhetorical process .

Decision-making Attention to Concrete Data

While it is possible to find business discourse that makes the abstract argument for economic policy or national interest or legal rules, such texts are the exceptions. The mass of business discourse is the fine-grained record of transactions, values, agreements and day-to-day minutia of commercial exchange. Such mundane details have seldom been the stuff of rhetorical study, and even when the texts are not numeric, careful attention to the intricacies of a discourse is problematic . Business scholars have begun to realize, however, the degree to which accounting practices and reporting requirements guide the decision-making behavior of both individuals and organizations. The notational form of the data—rows of number rather than words and sentences—does not reduce its potential for meaningfulness.

The iconoclastic nature of rhetorical scholarship has been challenged , as has the Western presumption that language symbolically represents reality in any important way . Some exploratory work in the rhetoric of mathematics and graphic design suggests that notational discourses allow modes of thinking outside the range of language. Analysis of business texts that embraces rather than discounts their form might serve to illustrate the epistemological and rhetorical potential of both numeric and graphical communication.

A Rhetoric of Material Effect

It might seem that the most relevant measure of a community's decision-making process would be its material outcome. A reasonable measure of a community's rhetorical success would be the degree to which the decision benefits its immediate or long-term interests. Instead, critical measures of both rhetorical process and rhetorical texts have been largely divorced from the materiality of their outcome . It is possible to talk about the "rhetoric" of a private journal, never read or heard by any audience. It is possible to judge a rhetor to be "eloquent" on the basis of his or her ideas, irrespective of any attempt (much less success) in implementing those ideas. A telling feature of the historical businessman is the frequency with which he is "indicted for taciturnity" (Beard, 1938). It seems that material outcomes are not only irrelevant to the rhetoricity of words, but material outcomes without words lie outside the boundaries of rhetorical consequence.

This is not to discount the potential of business discourse to affect the political, social and economic choices of a community; its study would offer much to our rhetorical understanding. Beyond that, however, expanding the scope of "rhetorical" to include

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whatever human behavior results in a collective choice can be instructive. Such a perspective would allow the study of human behaviors across the multiple cultures that have not embraced the West's focus on articulated reason-giving as the only legitimate source of collective action. Further, removing an arbitrary and artificial distinction between legitimate rhetorical processes and their material outcome suggests a more useful means of understanding how communities manage—or don't—their own sustainability.

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A Native-American Bad-News Message from 1805

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Abstract

In 1805, Iroquois chiefs met to consider a request from a missionary to establish a church on a Seneca reservation. Sagoyewatha (Red Jacket), the principal Seneca orator, presented the Senecas' reply, diplomatically rejecting the request in an indirect bad-news message. He buffers the beginning, presents strong reasons for the refusal, and closes with an ending designed to maintain goodwill. This early speech, which students can read, analyze, and discuss in a class period, can be used by writing and speech faculty to illustrate the characteristics of an indirect bad-news message and to discuss methods of effective intercultural communication.

Introduction

Business communication texts all address the indirect bad-news or negative message, discussing how to create such a message but also providing examples, which range from rejecting proposals to requesting favors or claims (Ober, 2006) to denying requests for donations (Guffey, 2006) to announcing changes in insurance coverage (Locker, 2000). Contemporary examples of bad-news messages are clearly important for students, as they mirror common business situations. However, instructors can also provide historical examples of negative messages to provide variety or to demonstrate that the rhetorical situations and principles involved in negative messages are not recent developments. One such historical text, a speech delivered in 1805 by Red Jacket, a chief of the Seneca tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy, can also serve as a valuable example of intercultural communication. Red Jacket's speech is short enough (1150 words) that students can read, analyze, and discuss it in less than a class period. Students can see how the characteristics of an indirect bad-news message were used to create an effective intercultural communication.

Analysis

Red Jacket (ca. 1758-1830) was a minor chief but important orator of the Seneca Indians of western New York State, "a power among his people," according to a historian of the Seneca, Arthur Parker (1926, p. 137). Red Jacket's original name was Otetiani ("Always ready"), but in recognition of his skills he was given the name Sagoyewatha, which means "He keeps them awake," or, translated to represent his skill more accurately, according to Daniel Richter, "He Makes Them Look for It in Vain" (1996, p. 532).

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Red Jacket at first "urged that this was a family quarrel among the white people . . . and that interference might be a mistake" (Wallace, 1970, p. 133), but when the Seneca and most of the other Iroquois were persuaded to fight for the British

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by a Mohawk chief who called them cowards, he too joined the British, serving as a messenger rather than a combatant. For his service, the British presented him with a red jacket that he wore proudly even long after the Revolution.

In negotiations with the British and subsequently with representatives of the United States government and other organizations, Red Jacket presented the Senecas' (and Iroquois') position through interpreters. According to his biographer, William Stone, Red Jacket could speak "very little English, and could not write at all" (1841, p. v). The English translations of his speeches were printed in various newspapers, especially in nearby Buffalo.

After the Revolution, increasing contact with whites resulted in missionary efforts to convert the Seneca and other Iroquois to Christianity. Gradually, some Iroquois began to listen, drawn especially to temperance efforts that they saw as a possible solution to the ruinous effects of rum on their people. Pritzker notes that "beginning in 1799, the Seneca Handsome Lake . . . [propounded] a blend of traditional and Christian teachings . . . [that] had the effect of facilitating the cultural transition occurring at the time" (2000, p. 467). Red Jacket and other Seneca resisted acculturation, believing that it was essential to maintain their native religion and culture. "It was his belief," his biographer Stone noted, "and it is that of the Indians generally, that they form a race entirely distinct from the pale faces" (1841, p. 197).

In 1805, a representative of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Massachusetts, Reverend Cram, approached the Seneca with a request to establish a church on the Seneca reservation near Buffalo Grove. Cram's position, which he presented in his request, was clear: "'There is but one religion, and but one way to serve God, and if you do not embrace the right way you cannot be happy hereafter. You have never worshipped the Great Spirit in a manner acceptable to him; but have all your lives been in great error and darkness'" (Stone, 1841, p. 188). Cram invited the Seneca to speak their minds freely in response to his request. After the chiefs deliberated for two hours, Red Jacket addressed to the missionary the following speech, as quoted by Stedman (1892, pp. 36-38).

> FRIEND AND BROTHER: It was the will of the Great Spirit that we should meet together this day. He orders all things, and has given us a fine day for our council. He has taken his garment from before the sun, and caused it to shine with brightness upon us. Our eyes are opened, that we see clearly; our ears are unstopped, that we have been able to hear distinctly the words you have spoken. For all these favors we thank the Great Spirit; and him only.
>
> BROTHER: This council fire was kindled by you. It was at your request that we came together at this time. We have listened with attention to what you have said. You requested us to speak our minds freely. This gives us great joy; for we now consider that we stand upright before you, and can speak what we think. All have heard your voice, and all speak to you now as one man. Our minds are agreed.
>
> BROTHER: You say you want an answer to your talk before you leave this place. It is right you should have one, as you are a great distance from home, and we do

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not wish to detain you. But we will first look back a little, and tell you what our fathers have told us, and what we have heard from the white people.

BROTHER: Listen to what we say. There was a time when our forefathers owned this great island. Their seats extended from the rising to the setting sun. The Great Spirit had made it for the use of Indians. He had created the buffalo, the deer, and other animals for food. He had made the bear and the beaver. Their skins served us for clothing. He had scattered them over the country, and taught us how to take them. He had caused the earth to produce corn for bread. All this He had done for his red children, because He loved them. If we had some disputes about our hunting ground, they were generally settled without the shedding of much blood. But an evil day came upon us. Your forefathers crossed the great water, and landed on this island. Their numbers were small. They found friends and not enemies. They told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat. We took pity on them; granted their request; and they sat down amongst us. We gave them corn and meat; they gave us poison in return.
The white people, brother, had now found our country. Tidings were carried back, and more came amongst us. Yet we did not fear them. We took them to be friends. They called us brothers. We believed them, and gave them a larger seat. At length their numbers had greatly increased. They wanted more land; they wanted our country. Our eyes were opened, and our minds became uneasy. Wars took place. Indians were hired to fight against Indians, and many of our people were destroyed. They also brought strong liquor amongst us. It was strong and powerful, and has slain thousands.

BROTHER: Our seats were once large, and yours were small. You have now become a great people, and we have scarcely a place left to spread our blankets. You have got our country, but are not satisfied; you want to force your religion upon us.

BROTHER: Continue to listen. You say that you are sent to instruct us how to worship the Great Spirit agreeably to his mind; and, if we do not take hold of the religion which you white people teach, we shall be unhappy hereafter. You say that you are right, and we are lost. How do we know this to be true? We understand that your religion is written in a book. If it was intended for us as well as you, why has not the Great Spirit given to us, and not only to us, but why did He not give to our forefathers, the knowledge of that book, with the means of understanding it rightly? We only know what you tell us about it. How shall we know when to believe, being so often deceived by the white people?

BROTHER: You say there is but one way to worship and serve the Great Spirit. If there is but one religion, why do you white people differ so much about it? Why not all agreed, as you can all read the book?

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> BROTHER: We do not understand these things. We are told that your religion was given to your forefathers, and has been handed down from father to son. We also have a religion, which was given to our forefathers, and has been handed down to us, their children. We worship in that way. It teaches us to be thankful for all the favors we receive; to love each other, and to be united. We never quarrel about religion.
>
> BROTHER: The Great Spirit has made us all, but He has made a great difference between his white and red children. He has given us different complexions and different customs. To you He has given the arts. To these He has not opened our eyes. We know these things to be true. Since He has made so great a difference between us in other things, why may we not conclude that He has given us a different religion according to our understanding? The Great Spirit does right. He knows what is best for his children; we are satisfied.
>
> BROTHER: We do not wish to destroy your religion, or take it from you. We only want to enjoy our own.
>
> BROTHER: You say you have not come to get our land or our money, but to enlighten our minds. I will now tell you that I have been at your meetings, and saw you collect money from the meeting. I cannot tell what this money was intended for, but suppose that it was for your minister, and if we should conform to your way of thinking, perhaps you may want some from us.
>
> BROTHER: We are told that you have been preaching to the white people in this place. These people are our neighbors. We are acquainted with them. We will wait a little while, and see what effect your preaching has upon them. If we find it does them good, makes them honest, and less disposed to cheat Indians, we will then consider again of what you have said.
>
> BROTHER: You have now heard our answer to your talk, and this is all we have to say at present. As we are going to part, we will come and take you by the hand, and hope the Great Spirit will protect you on your journey, and return you safe to your friends.

In a business communication course, writing or speech students might be invited to read this speech in class or as an out-of-class assignment, to examine the characteristics of an indirect bad-news message in it, including the buffer, the logic and presentation of the reasons for the negative message, the implying of the refusal, and the goodwill ending.

At the beginning of the speech, Red Jacket refers to Cram's request, consistent with the suggestion by Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman to "base your buffer on statements made by the person you're responding to" (2003, p. 231). Red Jacket's statement that "the Great Spirit . . . orders all things" establishes common ground between the Senecas and the missionary in their shared belief in the Deity. This approach illustrates one of Guffey's suggestions for opening with a buffer, to "mention some mutual understanding" (2006, p. 348).

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As business communication texts indicate, buffering a negative message at the beginning can be important. Ober stresses the importance of the strategy: “Putting the negative news in the first sentence might be too harsh and emphatic, and [the] decision might sound unreasonable until the reader has heard the rationale.” He recommends beginning “with a neutral and relevant statement – one that helps establish or strengthen the reader-writer relationship . . . to establish compatibility between reader and writer” (2006, pp. 310-311). Similarly, Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman recommend avoiding “a blunt ‘no’ [that] could well prevent people who prefer an explanation first from reading or listening to your reasons,” beginning instead with “a neutral, noncontroversial statement that is closely related to the point of the message” (2003, pp. 230-231). Red Jacket’s approach clearly coincides with these suggestions.

The neutral reference to the weather in “a fine day,” while at first apparently a cliché, may be a more strategic opener. Red Jacket strengthens the Senecas’ relationship with the listener in the buffer, but he is quick to remind Reverend Cram that the Seneca and white cultures are different despite their shared belief: the clouds are the Great Spirit’s garments that He can take from before the sun, allowing it to shine – they are not just clouds.

Red Jacket uses the buffer as part of his attempt to demonstrate diplomatically that the Senecas are not savages but instead are considerate and respectful. The buffer demonstrates his skill and helps him build a favorable image of the Senecas. Guffey (2006), Locker (2000), and Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman (2003) discuss the importance of the buffer in intercultural communication; this speech contains a good example.

By stating the reasons why the Seneca reject the missionary’s proposal before clearly implying the rejection, Red Jacket has used the approach recommended by most business communication texts. Red Jacket himself consistently opposed the Iroquois’ conversion to Christianity, arguing instead for the preservation of traditional customs, but he recognized that assimilation was inevitable. He saw white culture as alien but powerful and understood the need to remain on friendly terms with whites, so he naturally chose the indirect approach, explaining the reasons for the rejection before presenting the rejection. Business communication texts recommend such an approach; Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman advise writers “to explain *why* you have reached your decision before you explain *what* the decision is” (2003, p. 232).

To make his case that whites and Indians should not necessarily have the same religion, Red Jacket establishes parallels between the Senecas’ religion and Christianity: they are passed down from father to son, and they both teach people to “be thankful for all the favors we receive; to love each other, and to be united.”

To argue his case from another perspective, Red Jacket points out apparent differences between the Indians and the whites. The whites’ religion is written in a book that they all can read, but the Indians have no such book. The two groups have “different complexions and different customs.” The whites have the arts, but to them, Red Jacket says, the Great Spirit “has not opened our eyes.” Given these differences, he suggests, “may we not conclude that he has given us a different religion according to our understanding?” He obviates the objection of a false analogy with statements that Reverend Cram cannot refute: “The Great Spirit does right. He

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knows what is best for his children." As the two groups are clearly different, so perhaps the Great Spirit intends for them to have different religions, especially since the whites "differ so much" about their religion but the Indians "never quarrel about religion." Red Jacket's reasons embody the Senecas' belief that instead of improving their situation by allowing the mission to be established or converting to Christianity, they might lose their unity and love for each other.

The discussion of similarities and differences establishes the reasons for the implied rejection of the proposal in the final two paragraphs. Ober states that it is important to "convince your reader that your decision is reasonable [so] the major part of your message should thus focus on the reasons rather than on the bad news itself" (2006, p. 312-313). Though implied, Red Jacket's negative message is clear, as the textbooks indicate that an implied message must be (Guffey, 2006, p. 349). Although some texts such as Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman recommend "using third-person, impersonal, passive language to explain your audience's mistakes in an inoffensive way" (2003, p. 229), Red Jacket is more forthright, as the rhetorical situation demands a direct address, but he is also apparently less concerned about the listener's response than Locker suggests a writer should be, in her discussion of psychological reactance (2000, p. 200).

Red Jacket's speech contains a fine example of a goodwill ending. He indicates that the Seneca will reconsider the Missionary Society's request at a later date if missionaries' preaching in the neighborhood makes whites less disposed to treat Indians unfairly, suggesting that the Seneca have not rejected completely the request but have only done so for now ("at present"). Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman recommend that writers "use a conditional (*if* or *when*) statement to imply that the audience could have received, or might someday receive, a favorable answer" (2003, p. 233). In the concluding sentence, the offer to shake hands and the request that "the Great Spirit will protect you on your journey, and return you safe to your friends" is cordial, polite, and civilized, fitting the image of the Seneca that Red Jacket's speech is designed to support.

Various textbooks stress the importance of maintaining goodwill, which is often interpreted as designed to keep the reader or listener as a customer (Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman, 2003, p. 235). Clearly, this is not Red Jacket's intention; nor is it always the case in a business or agency environment. While it is important to be civil and preserve or enhance the organization's image, situations may arise in which the organization is not concerned with maintaining or improving its relationship with the reader (or listener). A direct negative message might communicate that sense more clearly, but an indirect message can communicate that message as well, especially in different cultures, as various business communication texts point out (for example, Locker, 2000, p. 193; Guffey, 2006, p. 362; Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman, 2003, p. 235).

Red Jacket attempts to be conciliatory and friendly throughout, especially in his address to Reverend Cram as "Brother," but the speech may seem confrontational in Red Jacket's implication of the Christians' motives in the statement "We do not wish to destroy your religion, or take it from you." However, he follows this statement with the Senecas' conclusion – "We only want to enjoy our own" – a conclusion prepared for by his arguments of the similarities and differences between the two groups and their religions, a conclusion to which a rational listener would be drawn.

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That the implied refusal was clearly understood was evidenced by the listener's response. The missionary, Reverend Cram, was angry. According to Stone's biography of Red Jacket, published in 1841 eleven years after Red Jacket's death, "Mr. Cram rose hastily from his seat, and replied that he could not take them by the hand, 'there being,' he added, 'no fellowship between the religion of God and the devil.' These words were interpreted to the Indians, but they nevertheless smiled, and retired in a peaceable manner. Subsequently, on being advised of the indiscretion of his remark, Mr. Cram observed in explanation, that he supposed the ceremony of shaking hands would have been received by the Indians as a token that he assented to what had been said. Being more correctly informed, he expressed his regret at what had so unadvisedly fallen from his lips" (Stone, 1894, p. 194). Stone's comment on the behavior is significant for the period: "Still it cannot be denied that the Indians exhibited better breeding, and more knowledge of human nature, than the missionary" (1841, p. 194). More recent scholars have commented on the speech; for Snow, "Red Jacket brilliantly exposed the hubris, hypocrisy, and inconsistencies of Christian missionaries in the speech" (2000, ¶ 4).

In 1811, the Seneca rejected a similar request, this time by a missionary society from New York City. In his speech, Red Jacket presented many of the same arguments that he had presented in 1805 but expanded the earlier statement about differences in forms of worship: "We do not worship the Great Spirit as the white men do, but we believe that forms of worship are indifferent to the Great Spirit,--it is the offering of a sincere heart that pleases him, and we worship him in this manner" (Stone, 1841, p. 203).

Red Jacket's speech can serve as an interesting case study in an undergraduate or graduate business communication or speech class. It is more direct in its address to its audience than some authors of business communication texts recommend; Ober, for example, tells the writer "when using the indirect plan, phrase the bad news in impersonal language avoiding the use of *you* and *your*" (2006, p. 314). However, it has an "audience-centered tone" created, as Bovée, Thill, & Schatzman suggest, by using the "you" attitude, positive phrasing, and respectful language (2003). Red Jacket's continued address of his audience as "Brother" directs his speech to the listener, Reverend Cram. His use of positive and respectful diction helps soften the negative message, but he is not averse to using words conveying negativity such as "cannot," which are advised against in texts such as Guffey's (2006). In part, the negative terms carry the implied message, but usually they skillfully support the idea of differences between the cultures, differences which form an important base in the decision to reject the missionary's request.

Although some authors such as Ober (2006) suggest that the writer or speaker try to point out that the reasons for the negative message may have benefits to the reader or listener, there is no benefit to the missionary society in this case, since their request has been denied. Pointing out the absence of a listener benefit in Red Jacket's speech can help students recognize that at times there is no benefit to be recognized from the refusal, and it might seem disingenuous to attempt to suggest one.

Conclusion

Red Jacket's 1805 speech embodies the characteristics of an indirect bad-news message but also provides an interesting example of intercultural communication. It embodies clear concern for

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the attitudes of others toward the group represented by the document, a concern that can be seen in other historical documents designed at least in part as negative messages, including the Declaration of Independence. Using historical texts can supplement the discussion of negative messages in business communication texts, broaden students' sense of the importance of effective communication, and enrich their understanding of and appreciation for skillful speaking and writing.

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Fighting the Journalistic Perfect Storm: The Duke Administration's Handling of the Lacrosse Team Sex Scandal

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Abstract

In mid-March 2006, two African American dancers were hired to strip at an off-campus Duke University lacrosse team party. Later that night, one dancer said she was raped by three white players. By early May 2006, three players were charged with rape, sexual assault and kidnapping. Later news reports called into question the accuser's accusations.

This paper examines how the Duke administration handled the crisis from a public relations point of view. Given the intersection of issues such as race, class, gender, violence, money, privilege and politics, how does an academic institution deal with such a journalistic perfect storm?

Introduction

Scandals can sometimes be a two-edged sword. Entertainment celebrities are always working to stay in the news, as continued public presence means people will go see them when they are in that next movie or on that next concert stage. It's essential that they stay in the news for as long and often as possible. In reality, most people in the audience aren't drawn to the talent when it comes to celebrities, but to their stories. The actress Lindsey Lohan possesses some acting and musical talent, but it's the "Will this party girl self-destruct?" storyline that keeps her in the news. The trick is to come up with compelling stories that the public will buy into over time. That's why good public relations agents are invaluable to celebrities.

Even scandals can help, because in the world of celebrities, there is generally no such thing as bad publicity, The public loves the "Phoenix" narrative – the story of the star who falls from grace or out of public view for some reason and then comes back. The press has touted actor Robert Downey, Jr.'s recent "comeback" after his incarceration from years of arrests for drug abuse. Similarly, stories are emerging about Winona Ryder's return to acting after a hiatus due to her shoplifting conviction. Many cable network reality shows featuring fading "has been" or "never quite were" stars would not exist were it not for the public's quest to find out about "Where Are They Now?" Comedian Kathy Griffin has actually made herself a career by parodying her "D-list" celebrity status.

That doesn't mean lines can't be crossed. Some stories have such an "ick" factor that a celebrity may never recover. Michael Jackson was acquitted of child molestation charges

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in 2005, but he has assumed a sort of *persona non grata* status since. In addition, the public has shunned O.J. Simpson in the belief that although he was found not guilty of murdering his ex-wife Nicole and her friend, Ron Goldman, he really did get away with murder. Currently, baseball star Barry Bonds has received often hostile response from the fans in his quest to become the all-time home run leader in baseball because of allegations that he has been taking performance-enhancing drugs.

Outside of the celebrity world, however, for most people and institutions, bad publicity is not a good thing. Scandals can be ruinous to the reputations of people and organizations. Plus, the longer the scandal is in the news, the greater the potential that the damage will endure. There are three primary aspects of scandals that determine their intensity and longevity – the “salacious” elements of the story, the length the story is in the news, and the number of actors who can prolong the scandal. For example, suppose a university president is charged with misappropriation of funds – such as double-billing for reimbursed travel expenses. If the act is a single act, involves a relatively small amount of money (say, $10,000 or less) and the president apologizes and makes immediate restitution, the scandal goes away quickly. Now, suppose audits reveal a pattern of such behavior, the amount of money approaches or exceeds $100,000, a press investigation (the media being an “actor” who can extend the length of the story) of the president’s tenure at another institution raised similar questions, and the president is slow to make restitution – now the scandal is going to be more intense and more prolonged.

Duke University is one of the most elite private universities in the nation, having tied for fifth in the 2005 *U.S. News & World Report's* annual college rankings, behind only Ivy League schools. In addition to superior academics, the school boasts several major sports powers, especially its basketball team. In mid-March 2006, two African American dancers were hired to strip at an off-campus lacrosse party. Later that night, one dancer said she was raped, choked and kicked by three white players in a bathroom. Duke canceled the season and accepted the coach's resignation. In late April 2006, two players were charged with rape, sexual assault and kidnapping (a third player would be inducted in May), while days later, news reports revealed that the accuser had made unfounded sexual violence charges a decade earlier.

This paper examines how the Duke administration handled the crisis from a public relations point of view. The scandal had a number of salacious elements to it, representing the intersection of issues such as race, class, gender, violence, and politics. While the most intense media attention to the story occurred from late March 2006 to mid-June 2006, the scandal has continued to be in the news from the outset. In addition, beyond the institution’s response to the crisis -- which overall has done a good job of limiting institutional damage, but not necessarily in an ethical way -- there are a number of actors outside of Duke’s control, particularly the prosecutor and defense attorneys, who have prolonged the story’s time in the media. The main question this paper addresses is: how does an academic institution deal with such a “perfect storm” of factors fueling the scandal?

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The "Perfect Storm"

On March 13, 2006, the Duke men's lacrosse team sponsored a party at 610 North Buchanan Boulevard, which was rented by three of the four captains of the team. The team had reason to celebrate – it was ranked No. 2 in the nation, having been to the Final Four in 2005. The captains hired a pair of strippers for $400 apiece from a local escort service. Photos taken at the party show that about 40 lacrosse players – nearly the entire team -- came to the party. Around 11:15 pm, the first stripper, Kim Roberts, arrives at the party. About half an hour later, the second stripper, the accuser, arrives.[1]

Photos of pictures taken around midnight show the now-scantily clad strippers on the carpet. One of the partygoers asked the women if they had brought any sex toys. The atmosphere got tense when one of the partygoers got a broom handle and shouted "Use this". The accuser allegedly hit him, and then the two strippers went into the bathroom, locking themselves in. According to one of the players' lawyers, Bill Thomas, the partygoers become concerned about what is up with the women, even slipping money under the door asking them to leave.

Around 12:20, the two women leave the party, going to the second stripper's car, where the accuser has left her purse behind. She goes back inside the house to retrieve her purse. She comes out 10 minutes later, but is only wearing one shoe. Several minutes later, she attempts to get her shoe, but the men in the house have locked her out.

There is far less agreement as to what happened over the next hour. The physical evidence – the photos – show that at 12:37 am, the accused is lying on the back stoop of the house, with a scraped elbow and cut, bleeding ankle. A photo time-stamped at 12:41 shows her getting into the car, with the apparent assistance of the one of the partygoers.

Roberts drove off as the accuser nearly passed out in the car. Roberts drove to a local Kroger supermarket. While there, Roberts told the store security guard there that she had a woman in her car who could barely move. At around 1:30 am, a police officer makes a call to the police dispatcher saying that he has spotted the woman (later identified as the accuser) in a parking lot, and that her condition was "passed-out drunk" but "not in distress."

After a stop at a substance abuse center, the accuser is brought to Duke Hospital. Police logs show that the accuser arrived there at 2:31 a.m. While at the hospital, the accuser claimed she had been raped. A sexual assault nurse examined the accuser and gave her a series of blood and urine tests. The prosecutor's office said that the hospital report indicated the accuser's injuries and emotional reactions were consistent with being raped. The accuser charged that she had been raped vaginally, anally and orally, as well as being beaten and strangled. When asked, the accuser gave the first names of three men at the lacrosse party. The accuser acknowledged, however, that the players were using different

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[1] The following timeline is summarized from Meadows, S. and Thomas, E. (2006, April 24). Timeline of the Duke Rape Scandal. Newsweek Online, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/12335371/site/newsweek/

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names at different times – which seems to account for the fact that none of the names she provided matched the first names of the players later indicted in the case.

Later, according to a prosecutor's report, the accused was 100% certain that Reade Seligmann forced her to perform oral sex on him and that she was equally certain that Collin Finnerty raped and sodomized her. She was reported to be 90% certain that a third man, not named, was also involved. The same report indicated she identified her assailants by being shown a PowerPoint presentation of the photos of 46 team members.

On April 5, police released, from a court-ordered search warrant, an e-mail message sent by a player soon after the party, joking that he wanted to "kill and skin" more strippers for sexual gratification. The revelation of the ugly email prompted the administration to spring into action after three weeks of relative inaction. Immediately, Duke officials suspended the player. The men's lacrosse head coach, Mike Pressler, resigned. Finally, President Brodhead, who had suspended the team's season a week before, canceled it (Lipka, 2006).

Later that day, April 5, the president issued a five-page letter "to the Duke community." In the letter, he acknowledged "that the acts the police are investigating are only part of the problem." He outlined five simultaneous investigations or councils designed to deal with the main challenges the incident revealed: an investigation of the men's lacrosse team; an examination of student judicial process and practices; a campus culture Initiative to evaluate and suggest improvements in the ways Duke educates students in the values of personal responsibility, consideration for others, and mutual respect in the face of difference and disagreement; a presidential council advise on internal policies as well as to consider ways that Duke and Durham can work more closely; and an investigation of the Duke administration's response to the scandal. That investigation would be headed by William G. Bowen, president of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (and a prominent critic of college athletics), and Julius L. Chambers, former director of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and former chancellor of North Carolina Central (Brodhead, 2006, April 5, "Letter").

On May 1, the Lacrosse Ad Hoc Review Committee issued its report on the behavior of the Duke lacrosse team (Duke University, "Report", 2006, May 1). While praising the students for their high academic achievement, the report noted:

> Paradoxically, in contrast to their exemplary academic and athletic performance, a large number of the members of the team have been socially irresponsible when under the influence of alcohol. They have repeatedly violated the law against underage drinking. They have drunk alcohol excessively. They have disturbed their neighbors with loud music and noise, both on-campus and off-campus. They have publicly urinated both on-campus and off. They have shown disrespect for property. (Duke University, 2006, May 1, "Report")

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In addition, the committee also found that the administration had been aware of the lacrosse team's behavior since at least the Fall 2003 semester, but did nothing about it. Though at least a third of the current team had been guilty of underage drinking, public drunkenness and even public urination, none of the players had been charged with any more serious offenses.

The Bowens-Chambers report praised Brodhead for "strong, consistent, and effective leadership in a situation that would try the talents and patience of even the most skillful leaders and crisis managers among us," but criticized Duke University police for its failure to notify the administration of the rape incident more quickly (Bowens and Chambers, 2006, May 8).

On Monday, June 5, President Brodhead announced that the Duke University men's lacrosse program will resume in fall 2006, with stricter administrative oversight and under new standards of behavior drafted by the players.

The Scandal's Narrative

Real life stories that excite the public are like compelling books or plays. They have a cast of compelling characters, a plot that is easy to follow with some twists, and an involving backdrop. Like a book or play, the storyline has to have an arc and pacing is very important. A scandal is even juicier when there is someone you can hate, and if they feed deeply held prejudices and appeal to a sense of self-righteousness. It helps if there is also an innocent victim. A great scandal has all of these elements.

The Duke Lacrosse scandal has a very compelling narrative: a black woman allegedly gang-raped by privileged white boys. You have a storyline of a black mother of two attending college pitted against arrogant, white rich kids. From a scandal standpoint, it doesn't matter if the accusation is true. The media understand that scandals don't have to be true. They just have to be compelling, because compelling stories sell advertising. The public is complicit in this corruption of reporting of scandals because they will watch whether or not the story turns out to be true. All they care about is whether the story is interesting.

Perhaps the factor that helps sustain interest in a story is the presence of compelling characters. Those characters may be individuals or they may be the institutions themselves. In terms of the Duke scandal, the lacrosse players are physically attractive characters, but, by and large, they are relatively anonymous, even the players who have been indicted. In addition, it is likely that the attorneys are going to limit media access to their clients, which will diminish the ability of the public to connect with the accused.

In addition, the media appeal of the victim is hard to determine. To date, while the prospect of a woman being gang-raped should elicit public support for the victim, the fact that she has issued inconsistent stories, and the fact that she has falsely accused a person of sexual assault in the past means that public support for her is shaky at best.

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Consequently, Duke University has emerged as the principal compelling character. Duke is a beautiful, elite private university where the "best and brightest" go. Critics see Duke, however, as representing a $40,000 a year camp that for students who really major in sex and alcohol on the way to successful careers facilitated by well-connected Duke alumni. Duke is also located in a community that is demographically very different – in terms of race and class – than the university is. The split between the insular, institution of largely white students of privilege, and the racially mixed, middle class community of Durham also helps propel the story. The story is so ideal from a media standpoint that it's unlikely that Duke's management team could have done much to quell it.

Venette, Sellnow, and Lang (2003) use the term "metanarration" to refer to the production of multiple narratives that occurs during an organizational crisis. According to these authors, the "original crisis story as portrayed in the media" creates a "primary narrative" (2003, p. 220). In response to the primary narrative that the media create, the organization creates "secondary narratives" that attempt to displace or revise the primary narrative. With the production of secondary narratives, "organizations attempt to change the primary narrative, not by negating the original story, but rather by retelling the story in a more favorable way" (Venette, Sellnow, & Lang, 2003, p. 220). A good PR person can drive a story off the media agenda by making it less compelling. Doing so will make people lose interest.

Initially, it didn't appear that Duke itself would need to be involved in the metanarration because the district attorney, Mike Nifong, was such a visible and attractive character. Early on, Nifong gave scores of interviews, calling Duke lacrosse players "hooligans" who were hiding behind a wall of silence. His emphatic statements fueled a national media story. He appeared in the media constantly, talking "off the cuff" and projecting a "regular guy" image. Of course, part of his media availability came about because he was running be re-elected as Durham district attorney. When the case began to turn against Nifong, he ceased making media appearances and disappeared from the press glare. The public lost a character they could identify with.

Nifong's departure did have the potential to lessen the profile of the story, and drive it down the media agenda. Instead, the defense lawyers replaced Nifong. They have been keeping this story in the media spotlight because they want the public to hear their side of the story early and often.

One school of thought in public relations that an institution should ignore attacks to its reputation. The logic behind this approach is that by responding to attacks, you legitimize the attacker. In addition, the response makes it more likely the media will notice. Suddenly there is a controversy -- the institution versus the attacker -- and the press attention escalates. Thus, an institution may best defend its reputation by showing strength with the strategy that if someone attacks, act as if like they don't exist.

Duke attempted this strategy the year before, when doctors at Duke University Hospital mistakenly transplanted the wrong heart and lungs into a 17-year-old girl, who subsequently died. At first, the hospital said nothing. The resulting bad publicity,

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however, prompted Ralph Snyderman, then CEO of the Duke University Health System, to open up to the public. Over the next week, a flood of press releases were issued and Snyderman even agreed to be interviewed by Ed Bradley on *60 Minutes*. During the interview, Snyderman admitted the mistake, took responsibility for it, expressed remorse for the tragedy, and vowed that the hospital would do everything it could to preclude such a calamity from ever happening again (Kellerman, 2006).

Snyderman's apology, albeit belated, calmed down the storm of bad publicity. A few months later, the hospital established a $4 million fund, in the name of the girl who died, for Latino pediatric services. This example illustrates that institutional leaders have two choices when under attack:: to behave that the institution does not believe that the press concern is valid and ignore the scandal; or to be proactive and be visible in the press trying to keep the scandal down. So, Brodhead, while being deliberate, chose the latter course of action.

Beyond the hospital scandal, Brodhead had to acknowledge there was also an environment fueling the Duke scandal. At the University of Colorado, " sex, alcohol and marijuana were used as recruiting currency to lure blue-chip football players (Roberts, 2006, April 12, p. D-1). At the University of Vermont, a hazing ritual conducted by its winning hockey teams required freshmen to "binge drink and walk naked while holding each other's genitals" (Roberts, 2006, April 12, p. D-1).

What was similar about the Colorado and Vermont to the Duke situation is that while all the institutions had prior knowledge about these activities, none of the colleges involved did anything to correct them until media attention was focused on them. Accountability for these actions occurred late -- often too late -- to spare the institution from loss of public prestige and the forced resignation of university personnel.

That was Duke's problem. Both media reports and the university's own investigation revealed that a third of the lacrosse team's current players have been charged with misdemeanors related to partying. The behavior was not just limited to the lacrosse team -- the baseball team was guilty rowdy behavior, alcohol abuse and parties with strippers. Those same reports indicated that both President Brodhead and athletic director, Joe Alleva, knew about the behaviors of the lacrosse and baseball teams, according to *The News and Observer*, but did nothing about it because of a lack of media attention. Now the media's spotlight was directly focused on Brodhead's office.

An Analysis of Duke's Response

The most difficult function of public relations involves crisis and reputation management. "In the best situations, crises can be averted through a combination of strategic planning and proactive behavior. Unfortunately, many organizations find themselves responding to crises rather than preventing them." (Baker, 2001, p. 513). Those institutions without a specified crisis communication strategy will be left to struggle to recover from the significant blows dealt to their image.

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Reputation hinges upon the judgments that key publics make based upon the organization's behavior. Sound reputations protect the organization against existing and potential problems such as those that arise when controversial incidents occur (Baker, 2001). A previously solid reputation will not only help an organization to ride out the storm, but also to successfully recover in the wake of its damage.

Image restoration becomes an issue when organizations have passed the point of anticipation and have lost the opportunity to act proactively in protecting themselves. All efforts thereafter must be made with the goal of regaining the confidence of all relevant publics, minimizing negative publicity, and returning the organization to either its previous state or one better.

Image Restoration Discourse

Analysis of crisis communication often focuses on the content of external communications such as organizational apologies and speeches of self-defense (Seeger, Sellnow, Ulmer, 2001). Benoit's theory of image restoration creates a detailed typology of image restoration strategies for organizations (Benoit, 1995). In addition, public figures and organizations need to address a variety of stakeholder groups, each with their own set of goals and concerns. Benoit (1997) urges that in crisis situations, it is important to prioritize these groups and tailor messages to their specific concerns..

Image restoration theory focuses on the variety of message options at a crisis communicator's disposal. Benoit (1997) proposes that an attack contains two elements: 1) the accused is held responsible for an action; and 2) that act is considered offensive. Benoit's theory then goes on to identify five categories of image repair strategies and three of these are divided into more specific subcategories of tactics.

Denial is the first category of repair strategies. There are four variants within this category: *simple denial, shifting the blame, separation,* and *denying that the act was harmful* (Brinson & Benoit, 1999). Simple denial is a rejection of the charges. The accused party may deny that the act occurred or that they even performed the act. For example, at first, Enron denied that it had engaged in any financial wrongdoing (George and Evuleocha, 2003). Shifting of blame entails an argument that another party is actually responsible for the undesirable act. Blaney, Benoit, and Brazeal (2002).demonstrated that both Ford and Bridgestone tried to focus the blame on the other company in the wake of the incidents involving rollovers of Ford sports utility vehicles that used Firestone tires. In an analysis of Texaco's racism scandal, in which executives were taped using racial slurs against African-Americans, Brinson and Benoit (1999) also identified a previously unrecognized form of shifting of blame that they termed *separation*. Separation seeks to place the blame on a small portion of an organization that can be separated from the remaining and presumably good part. Finally, denying that the act was harmful is an admission by the accused that they committed the perceived wrong, however, they refute the fact that anyone was damaged by it (1999). For example, the members Bush administration admit to leaking information that revealed that Valerie

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Plame was a CIA operative, but deny that the act was harmful because her CIA status was an open secret in Washington.

Evasion of responsibility is the second category. Here the offender attempts to dodge or reduce responsibility of wrongdoing. Simply put, evasion of responsibility involves the crafting of excuses (Brinson & Benoit, 1999). This general strategy has four different versions: *provocation, defeasibility, accident,* and *good intentions*. Provocation occurs when the accused party claims that the offensive act was merely a response to another's offensive act, and that the behavior should be viewed as a reasonable reaction to that provocation. In 1998, Northwest Airlines initiated an issues advertising campaign because they alleged striking pilots were conducting negotiations in public, so management needed to correct the record (Cowden& Sellnow, 2002). Another form of evading responsibility is defeasibility. Here, the accused party alleges a lack of information about or control over key elements of the situation. Arthur Andersen tried to blame the Enron scandal not on their accounting practices, but on the downturn in the economy (George and Evuleocha, 2003). Similarly, President George W. Bush attempted to use defeasibility in defending his first term as president during an appearance on "Meet the Press" (Benoit, 2006). A third option is to claim that the offensive action was accidental. If the audience can be convinced that the negative action was a mishap, then the reasoning is that the accused will be held less accountable and the damage to image will be mitigated. Part of the image repair strategy used by the U.S. Navy in 2001 when the USS Greenville collided with a Japanese trawler, killing nine people, was that the incident was an accident (Drumheller and Benoit, 2004). A final strategy within this category entails an attempt to convince the audience that the offensive act was performed with good intentions, that although an undesirable situation occurred, the accused meant well (Benoit, 1997). For example, when Sears was charged with auto repair fraud, its chairman claimed that not only were the mistakes "inadvertent," but also that the company's 105-year old record shows that it would never intentionally harm its customers (Benoit, 1995).

The third major category involves **reducing the offensiveness** of events. This category is made up of six sub-categories: *bolstering, minimization, differentiation, transcendence, attack accuser,* and *compensation*. Bolstering attempts to boost audience good will toward the accused in order to offset the negative feelings connected with the offense. It is achieved by stressing the good traits of the offender or describing the offender's positive acts in the past. In the wake of the Enron crisis, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) engaged in bolstering by stressing the positive activities and attributes of the profession (Rogers, Dillard and Yuthas, 2005). Minimization seeks to reduce the negative feelings associated with the wrongful act so that it appears less harmful than it may have initially seemed to be (Benoit, 1997). The Dixie Chicks used this strategy in the wake of the reaction to their criticism of George Bush (Bell 2004). A third option is the employment of differentiation, distinguishing the present negative act from other similar, but more offensive actions in the hopes that this will reduce negative sentiment toward the act and concurrently toward the accused (Brinson & Benoit, 1999). U.S. Congressman Gary Condit attempted to employ differentiation in explaining his role in the disappearance of Chandra Levy, an intern in his office with whom he was having an affair (Len-Rios and Benoit, 2004). Transcendence attempts to place the act within a broader, more favorable context and appeals to values and group loyalties in order to improve the offender's image. In attempting to shore up his sagging approval ratings, in an April 2004 press conference, President George W. Bush employed transcendence as a strategy by claiming he was a "war president" and thus should not be judged according to the usual criteria for evaluating presidential performance (Benoit, 2006b). When attacking the accuser, the offender tries to cast doubt upon the attacker's credibility to reduce the intensity of the attack. During the August 1, 2006 broadcast of his TV show, *The O'Reilly Factor*, host Bill O'Reilly responded to charges he personally attacks guests by charging his attacker, Oregonian TV critic Peter Ames Carlin, with not doing his own reporting, thus attempting to undercut his Carlin's credibility (O'Reilly, 2006, August 1, "Most ..). The sixth and final strategy within reducing offensiveness is compensation. In this strategy, the accused offers to reimburse the victim of the offense, which, if it is acceptable to the victim, should help reduce the negative feelings arising from a failure of some sort (Brinson & Benoit, 1999). When there was an e coli outbreak at Jack-in-the-Box restaurants in 1993, the company announced they would pay hospital costs for people who became ill from eating the contaminated burgers (Sellnow & Ulmer, 1995)..

The fourth category of image restoration theory is **corrective action**. Strategies of corrective action involve the offender promising to correct the problem. The offender may promise to restore the situation to the state of affairs before the event by repairing existing damages, and/or promising to take preventive action (such as revising policies) to avoid a recurrence (Benoit, 1997).

The last category of defensive rhetoric is **mortification**. Apologists who use mortification confess to the wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness or express regret (Benoit, 1995, pp. 74-79). The rationale here is that the admission of guilt and a display of regret can often lead the audience to pardon the negative action (Brinson & Benoit, 1999).

Benoit (1995) argues that the more successful apologies will be those that use a combination of strategies. He also counsels the apologist to admit fault (if at fault) immediately and to report plans to correct problems and prevent recurrences. He argues that denial, shifting blame, and minimization do not typically work to preserve an apologist's image.

In terms of image restoration strategies, Duke employed the strategies of corrective action and mortification. In terms of corrective action, President Brodhead cancelled the lacrosse season, fired the lacrosse coach and set into motion five investigative committees and councils to insure such an incident would not be repeated. In terms of mortification, President Brodhead apologized for both the actions of the Duke lacrosse team, and for not dealing with the relationship between Duke and the surrounding community of Durham in a more pro-active fashion.

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A Further Analysis of Brodhead's Use of Mortification

When we commit a wrong against someone we know, even unintentionally, we are generally expected to apologize. And, we generally do apologize. But, for a leader of a major organization, a public apology is always a high-risk move. Leaders are responsible not only for their own behavior, but also for those connected with their institution. Therefore, leaders speak for, as well as to, their followers, so their apologies have broad implications. The apology is not just individual, but institutional (Kellerman, 2006). While apologies can moderate constituents' anger, they can also strengthen the negative associations between the institution and the problem.

Tavuchis (1991) writes that apologies speak to acts that cannot be undone, but, at the same time, must be dealt with or otherwise the current and future relationship of the organization and its publics will be compromised. As a result, organizational leaders will publicly apologize if and when they calculate the costs of doing so to be lower than the costs of not doing so. More precisely, leaders will apologize if and when they calculate that staying silent threatens a current and future relationship between them and their customers, stockholders, or other publics.

Kellerman (2006) also notes that good apologies consist of four parts: an acknowledgment of the mistake or wrongdoing, the acceptance of responsibility, an expression of regret, and a promise that the offense will not be repeated. An ideal exemplar of a good apology is that given by James Burke, head of Johnson & Johnson during the Tylenol tampering crisis in the 1980s. And, contrary to the perception often given that an apology will denote legal culpability, Patel and Reinsch (2003) found that apologies can make positive contributions, including assisting the apologists' legal strategy. By contrast, refusing to apologize may suggest the unwillingness to accept responsibility or to express remorse for situations in which there could clearly be some culpability.

Kellerman (2006) also argues that leaders of groups and organizations should consider apologizing publicly only if and when a critical interest is at stake, and only if and when they're the only ones who can do the work that needs to be done. There are times the organization is better served if someone further down the organizational ladder acknowledges the problem and expresses regret.

In this instance, however, when President, Brodhead finally appeared in the media April 5, Duke the institution became represented by a human face -- the soft-spoken, distinguished-looking professor-Richard Brodhead. In his April 5 letter, Brodhead struck the right note in terms of a leader apologizing.

> Nobody wishes trouble on one's house and I regret the trouble that this incident has brought to Duke and Durham. But when trouble arrives, it's the test of a community and its leaders to deal with it honestly, act accordingly and learn from it. This is a deeply emotional time as well as a rare opportunity for education – for our students, faculty, administrators,

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> and members of our community. Let's move forward with a serious commitment to make progress on the many complex issues that confront us now. (Brodhead, 2006, April 5, "Letter").

Kellerman (2006) proposes that a good apology should acknowledge the mistake or wrongdoing; accept responsibility; provide assurance that the offense won't be repeated; and is well-timed. Though Brodhead was somewhat deliberate in issuing the apology (over three weeks from the alleged rape), the apology contain the requisite elements that would make it a good one.

An Ethical Caveat

On the other hand, what is particularly troubling in the letter was the following passage:

> If the allegations are verified, what happened would be a deep violation of fundamental ethical principles and among the most serious crimes known to the legal system. Such conduct is completely unacceptable both within the university and in our society at large. If the truth of the allegations is upheld, it will call for severe punishment from the courts and from Duke's disciplinary system. T his university has cooperated and will continue to cooperate to the fullest to speed the ongoing investigation by the police, and I pledge that Duke will respond with appropriate seriousness when the truth is established. (Brodhead, "Letter, 2006, April 5).

What is not communicated here is a sense of the legal value of innocence until proven guilty. In the June 5 letter to the Duke community, Brodhead does somewhat acknowledge the presumption of innocence for the players, stating:

> Since I wrote last, three members of the men's lacrosse team have been indicted on felony charges arising from the March 13 party. The students proclaim their innocence on all the counts. As you probably know, initial reports circulated through the media advanced the case against the students; more recent reports have made the case in their favor. But none of us has direct access to the criminal investigation, and until the full evidence is presented, none of us can know with certainty what did or did not happen.
>
> As I have said, it's essential that we allow the criminal justice system to run its course, and that we wait for the truth to be established before we reach final judgment. In the meanwhile, we need to remember that the American legal system is based on the principle of the presumption of innocence. When he handed down his third indictment on May 15, District Attorney Nifong stated that no other students were under investigation; with the cloud of suspicion lifted from other members of the team, the legal case has taken on finite boundaries. Now we must wait for the legal process to do its work. (Brodhead, 2006, June 5, "Letter").

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On the other hand, Brodhead also states:

> Let me also say a word about the players. These students have lived through an extraordinarily painful situation for the last eight weeks. Whether or not the felony charges are upheld against the three indicted students, *the fact is that members of the team engaged in irresponsible and dishonorable behavior on the evening of March 13, and those who were involved bear responsibility for their actions*. (Brodhead, 2006, June 5, "Letter"). [Italics added for emphasis]

Thus, while on the one hand Brodhead notes that the students must be presumed innocent of the felony charges, he also notes that they are not "innocent," having engaged in "irresponsible and dishonorable behavior" on March 13. This rhetoric serves two purposes. First, it throws the blame for the events of March 13 away from Duke as an institution to a few lacrosse players. Second, it supports his previous statement on April 5, where he stressed the allegations of the accuser rather than tempering the allegations with a discussion of the presumption of the players' innocence.

Such a rhetorical strategy may be effective at protecting Duke as an institution, and is a good example of changing the narrative. Brodhead's rhetoric presumed guilt on the part of the students; he was simply trying to get the scandal off the front page. Canceling the season and suspending the students was a way of cutting Duke's ties from any potential negative fallout the students might generate. Essentially, he made the calculation that the reputation of the university was more important than the lives of the students.

Ethically, however, that calculation was problematic. While it may be a good idea for an institution to cut ties to anything that potentially might harm its reputation, it's one thing when this is done to university employees. For example, forcing out Duke's lacrosse coach makes sense. It's quite another to almost ruthlessly cut ties to your customers – students and alumni. When those customers are powerful and wealthy, they can hurt the university. The perception of a university president ruining the lives of some students by letting them "twist in the wind" while they are enduring a trial could cost Brodhead the status and goodwill associated he brought with him when he assumed the presidency

The Aftermath So Far

Duke's administration has been struggling to stay on top of the crisis, and responding appropriately as details of the case unfolds.. "It's been a matter of trying to figure out the right thing to do in a situation of considerable uncertainty and changing information," acknowledges Brodhead. He observed further "If we ignore the challenge of this event, we'll be legitimately blamed for it, but if we step up to it I think it will go to the health of the school. Whatever happened here did in fact happen here, but the ingredients for it everyone knows exist on every campus in America." (Stancill, 2006).

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According to the *Chronicle*, Duke athletes have been ordered to remove references to drunkenness on their online profiles on Facebook, a social-networking website. Having to change or remove a profile on Facebook or other social networking sites is about as popular as re-instituting dress codes. In addition, athletes have been deterred from having contact with reporters. Athletic Director Joseph L. Alleva has been unavailable to the press.

In the meantime, defense attorneys have combed through the available 1278 pages of files turned over by Nifong and have attacked the accuser's statements, her medical exam, the police department's lineup procedure and the district attorney's conduct. They disclosed a favorable polygraph test by one of the defendants, a dearth of DNA evidence and doubts expressed by fellow stripper Kim Roberts that a rape had occurred.

In addition, the defense lawyers have mounted a media offensive. In a five-hour interview with a CBS news reporter, Kathy Seligmann talked about the emotional toll her son Reade’s indictment has had. David Evans' lawyers took the unusual tactic of having his client appear on live television on the morning of his indictment, defiantly telling the world he didn't do it. Over the July 4th weekend, Collin Finnerty's parents were interviewed by MSNBC’s Dan Abrams, and proclaimed their son's innocence (ironically, Abrams is a Duke alumnus).

Already, one enraged parent of a lacrosse player has personally confronted Brodhead at a spring event, stating angrily, “When you do this, just remember who you're doing this to.” The father later told the campus newspaper, *The Chronicle* that he objected to a characterization of the lacrosse team by some faculty members and local residents as pampered “blue bloods”. The father pointed out that he is a firefighter, and further indicated that he wanted the president to know that families stood behind the players.

The father is not the only critic of Brodhead. Some have criticized the president for waiting well over two weeks to denounce the possible rape, thus communicating a possible callousness. Some charge that when he responded, he overreacted by canceling the entire season, a response that elevated the seriousness of the incident, and, by extension, the belief that the charges were indeed true. For example, if the athletes are innocent until proven guilty, why was he adding another black mark to their reputation by canceling the season?

So, as the Fall 2006 semester opens, the lacrosse coach has been forced out, its spring season has been cancelled, the very future of the lacrosse at Duke was threatened, and players and their parents alike have endured emotional turmoil. All the while, it’s possible that what happened was that students were drinking and behaving boorishly, but not criminally (aside from underage drinking). Since they've done this before, with Duke’s leadership generally taking a “boys will be boys” attitude, who is really to blame? The future of the incident is unclear, but once President Brodhead became the face of institution called Duke in this story, it is he who will be held accountable by Duke’s constituents for his actions.

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Intercultural Communication Choices in the Muhammad Caricature Debacle

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Abstract

Intercultural communication is often difficult as has been shown with the Muhammad caricature debacle. Using an intercultural communication model, the caricature debacle is reviewed as to what happened and why. The classic differences in protocol characteristics, religion, and humor between the Western views and the Islamic views are discussed. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations for other similar intercultural communication will be offered.

Introduction

Knowing the culture you are talking about can be an essential element of not offending another person or group of people. It is important to recognize topics that are taboo in conversation and in writing. When someone is rude or insensitive humorously to another culture, situations such as the riots caused by the Muhammad caricature happen (Martin & Chaney, 2006). However, it is the premise of this paper that there is insensitivity on both sides of this particular issue because there is a gap on both sides of understanding each other's culture.

Exchanges of information and thoughts between cultures can be substantive such as the discussion of prices or nonsubstantive such as social conversations (Martin & Chaney, 2006). The Muhammad caricature was meant to be humorous by the Danish artist and newspaper and nonsubstantive; however, the Muslims viewed the caricature as very substantive. Because the cultures' protocols are very different, the Muslims took the caricature as a major affront to their religion. The caricature has caused a breach of etiquette between the West and the Muslim worlds.
The fact that very few Western people have ever read any of the Koran, they have a cultural blank on what is in the Koran; and therefore, what may be offense to someone of the Islamic religion.

Intercultural Communication Model

Figure 1, Intercultural Communication Model in Conflict, describes what happened in the caricature incident.

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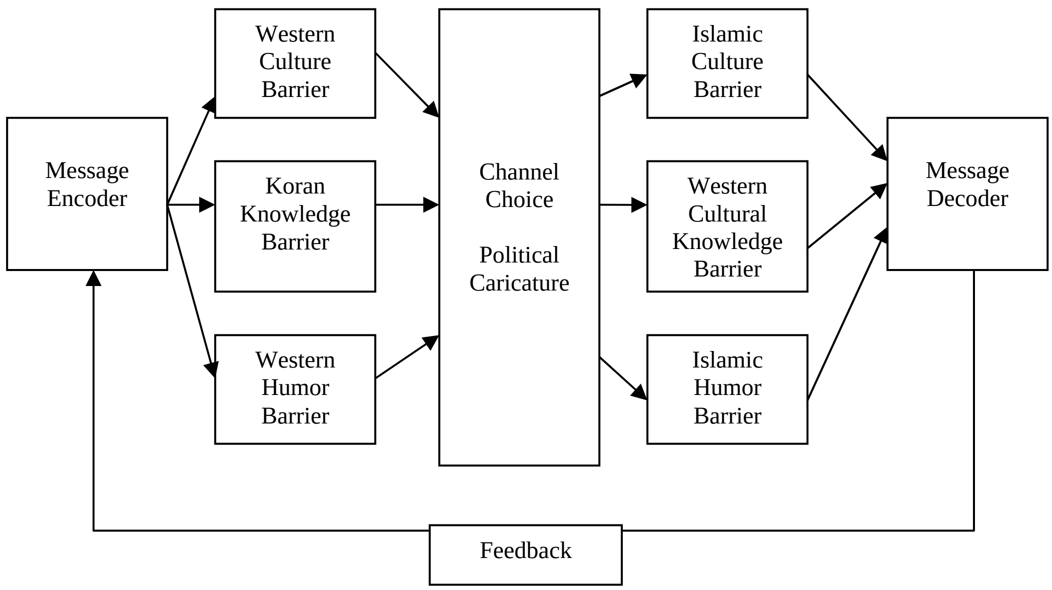
Figure 1. Intercultural Communication Model in Conflict



The Danish artist and newspaper as the message encoder, and from a very ethnocentric Western cultural and humor perspective, and no Koran knowledge chose as their channel of communication to draw and publish the offensive Muhammad caricature. The Muslims as the decoders of the caricature chose to decode it from their ethnocentric Islamic perspective with no consideration of the West's lack of knowledge of the Koran or knowledge of what the West feels is humorous. However, there was a time warp of five months before the Muslims provided much feedback on the caricature to the Danish.

Cultural Effects on the Intercultural Communication Model

When you look at the incident through the model, you are going through the logical steps in the intercultural communication exchange. It is easier to understand why the Muslims were so incensed and why the West could not understand their concern. They have no common base from which to communicate to each other; they were both operating from an ethnocentric perspective.

Different Protocols

Leaptrot (1996) describes the three fundamental classifications of protocol which are tribal, collective, and pluralist. We will discuss the pluralist and the tribal because these are the two basic protocols that are involved in this caricature situation. The Islamic religion is a form of tribal protocol. Tribal involves close family units, close relationship with friends and business partners, and a strong connection to the past. In the tribal protocol a person's word is the most important part of building a relationship. The Danish (and much of the West) are pluralist societies. People in a pluralist society belong to many groups and are not as concerned about the past as tribal people are. According to Ping (1998) when two cultures do not share the same reality, they do not share the same needs. When expectations are

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different and not meet, disastrous consequences happen such as blasphemous caricatures being published and the riots over the caricatures.

When different mindsets exist there is a lack of stability and compatibility between the two cultures. With this cognitive dissonance, it is difficult for either culture to understand the other. It is necessary that each culture acknowledges that the other culture is having problems understanding a different culture and religion in this case. In addition, the more abstract the subject the more difficult it is to view it from the other culture's mindset (Fisher, 1997). On both sides tolerance, discussion, and education was what was needed in the caricature situation. The feedback loop needed to be used until all sides understood and could empathize with the other side.

Understanding of Religion

Religion impacts how people communicate. In many parts of the world, including the Middle East, religion is a way of life. In countries where there is separation of church and state, such as the United States, all religions are treated equally. Which means religion is a humor subject at the expense of whatever religion is being caricatured. In countries where there is separation of church and state everyone knows that they are expected to follow the law of the land first and their religious laws second. Whereas in a religiously dominated country the religious and secular laws lines of demarcation are blurred. This is the reason the Danish had no problem with running a caricature of Muhammad, they were free to say whatever they felt. Unlike in the Islamic countries where the government controls what people are allowed to say. Also most Christian countries do not read the Koran and do not know that it is forbidden that there be any kind of drawing, painting, or depiction of the Muhammad.

Religion answers questions concerning what is life and death, the creation of the universe, society's origin, relationships between people within the society, and our relationship to nature. Individuals can use religion as psychological welfare to understand what is not easily explained. Religion is one of the main contrasting cultural values people have (Samovar & Porter, 2004).

What is surprising is the length of time between when the caricature was first printed, September, 2005, in Denmark with very little protest by Danish Muslims. At the same time, Egypt reprinted the cartoon without any noticeable wrath from Muslim clerics. It was only after a December meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conferences that the cartoons were used to show devote Muslims that the freedom and democracy of the West denigrates Islam. Religion has been used to orchestrate political unrest. Iran does not want Denmark to assume the presidency of the U.N. Security Council, and other countries need something other than their government for the people to respond. There is a conflict of culture; there is also a conflict within many of the Islamic nations (Clash, 2006).

Understanding of Humor

Humor is often used to establish a relaxed atmosphere. Humor can be categorized as absurdity, exaggeration, human situations, playful ridicule, and surprise. Humor often does not transcend the culture for which it was designed. Humor is generally viewed as a way to diffuse tension and to convey a message indirectly. In the West we laugh at other people, not as ridicule, but as a way to say we can appreciate the humor in the situation. The West sees Iran having nuclear weapons as a negative. It

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would be natural as a way to see the humorous side of a possibly traumatic situation and to help people gain a perspective of the situation to draw cartoons of the situation. Part of the purpose of friendly cartoons in cultures, where it is acceptable, is to learn to deal with friendly insults in a positive way (Martin & Chaney, 2006).

Paulson (1989) said “Humor is an ability to stand outside of life’s flow and view the whole scene—the incongruities, the tragedies outside our control, and the unexpected” (p.6). A true sense of humor includes a sense of irony; it involves the wisdom to recognize the irrational in the presence of apparent reason. As Ober (1998) says humor is meant to augment, not detract, from the conveyed message.

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Many layers exist in the Muhammad caricature situation—hate crime, political cartoon, lack of education, political unrest, and political abuse of a situation.

Hate crimes can result from the fear differences can cause and result in hostility towards the group perceived as different. While the Danish did not mean for their caricature to be seen as hostile, they were showing their fear of Iran becoming a nuclear power. Since Arabic is not a language of Denmark, nor is the Islamic religion a major religion, the cartoonist, it is safe to assume, did not know that it was blasphemous to depict Muhammad in any form. Of course depicting Muhammad humorously did not help the situation. Given that very few people in Denmark said anything and that it took five months for other countries in the Middle East to respond, it is not surprising that the West is asking what is the problem and having trouble understanding the rioting that is happening.

Once you have been told that the Koran says it is blasphemous to depict Muhammad, it is understandable to see that Denmark stepped on something that is considered very holy to Muslims. However, is it too much to ask Muslims to educate the West rather than riot. As one of my students said in a discussion of this situation, “Don’t they know that they look ignorant to us rioting about something that was not intended to be interpreted, as they are interpreting it, five months after the event.” If you look at Figure 1, it is obvious that direct feedback in the form of education was never part of the communication process. There is also the problem that the humor was not meant for the people in the Middle East but for the Danish readers of the journal in which it was first published.

Now that it is known that Muhammad is not to be depicted, people have been educated, and to want to irritate Muslims by reprinting the offending cartoons does not make sense. Some things we do not have to see to know that they are improper, depicting the cartoons in words is quite sufficient at this point in time.

However, the Middle Eastern governments that are crying foul and saying the West is defaming them have to look at what they are doing to the West also. An understanding is necessary that all countries will choose different types of governments under which to live and that other countries must respect those differences and not impose their own beliefs on other governments. After all, once the caricature was printed, the only thing that could be done was for the Middle East to educate, and the Danish

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cartoonist to apologize for ignorance. It was necessary for the cartoonist to apologize because humor should not be intended to be blasphemous, in any culture.

The conclusion is that people should do a little research before they write about, depict, or in anyway do something that could be misinterpreted; however, it is also safe to say that in this large world of ours that you cannot know everything and that education should be the first line of defensive rather than riots when mistakes are made. It is also easy to see that this was not immediately a crisis and only became one when it was politically convenient.

It is our recommendation that in this very unstable time in the Middle East that Western newspaper people and journalist in general be very careful about due diligence to the research part of their reporting.

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Aspects of Intercultural Understanding Through an MBA Study Abroad Program

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Abstract

Understanding the globalization of business practices is an important area of learning for students studying in MBA programs today. Fitting in yet another course into a core curriculum can be a challenge for any academic program. Administrators of MBA programs across the country realize that their students must be able to interface with both business practices and business people around the world in order to re-enter the competitive work force. This paper discusses how one particular MBA program on the east coast addresses the need to prepare students for the global market place through a summer study tour program. This paper will show that even short-term exposure to learning and living overseas can significantly enhance one's intercultural awareness and appreciation of international business and culture.

Introduction

We are all familiar with the saying that the 'world is shrinking' and that we live in a 'global village.' Advances in technology have made it possible to design, assemble, move, market and sell products across oceans, borders, and time zones. We can do electronically what we used to have to do in person. Advances in technology such as the Internet and telecommunications make it easy to communicate with each other by the press of a button or the touch of a key, and the ease of travel allows us to be transported from one part of the globe to another in just a matter of hours. Who would have thought that when the concept of a global village was envisioned by media expert, Marshall McLuhan, back in the 1960's (Samovar and Porter, 1994) you could stand on the Great Wall in China and take your picture by using a cell phone that was designed by the Japanese, manufactured by the Taiwanese, assembled in China, and sold all over the world.

The world is not just getting smaller, it *is* smaller. Today's reality is that we deal with an international marketplace as we go about our daily lives – whether working or studying. In fact, according to the 2005 annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (2005, IIE), in 2005 there were approximately 565,000 international students studying in institutions of higher education in the United States with the most popular field of study being business and management (18% of total) followed by engineering (16.5%) and mathematics and computer sciences (9%).

Furthermore, there were over 190,000 U.S. American students who earned credit for study abroad during the 2004-2005 academic year and approximately 17.5% of these students were business majors with the leading field of study being the social sciences (22.6%). Study abroad in non-traditional destinations, such as China and India has increased as students see the potential for emerging economies and how they will affect the global economy. In fact, the

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number of students who chose China as their host country for study abroad dramatically rose by 90% in 2004, which makes this the 9th leading host country for outward bound U.S. American students (IIE, 2005, p. 2). The traditional spots for study, such as Europe (previously with the interest in the Euro) or Eastern Europe (after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989) have given way to emerging economies such as China and India. In fact, China and India have become the two hot spots for U.S. American students to study business because of the focus on economic growth and their increasing importance to the U.S. and the world.

Evidently, both undergraduate and graduate students see the benefit of experiential learning when it comes to interacting in a globally interdependent world. Interestingly, the field of business and management is number one for incoming international students and number two for outgoing U.S. American students (IIE, 2005. The trends of study abroad show that it is not enough to simply engage in class discussions and exercises or read about business development elsewhere. Actually going to another country and learning to adapt while on an academic study program or for work is the best way to begin the long process of awareness of what it means to live and work in a global economy). The bottom line, as purported by numerous international scholars in business, is that “business students [should] emerge better prepared to cope with the forces that govern today’s world economy” (Ortiz, 2004).

This paper will focus specifically on China as the backdrop for an MBA study tour month-long program. It will address both the programmatic aspects and learning outcomes of an academic study program at a university by looking at the design of the program, its course objectives and the learning outcomes of its participants. First, the relevance of the topic will be addressed through a literature review of current thinking on the matter; second, programmatic aspects will be addressed by describing the types of programs offered, how the curricula is focused on intercultural learning, and what types of assignments are used to facilitate a broader intercultural understanding of the global business environment. Third, both quantitative and qualitative data will be examined from the study tour to Greater China that took place in May 2005, as led by the first author of this paper. These data include Pre- and Post Surveys, observation of pre-departure lectures, interaction with the students before, during and after the overseas experience, and student papers. A thorough discussion of students’ expectations before and reflections after the trip will illuminate this particular global learning experience in order to help administrators and educators creatively address the need for more intercultural communication learning within the business school curricula. Finally, based upon these Pre- and Post-Surveys and reflection papers, this paper will show that even a short-term exposure to learning and living overseas can significantly enhance one’s intercultural awareness towards international business practices, business culture and national culture.

Literature Review

This section will illuminate two aspects of importance in the pursuit of understanding business practices and business communication in the field of business studies in higher education. The first aspect is international business education in general and the second is intercultural communication. Both themes are driving forces of why the university in the study promotes the Global Immersion Program as an optional learning experience for study abroad for its MBA students.

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International Business Education

Why provide opportunities for understanding and growth regarding international business practices? The answer is two-fold. First, the goal of an MBA program should be to help foster critical thinking and analytic skills beyond one's "inherent biases" (White, et al., 1998, p. 108). Second, the growth of multinational corporations and their increasing thrust into the international markets has caused both opportunity and challenges for these organizations and institutions of higher learning (Webb, et al., 1999). The internationalization of the business curriculum involves both a growing awareness and acknowledgment of administrators, faculty and students themselves, that they (students) need the skills to be able to manage business interactions competently in the global environment and be specifically trained to do so (Beamer, 1992; Shetty & Ruddel,2002; Varner, 2000; Varner, 2001). These are the three primary groups of people who have something at stake in terms of international business communication: employers, administrators of academic programs, and students.

The first issue concerns employers. Both foreign and U.S. corporate employers want their newly minted MBA students to have global skills and knowledge preferably learned through their studies; however many companies are willing to pay to have them trained if their new hires do not possess the level of skills needed (Caudron, 1992; Kitsuse, 1992; Neelankavil, 1994, Nowak & Dong, 1997; Slate, 1993). For those companies that are either small or that have not built international training programs into their employee training programs, Hugenberg (Hugenberg et. al. 1996) implores such business leaders to incorporate intercultural training *before* sending their employees to do business in the international marketplace. The point: there *is* a need.

Secondly, administrators of academic programs across the country acknowledge the demand of study abroad programs - that their students must be able to interface with both business practices and business people around the world in order to re-enter the competitive work force; hence the popularity of academic study programs overseas. So, such administrators adjust and or create programs that more closely fit the context and culture of their institutions (Neelankavil, 1994; Sokuvitz, 2002). Many institutions are responding to the corporate mandate to create business graduates who have the competitive advantage of being internationally savvy – that it is the obligation of institutions of higher education to turn out well-prepared workers (Shetty & Rudell, 2002). When business schools began revamping their curricula in the early 1990s in order to face the demands of the business world, adding global dimensions to course requirements was part of the overhaul (Andrews & Tyson, 2004; Cavusgil, 1993). Stakes were high because the demands were high.

Years later, it still is not easy to meet the demands of the corporate recruiters. Responding to corporate demands is not easy because of curricular, instructional and organizational constraints on administrators, faculty, and students. For example, academic administrators also find it difficult to navigate such programs with MBA students because of scheduling, departmental needs and institutional mandates (AACSB, 2002). It becomes increasingly complex with MBA programs to engage in traditional semester-long study abroad programs because their academic and recruiting schedules just don't allow for this. MBA students are expected to maintain high academic standards while interviewing for internships and being recruited for post graduation careers.

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Finally, students of business and management realize the need for a broader global perspective keenly because the intensive recruiting process demonstrates the general corporate demand on international knowledge and language skills. While many students may be culturally savvy and thoughtfully inclined to seek understanding of other cultural perspectives rather than be ethnocentric, many may not be entirely knowledgeable about cultural complexities – the present generation has not necessarily been attuned to matters international. Interculturalists, Edward Stewart and Milton Bennett (1991), caution us to think about the typical challenges of not only doing business abroad, but interacting with people from different world views in general:

> Cross-cultural problems arise from differences in behavior, thinking, assumptions, and values between U.S. people and those from other countries and cultures with whom they associate. These cultural differences often produce misunderstandings and lead to ineffectiveness in face-to-face communication. A deeper understanding of the nature of cultural differences would increase the effectiveness of U.S. people in cross-cultural situations. But to reach this goal, Americans must first become more conscious and knowledgeable about how their own culture has conditioned their ways of thinking and planted within them the values and assumptions that govern their behavior. (p., ix)

The point is that it is not just about the learning of *other* cultural differences, but becoming aware of your *own* cultural norms – to realize that there is a broader world out there but that there is also a rich opportunity for learning about one's own world as well - and then to be able to take what you know about yourself and compare and contrast to what you learn about others in order to begin the understanding process.

When students are able to take part in study abroad programs, the goal should not just be to focus on other cultures but to include one's own and understand how the two work together. The "back stage/front stage" analogy is appropriate here (Varner, 2001). All too often, we glorify only the actor who is front and center only to forget about the crew behind the scenes who make it possible for the actor to do his or her job. We do this with culture as well – we focus on the apparent trappings of culture such as customs, food, and the do's and don'ts of behavior to the neglect of all of the intricacies of the rules and norms that guide and lead such behavior from behind. While we can enjoy what we view from the vantage point of our seats, when we overlook all that must go on backstage in order to support the actor, we miss out on the beauty of understanding the many complexities that go into making a production worthwhile.

So it is with this type of study abroad program that allows business students to actively "go back stage" to see how things actually work behind the scenes. By not only *learning about* business and cultural practices but rather *engaging in* what actually happens to business practices and cultural practices in another cultural context), students get the full perspective of stagecraft. The internationalization of the business curriculum in the U.S. has been evolving over the last two decades to afford future business leaders that vantage point of understanding and doing something about better business and communication practices across cultures.

This leads us to the second topic of discussion – issues of culture and communication. While actors memorize a script, we all know that in any given script the playwright has included what is called the subtext. It is not enough for the audience to listen to the actual words being said, but they must pay attention to all of the symbolic cues and subtle nuances (both in vocal variety and non-verbal behaviors) that transpire as the actor attempts to communicate the many important

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aspects of the thought and feeling and meaning behind those words. In any "backstage" cross-cultural experience, students are experiencing firsthand what culture is and how people from that culture use communication to express their cultural norms.

Intercultural Communication

Interestingly, the word, "communication," comes from the Latin verb, "communicare," which means to "share or make common to many" (Grice & Skinner, 1991). The theatrical metaphor notwithstanding, let us look at yet one more metaphor as we try to understand the notion of international business practices and the importance of intercultural communication in the process of doing business across cultures. Metaphors prove useful as we try to wrap our minds around abstract concepts – they help us to be in the same frame of reference and share in similar meanings.

In our age of technology, probably one of the best metaphors of culture has been offered by Dutch social philosopher, Geert Hofstede (1997), who has described culture as the 'software of the mind' or the way we are programmed to do things based upon what we learn over a life-time. One's culture dictates the unstated norms of any given group – it encompasses all of the beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors that are generally accepted and expected within that group but that are not necessarily talked about. We act out the cultural traits of our society daily but the only time we really notice them is when accepted behavior has been violated – something happens that deviates from our expectations of how we are 'programmed' to behave. Anthropologist, Edward T. Hall (1976) describes intercultural communication by how we use language – that what we communicate is governed by hidden rules that he calls the "silent language' or hidden dimension that are reflected in both language and behavior. Additionally, Jandt (2000) defines culture in a most comprehensive manner,

To fully understand a culture, you need to understand all the experiences that guide its individual members through life, such things as language and gestures; personal appearance and social relationships, religion, philosophy, and values; courtship, marriage, and family customs; food and recreation; work and government; education and communication systems; health, transportation, and government systems; and economic systems. Think of culture as everything you would need to know and do so as not to stand out as a 'stranger' in a foreign land (p. 10).

Intercultural communication, therefore, is the communication among people who ascribe to different values, beliefs and attitudes as framed by the norms of that culture. While we often use generalizations to describe a culture (individualistic/collectivisitic; high power distance/low power distance, etc.) we always want to keep in the fore front of our minds that within any culture there are many sub-cultures and that *individuals* make up those sub-cultures. We may ascribe certain generalities to "a people" or "a culture" or a "language group"; however, we need to remember that situations will vary because people vary. Business practices will be different and perhaps unpredictable not only because of national culture, but because organizational culture will be different – and individuals within the national and organizational cultures will have a variety of behaviors, attitudes, values and beliefs. We must therefore be aware that communication context, situation, and personality traits come into play in any communication act (Lovitt, 1999). And, it is important for students to realize that just because emerging

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economies such as China and India may be exposed to Western ways of doing business it does not necessarily mean that such cultures will adopt the values of the other culture/s (Ralston, et al., 1993). These matters of international business practices and intercultural communication are so complex and interconnected and are the very reason why a study abroad program can be extremely beneficial to its participants.

While there is no substitute for an extended period of time to work or to study in a culture foreign to one's own, even short-term experiences abroad can help to foster a new awareness and the beginning of a deeper understanding of the complex issues of culture – this includes 'other' culture and one's own culture (Davis & Redmann, 1991). Understanding the globalization of business practices is an important area of learning for students in business programs today regardless of how short or how long a study abroad program may be. A growing number of MBA programs are adapting to the traditional 'semester abroad' and creating two to four week intensive study tours instead. "The length of the program must be balanced against intended results…Short-term programs, when well structured and value-added, are quite useful and may stimulate students to undertake longer programs subsequently" (AACSB, 2002, p. 6) and that "different kinds of programs allow for different kinds of learning" (p. 11).

Study abroad programs help students get beyond the theories of cases and simulations and out into a "lab" experience, testing and seeing first-hand if what they learn in the classroom and through the course readings plays out the way they imagine. And hopefully such experiences will encourage critical thinking about one's "inherent biases" (White, et al., 1998, p. 108) as hypotheses are tested and situations occur where there may be cognitive dissonance because what students may have read and heard doesn't match what they see and experience. Varner (2001) says of international experiences, "Students need to realize that culture is not something that is in the past. Culture lives and changes. It expresses itself in politics, government policies, business regulations, educational systems, and business practices. One cannot separate culture from these issues and study culture in isolation" (p. 104).

By combining the needs of the organization, the academy and the student, there can be strong synergy here to accomplish the task of learning what it means to be competent intercultural communicators and international business leaders in the global economy. It would be like braiding a rope with three cords – the student, the institution of higher education and the corporation – where all three of these strands contribute to strengthen global business practices as business expands and the world shrinks. Developing programs to foster the development of skills that will, in turn, make for more competent workers is what internationalizing the business school curriculum is about. Now it is time to move towards our description of the program.

Program Structure and Objectives

The university was one of the first MBA programs to develop a study tour program with a pilot in 1992 and then for credit thereafter. Known as the GIP (Global Immersion Program), this program provides a unique and custom-fit experience for its students, allowing them to have in-depth exposure to the business environment of a significant global market outside the U.S. Since its inception, programs have run in Europe, Greater China, Southeast Asia, and South America.

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The Global Immersion Program is a half-credit elective course, designed to provide MBA students with an in-depth exposure to the business environment of a significant global market to foster greater awareness of a certain area in the world economy. Each year the destinations include Greater China (Taipei, Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong), Southeast Asia (Bangkok, Ho Chi Minh City Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore) and South America (Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Salvador and Rio de Janeiro). The backdrop of this paper will focus specifically on a trip taken to Greater China (in May of 2005) as a demonstration of one particular program design that helps foster understanding by creating opportunities for students to engage in genuine learning about intercultural issues in global business practices.

Each of these four regional groups makes up one section of the course, with 45 students being the maximum enrollment for each section. The overall objectives of each program are:

- to provide an understanding of the region's business, cultural and political environments
- to achieve a working knowledge of regional business practices through direct interaction with managers, employees and government officials
- to explore the value of different economic models as benchmarks for global business practices
- to promote intercultural awareness and communication skills

Greater China Program

The China Global Immersion Program offers a comprehensive tour of Greater China, including Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland's two most important cities, Shanghai and Beijing. Through alumni and institutional contacts, students are provided the opportunity to develop a solid understanding of the business environment and an appreciation for the ancient Chinese culture. Particular themes that are usually addressed during the immersion experience in Greater China most often include: government regulation of commercial activity; joint ventures; market-entry strategies; capital development structures; privatization; special economic zones; import/export issues; Cross-Strait relations; and the future of Hong Kong. So that the program content is geared toward the interest of students who register for the course, each year the themes are developed once students complete a survey that details their specific interests and concerns.

And, as the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) opens itself up to foreign investment and liberalizes its economic policies, it is positioning itself as an emerging world economic power. Equally important is its relationship with the Republic of China (ROC) of Taiwan, which has also emerged as a world leader – especially in high technology and heavy manufacturing. How these two economic powerhouses sort out their complicated relationship will determine in large part the state of global business in the 21st century.

Site Visits

In Taipei, the capital of the Republic of China of Taiwan, students have the opportunity to meet with leaders in some of the high technology industries for which the country is famous, such as semiconductors and telecommunications. Students can observe firsthand the organization of

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Taiwanese heavy industry, and learn how the large family businesses are managed. Time is also set aside to discuss how the new political party is affecting the commercial environment and the future of relations with the mainland. Gaining a foundation of the history of the political contexts of ROC and PRC is crucial before the group can head to the mainland.

On the mainland, the group travels to the political and cultural capital of China, Beijing. Here the focus will be on how the country's economic & political policies affect the domestic & foreign business community. Time is set aside for visiting key government agencies charged with regulating commercial activity, including the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of China. Students also participate in meetings with representatives from foreign joint ventures, a large state-run industrial enterprise and international organizations. Time is set aside (a three-day weekend) to provide plenty of opportunity to explore such famous sites as Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City, the Great Wall and the Summer Palace – all important to the historical makeup of this great country.

Another important city is Shanghai, the commercial center of modern China. Participants meet with educators at key institutions of higher education, such as the China-European International Business School, have the opportunity to experience the Pudong New Economic Zone and other local manufacturing enterprises. As a financial center, Shanghai boasts the country's most active stock exchange and will be included as part of a focus on capital formation in China. Past programs have included visits to successful joint ventures and a traditional Chinese hospital.

And yet another major aspect of China is Hong Kong. Long known as a center of finance and trade, Hong Kong underwent a major change in 1997. The program explores the future of this territory as a business center in light of its handover to the PRC. To examine the financial industry, the group meets with the leaders of some of the most famous financial institutions in the world. In addition, participants are introduced to some of the more important family-owned businesses for which Hong Kong is famous. Cross-border visits to manufacturing enterprises in Shenzhen. Plenty of opportunities to meet with Wharton alumni working in Hong Kong are another important feature of this segment.

While the time abroad is short, each daily agenda is packed tightly with high level appointments in government, education and industry that provide students with a fantastic overview of key issues that relate to Greater China's debut as an emerging world economic power. The students are immersed in an intensive 24/7 learning opportunity. The following explains how we prepare them for the trip.

Program Structure

Students have the opportunity to take courses in International Accounting, International Business, International Finance, International Management, International Marketing, etc. An MBA program would not be complete without such courses as they are important for any business school curriculum. They are also crucial for students who plan to work in multinational corporations; however, how much better if students can take the theories and the case examples discussed in classes such as these and have the opportunity to sit down with and learn from a business professional in Hong Kong who tells them about global supply chain management

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before they head out to a factory and meet the workers and see first-hand what is happening. If students are at all widening their global perspective, then the GIP has succeeded.

The Global Immersion Program consists of three main components: on-campus sessions; a four-week immersion experience; and a written assignment due at the beginning of the second-year fall semester. Since the GIP is offered for academic credit, students are evaluated on attendance at on-campus lectures, active participation during the four-week immersion experience and the quality of written work. Grades are given on a credit/no-credit basis. At the head of each group is a program director who is a member of the Wharton staff and whose primary role is official representative of the school. The program director is intimately involved in planning the immersion experience itinerary in cooperation with the faculty area specialists, and ensures that program arrangements are realized en route. The program director also facilitates group decisions, and serves as a formal link between the group and the university in case of emergencies.

During the second half of the spring semester, each on-campus lecture meets weekly for a total of five sessions. Led by faculty area specialists, the lecture series covers the history, political systems and social structures of the chosen region of study. Assigned readings and videos serve to augment classroom discussion. During this period, students participate in additional co-curricular sessions to minimize the culture shock that is inevitable when traveling in an unfamiliar environment. The student coordinators who are hired to assist in each major city visited provide the information on business etiquette, language, and cultural expectations. These individuals have extensive living experience in the countries visited. In addition to being an interpreter of the local culture, student coordinators serve as liaisons between the group and the GIP staff to help deal with any problems that might arise. Students also receive information on social and recreational opportunities to help plan any free time. Prior to departure, briefings on necessary immunizations and other health issues are conducted by professionals from the University's Health Services staff. Special meetings also are scheduled to discuss personal security and safety while traveling abroad, utilizing the experiences of fellow students who have recently returned from these areas.

Lectures and Activities

The centerpiece of the GIP is the four-week immersion experience that begins immediately following spring final exams in May, and concludes during the first week of June. Each immersion experience consists of several basic features. The first is the academic overview. Wharton arranges for experts at a partner school of management to provide an overview of key issues facing the region's business community. The purpose of these lectures is to provide participants with up-to-date information and to prepare them for subsequent meetings with senior executives. One of the highlights of the immersion experience is testing this information against real-life situations encountered during the program.

The next feature of the program is are the company and government meetings, which is designed to get students out of the classroom and into the "real world." Through face-to-face meetings with company executives, they observe how managers run their companies, how market forces influence their decisions, and what they perceive as current and future problems. By visiting both

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production facilities and corporate headquarters, they see how management decisions directly affect operations and personnel.

Finally, throughout the immersion experience, there are numerous opportunities to learn about culture and its influence on society. These might take the form of planned group events such as a city tour or an excursion to a significant historical area. Receptions with Wharton alumni and students allow participants to interact with their counterparts on a less formal basis and develop a valuable network of contacts. The importance of unplanned, informal cultural activities cannot be overemphasized, since they provide exposure to social norms without the constraints of prescribed expectations.

Upon returning to campus in the fall, student participants meet in a final wrap-up session to evaluate their experiences. The program concludes with a 10-page paper on conclusions from the immersion experience that is turned in at this time. The Global Immersion Program is more than just a trip; it is intended to be a comprehensive learning experience. Sessions prior to departure, the four-week immersion experience and the written assignment upon return are designed to fulfill the academic and programmatic requirements of students, faculty, and staff. The following section will examine the three forms of data that were collected – Pre-Surveys, Post-Surveys and student papers – to assess student learnings from attending the 2005 China Global Immersion Program.

Methodology

Part of any research study must meet the rigorous demands of data analysis. Methodologies used for this paper were of a qualitative nature, which included participant-observation (As the primary researcher, I served as program director and accompanied the students on the trip as well as helped prepare them for it.), surveys and document collection (final papers). Pre- and Post-Surveys served the purpose of recording students' perceptions of their cross-cultural knowledge before and then their reflections on culture and business practices after. The formal written "term" papers served as the summary of each student's interests and learning throughout the pre-sessions, lab experience abroad, and post-sessions. Student coordinators were also required to write a paper if they wanted to receive the 1 C.U. equivalent for a course. Out of the 45 students who participated in the program and the 4 student coordinators, I collected 41 papers in total. This does not mean that 8 out of the 49 students did not submit their final papers, simply that I did not receive all of them after they were submitted. Papers are evaluated on a Pass-Fail basis. Both of the surveys and the papers, as well as my notes were put through an analytic process of coding and determining themes. From these themes come the summaries which are included in this paper.

Data Analysis

In qualitative research, data analysis requires the researcher to go through a process of sifting through documents, field notes and other materials in order to increase one's own understanding in order to present them in a coherent manner to others (Bogden & Biklen, 1990). The first step to analyzing qualitative data is to read all of the collected documents and begin to write notes, or analytic memos, which basically are notes to your self about hunches or insights that seem to be

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apparent (Maxwell, 1996). After examining these memos, you begin to develop categories, which is the coding process. In qualitative research, coding is the primary manner in which data is organized and includes breaking down large chunks of information into smaller yet similar categories to which you assign more specific categories (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995; Maxwell, 1996). As specific categories emerge, they may begin to repeat themselves, so it is necessary to combine those that overlap. This is what I did in order to narrow the scope of student papers and comments and come up with appropriate themes of the students' learnings within their final papers.

I am always fascinated at just how many categories can emerge when doing a qualitative analysis; therefore, it is important to remember that making one choice over another is all a part of the qualitative research process (Bodgen & Biklen, 1990). Analysis is a series of choices, which can be broken down in many ways so the important thing is to narrow one's focus and remain dedicated to it. This is where the aspect of triangulation comes into practice. Triangulation is a method of analysis that allows the researcher to put various documents, interviews and sundry information through the test of looking for broader perspectives rather than simply relying on single inferences (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1993). Collecting data from a variety of people and sources, as well as examining what the literature says on a particular topic can help keep one's biases in check even when the data appears to support one's hunches.

This is why I chose to design a Pre-Survey, a Post-Survey and collect the Final Papers as my primary documents. In any type of research there is a validity threat in terms of bias, but especially so concerning the subjective nature of qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are challenged by constantly having to uphold their potential biases and try to look beyond what they already know or think about an issue in order to achieve broader perspectives (Maxwell, 1996). Triangulation of data helps achieve this broader perspective regarding qualitative data analysis. The following discussion examines the "findings" of the Pre- and Post-Surveys as well as the Final Papers.

Pre-Surveys

The purpose of the Pre-Survey was to determine student demographics including who had lived or worked abroad to gauge previous experience and understanding of cross-cultural issue and set up the Post-Survey to examine what students had learned in terms of two things: cross-cultural learning and business learning. The goal was to eventually triangulate the Pre-Surveys with Post-Surveys and then the Final Papers in order to get an idea of student learning about global issues of business and culture.

There were 15 total questions in the Pre-Survey (see Appendix A) that asked a variety of questions. For the 2005 China GIP program, 45 students attended along with 4 student coordinators. This section examines the responses of the 49 students which were almost equally split between females (43.5%) and males (56.5%). The average age was between 25-27 years of age (56.5) with 32.6% being in the 28-30 year range and 10.8% being in the 30+ age bracket. Students who matriculate into the Wharton MBA program must have at least 3-5 years of professional work experience. Over half of the students were U.S. citizens (54.3%), with the next largest percentage being from a variety of Asian locations (17.4%). When asked if they had

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worked in a country other than their country of origin, 59.6% responded yes with 71.4% of those respondents having done so as an adult. When asked about simply living in another country, 83% responded yes with 73.7% having done so during college years. In terms of second language proficiency, 58% of the respondents claimed to be fluent in a second language with 42% being conversant.

When asked about their perceived ability to be comfortable with the ambiguity that interacting specifically with a business contact in another culture entails, 45.7% felt that they were above average and 28.3% felt that they were strong. When asked the same question regarding communication, 39.1% said that they were above average and 32.6% said that they were strong. When asked to select from a list of the most common aspects of culture, students found the most challenging to be: dealing with communication contexts, language, and identity, with the broad category of “customs” coming in fourth. One could argue that self-referenced criterion are not measures of accurate behavior and that asking such questions are superficial; however, the goal was to identify significant overseas living and working experience and to give students the ability to at least superficially begin to think about communication and cross-cultural competencies. A further study would need to address whether this self-referenced criteria was accurate or not. Judging by the overwhelming response of students who lived overseas, it is safe to assume that there was a baseline for eliciting answers from participants who had knowledge and experience of the world around them.

The final question on the survey was designed as an open-ended question prompting students to identify what they wanted to gain from their overseas experience regarding business and/or cross-cultural understanding. Thirty-one of the forty-nine students chose to answer the final open-ended question that asked about what they hoped their learning outcomes to be. This will be discussed below.

Discussion of Survey Findings

What does this say about the Class of 2006 MBA students who participated in the Global Immersion Program? Several trends are evident. First, these students were rather savvy about cross-cultural issues in terms of having lived and worked abroad, which the majority had done. More than half self-reported that they were fluent in a language other than their native language and most thought that they were above average to strong when it came to dealing with the ambiguity that comes with trying to interact with norms that differ from one’s own. This group was clearly made up of many individuals who had substantial overseas work experience, about 60%, and were rather confident about their abilities dealing with the ambiguities of intercultural interactions - about 74% felt that they were either above average or strong. What is particularly encouraging is that while the majority of students did have that overseas working and living experience, which clearly would have presented them with long-term opportunities to learn about interacting in an intercultural business setting via trial and error, they chose to spend an intense month studying and learning in a lab-type experience in order to learn *more*. Linked to this was that, while such students may have had substantial experience, it may have been in a different region of the world. There was definitely the acknowledgment that continuing to learn about world markets and how to do business in China was crucial.

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Secondly, and not surprisingly, one of the typical themes that emerged from their responses was that students acknowledged China's increasing importance as an emerging global economic power and wanted to know how to explore the major challenges that come with the territory. Another was that they wanted to gain an understanding of "how business is done," "how to do business," or, "how business works." Yet another theme was to explore the major challenges presented to companies breaking into China's rapidly growing economy.

Probably the most interesting theme comes as the third point of discussion. As the final survey question indicated, students not only had a desire to analyze China as an emerging superpower, learn how to do business in this country, and discover what challenges lie ahead, but they seemed intrigued by the notion that culture is inextricably linked to business practices. In essence students identified that there was the need for better cultural understanding as a precursor to "doing business" successfully. With this theme was the idea of needing to understand the drivers of big business as implicit in the cultural practices and norms of the people. Linked to this was a concern for learning reciprocal values and developing an appreciation of those values of others in the hopes that they would appreciate theirs. This is an exciting finding because this type of inquisitiveness goes beyond mere surface learning and implies digging deeper into how to become *competent* with actually "doing business interculturally." Comments about the values theme were, "What parts of my culture do they value?" or "…not just understanding the cultural aspects of the Chinese, but what they value…" and "…a different perspective about how the Chinese view life…gain a greater appreciation of [it]…".

The idea here is that they wanted to develop competency at interacting and communicating as a global business. Figuring out how to do that would be a challenge – perhaps what underlies this theme is the very detailed and subjective nature of "doing business from a global perspective." Perhaps taking this general concept and breaking it down into the more mundane, nitty-gritty details and complexities will be a future question for consideration. It is easy to say that we want to "gain a global perspective" but what does that *really* mean? Perhaps we will discover this as we move to discussing the findings in the student papers.

Student Papers

A total of 41/49 papers were collected and sorted based upon topic of paper. The nature of the papers varied greatly by student, since they were given very broad requirements with the purpose of eliciting from each student what interested them the most. The general assignment was as follows (for a more descriptive assignment, see Appendix C):

> "This paper should be based on your observations during the immersion experience. It can take the form of an evaluation of a specific institution or industry, or overall impressions gained during the immersion experience related to a particular topic with specific examples used to back them up."

Based upon the methodology of coding as previously explained, topics of student papers were eventually grouped into six broad categories:

- Social/Political;
- Business Practices ('doing business');

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- Growth (including infrastructure, emerging economies, environmental issues);
- Financial (real estate, private equity, currency);
- Branding (including retailing, advertising and marketing); and
- Other (manufacturing, multinational corporations).

For the purposes of this proceedings paper the first two categories (the largest) will be examined for student learnings.

Social/Political Aspects

One of the most popular topics of the Final Paper and probably the most interesting was the intrigue around China's single party authoritarian government and the view that it represents a major threat to country's long term stability. Another concern of the students addressed the cross-strait relations of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) claim of control on Taiwan and Taiwan's refusal to concede their stance as a sovereign nation. Eight students wrote about the imbalance of political power and social reform in relation to the massive economic reforms. One theme that came up over and over again was that China had the 'potential for growth' in the midst of the economic advancements. There was great concern about the advances of economic change before social and political reform and how this is creating a huge imbalance for both the people and the country.

Probably the most notable aspect of these student papers is that they compare Western-centric views to those of a more authoritarian nature. As extrapolated from the excerpts of student papers written on the socio-political aspects, authoritarian policies of the Chinese one-party political system were compared to the western multiple party systems that ultimately lead to freedom and prosperity. There was concern over the government's control of the people, the media, and the infrastructure. Much discussion centered around the disconnect between rapidly expanding businesses yet the lack of appropriate marketing; the building boom in all of the cities but the lack of proper infrastructure; the explosion of global mass media access yet the single party's authoritarian hold on what media outlets its people can consume. It is not surprising that students would compare this emerging economy with all its promises to the free market economies of the world that are thriving because of democracy. What makes this even more interesting is that students, regardless of whether they were U.S. born or not, made such comparisons. The total number of U.S. born students who completed the Pre-Survey numbered 54.3% and 45.7% were citizens of other countries.

It is also noteworthy that students grappled with the systematic nature of "doing business" in an emerging economy and how all of the pieces of the puzzle must fit together: manufacturing, advertising, infrastructure, currency, private equity and on and on. One male student (Taiwanese national whose father was part of the Taiwanese citizens involved in the earlier uprisings and was forced to flee to the U.S.) concluded that "Turning from authoritarianism and dictatorship, Taiwan has embraced freedom and become one of the World's democratic countries as a sovereign, independent country. Taiwan takes its places in the global political, cultural, and financial economy as an economically prosperous, democratically, free, pluralistic, open, and modern nation."

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It is quite appropriate to examine the inextricable links between economic growth and social and political freedom, yet from the comments that students made it seemed apparent that they were able to step away from their Western-centric views and ponder the differences in cultural norms as this one student put it, “Regime change and a more democratic system is not an inevitable outcome for China, as many pundits in the West would like to have people believe…” One student began his paper with the opening statement, “The instinctive first impression that most westerners have about the Chinese political system is that China should be democratic…”

A paper on the role of women in society was written by one of the female student coordinators who was originally born in Beijing and then moved to Hong Kong. She writes, “The issues that matter deeply to me…are human rights, gender inequality, social injustice, the prevalence of kickbacks and corruption….of all these issues, the one that stands out the most to me is gender inequality…in order for China to prosper, its culture would have to fundamentally change.” She reasoned back and forth about the issues and ended on a hopeful note, expressing that there appear to be “seeds of change” as more and more women are entering the workforce in higher level positions and that more multinational corporations were springing up rather than merely state owned companies. She found it ironic that it was Mao Tse-tung who claimed that “half of the sky in China is held up by women.”

Another student acknowledged the limitations of the trip as he wrote about the history of Taiwan and its relationship to Mainland China, “On our trip, we saw the developed, urban side of China, but the reality is that a full two-thirds of the Chinese economy is still agrarian…” One female American-Taiwanese student grappled with the delicate tensions surrounding Taiwan and China’s clash over independence and although she still clung to the nationalism that her parents supported, she reasoned, “…After being in Taiwan and China, having met top political representatives, now…I am more inclined to support the status quo where China and Taiwan have an uneasy peace rather than risk unleashing China’s military might…” While students may reason that the democratic government of Taiwan has led to their successful economic growth and relatively enviable freedoms compared to other authoritarian nations these students ultimately questioned their assumptions of “other” in the attempt to not only exert their viewpoints, but acknowledged that there are others.

One student, after completing his global immersion experience, identified what he believed to be four major perceptions of U.S. Americans regarding China and refuted each of them (skepticism around non-democratic nations; loss of jobs for Americans due to large labor supply; image of low-cost manufacturing and quality; and that China is dependent on the U.S. for its economic survival). He also grappled with the notion of economic and national growth under a communist state and looked at the unpopular side of it, concluding that, “While I hope that the level of knowledge regarding China amongst the American people continues to increase…it is difficult for me to imagine that the American people will fully appreciate the subtleties of Chinese culture without taking a month-long immersion trip themselves…”

These “ah-hah!” moments are what the administration and faculty hope will happen through the immersion experience. *This* is what cross-cultural understanding is all about – to have one’s opinions yet be able to reason with differing ones by looking at the big picture while analyzing the issues.

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Business Practices

Another popular theme emerged, "doing business" and ten students explicitly chose to address issues related to this topic, such as the challenges and/or differences of doing business between other countries (e.g., India, South America, Iran). Again, the perspectives of these papers were not necessarily those of U.S. born nationals. For example, one of the papers dealt with Japan-China relations as written by a Russian student who lived in Japan and who was engaged to a Japanese woman. He wrote a fascinating paper that outlined his reflections and observations of the people in general and business people from each city we visited (Taipei, Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai) and what their thoughts were on China's (and Taiwan's) relationship with Japan.

Another student talked about China as a land of paradoxes where on the one hand they were ready to take a central role in current world affairs, but on the other hand, he observed "…a certain humility…and a communal connection to the greater whole that makes [its] presence a much less threatening player on the world stage." One of his themes was the value of collectivism and the understanding of "guanxi" or relationships in networking. He wrote, "We have a sense of networking in the West, and no one is more attune to that sense than the fresh MBA student, but guanxi goes many degrees further. It is so much more about *who* you know than *what* you know or can do. This same student did a triangulation of his sources. He writes,

> "During my time in China, I made a point to meet as many local Chinese as I could. I'm very glad I did as it afforded me the unique opportunity to take a look inside the local culture. During our GIP sessions with businesses, we learned time and again about the censorship that exists in China and how Western news web sites were off limits through the Chinese Internet. So I asked one of my new friends if she was concerned at all about not being able to get Western news sources. She was shocked and told me that should could certainly get to the Wall Street Journal or New York Times on-line without difficulty. What she *couldn't* get to was any of the other pages past the home page, but she never checked into it further. From her perspective, there was no censorship problem at all. As I thought about it, I realized what an effective and insipid way to control the flow of information and at the same time keep the bulk of the population ignorant to the fact that you are doing it."

Having sat and talked at length with this very energetic and outgoing student as well as having observed him in action, wherever he went, he had his Mandarin phrase book in hand, ready to talk to anyone he met. He showed promise for picking up the language fluently, but more importantly, understanding the "locals" as he put it. While many students wrote about the lack of freedom of the press, this seemed to echo the previous student's thoughts,

> "Although the Caijing business magazine has attracted substantial following and has succeeded in exposing the need for economic reform, the continued threat of Government interference and a lack of media protection laws have prevented Caijing from publicizing the need for political reform."

Doing business with China also meant making comparisons to other emerging economies. Differences between India and China came under scrutiny for a number of students (Indian) as they viewed India as a rising super power. One of the observations noted that while China has

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been a leader in terms of a low-cost manufacturing, it could also have potential in developing high-quality manufacturing. Another train of thought is that India is emerging as a “star” in the areas of software, design and services industry. Several students concluded that language skills, with the lack of English language skills (Chinese) versus the advantage of having such skills (India) seemed to be a barrier for service industry jobs with regard to China taking center stage. This would imply that English would be the lingua franca of business. This student concluded,

> India…has the benefit of a large English speaking population which can create connections with several cultures abroad. With over 300 languages and dozens of cultural backgrounds, it has a history of assimilating the new and [the] foreign. This mindset could make it easier for Indians and expats to develop an open exchange of ideas in both the business and social forums.

Another popular theme was infrastructure. Almost every single student, whether talking about China’s growth, financial capacities, or socio-political issues, gave their opinions regarding infrastructure. One of the Indian students pondered,

> “Infrastructure sees China’s most obvious and greatest ‘edge’ over India. Beijing’s impressive roadways and Shanghai’s high-rises and skyline made it apparent that China was years ahead of India in its physical infrastructure development. As I compared the two countries, I realized the benefits of communism in getting a developing region off the ground and on its way to economic prosperity. Centralized decision-making resulted in rapid execution. In India, democracy means gaining consensus among several political and economic stakeholders about the next areas of investment. While this is the norm in most developed countries, some would argue it is not the most efficient system in a developing economy.”

This was not the first time a student ventured to extol the benefits of a non-democratic governmental system.

India was not the only country to be compared to China. One Ecuadorian student sought “…to understand why development [has] occurred in China and not in Latin America from the perspective of an Ecuadorian national exposed to Chinese business for the first time.” This student presented a very persuasive argument of China’s competitive advantage but also its model. He reasons that on the one hand people from Andean Pact nations (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia) see China as “the efficient and powerful Chinese steamroller [that] has become a formidable competitor almost too powerful to overcome,” while on the other hand, “China has become a model for Andean Pact development experts.” He writes of his enthusiasm about participating in the China GIP,

> “My motivation for obtaining a business school education was to learn valuable business practices that I can hopefully apply in the long-term when I return to Ecuador and start my own export-oriented business. China GIP allowed me to experience first-hand the successes and obstacles Chinese firms have to overcome. This [paper] is my attempt to compare the four most challenging issues present both in China and the Andean Pact (political stability, corruption, special economic zones, size of labor force) and try to gain insights into how China has managed these obstacles while Ecuadorian political and business leaders are still searching for answers.”

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Discussion of Student Papers

All in all, common themes emerged concerning: manufacturing, service, infrastructure, cultural/social/political openness, freedom of press, company performance, market economy competition, growth, advertising and branding, currency and private equity. While student papers encompassed such a wide range of topics, with some explicitly stating in their titles or thesis statements that they were focusing on "doing business" in China or Greater China, each paper, in its own way was about doing business in China. Throughout the summer as the adventure progressed, students began to make connections between the many forces that drive culture – the government, the economy, and the social policies. It became clear to the students that the important aspects of "doing business" in China were all interrelated – understanding culture and business practices were inextricably bound to national culture. The very reason that the Global Immersion Program begins in Taiwan is to subtly yet powerfully make an impression of such interrelationships. The fact that students engage in governmental and educational appointments as well as corporate appointments also supports this function. One female student summed it up quite well. She writes,

> Having spent four weeks in Greater China, my observations of doing business in the region are best encapsulated by the phrase, 'anything is possible, nothing is easy.' The apt phrase was first articulated by a speaker from BBDO advertising in Hong Kong. After visiting more than forty companies, government and educational institutions throughout Greater China, I believe the phrase accurately captures the contradictions which inevitably arise in a rapidly developing economy that remains a socialist state."
>
> "This paper examines both sides of the story. Under the heading, 'Anything is Possible,' it explores China's astounding record of economic growth; its entrepreneurial culture; successes by local and foreign businesses; progress towards reform; and future growth opportunities. 'Nothing is Easy' outlines the difficulties of doing business in China. These include restrictions imposed by the communist government; the poor performance of the Chinese stock market difficulties enforcing intellectual property rights; and the struggle to establish brand recognition for Chinese goods."

By getting out of the classroom, away from theory and into an active lab setting, students experienced first-hand China's potential for growth economically, politically and socially. China's potential is like a little known actor who has recently been discovered for her talent and is poised for taking center stage in the global economy. In sum, students see this powerful nation as "China in transition." While paper after paper attested to the feeling that nothing in China is easy at present and so many of the issues are deeply complex, students have revealed their enthusiasm and optimism for a future where anything is possible.

Post-Surveys

The term papers were not the only telling aspects of documentation of the GIP trip. Students filled out a more lengthy Post-Survey once they returned to campus in September after their summer internships. There were a total of 16 questions with 8 of them being open-ended short answer and the other half being Likert-type questions (1-5 scale). This particular survey was administered to all of the students of the four GIP programs (Greater China, South East Asia,

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South America and India), which totaled about 170 students and there were a total number of 76 respondents. Surveys were then filtered for the Greater China trip for a total of 26 respondents (of 49), which makes for a return rate of 53%.

Once again, based upon the methodology of coding, a variety of themes occurred based upon the types of questions. When asked why they chose the China GIP program in particular, the responses revealed three themes: a) to learn about business and cultural practices of China; b) the uniqueness of the experience that the students wouldn't be able to replicate outside of the Program; and c) not one of the easiest regions to travel to/use the language. When asked how valuable a trip such as this was, 46.2% said "very valuable" and 26.9% said "extremely valuable" for a total of 73.1%. When asked if it was realistic that they will put these experiences and insights to use at work, 38.5% said that they were likely to do so and 30.8% were very likely for a total of 69.3% expecting to use this knowledge in the future. When asked "How will you put this knowledge into practice, the responses were fascinating, given their specific nature:

- This was important to me for analyzing companies that have ventures in China or compete with Chinese companies.
- Either within the U.S. interacting with Chinese colleagues, interacting with Chinese clients or visiting China for business reasons (more likely in the distant future).
- Within private equity, if I were to invest in China or emerging markets, I feel that I would be much more sensitive to certain of the complexities involved
- I believe this experience would be very useful if I end up working in Asia or in the US but interfacing with Asia companies (both of which are very likely in my future career path).
- I intend to work in China at some point. Even for those who do not work in China, most all will work with Chinese companies
- Be open-minded to different work style
- Over the summer, I helped launch a quality of life product in China. Understanding the patent laws and the importance of full employment allowed me to change my marketing strategy
- Hopefully I will get an opportunity to work in China.
- I will put it to work as it is an experience I now have with me. Whenever I read a story or engage in a conversation about China (which is often) I will always think back to my time there. I don't think I will work in China so there won't be a direct implementation
- I think just understanding that as hot as China is and there is this desire to outsource manufacturing to the region there are limitations and risks that many companies do not take into account. In general, gives me perspective
- I already talked about our factory tours when visiting a distribution center during my summer job

When asked about key takeaways concerning *cultural* practices, specific comments were:

- "Guanxi" -- relationships are key across culture
- The importance of the relationship between China and Taiwan. - The new emerging consumer trends in China mainland. - Rising competition among Chinese mainland cities
- I learned that it is not easy to do business in China as a foreigner. One needs to be exceptionally committed to conforming to cultural norms, learning the language and adapting to values such as lack of freedom of speech, etc.
- Americans do not get China. It is an ambiguous place, with an ambiguous mindset. Things are not as black and white as westerners would like to see them.
- East needs to meet the west!!

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When asked about key takeaways concerning *business* practices, specific comments were as follows:

- Business is relationship-based. Capital markets [in China] are still far behind the west
- Business ethics seem different, more tenuous than in the U.S., meaning there is more grey area. This is reflected in their lax Intellectual Property laws, etc.
- Learned that China should be approached as a country with several distinct regions vs. as one conglomerate
- We saw that political stability was a major issue for businesses in China.
- The growth of China will not last forever. Cheap labor is only a temporary competitive advantage.
- Business is complicated by the governmental authority.
- I learned a great deal about doing business in China - legal system, intellectual property, areas to invest in, differences between regions, entrepreneurial nature of people
- Market is developing, but culture still informs business practices to a very large extent

When asked to contribute any other helpful comments or thoughts regarding their learning, students said:

- Should perhaps put the situation in perspective by spending 1 or 2 days in an inland area that doesn't have the outward appearance of the west. China's advancements were evident her challenges and limitations were not
- Spending time in China is the ONLY way to really understand what is going on there, what the risks and opportunities are. Thanks.
- It was one of the deepest and most valuable experiences while at the university
- There is no substitute for visiting a region and getting a three-dimensional experience. Also, I would not have been able to setup meetings had I traveled there alone.
- Although many students said that we had too many meetings each week I believe the number of meetings we had with business professional and government leaders was perfect. it gave me a good background on the economic and social issues and hearing the information repeated through different sources just reiterated and confirmed the facts and how people think
- It is an entirely different experience to read about a country. Visiting with people in their home country, walking factory floors, and witnessing first-hand the blossoming of the Chinese economy cannot be replicated

Discussion of Post-Surveys

Once again it was clear that there was an interconnectedness of social, cultural, political and governmental issues that essentially defined “culture.” Students took their individual experiences, compared them to the collective group experience and responded accordingly. It was apparent that students responded to the survey questions honestly as well as approached their papers with transparency. One might argue that they were earning a grade for their paper and would respond as they thought the faculty and administration would like, but since the grade was pass/fail and since they were prompted to write on open-ended topics, it is likely that we elicited honest responses to the issues that mattered the most to them.

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Implications

How realistic is a program such as this in terms of cross-cultural learning? What can students honestly take away from it? Asking tough questions is vital when dealing with course development and pedagogical concerns in any academic program. Checks of balance must be in place as Woolf contends, "There is a tendency to assume that the rhetoric or globalization [of curriculum] matches the reality" (Woolf, 2002, p. 5). The caution here is that while it may appear to be good that one's institution has internationalized the curriculum, the focus may only be giving lip service to what internationalization really is. Measuring student outcomes are very important. To answer this challenge I would posit that the proof is in the pudding as evidenced from the thoughtful reflection pieces students wrote that are excerpted in this paper.

The other question is can intercultural communication be taught? A more accurate question should be can intercultural communication be *learned*? Chick (1990) would argue that while you can't teach intercultural communication as a body of knowledge (i.e., being prescriptive and making sweeping generalizations about "people from 'x' culture will do this and that"), you *can* learn how to deal effectively in communicating across various cultures. If culture means that any composite beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviors make up or program any given group's identity (granted that within our cultures we are all individuals and will not ascribe to all norms), then living among, interacting with and learning from nationals can present opportunities for students to experience first-hand for themselves if what they read and see and hear is accurate.

Measuring outcome of such an experience is very subjective and not necessarily generalizable. However, as evidenced by the individualized and very personal connections made in each student's papers, there is deep learning occurring. Arpan (1993) identifies 3 primary goals when considering an international component for learning. They include awareness, understanding and competency. Awareness obviously begins with expanding one's knowledge base about how the various economies of the world markets and how they work. Understanding follows basic awareness as students build upon their learning – this is where students make connections between how these world markets and economies interact, connect and are thus vital for productivity and survival. Competency requires that students build skills so that they can handle diverse situations with competence – this would mean the "transformation of understanding into action" (p. 17).

The GIP program clearly emphasizes the first two goals of Arpan's tenets: awareness and understanding. Competency would be the natural outgrowth for those students who might choose to continue to seek opportunities to interact with and/or manage in an international setting. Perhaps competency would follow as Ulijn (2000) believes competency means the ability to understand the correlation between national culture, corporate culture and professional culture. Woolf believes that the natural outflow of international exchange experiences is that it can produce a clearer appreciation for and understanding of cultural diversity. He says, "One measure of the efficacy of international education must, therefore, be the degree to which it brings tolerance, respect, and an appreciation of diversity" (2002, p. 6). Jandt (2003, p. 4) says that being a successful intercultural communicator means two things – that you are able to use your knowledge about culture and its effect on people and that by doing so you learn things about yourself.

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Part of the outgrowth of this immersion experience is to expand a student's world view so that he or she will add to his or her repertoire of experiences (and as we have seen, many students have had significant cross-cultural experiences in the business world) and think twice before acting or reacting with someone else who shares a cultural value that may differ from them. Also, having a substantial overseas experience such as this helps students to become aware of themselves in relation to others (Cheney, 2001). Yet another aspect is to get them out of the theory based classroom and into a lab experience that allows them to see, first-hand, how business operates – making valuable connections between what they learn in class as opposed to what they experience first-hand allows them to make conclusions for themselves. One student wrote of her experience while at Taiwan's TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor) in the famous Hsinchu Science Park, and envisioned how she and her classmates would want to act based upon their growing knowledge as business students:

> "It was not the list of TSMC's accomplishments that stunned our group, but [our host's] declaration that TSMC was content continuing to compete in the same part of the market in the future that it occupies today. She explained to us that TSMC occupies the middle of the value chain in the semiconductor industry. Specifically, TSMC's suppliers provide the vast majority of its raw materials while TSMC's customers focus on the design, marketing and sales. Therefore, TSMC is dependent upon customers to provide a market for its products. This strategy runs counter to general management theory. At Wharton, our professors speak about the need to "own' the end customer.
>
> [Our host's] statement shocked our group. Very few students on the China GIP had heard of TSMC before our visit, but after seeing the fancy headquarters, meeting our polished host and hearing the impressive statistics of this company, our group expected that TSMC would want to expand its control in the semiconductor industry, most likely moving to control the end customer and increase its presence worldwide. The bankers in the crowd were anxious to give TSMC any financing necessary to add the required capabilities. The consultants were already dreaming the growth strategy business plans and identifying potential acquisition targets…"

Such connections of classroom theory and the reality of business practice is what the Global Immersion Program is all about. Its purpose is to serve the MBA students by exposing them to market economies outside of the U.S. and perhaps outside of traditional student experience, as well as social, cultural and political environments. Such a program provides simply a snapshot that will hopefully be added to a repertoire of many pictures in each student's global awareness album. Our purpose is to implant more awareness and to begin to foster understanding. When students make significant connections like these, teachers, administrators and employers alike will cheer.

Conclusion

This paper discussed how one particular MBA program prepared students for the global market place through a summer study tour program by showing that even short-term exposure to learning and living overseas can significantly enhance one's intercultural awareness and appreciation of international business and culture. The discussion was grounded by relevant literature on the issues surrounding internationalizing the business school curriculum in order to

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look at programmatic aspects of the study abroad program and curricula that is focused on intercultural learning. Both quantitative and qualitative data were examined from the study tour that took place in May 2005 to greater China by examining students' Pre-Surveys, Post-Surveys and Final Papers that reflected on their experiences and insights. As was evidenced in the reflection papers, students believed that even a short-term exposure to learning and living overseas significantly enhanced their intercultural awareness towards international business practices, business culture and national culture.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

GIP Program Overview

Pre-Departure	Four-Week Experience	Post Trip
Lectures (4)	-Site visits: government, corporate, educational	-Papers
Dinner out at local restaurant	-Mid-session evaluation	-Wrap up meeting
Cultural issues/language session	Free time	-End-session evaluations
Free time session		
Pre-departure/health info		
Course pack - current readings		

APPENDIX B

Pre-Survey Questions
Sample of the total 15 questions in actual survey
What is your gender?
What is your age?
Nationality
Work/living experience in country other than U.S.
Ability to converse in languages other than English.
Ranking of comfort level regarding ambiguity in cross-cultural settings?
Ranking of self-perceived ability to communication with someone from another culture.
Choosing 3 most challenging aspects of learning to interact in a culture other than one's own. [language, communication contexts, identity, authority, religion, ambiguity, time, customs, food, bribes, other]
Prompting to write about what students hoped to gain concerning business and cross-cultural understandings while on study tour.

APPENDIX C

Final Paper Assignment

Upon your return to campus in the fall, you will present your final conclusions regarding the business environment you studied in the form of a written paper. This paper should be based on your observations during the immersion experience. It can take the form of an evaluation of a specific institution or industry, or overall impressions gained during the immersion experience related to a particular topic with specific examples used to back them up. You are welcome to augment your direct observations with research. To ensure a thorough discussion of your conclusions, the paper cannot be less than eight pages in length (double-spaced). You should include a list of references (books, articles, etc.) used, and cite them in the text as you make arguments or document facts or trends.

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To assist you in organizing your thoughts on this assignment, two synthesis sessions have been scheduled during the study tour. These sessions will take the form of seminar-type discussions moderated by the GIP program staff.

The following is a list of guideline questions that can be used to help you craft your work:

--What are the region/country's cultural characteristics and how do they manifest themselves within the business environment?

--What are the two or three most important issues facing the region/country's business enterprises in the next ten years and what are local managers doing to address them?

--How would you characterize the relationships within the region/country's business community, either within a corporation or between corporations and other entities (competitors, government agencies, etc.)?

--What recommendations would you make to companies considering entering this market?

APPENDIX D

Post-Survey Questions
Sample of the total 12 questions in survey – some were open response and others on a Likert-type scale.
Why did you choose to go on a GIP study tour?
Please give specific comments on the insights you gained regarding CULTURAL practices/issues of the region.
Please respond to the following question: The overall GIP experience helped me to gain valuable insights into the CULTURAL practices/issues of the region.
What kinds of CULTURAL information would have been most helpful for you to prepare for the GIP experience? Please make specific recommendations
Please give specific comments on the insights you gained regarding BUSINESS practices/issues of the region.
Please respond to the following question: The overall GIP experience helped me to gain valuable insights into the BUSINESS practices/issues of the region.
What kinds of BUSINESS information would have been most helpful for you to prepare for the GIP experience? Please make specific recommendations.
How realistic is it that you will put these experiences and insights to work?
If realistic, HOW might you put this knowledge to work?
Participating in an academic study program helped me gain insights into business and cultural issues/practices that I could not have gained through reading cases, books and discussing issues in an MBA course.
Please contribute any other helpful comments or thoughts regarding your cultural and global business learning while on GIP.

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The Implications of Confucian and Daoist Values for Multinationals in Intercultural Business Communication

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Abstract

Studies of intercultural communication focus little on the ethical principles that inspire specific communication practices (Dragga, 1999, p. 368). However, with increasing exposure to the intercultural dynamics of the global economy, a comprehensive understanding of ethical differences is necessary for multinational companies to succeed in the global marketplace. This article argues that awareness of ethical assumptions in other cultures is necessary to advance research and practice on intercultural business communication. Specifically, the article looks at the ethical backdrop inside China, which boasts the largest market potential in the world. The article first offers an introduction to Confucian and Daoist thought and the quintessential virtues of ethical behavior in China—harmony, reverence, patience and relationship. Then it depicts Microsoft's 14-year struggle in China, demonstrating the critical importance of complying with local ethical rules. This analysis supports the argument that a full understanding of ethical differences of multiple cultures is indispensable for enterprises to survive and ultimately thrive in a foreign market. Specific recommendations are offered for companies setting up business in China.

Introduction

"Effective international business-communication skills are the backbone that supports the transaction of business around the world" (Scott, 1996, p. 1), so developing intercultural communication fluency will help the business community cope with such important communication-related challenges as growing workforce diversity and increasing globalization. However, studies of intercultural communication focus little on the ethical principles that inspire specific communication practices (Dragga, 1999), even though those norms are crucial for facilitating business transfer and implementation in different cultural contexts. With increasing exposure to the intercultural dynamics of the global economy, a comprehensive understanding of differences in ethical perspectives is necessary for multinational companies to succeed in the global marketplace. Philosopher Richard DeGeorge (1993) has offered 10 useful ethical guidelines that multinational corporations should observe cross-culturally, such as "do no intentional harm; produce more good than harm for the host country"; however, in terms of business communication in a particular cultural context, his guidelines, while applicable, are too broad for specific problem-solving. Cultural ethics in China, for example, receive disproportionately sporadic scholarly attention, given the huge growing market potential the country offers to the world. With its GDP growth keeping 9% per year since 1978 and consumer savings amounting to 1 trillion USD per year (State Statistical Bureau, 2006), no one in the business community can afford to ignore this enormous market. Nevertheless, market opportunity does not mean that everyone can make money without a good understanding of the target market, especially its culture, ethics, and the way people communicate in that culture. Some issues and standards vary

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either significantly or subtly from country to country, which will directly affect certain business practices.

By applying Confucian principles, Dragga (1999), in his paper “Ethical Intercultural Technical Communication: Looking through the Lens of Confucian Ethics,” analyzes the communication issues on a breakfast cereal box created by Kellogg’s as it tries to introduce ready-to-eat cereal to Chinese. The following discuss also uses this strategy and starts by offering an introduction to Confucian and Daoist thought and its quintessential virtues that constitute the basis of ethical behavior in China—harmony, reverence, patience and relationship. Then it depicts Microsoft’s 14-year struggle in China, which demonstrates the vital importance of complying with the local ethical rules. The paper concludes by proposing several recommendations for companies setting up business in China: Respect the Chinese people, establish and maintain a strong relationship with government at all levels, play by China’s market rules, localize, and benefit China.

Confucian and Daoist Tradition in China

Over the past 2500 years, Confucius and Lao-zi have both been esteemed as great philosophers and educators in China. The two great sages are the founders of Confucianism and Daoism, respectively. Their philosophies, which represent a set of moral values and ethics with which people should comply, have long permeated Chinese civilization and culture. In other words, the Chinese nation is deeply rooted in the enduring moral concepts articulated by these two great philosophers, despite efforts, such as those of the former chairman Mao Zedong’s “Cultural revolution” in 1966, to eradicate such “out of date” vestiges of tradition. Teaching of Confucian and Daoist thought in China begins as early as kindergarten and lasts throughout high school and into college. Chinese children, even those just beginning to speak, are taught some popular phrases from the Confucian classics. Moreover, a surge of academic conferences is devoted to the study of Confucianism, Daoism, and other classics, which serve as an incentive to enrich the ancient legacy. Therefore, observation of traditional ethics in China, as reflected in Confucian and Daoist thought, will facilitate China-related business transactions and communication.

However, it is equally unwise to over-emphasize certain specific ethics in a culture, or make premature or hasty generalizations without sufficient evidence, especially if those generalizations tend to ignore external similarities and internal discrepancies. In this age of great cultural and economic transformation when people in the global village are more and more interrelated with each other, cultural assimilation tends to bridge cultural gaps. It is thus impossible to promise that a specific individual within a particular situation will be chiefly motivated by a specific ethical perspective: it is only possible to describe the potential influences of ethics on the individual communication behaviors (Dragga, 1999).

Confucian Ethics

Confucian ethics took root during the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.) which is marked by extreme social unrest and frequent civil wars. The philosophical teachings of Confucius provided a moral compass to society during this chaotic period, and even today, he is considered to be the greatest teacher in Chinese history.

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The landmark of Confucius thought is harmony (*da tong*), which is twofold in meaning. The first implication is the inherently dynamic interaction between our character and our conduct, that is, the consistency of what we are and what we do. The second implication of harmony is the concord in our nature. Confucius emphasizes that man is the center of nature and man should shoulder the responsibility to balance people and nature in order to make the world a better place: "Only after the self is cultivated, can the family be regulated; only after the family is regulated, can the state be governed; and only after the state is governed, can peace be brought to the land" (Confucius, 2006, p. 8).

Thus, the most distinct value of Chinese society is harmonious relationships, not only within oneself, but with other people, or even nature and the whole world. This is a critical concept that people in the business community should pay close attention to. The notion of identity is, for the Confucian, defined in terms of relationships (Brannigan, 2005). There are five relationships in Confucian ethics: ruler and subject; father and son; husband and wife; elder brother and younger brother; friend and friend. That is why there is a multitude of ways to address relatives of different relations in China, to the point where sometimes even native Chinese people are perplexed. For instance, you should call father's brother *shu shu*; mother's brother *jiu jiu*; father's sister *gu gu*; and mother's sister *yi niang*. Moreover, the name for relatives varies in different geographical locations; while in English-speaking countries people simply say uncle and aunt.

So the how can we bring about this harmony? Confucius' answer would be: through habitual practice of virtue. The six important virtues defined by Confucius prevalent in Chinese history are benevolence (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), wisdom (*zhi*), faithfulness (*xin*), reverence (*jin*), and courage (*yong*).

To summarize, Confucian ethics is based on the notion of harmony and six virtues that bring about this harmony. An examination of Confucianism also reveals that relationships have deep roots in Chinese history. In the discussion of Microsoft later in this paper, we will see that an initial failure to observe these principles of Confucian ethics led to problems in Microsoft's early attempt to establish a presence in China.

Daoism

Daoism developed, along with Confucianism, during the Warring States period of Chinese history. But unlike other great philosophers, the founder of Daoism, Lao-zi's life is barely known by his offspring. This is, to some extent, a reflection of his low-key philosophy. Daoist philosophy emphasizes various themes that can be found in its classic *Dao De Jing*, among which "non-action" (*wu wei*) is the quintessential element of Daoist thinking. Here are the first two and most known sentences in *Dao De Jing*:

> *The way that can be told of is not an unvarying way;*
> *The names that can be named are not unvarying names (Lao-zi, 2004, p.2).*

In Chinese, "*Dao*", when used as a noun, can be translated as "way" "path" or "natural working of the universe," but when it is used as a verb, it means "to say" or "to speak it out." So what Lao-zi tries to convey is that Dao is unutterable, and should be comprehended through meditation in tranquility. Lao-zi says, "The worst leaders are those who are hated;

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the next worst are feared; the next are loved and praised; but the best are those people barely know." When the "path" (*dao*) is forgotten, the doctrines of humanity and morality arise, just as his saying goes: "How did the great rivers and seas get their kingship over the hundred lesser streams? Through the merit of being lower than them; that was how they get their kingship. Therefore the sage" (Lao-zi, 2004, p.141). What Lao-zi recommends in his thought is emptiness, detachment, receptiveness, spontaneity, and flexibility. And those attributes have long been considered as a good attitude towards life in Chinese people's minds.

The other important stream in Daoism thought is the concept of "yin" and "yang", which is always accompanied by a beautifully balanced black and while image, as shown in Figure 1. It is a symbol that reflects the inescapably intertwined duality of all things in nature, with black representing "yin" and white representing "yang". In addition, the concept of "yin" and "yang" connotes another meaning deriving from the streamlined image. It looks like an eternal circle, telling people to be determined and perseverant, which is well demonstrated in one of Daoist classics *Dao De Jing*: "A huge tree that fills one's arms grows from a tiny seedling; a nine-storied tower rises from a heap of earth; a thousand miles journey begins with a single step."

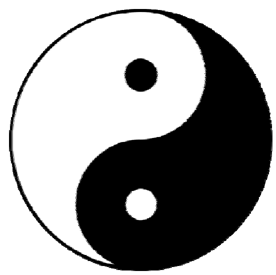

Figure 1. Image traditionally associated with yin and yang.

On the whole, detachment, balance, perseverance and patience are the core concepts of Daoist ethics. Those ethics, combined with Confucian ethics, withstand the test of time and constitute the basis of ethical behavior in China. Table I summarizes the key concepts found in Confucian and Daoist ethics.

Confucianism	**Daoism**
Harmony Relationship Benevolence Righteousness Wisdom Faithfulness Reverence courage	Low-key attitude & position Yin & Yang balance Perseverance Patience

Table I: Key concepts in Confucianism and Daoism

A Case Study: Microsoft's Experiences in China

Microsoft has been chosen as a case for an ethical analysis of intercultural business communication for three reasons. First, it is a multinational corporation. Second, it's large

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enough in scale to have the possibility to encounter more challenges, especially cultural discomfort, than smaller companies might. Third, it has 14 years' presence in China, and thus any problems or mistakes it encountered or made could possibly be rectified.

Microsoft's Early Struggles in China

After Microsoft established its Beijing office in 1992, this multinational giant began its "twists and turns" in China fraught with controversies and adjustment.

First of all, Microsoft failed to observe the most important virtue, "reverence" toward the Chinese government. As a result, its relationship with government at the beginning stage of its market entry was not good. Unlike other companies such as HP, Intel, and Motorola, whose CEOs paid their visits to the Chinese government long prior to their companies' initial presence; Bill Gates did not visit China until one year after the setup of Microsoft Beijing office. This gave the Chinese people an impression that he took this market lightly, and worse, he did not show much respect for China, though it is possible some other issues may account for his late appearance. Among the six virtues in Confucian philosophy, Chinese people value reverence more than anything else. People are interrelated in five relationships throughout their lifetimes, so they should show respect to others, and only in that way can mutual respect occur. Specifically, among the five relationships, ruler and subject is put in the first place, which denotes that the mutual reverence between government or the community and individual is the prerequisite of a harmonious society. This is particularly true for those companies setting up business in China. Showing reverence to government is of vital importance when interacting with and being recognized by businesses in China. Furthermore, in the classic Confucian text *Book of Rites* (*Li Zhi*), Confucius outlines specific rules and codes of conduct for various settings in order to standardize daily behaviors in interactions with those key relationships. Confucian ethics believes that social order and stability is based upon observations of those rules and proprieties.

Business communications between China and other countries can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty approximately 1500 years ago. At that time, businessmen from another country would go to the Capital City Chang'an (now the city of Xi'an) to pay a formal visit to the emperor. They would exchange their ideas and possibly reach agreement on issues related to trade. In addition, if this visit turned out to be successful, which actually it always was, they were guaranteed of smooth trade with few bureaucratic hindrances. And more importantly, the visiting businessmen would be recognized by the Chinese people, and the recognition itself would open their business in China.

Microsoft did not observe these behaviors and therefore aroused criticism from all levels. A survey conducted by *China Fortune* revealed that the words people would associate with Microsoft were overwhelmingly negative: *arrogant, conceited, hegemoneous, monopoly, loophole,* etc. (Yi, 2004). This negative impression was partly due to Microsoft's negligence in managing its self-image inside China, and partly due to its insensitive relationship with mass media, which can easily direct public opinion. This was the beginning of Microsoft's unfriendly image in China and also partly accounts for its unsatisfactory sales.

Another contributor to Microsoft's poor sales in China was its turnover of five CEOs within 14 years. This high rate of turnover is extremely uncommon in Chinese business circles, and

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it is a popular saying in China that "Microsoft's China CEO is cursed." The reason for this curse is due, to some extent, to the sales figures that would never satisfy its headquarters. But the point is, the marketing styles of those five CEOs are totally different, ranging from Wu's localization theory to Gao's uncompromising policy. As a result, instead of long-term, unified planning, Microsoft's marketing strategies in China were never balanced, in defiance of the "Yin" and "Yang" theory in Daoism, and contributed to another flaw of Microsoft's presence in China.
The third lowlight would be Microsoft's lack of attention to relationships, the most fundamental element of Chinese society. Actually relationship-building is where communication occurs. The Chinese culture regards relationships highly, especially the five relationships in Confucian ethics. Therefore, Chinese people would rather do business with those in the five relationships than with people they are not familiar with. That's why it is indispensable for Chinese companies to set up a department called "Public Relations," the function of which is to establish various relationships with the outside and to make people feel the company is their friend, not a stranger, though it has nothing to do with pre- or post-selling. It is true that people do know Microsoft, the world-famous giant; however, the company does not fit into any category of the five relationships. So in a sense, the brand name has nothing to do with the Chinese people. People do not trust the company unless they have interactions with it. In contrast, when the relationship is fashioned as "friend and friend", business is no longer harsh. But for China nowadays with a population of 1.3 billion, it is impossible to cater to every individual; the most efficient way is to build a good relationship with government and mass media, the two most important powers that direct public opinion. However, as indicated before, Microsoft's early appearance in China showed no sign of rapport with the Chinese government. Worse, for Microsoft in the 1990's, the voice of mass media was more negative than positive.

The fourth lowlight was the obtrusive measures Microsoft took to counter piracy in China, the nightmare of Microsoft for years. Piracy is indeed troublesome in China and is a threat to the development of software companies, national or multinational. However, it does not mean that the Chinese people do not care about copyright, intellectual property, and creative work. Rather, traditional notions prevail of what is ethically appropriate behavior for (high class) scholars as opposed to (low class) merchants. This has meant that Chinese tend to spurn the practice of selling knowledge for private gain; to teach or to sell books if it is for gaining profits is considered immoral and beneath the dignity of a respectable person (Hsieh & Lehnam, 2003). With this cultural background in mind, it is easy to feel the gap between China and Microsoft. We understand Microsoft's drastic measures to counter piracy in China; nonetheless, the rooted cultural issue cannot be solved overnight.

Moreover, Microsoft adopts a unified pricing system globally, which is seen as unethical or embarrassing in China. The cost of living in China is radically lower than in the U.S. It is cost-prohibitive for the Chinese consumer to buy the Microsoft operating system or Office software, as this financial outlay could match as much as one month's income. When comparing 2000 RMB for a legal copy and 5 RMB for a pirated one, most consumers would probably choose the latter, or other cheaper brands. The discrepancy of Microsoft's pricing system and the country's average personal purchasing power makes the company's sales in China embarrassing because they appear to violate one of the five virtues of Confucian ethics, that of *ren*. There is no equivalent English expression for the Chinese character *ren*—concepts such as "humanness", "goodness", "love" embody some of its meaning. This

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concept is probably best expressed in the Confucian version of the golden rule phrased in the negative: "Do not do to others what you would not like yourself" (Confucius, 1998, p.144). In Chinese people's eyes, a man who is not benevolent or patient enough is not worthy of trust.

All those factors ultimately contributed to Microsoft's failure in their Beijing Government Procurement bid in 2001. Jinshan Company, Microsoft's major competitor in China, smiles.

Microsoft's Recent Highlights in China

Recent years have seen Microsoft's adjustment of its marketing strategy in China. Right after its failure to win the Beijing government procurement bid, this multinational giant began to re-think its China policy. Different from its past, it now takes a more friendly stance and a comparatively low-key position.

On June 26, 2002, Microsoft and the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC) of China signed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding their cooperation in the software industry. Under the Memorandum, Microsoft will invest RMB 6.2 billion (USD 750 million) in China in the next three years in the areas of education and training, academic and research cooperation, hardware manufacturing outsourcing, continued support in software outsourcing and strategic investments and cooperative developments in local software companies (Microsoft, 2002). This action can be seen as an icebreaker for Microsoft to work together with the Chinese government and build a dynamic relationship with it. Microsoft's attempt to change its public image was also shown during Chinese President Hu Jintao's state visit to the United States in April 2006. Seattle was the initial stop of President Hu's visit to the States, and the Chinese delegation was welcomed by a grand reception hold by Microsoft Corporation. Moreover, Bill Gates and Tim Chen, Microsoft's vice-president and CEO for Greater China region, have on several occasions reaffirmed Microsoft's long-term commitment to grow together with China's IT industry. Furthermore, "openness and respectfulness" were added to its corporate values in 2003 to attach importance to the reasons that partly account for their initial failure in China. From then on, Microsoft in China has taken on a low-key position, a sign of its willingness to accommodate the country's ancient ethics.

The second Microsoft highlight in recent years is its effort of localization by the partnership with domestic enterprises. Under the accord it signed with Langchao Group, China's biggest server manufacturer and supplier in 2004, cooperation between the two covers software R&D, technical training, solution customization, enterprise management and international cooperation. Also, an announcement was made in April 2006 by Microsoft and China's biggest personal PC manufacturer, Lenovo Group Ltd., to promote the use and benefits of validly licensed Microsoft software products through new and innovative joint sales, marketing and training programs in China and around the world. Through the partnership, Microsoft actually gains almost all Langchao's and Lenovo's customers, and more importantly, people begin to view Microsoft from a new perspective: It's much more localized, rather than an alien that robs their domestic market.

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Another issue worth noticing is that the drastic anti-piracy measures taken by Microsoft in its early years in China are being replaced by a plan called "Microsoft Genuine Advantage." This plan is aimed at promoting people's awareness of intellectual property by offering extra technical support for those enterprises or individuals who buy legal copies. Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, has also expressed the company's patience with China on the issue of piracy. Indeed, a cultural problem may be easier to be solved by the observation of its cultural ethics rather than tough means. As the old Chinese saying goes: "It is one who fastens the bell that can unfasten it."

Microsoft's new stance in China has resulted in almost sweeping victories in government procurement projects in several Chinese provinces and municipalities from the year 2002, demonstrating to the world its dominant position in the computer software industry. For example, it was the only provider of operating systems and office software suites to the Beijing municipal government in 2004, with a transaction volume amounting to 29.25 million RMB (3.52 million USD). And the decisions of Beijing Municipality, in its role as the capital, usually have a radiating influence on municipal governments in other regions.

However, Microsoft should never be too optimistic. Its sweeping victories have already aroused increasing concerns and controversies. And the newly released China's Government Procurement Law requires domestic products and services to be preferred in government projects. Haoqiang Tan, a famous professor of Computer Science at Tsinghua University in China, once commented, "Don't think Chinese companies deserve to lose to foreign companies when foreign companies have a better product. It is different that a foreigner is making money and not a Chinese. The downfall of Chinese companies will come back to hurt all citizens of China" (2002). So, for Microsoft, there is still a long way to go.

Implications for Multinationals

As indicated above, Chin's 5000-year history endows the nation with deep-rooted values and ethics that affect international business communication. An understanding of those mores and the study of Microsoft's 14-year struggle reveal some implications for multinationals setting up business in China.

First and foremost, a company, be it small or giant, should respect the Chinese people, and always keep an image of respectfulness and sincerity. Reverence is the utmost virtue in Chinese people's minds; they would not allow anything that undermines their dignity.

Second, the company should build strong government relationships. Whether or not the company has direct business with the Chinese government like Microsoft does, a strong government relationship is always a cornerstone of running business in China.

Third, play by China's market rules. It is hard to change an environment, compounded by the unaffordable cost. Thus, to show respect and patience is the golden rule.

Fourth, make every effort to be localized. This is an attempt to fit the Five Relationships in Confucian ethics. Either through cooperation with local companies or nurture of local people, the point is to make people recognize you and consider you as a friend.

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Last but not least, benefit China. Given the influence, power, and resources that multinational corporations enjoy, they have a responsibility to provide positive benefits and support for the communities in which they operate (Desjardins, 2003). The Chinese will recognize you if you perform benevolently.

Conclusion

Culture and business communication are inextricably linked. Organizational structure, professional "mores," corporate goals, and even daily schedules and procedures are quite different, reflecting the larger, unique culture of each country. Significant ethical issues are raised by an examination of the proper role of business in international settings. Culture is only a partially understood but nevertheless powerful force that strongly influences communicative behaviors. Development of the ability to function effectively in other cultures by regularly matching decoded and encoded message meanings should be a top priority (Scott, 1999). It is hoped that this brief introduction to Confucian and Daoist values in China and the lessons drawn from Microsoft will help improve future international business communication and transactions.

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What's Not to Like? Business Students' Opinions about PowerPoint Slide Design

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Abstract

This paper examines 25 business students' preferences for PowerPoint presentations and investigates students' responses about designing slides. The students were experienced and inexperienced PowerPoint viewers and designers. The results show students were sensitive to slide design and strove for effective design in their own presentations. The focus of students' responses was white space. Students preferred and aimed to create uncluttered slides. Students' noticed presentations with compelling and clear images, and they used images carefully in their own presentations, considering content and quantity.

Introduction

Since the 2003 publication of Edward R. Tufte's *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*, a critique of PowerPoint and similar presentation software, business communicators and business communication instructors have discussed the merits and pitfalls of using projected slides during presentations. Tufte argues that PowerPoint (PP) leads presenters to simplify their messages and to generate slides that obscure rather than support and enhance presenters' meanings.

In the essay, Tufte analyzes PP slides used by NASA engineers in a presentation to officials in January 2003, right before the space shuttle Columbia accident. Tufte argues that NASA engineers failed to convey the impending danger clearly to officials because the engineers had filtered their message through the medium of PP, a medium that, according to Tufte, facilitates bad practices like "vaguely quantitative" language, misdirection of audience attention, inclusion of irrelevant information, ambiguity, and "typography . . . so choppy and clunky that it impedes understanding" (pp. 8–9). He closely analyzes the slide shown in Figure 1 (as well as other slides) to support his points.

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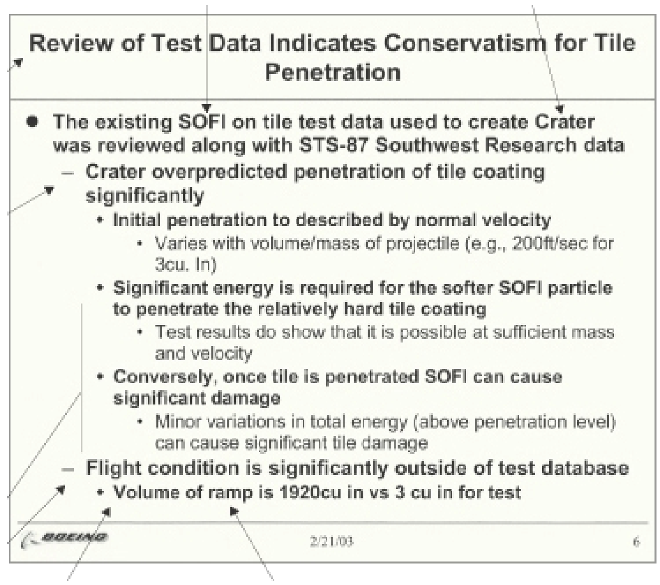

Figure 1. The NASA PowerPoint slide that Tufte uses as evidence (2003, pp. 8–9).

Few technical communication experts would argue that the NASA slides analyzed in Tufte's essay are effectively composed and designed, but many would argue with Tufte's claim that "the cognitive style of PP compromised [NASA engineers'] analysis" (p. 7). In general, though, many business communicators and instructors would likely agree with Doumont's (2005) assessment that Tufte's fault-finding is justified insofar as many people, when designing slides for their presentations, include unneeded information and use too many colors and decorations (p. 68).

In light of recent debates about the use of PP during academic and business presentations (e.g., Keller 2003; Norvig 2004; Thompson 2003), particularly the discussions arising in regard to effective design of PP slides (e.g., Doumont 2005; Manning & Amare 2006), studies that investigate perceptions and processes of slide design are needed. However, except for several studies of instructors' use of PP during lectures (Lowry 1999; Mantei 2000; Szabo & Hastings 2000), little research has examined presenters' preferences for PP presentation design. In addition, no research to date that we know of examines presenters' reports of their processes for designing PP presentations.

This study fills gaps in research on PP in two ways. First, it examines 25 business students' preferences for PP presentations. Specifically, students were asked to recall and evaluate other presentations that they had seen. Second, the student examines students' responses about designing presentations. In addition, the study compares students' preferences for PP presentation design to the recommendations of PP experts. Myriad manuals for creating PP presentations exist (e.g., Atkinson 2005; Finkelstein 2003; Munter & Paradi 2006; Wempen, 2003), but it is unclear whether business students who design PP presentations share experts' opinions about what constitutes effective design.

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PowerPoint Slide Design

Tufte and others malign PP, but it continues to be the presentation software that most people, including those who communicate business information, use in the workplace. Indeed, there is little but anecdotal evidence to justify Tufte's assertion that PP generates ineffective communication. In fact, several studies of instructors' use of PP during lectures showed that PP presentations improved students' performance (Lowry 1999; Mantei 2000; Szabo & Hastings 2000). Also, students stated that lectures accompanied by PP slides were more organized (Susskind 2005, p. 212).

Alley and Neeley (2005) investigated an alternative design of PP slides. They advocate succinct sentence headlines rather than phrase headlines for slide titles. So, for example, a slide might be titled "Digital data acquisition changes the data's form" rather than "Digital Acquisition System." In testing this alternative slide design, Alley, Schreiber, Ramsdell, and Muffo (2006) recently found that PP slides displaying key assertions in sentence headlines, as opposed to phrasal headings, significantly improved students' recall.

Alley and Neeley (2005) also advocate use of visual evidence, such as a picture or a graph, rather than bulleted text (p. 419, p. 421). Doumont (2005) also supports using visual elements, pointing out that visual language enhances a presenter's message, rather than competing against his or her oral communication. Farkas (2005), too, advocates alternative design. He supports using title slides throughout presentations (p. 27) and using explicit hierarchical structure of information through different styles of bullets (p. 26).

Blokzijl and Naeff's (2004) examined students' perceptions of PP presentations and indicated several slide design elements that are appreciated by and that annoy students. They found that good layout/legibility and use of diagrams, pictures, and graphs were two design elements that students appreciated most. In contrast, students rated poor layout/wrong color combination as the second-most annoying design characteristic, following effects (p. 75). Blokzijl and Naeff's study is one of few to examine viewers' preferences for PP slide design, and it leads into this study of business students' opinions of PP presentation design and the process by which they design their presentations.

Methods

Undergraduate business students were offered extra credit points in their business communication class to take our survey about PP. A total of 25 students responded to the questions about PP presentations and design of them. Students found the survey at the SurveyMonkey.com Web site (www.surveymonkey.com). They were told beforehand that the survey would take about 15 minutes. Students answered four questions that gathered demographic information about gender, age, and experience in viewing and designing PP presentations:

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- Are you a female or a male?
- What is your age?
- About how many PowerPoint presentations that were created and presented by others have you seen in the last month?
- About how many PowerPoint presentations have you created and presented YOURSELF?

Of the 25 students, 16 were male, 8 students were female, and 1 student did not indicate sex. Of the 25 students, 17 were between the ages of 21 and 25. Another 5 were between 18 and 20. The other 3 were ages 26–30, 31–35, and 36–40.

In relation to their responses about their experience with PP, students were divided into inexperienced and experienced categories for both viewing and designing PP presentations. Table 1 displays this categorization.

Table 1. Business students' experience with PP presentations.

Viewing			Designing		
	Inexperienced (10 or fewer)	9		Inexperienced (5 or fewer)	11
	Experienced (11 or more)	16		Experienced (6 or more)	14

Then, students answered six other questions about PP. Three of these questions solicited their evaluations of other people's PP presentations:

- What do you think is the biggest mistake the people make when they give PowerPoint presentations? For example, do you think that presenters tend to read the slides rather than speak conversationally about their topics? Or do you think that presenters use too much animation or too many sounds?
- What, if anything, do you dislike about the way other people design PowerPoint presentations? For example, do you think that presenters tend of put too many words on one slide or create graphs that are too complex?
- What is the worst thing that you have ever seen in a PowerPoint presentation? What was the best thing that you have ever seen in a PowerPoint presentation?

The other three questions solicited their opinions about their processes for designing PP presentations:

- If you have designed a PowerPoint presentation, describe the steps you took in designing it. For example, did you create an outline or use the AutoContent Wizard?
- If you have designed a PowerPoint presentation, what is the most difficult part of designing a PowerPoint presentation? (For example, do you think it is difficult to choose a good color scheme or to organize slides into a logical order?) Whatever

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your answer, why do you think that this is the most difficult part of designing a presentation?
- What features of PowerPoint do you like to use in your own presentations or see in the presentations of others? For example, do you like interesting fonts, bright colors, pictures, animation, or video?

Results and Discussion

The following section describes the results obtained from the 25 business students—their evaluations of other people's presentations and their opinions about their own PP design processes.

Evaluating Presentations

Business students' survey responses indicate that several factors can contribute to what students perceive to be a successful or unsuccessful PP presentation. Their responses fall into these general categories:

- **White space** describes the ratio of text to background that appears on a slide. Cluttered slides have more text, and students considered them to be more difficult to read and understand.
- **Delivery** describes the ease with which the presenter facilitates the presentation, makes eye contact, and shows overall enthusiasm for the subject matter.
- **Style** refers to background color, font family, color schemes and slide layout. Over half of the students preferred the use of a PP default template.
- **Images** refers to static graphics on a slide, such as clipart, charts and graphs. Students preferred images that were clear and easy to understand in relation to the amount of time the presenter spent on a slide.
- **Animation** refers to slide transitions, moving text, embedded video, flash animation and sounds. Students expressed a preference for "professional" animations that enhanced the presentation's message.

In response to the question *What do you think is the biggest mistake the people make when they give PowerPoint presentations?*, 18 students (72%) agreed with the example answer that we provided with the survey question, saying that presenters put "too much text" on a slide. Students provided other answers, sometimes listing more than one "biggest mistake." Besides the prompted response about too much text, 10 students said that the biggest mistake that presenters make relate to delivery (40%) and, and 8 students said that the biggest mistakes related to style (32%).

No single factor outweighed any other in students' responses to *What do you dislike about the way other people design PP presentations?* Sixteen students (64%) identified too much text as undesirable, 14 students (56%) cited issues with style as a detractor, and 7 students (28%) reported misuse of images as detractors from presentations. These findings suggest that struggling to read slide text and viewing poor style may be more

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annoying to students than distracting animations and other effects, which only 5 students (20%) referenced.

Interestingly, when asked to recount the best and worst PP presentations that they have seen, students' responses revealed another important element—harmony; nine students (36%) commented that images, animations, and delivery must complement the content. In recounting characteristics of the worst presentations they had ever seen, 9 students (36%) identified poor delivery, and 12 students (48%) reported too much text on a slide. The pervasiveness of these factors across students' responses supports experts' assertion that presenters tend to use PP slides as a crutch and to deflect the audience's attention to the slides and away from themselves (e.g., Keller 2003).

In describing the best presentations that they had seen, 7 students' responses (28%) again related to the design principle of harmony, and 6 students (24%) responded that they preferred slides with compelling and clear images. Six students (24%) mentioned useful, professional-looking animations. This latter finding challenges the assumption that animations like transitions are overused and overdone, distracting the audience from the speaker's delivery. Students' responses show that they were aware of the complex relationships between content and images as well as content and animation, and their responses challenge Tufte's (2003) assertion that PP filters and obscures content.

The importance of the six categories identified above appears to differ only slightly based upon the participants experience level of viewing PowerPoint presentations. When recounting the best PowerPoint presentation that they had seen, 5 inexperienced users commented on delivery, but no experienced users did. That said, both 5 experienced and 5 inexperienced viewers agreed that reading off slides, a type of poor delivery, was the biggest mistake that presenters could make.

Designing Presentations

Students also answered questions about their process of designing PP presentations. Students indicated that during the design process, they worked to create simple and direct presentations, and their comments centered on these elements of PP design:

- White space
- Images
- Style
- Animation

In general, the students' responses regarding the design process of PP presentations corresponded to the topics of their responses about viewing the presentations of others.

That said, a clear process for designing PP presentations did not emerge from students' responses to the prompt *If you have designed a PowerPoint presentation, describe the steps you took in designing it.* However, 13 students (52%) used the example design step provided in the question—creating an outline—in stating their first step in creating a PP

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presentation. Students indicated that taking the time to create an outline forced them to create a backbone for their presentation and helped to keep them focused the creation of their presentations.

The students' preference for creating an outline did not correlate with their experience level. Both students who were inexperienced and experienced in designing PP presentations made comments like the following:

- "I would first outline the different slides I want, then I outline the content of each slide, and I generally use the key ideas with a few visual."
- "1. Create the outline separately, 2. Apply outline to PP, 3…"
- "I make outline first, then fill in the content, then add pictures and stuff."

Outlining the whole presentation plays an important role in students' design process; then students move on to choosing words for individual slides and adding images.

In response to the question *If you have designed a PowerPoint presentation, what is the most difficult part of designing a PowerPoint presentation?*, the one element that the students found to be the most difficult to design was choosing appropriate visual design elements for the slides, which includes the images and style: 10 students (40%) said that choosing elements related to the look of the presentation was the most difficult part of the design process. Another 7 students (28%) related that ensuring enough white space for visibility and clarity was the most difficult part of designing a presentation. In particularly, students noted that narrowing down their information was challenging:

- "The most difficult part of designing a PowerPoint presentation is condensing the information one wants to report onto slides so that they are SIMPLE, easy to read and follow, and follow as logical order."
- "Not put to much information on a slide and making slides that are visibly clear to the audience."

Students also indicated an appreciation for slides that balanced clarity with visual interest. The difficulty in the decision process for many of the students was to balance their need to simplify text to get to the point with their personal preference for images:

- "Making sure it isn't all text. This makes for boring slides. I find it hard cutting out words to make it 'points' and not sentences."

These comments reflect students' struggle to design slides that were uncluttered enough to read yet interesting enough to engage the audience. Thus, the idea the idea of harmony between content and design is critical in designing PP presentations, just as it is in viewing them.

Students' preference for imagery is particularly reflected in their responses to the question *What features of PowerPoint do you like to use in your own presentations or see in the presentations of others?* Students listed "pictures" as a favorite PP element:

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- “Pictures are important to have something interesting for the viewer to look at.”
- “I like to use pictures, as they are a great way to give examples of what one is communicating in the PowerPoint presentation.
- “Pictures make a presentation much more enjoyable as well.”
- “Pictures. Any visual assistance makes for better PowerPoint.”

Although there was no direct relationship found between experienced versus inexperienced students in their comments about designing presentations, the students overall were clearly in agreement with Doumont (2005) regarding images as a way of enhancing the presenter’s message. In addition, with regard to visuals, students were savvy enough to know that there are limits to how much one should use visuals when trying to create and maintain clarity. Given students’ general lack of training in PP, it would be useful to know if students came to their preference from experience viewing presentations or from reading articles, manuals, or Web sites devoted to PP presentations.

Conclusion

In sum, this small survey of business students’ opinions about PP indicates that students are sensitive to PP slide design and strive for effective design in their own presentations. Overall, the primary focus of students’ responses was white space. Students preferred and aimed to create slides that get to the point and do not contain too much text. Students’ responses also show that they use images carefully, considering both content and quantity. However, students’ responses indicate that adding images is of secondary importance in the design process.

Other areas of research include elements that students and other PP presenters prefer to see and use in presentations. In particular, further research could explore the presentation design process of students and other presenters. What, for example, does the “outlining” step entail? How do people decide that they have edited the text on their slides sufficiently? How do people choose the images that they decide to use? Larger surveys and analysis of think-aloud protocols will help answer these questions about designing PP presentations.

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Applying the Potter Box to Merck's Actions Regarding the Painkiller Vioxx

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Abstract

In this paper we demonstrate how to focus an empirical application in reaching an ethical decision by working with the Potter Box, a model created by Ralph Potter as an analytical tool assessing the ethics of corporate decision-making, The facts emerging in news accounts regarding lawsuits against the pharmaceutical company Merck and its painkiller Vioxx are analyzed for ethical consideration. Utilizing the Potter Box model, the case against Merck can be interpreted and studied in light of ethical considerations. The results demonstrate not only how a decision is argued, but what is missing in the overall consideration for the decision.

Introduction

The mythos of freedom and responsibility in the United States is premised on the ethical actions of members of the society, particularly those in positions of power. And ethics in communication takes a place of preeminence since the words spoken by authorities are often all a public relies upon to pass judgment. How is the citizen or the communication analyst to evaluate the ethics of the utterances of others? And how does the communicator determine the ethical appropriateness of a planned message? This paper is an introduction to an accessible method of ethical decision-making in communication. The Potter Box allows both student and scholar to analyze the ethical responsibilities of communicators in terms that are both practical and theoretically grounded. The Potter Box's four primary dimensions--definition, values, principles, and loyalties--aid the communication analyst in locating the places where most misunderstanding occurs. It is along these lines that we construct action guides.

In this paper, we investigate the ethical considerations involving the law suites against Merck regarding its painkiller Vioxx. First, we provide background information regarding the case of Vioxx. We then describe the use of the Potter Box, as an analytical tool for assessing the ethics of corporate decision-making, by grounding the theoretical context and conceptualizing the four dimensions of the Potter Box. Finally, we demonstrate the analytically process using the Potter Box applied to the facts in the emerging cases against Merck.

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The Case of Merck's Prescription Drug Vioxx

On the day this paper was being submitted for conference consideration, Merck, the pharmaceutical company which made the arthritis drug Vioxx, was defending itself in the penalty phase of a lawsuit brought against it. On April 5, 2006, a New Jersey jury found Merck concealed the dangers of Vioxx in a split verdict that gave one of two plaintiffs in the trial $4.5 million in compensatory damages.

This trial was the sixth for Merck. The first one ended on August 19, 2005, when a jury in Angleton, Texas, awarded $253 million to the widow of Robert Ernst, a 59-year-old Wal-Mart employee and marathon runner who died after taking Vioxx for eight months (the $253 million award will be significantly reduced because Texas law limits punitive damages).

Merck's fortunes brightened on November 3, 2005, when a New Jersey jury absolved Merck of culpability in the case of Frederick "Mike" Humeston, 60. Humeston was an Idaho postal worker who survived a heart attack he said came after two months of Vioxx use. Just six weeks later (December 12, 2005), a mistrial was declared in Houston after a federal court jury couldn't reach a verdict in the case of Richard "Dicky" Irvin, 53, who died of a heart attack after taking the drug less than a month. The case was retried before a federal jury in New Orleans, and on February 18, 2006, the jury found that Merck wasn't responsible in Irvin's death. a trial over the death of Vioxx user Leonel Garza, 71, in state court in Rio Grande City, Texas, that began on January 25, 2006

The two Merck victories came about in cases where the use of Vioxx was short-term. The current New Jersey trial, the sixth over Merck's once-popular painkiller, was seen as a harbinger of things to come for many of the 9,650 pending lawsuits because it involved two men who said they took Vioxx for years. The company had previously admitted that people who take the drug for more than 18 months are at increased risk for heart attacks and strokes. Both plaintiffs in the case, John McDarby and Thomas Cona, had used Vioxx for a number of years. After two days of deliberations, the jury split, finding that Vioxx caused McDarby's heart attack but not Cona's. Cona was awarded only the cost of his Vioxx prescription. Jurors said the company also had failed to warn doctors and the public about risks associated with the drug.

Vioxx (formally known as rofecoxib) was approved by the FDA in 1999, after clinical trials of the drug conducted by Vioxx (and the results reported by Vioxx) revealed no significant adverse side effects. By 2004, the drug was making $2.5 billion for Merck, its manufacturer. Then, suddenly, on September 30, 2004, Merck announced that it was pulling Vioxx off the market.

Merck's action came in the wake of results from its APPROVe (Adenomatous Polyp Prevention on VIOXX) study comparing Vioxx to a placebo for patients at risk for colon cancer. Results of the 34-month study revealed that the incidence of heart attacks (myocardial infarctions) was significantly higher than that of a control group, especially

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among those patients who had been taking Vioxx for more than 18 months (Edwards, 2005).

At first, the decision by Merck was praised by Wall Street (Lublin, 2004, October 1). Pulling the drug off the market was bad enough for Merck. Not only was the company losing $2.5 billion in annual sales from Vioxx, but it was faced with a number of popular drugs losing their patents in the next two years (like Pepcid and Prilosec). Estimates poured in that the litigation costs related to Vioxx would be over $10 billion (Simons, et al., 2004).

The biggest blow to Merck, however, occurred when it was revealed that as early as the year 2000, Merck knew of a possible link between Vioxx and heart problems. Merck found in 2000 that more than twice as many patients had heart attacks when taking Vioxx than when given an older painkiller, naproxen. Merck reported incomplete results of this study (leaving out some data), and argued that difference was due to protective effects of naproxen, not the negative effects Vioxx. There was a problem with the logic of this explanation, however: Vioxx and naproxen are both COX-2 inhibitors, and help alleviate pain by reducing inflammation. Given that a major theory about heart disease is that reducing inflammation within coronary arteries should reduce risk for a heart attack, then Vioxx should have **reduced** the chances of a heart attack, not **increase**d them. The

An investigation by reporters at the *Wall Street Journal* revealed e-mails that confirm Merck executives' knowledge of their drug's adverse cardiovascular profile— the risk was "clearly there", according to one senior researcher. Merck's marketing literature included a document intended for its sales representatives which discussed how to respond to questions about Vioxx—it was labeled "Dodge Ball Vioxx" (Matthew & Martinez, 2004).

In the case of Vioxx, FDA was urged to mandate further clinical safety testing after a 2001 analysis suggested a "clear-cut excess number of myocardial infarctions" (Topol, 2004). It did not do so. Instead, the FDA did add a mild warning to the label, but that didn't stop the drug from being widely used (Casey & Barrett, 2004). Why? The FDA often sees the pharmaceutical industry as its customer—and a vital source of funding for its activities—and not as a sector of society in need of strong regulation.

For instance, the FDA's Office of Drug Safety co-exists in the same center—the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)—as the Office of New Drugs, the part of the agency that works with the industry to license new medicines. The closeness of the two offices – both physically and psychically, makes it difficult for CDER to reverse itself once a licensing approval has been made. Thus, concerns about negative side effects about drugs often get downplayed, or outright ignored (Spake, 2004, December 13).

On Nov 2, 2004, the FDA belatedly tried to bolster its reputation as a regulator on November 2, 2004 when it posted on its website an early version of a recently completed study into the safety of Vioxx. Amid qualifications that the report "not been fully evaluated by the FDA and may not reflect the official views of the agency" the FDA

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investigators estimate that over 27 000 excess cases of acute myocardial infarction and sudden cardiac death occurred in the U.S. between 1999 and 2003. The report suggested "These cases would have been avoided had celecoxib been used instead of rofecoxib". Unfortunately, for many Vioxx users, the information came three years too late.

The Argument for Ethics in Business

In a broad sense, our culture may be suffering from a crisis in ethics. As we see our politicians, business leaders, and religious figures become entangled in self-woven webs of unethical behavior, natural questions arise as to which behaviors are "correct." More specifically, we see a President impeached for lying, another President perhaps distorting the truth as a pretext for war, news bulletins about the latest Enron-like scandals, televangelists making public apologies for transgressions, and the Catholic church commenting (or not) on priest-child sexual abuse (Crane, 2004). We look to our leaders for moral and ethical guidance, but instead find humans as imperfect as ourselves. How, then, do we learn to behave and communicate ethically? Of course, there is no easy answer. Clark (2003, p. 18) offers a baseline for ethics training: "Business ethics should be an attempt to develop and apply basic principles of fair play to the area of human economic relations. Many problems in business are social problems, involving groups of individuals and dealing with relative positions rather than absolutes."

It is reasonable to wonder if there is a crisis in ethics, particularly in business. The answer is a resounding "yes." That there should be ethics training is without question, but current models are perceived to be inadequate (Crane, 2004). Although most businesses have explicit codes of ethics, very few employees follow such codes, and many are not familiar with the content of those codes (Carlon, 2003). The rise of the economic perspective in business, that is, making profit, appears to make teaching ethics a more difficult task (Gioia, 2002). In fact, Rothenburg (2003) questions the ability of anyone to teach ethics given capitalism's profit motives. Those very profit motives, though, make the need for ethical behavior all the more compelling. Adler (2002) cites a lack of confidence in business due to recent ethics scandals. Furthermore, unethical behavior reduces a company's ability to make a profit (Clark, 2003).

There is a growing awareness of the need for ethics training, but the approaches are fragmented, heading in different directions. The Business Roundtable is planning ethics training for CEOs (Lavelle & Borrus, 2002). Accounting firms are offering ethics training for college accounting professors (Karr, 2004). However, "MBAs have given barely passing marks to Columbia Business School's first required ethics course. Five ethics classes and extra lectures were woven into the core curriculum. But an informal tap of student opinion finds execution was uneven…" (Schneider & Sager, 2004, p. 16). The ineffectiveness of current approaches is highlighted in a 2002 NAS/Zogby poll: 84% of college students see the US as being in a business ethics crisis; only about 25% see ethics standards as "clear and uniform" (Ludlum & Mascaloinov, 2004).

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Development of the Potter Box

During the tumult of the 1960s, Harvard University theology doctoral student Ralph Potter faced the ethical questions of his time with some degree of bewilderment. In particular, Potter (1999) observed the growing concerns over the build-up of nuclear weapons and saw an ethical quagmire. By asking the simple question of the ethics of nuclear weaponry, Potter began an arduous process of self-examination and inquiry that would form the basis of his doctoral dissertation (Potter, 1965) and lay the theoretical groundwork for what is now called the Potter Box. Just as Potter used this rubric to reach conclusions about nuclear weapons policy, we, too, can follow these steps to determine ethical courses of action as we communicate with others.

The Potter Box developed over the course of decades, reaching its present form though clarifications and modifications from a number of sources. Potter devised the Potter Box and was instrumental in its early development; others have applied the scheme to the analysis of the ethics of particular communication behavior. Potter's original task was to identify a Christian position on nuclear arms policy (1999). Rather than one position, Potter isolated myriad positions. Potter notes that, "Policy preferences could not be traced back simply to worldviews, religious belief, philosophical orientation, or any one factor. A number of elements of belief were coming together in the establishment of people's concrete decisions about what ought to be done. I set out to identify these ingredients" (1999, p. 2). Potter began this task by sorting his notes, eventually creating four piles of notes. The first pile concerned questions of fact. The next pile contained information on social responsibility for those affected by a policy. "[N]otes on traditional moral philosophy and ethics" (1999, p. 3) constituted the third pile. The final pile "dealt explicitly with underlying philosophical or quasi-theological perspective that gave a hue to all that was said" (1999, p. 3). After sorting his notes, Potter's next step offered the theoretical grounding for his analysis.

The Potter Box is about social ethics; it is not individualistic. As such, the model is as much about sociology as it is philosophy. Thus, it is not surprising that Potter detected strong similarities between his four stacks of notes and Talcott Parsons' Theory of Action. In particular, Potter saw parallels between his stacks and Parsons' Cultural Subsystem of the General Theory of Action (Parsons, 1961). Parsons identifies four elements of the cultural system: adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance. Parsons maintains that for a culture to survive, these imperatives must be met: a culture must change with changing times and conditions; a culture must create and meet objectives relevant to its functioning; the culture must bring together its diverse elements to form a coherent system; and a culture must provide guides or models reflective of the reality perceived. In narrowing the broad needs of society, Parsons focuses on these four factors in the Cultural Subsystem. Parsons operationalizes the factors as follows: adaptation takes the form of empirical ideas; goal attainment takes the form of communication; integration occurs through evaluation; and latent pattern management provides the grounding for meaning. And these explanations of Parsons' cultural subsystem parallel, strongly, the categories Potter identifies as essential qualities of any ethical debate.

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Potter's four stacks reproduced his assessment of a particular issue, but reflect widely observed societal issues: empirical definition of the situation, loyalties rooted in preference, modes of ethical reasoning, and theological or quasi-philosophical religious worldviews (1999). Potter argues that, "any sustained argument, waged by alert, persistent interlocutors, would have, eventually, to deal with each of the four types of questions I had isolated" (1999, p. 4). That is, Potter's ideas are relevant to virtually any contentious issue. And, these four categories parallel Parsons' Cultural Subsystem categories. While the Potter Box moniker has been attributed to theologian Karen Lebacqz (Gillis, 2002), Potter himself claims that "waggish graduate students" first used the term (1999, p. 4).

The next stage of development of the Potter Box came about as a result of the war in Vietnam. Potter, echoing the feelings of much of society, was deeply concerned about the morality of the war. Starting as an attempt to examine Just War doctrine, Potter expanded on his four ideas in *War and Moral Discourse* (1969). Potter examined the morality of the war through the lens of his category scheme, concluding that in the case of Vietnam, ethics demand action. As such, Potter takes ethics from being an intellectual exercise for philosophers and makes it a moral imperative.

The Potter Box provides opportunities for the critic as well as the communicator. It has been used for scholarly analysis of decisions. Williams analyzes television news coverage decision making concerning AIDS using Potter's framework (1997). Park and Park utilize the model to assess Korean newspaper coverage of the Starr Report on the Clinton scandals (2000). Potter notes that, "The scheme can be used as a template or paradigm for content analysis" (1999, p. 5).

The rubric has also been employed in public relations (Christians, Fackler, Rotzoll, & McKee, 1998; Guth and Marsh, 2003). The Potter Box provides a method of making ethical decisions, regardless of context. To date, there appears to be no usage of the Potter Box in business communication outside public relations. Kienzler (2004) notes the complexity of ethical decision making, as well as the challenges posed by teaching ethics, for both teacher and student. Given the contemporary business atmosphere, business communication should investigate the use of this grounded and accessible tool.

Technique: The Potter Box

Christians, Fackler, Rotzoll, & McKee (2001) provide an effective introduction to the four dimensions of the Potter Box – definition, values, principles, loyalties – and construct action steps. The authors are careful to caution that the steps – usually applied in a systematic order – are a linked system, a circle, or an organic whole and not a random set of isolated questions. The action steps include: Providing an empirical definition, identifying values, appealing to ethical principles, choosing loyalties, making a particular judgment or policy, and finally, providing feedback.

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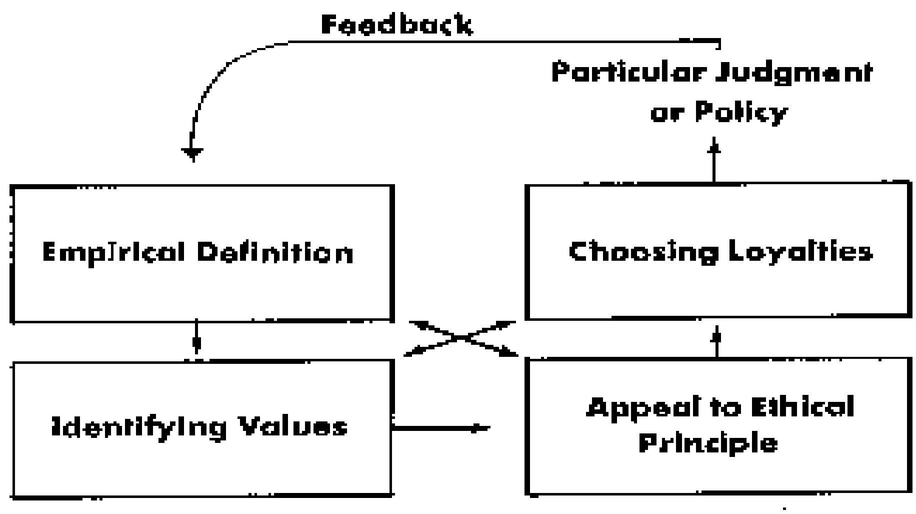
The Potter Box



Guth and Marsh (2003) elaborate on the concept of the four dimensions of the Potter Box and provide clear definition to the action steps. The authors' clearly defined eight-step process, aided by the Potter Box model, is presented in a summarized form. We believe it to be a meaningful technique for communication researchers and practitioners.

Box One: Empirical Definition
Step 1: Define the situation as objectively as possible. This requires detailed information that is relevant to the ethical dilemma.

Box Two: Identifying Values
Step 2: State and compare the merits of the differing values. Each value influences our discourse and our reasoning on moral questions. These values represent our notions of rights, beliefs, notions of right and wrong that are in conflict, and questions of fact and values.

Box Three: Appeals to Ethical Principles
Step 3: State a principle that each value honors. That means, imagine each value as the basis for a categorical imperative. These principles are broader ideas of justice. For example:

a. Aristotle: The Golden Mean
The moral virtue is the appropriate location between two extremes.

b. Immanuel Kant: Categorical Imperative
Act on the maxim that you wish to have become a universal law.

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c. John Stuart Mill: Principle of Utility
Seek the greatest happiness for the greatest number.

d. John Rawls: Veil of Ignorance
Justice emerges when negotiations are without social differentiation.

e. Hedonism: Personal Gain
The best option to take is the most pleasurable option

Step 4: Consider and compare other ethical principles. Do these ethical principles suggest new values to consider?

Box Four: Choosing Loyalties

Step 5: Decide to whom am I being loyal. For each principle, answer this question: If I base my action in this situation on this principle, to whom am I being loyal?

Step 6: Evaluate if there are others to whom I should feel loyal. If you identify new loyalties, do they suggest new principles and values you have not considered? Are there individuals or groups noted in the definition toward which you feel no loyalty?

Step 7: Select a course of action that embraces the most compelling values, principles and loyalties. Examine this course of action in light of your definition. If this course of action still seems to be the best choice, implement it. In each course of action you can now see which values, principles, and loyalties you are honoring.

Step 8: Evaluate the impact of your decision.

Application to Merck and Vioxx

The first step in applying the Potter Box is to empirically define the situation. In this case, the situation was: upon finding evidence in the year 2000 that Vioxx was linked to higher incidences of heart attacks, should that information been communicated to the Food and Drug Administration.

The next step is *to identify the applicable values*. One important value for a pharmaceutical company, like any company, is to make a profit, and to present a reasonable financial return to its investors. Corporations are not required to do good acts. They are required by law to make their investors money. On the other hand, while corporations are not in the business of doing good, doing good is good business. And, for pharmaceutical companies, an industry closest to the medical profession, the value of the medical profession – "do no harm" – should be followed. So, the dilemma here for Merck is one of completing underlying values. Revealing the information to the FDA that testing has revealed higher incidences of heart attacks will likely force Merck to drop a lucrative drug from the marketplace, resulting in substantially decreased profits. On the

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other hand, telling the FDA about the tests will likely prevent future potential users of Vioxx from suffering the negative side effects of the drug.

The third step in the Potter Box model is to *link the ethical principle with its associated applicable value*. It might be too cynical to say that the maximization of profits for shareholders is linked with the principle of hedonism, but certainly an argument can be made that it is linked with Mill's principle of utility – that is taking a position where the outcome does the greatest good for the greatest number of people.

The dilemma here for Merck is that the conflicting value here – the medical professional axiom of "first, do no harm" operates from a deontological perspective – the Kantian perspective of the Categorical Perspective. In other words, you always report negative results in drug testing *just in case* the problem is a persistent and serious one. Consider the catastrophe that occurred in the 1960s when Chemie Grünenthal ignored trial results about the birth defects associated with its tranquilizer Thalidomide. The result was that 15,000 children were born without fully formed hands or feet. Had FDA reviewer Frances Oldham Kelsey not demanded further test data from U.S. thalidomide distributor Richardson-Merrell, a similar fate could have befallen thousands of babies in the United States.

The final step in the analysis is to *identify the principle stakeholders – to whom is the company or individual being loyal*. Merck was faced with the choice of potentially harming current and future **customers** with its drug Vioxx, or to lose literally billions of **dollars** if it chose the reveal information that would result in the drug being taken off the market, thereby resulting in financial harm to, and ill will from, your shareholders. If you are operating from a Categorical Imperative, the choice is clear – you report the results to the FDA and live with the consequences.

From a Millsian perspective, however, the choice is murkier. Suppose you take Vioxx off the market, and save potentially thousands of lives. You also risk billions of dollars in revenues. Could those billions be used to eliminate the harmful side effects of the new MK-0767 diabetes drug, and perhaps save even more people? What is the greatest good for the greatest number of people? The choice is not always so clearcut.

Conclusion: Using the Potter Box for Ethical Decision-making

In the end, Merck was loyal to its shareholders rather than to its customers. The results have been devastating to the company – a loss of over $22 billion to its market capitalization, a potential $10 billion worth of legal judgments against it, and a serious erosion of the public trust in the pharmaceutical giant. Worse still, people died because Merck withheld information. That loss is incalculable.

One implication of this study is that the Potter Box can be a useful tool for analyzing the ethics of any decision, specifically in cases of conflicting forces. While the Merck case presented here asks for an explicit discussion of the four boxes and eight steps, the Potter Box may also be used for less formal analysis. The ideas presented are excellent points

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for discussion on any ethical issue. This technique may be used to analyze other case studies or ongoing examples from the front pages of the newspapers. Actual decisions may be examined to determine the motives of previous actors as well as to guide future actions.

As is true when utilizing most analytical communication tools, the process can be as significant as the results. An effective analytical result can aid in fine tuning the instrument and increasing the use of such an important analytical process.

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The "Dark Side" of Online Project Teams: Challenges and Remedies

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Abstract

Collaborative learning is a hot topic in higher education and the aggregate evidence from research studies is highly positive. However, there appears to be little research on negative learning outcomes in collaborative team projects, especially in the context of online learning and virtual teams. This study uses quantitative data (graded deliverables and a measure of team cohesion) to classify high performing and low performing teams. Then qualitative analysis, drawn from open-ended surveys and one-on-one telephone interviews, is used to compare and contrast the successful and unsuccessful teams to identify the factors that impact performance from the student perspective. Five performance factors emerged from the data: Team Membership, Action Plan, Communication, Goals, and Leadership. The study provides recommendations for instructors on how to help students improve project team performance in an online environment by addressing elements within the five factors.

Introduction

Collaborative learning is a frequently used instructional technique in higher education today and the aggregate research evidence on the efficacy of collaborative learning is highly positive (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005). However, in their comprehensive review of the literature, Barkley, Cross, and Major found little research on negative learning outcomes in collaborative projects. In addition, student criticism or dissatisfaction with group work seems to be lacking in the literature, especially in the context of online learning and project teams that are required to do most of their work virtually.

This research project combines quantitative and qualitative research methods to answer the following research questions:

1. In higher education, why do collaborative project teams, working in an online environment, sometimes fail to deliver a quality product? What practices or behaviors contribute to their poor performance when compared to high performing teams?

2. What can an instructor do to help prevent poor collaborative team performance in an online environment?

As the questions indicate, this is a prescriptive study. The purpose is to help instructors improve student team project performance in online classes.

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Research on Collaborative Learning in an Online Environment

The literature on virtual project teams in organizations is extensive, ranging from popular books (e.g., Duarte & Snyder, 2001; Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Lipnack & Stamps, 2000) to a robust lineup of empirical articles published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Furst, Reeves, Rosen, & Blackburn, 2004; Kirkman, Rosen, Gibson, Tesluk, & McPherson, 2002; Kirkman, Rosen, Tesluck, & Gibson, 2002; Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000).

Likewise, in higher education, there is a growing body of literature on collaborative (small group or team) learning in the classroom. In addition to assessing the effect of collaborative groups on learning for undergraduates (Springer, Stanne, & Donovan, 1999; Bacon, 2005), researchers have investigated a number of student factors that can affect team performance, such as social loafing (Taggar & Neubert, 2002), cohesion (Deeter-Schmelz, Kennedy, & Ramsey, 2002) and individual ability (Bacon, Stewart, & Stewart-Belle, 1998). In addition, studies have examined factors controlled by the instructor, such as methods of assigning students to teams (Bacon, Stewart, & Anderson, 2001), team size (Cossé, Ashworth, & Weisenberger, 1999), team longevity (Bacon, Stewart, & Silver, 1999), instructor coaching (Bolton, 1999; Kahn, 1995), and the use of peer evaluations (Gueldenzoph & May, 2002).

However, as noted in Barkley, Cross, and Major (2005), there appears to be little empirical research specifically investigating collaborative project teams working in an online environment in higher education. We were able to locate only three studies specific to this context.

Rutkowski, Vogel, Genuchten, Bemelmans, and Favier (2002) summarized a 4 year stream of research on e-collaboration of virtual teams made up of students from Hong Kong, The Netherlands, and, in the last phase of the project, France. Using an action research approach, they examined virtual team dynamics and a variety of group characteristics, such as the role of different cultures and the efficacy of different communication protocols (e.g., email, videoconference, and chat sessions). Teams consisted of two to four members and engaged in structured 6-week projects designed to deliver a report on an assigned issue, such as labor shortages in the IT area. The researchers created an “onion skin” model to present their findings. Their model distinguishes nine categories of problems that can be encountered in virtual teamwork (see Table 1). Each category (i.e., layer of the onion) represents a barrier to effective interaction that has to be addressed and “peeled” away.

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Table 1
Layers of Problems Associated with Work in Virtual Teams (Rutkowski et al, 2002)

Categories	Examples
1. Motivational issues	"Why are we doing this; what are the rewards?"
2. Context preparation	Common background materials; cultural awareness
3. Technological	Problems with access
4. Interaction	No communication for a long period
5. Structure	Protocols, agendas
6. Process	Planning methods, rotating leadership, roles
7. National cultural background	Cultural differences such as openness in communication
8. Professional background	Different ways of working, e.g., engineer versus accountant
9. Creative content formation	Differences of opinion on the actual content of deliverables

Dineen (2005) reported on an online team-based project called TeamXchange that was administered in an undergraduate Organizational Behavior course over two 4-week sessions using WebCT support technology. One purpose of the study was to examine the effect of team fluidity (rotating team membership) on a variety of outcomes, including team cohesiveness and social loafing behavior. The online activity was conducted in the context of a large (99 student) campus-based class. Students were placed in stable teams for one 4-week session and fluid teams for a second 4-week session. Teams were required to analyze short cases relevant to course material and answer questions related to the cases each week using the WebCT bulletin board. The study found that team cohesiveness and social loafing were lower in fluid teams when compared to stable teams.

Finally, building on the work of Rutkowski et al. (2002), Qureshi, Liu, and Vogel (2006) used a grounded theory approach to study the effects of electronic collaboration for distributed project management. This study examined participant communication logs of 21 virtual teams comprised of students from universities in the Netherlands and Hong Kong. The research found that effective use of the communication technology had a profound effect on the communication, coordination, and adaptation processes. Positive or poor e-communication practices affected shared understanding and collaboration effectiveness. The ability to coordinate across time zones and deal with delays in response times impacted productivity, degree of involvement, and learning. The ability to adapt to social expectations, to the technology, and to the work itself influenced conflict resolution and the perceived freedom to think creatively.

In summary, given the relative paucity of research on collaborative project teams working in an online academic environment, we can identify two gaps in the research that this study is designed to address. First, there appears to be no study that examines an online team project where the teams are required to complete a complex feasibility study, write a formal report, and deliver an oral presentation. Such a context should provide a richer perspective on why some teams fail to deliver a quality project when working collaboratively in an online environment. Secondly, while most studies included some qualitative data in the form of surveys, we found no studies that included actual interviews with the students about their experiences. Accordingly, we chose to use grounded theory procedures and techniques, with an emphasis on student interviews, to

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inductively derive recommendations for instructors to improve student success (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Methods

Participant Profile and Team Structure

Subjects. Participants in the study included 45 undergraduates (mostly juniors) from the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 online sections of the Managerial Communications course in the School of Business of a university in the southeast. Both sections were taught by the first author. The gender mix was 67% female, and 53% were classified as minority students (predominantly African-American). The mean college grade point average (GPA) for the group was 2.84 (on a 4-point scale). The average age was 27, and 51% considered themselves to be "non-traditional" students, i.e., out of school for 4 or more years prior to returning for a degree. The location of the study is a non-residential university and many online students tend to be older, with full-time employment and a family. Most students take a mix of online and campus-based classes.

Project Teams. Teams of 5 members each were formed at the beginning of the semester by using a stratified random method based on GPA, gender, and race. Assignments were then manually adjusted to insure representation of business majors on each team (primarily accounting, marketing, and management). Finally, adjustments were made to make sure each team had members with the requisite skill sets (research, writing, and computer skills) based on self-rated surveys. Over the two semesters, 10 teams participated in the project. Due to withdrawals before midterm, 2 of the teams worked with 4 members, and 2 teams had only 3 members.

The first half of the semester, students worked collaboratively in their teams on a variety of managerial communication competencies. The project was introduced at midterm and required the students to integrate and apply the skills they had studied the first half of the semester. The project, in the form of a business case feasibility study, required each team to collect data from a variety of sources (Web research, interviews, and surveys), reach consensus on a recommendation to management, prepare a formal report, and make an oral presentation in a conference room setting to a panel of instructors in the role of executives. During the midterm meeting, the teams received guidelines on how to manage the project and were provided time to use an action planning tool to outline the tasks, target dates, responsibilities, and deliverables.

Degree of Virtuality. The teams in this study meet Gibson and Cohen's (2003) definition of virtual or online teams: a functioning team interdependent in their tasks with shared responsibility for outcomes, geographically dispersed, and relying on technology-mediated communications. However, Gibson and Cohen also note that virtuality is a continuum. A team that does all its work through email, discussion boards, and teleconferences, never meeting face-to-face, is more virtual than a team that meets monthly or quarterly face-to-face. The teams in this study would be about midway on the virtual continuum. They did most of their work online but did meet at midterm to plan the project. In addition, though additional meetings were discouraged, most teams did manage to arrange at least one face-to-face meeting prior to the presentation, and some students had face-to-face contact with their team members during the 8 week project period while on campus for classroom-based courses.

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Research Design and Quantitative Measures

Figure 1 provides an overview of the data collection process used for this study. The literature on teams generally defines success in terms of both business outcomes, such as task performance, and human outcomes, such as team member satisfaction with the experience (e.g., Gibson & Cohen, 2003; Stewart, Fulmer, & Barrick, 2005). Therefore, we used quantitative data in the form of graded deliverables to assess task performance and a measure of team cohesion to assess the aspects associated with student satisfaction. We then used the quantitative data to identify high performing and low performing teams. Qualitative analysis, drawn from the Midterm Project Kickoff Survey, the End-of-Semester Project Questionnaire, and the one-on-one, semi-structured telephone interviews, was used to identify the factors that impacted performance from the student perspective.

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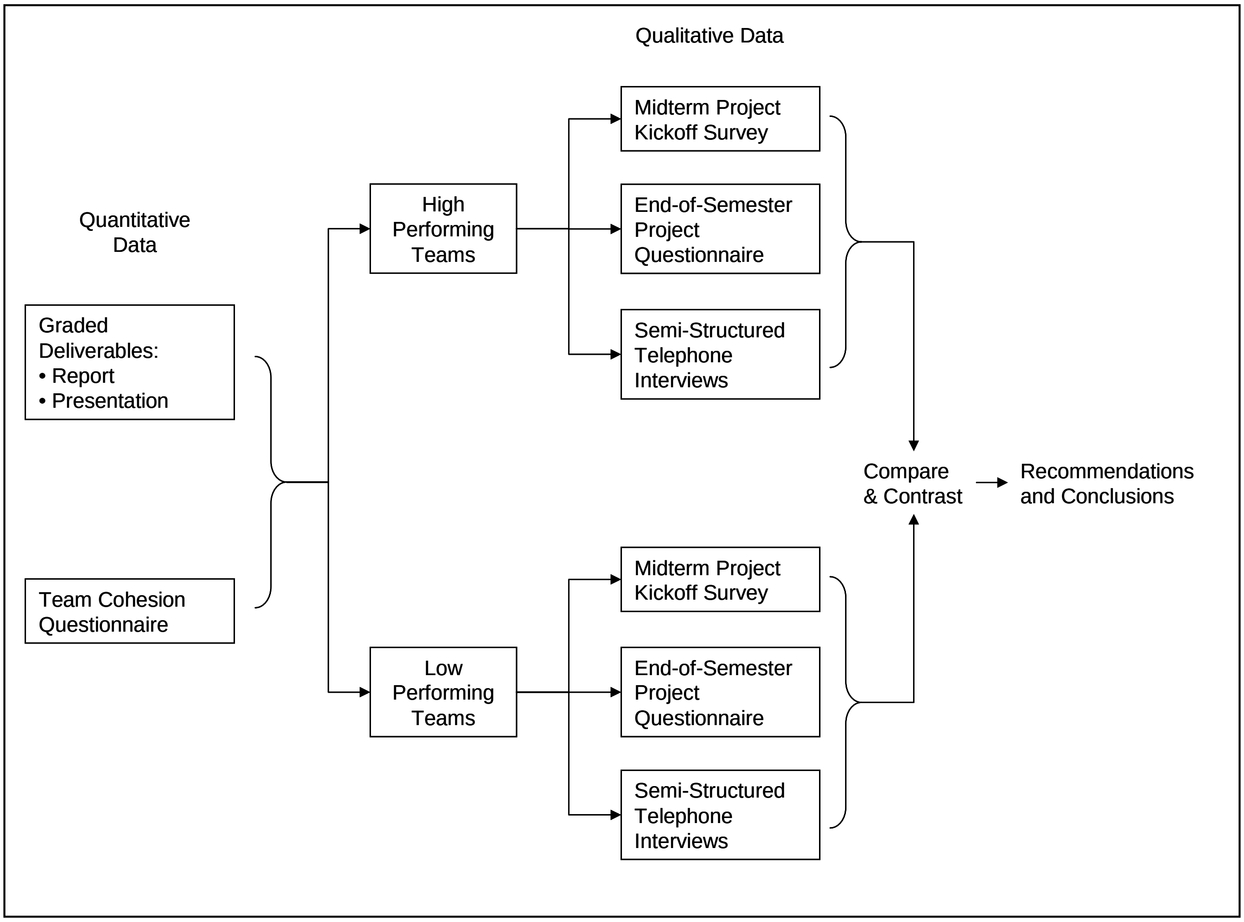
Figure 1
Data Collection Process



Graded Deliverables. The project deliverables accounted for 100 grade points and consisted of a report (50 points) and oral presentation (50 points). The report and oral presentation were graded by the instructor, and all members within a team received the same points. The report and oral presentation scores were added together to determine overall team performance on the task.

Team Cohesion. Cohesion, defined as the feeling among group members of being closely knit, was assessed with a 6-item measure adapted from Rosenfield and Gilbert's (1989) Classroom Cohesion Questionnaire. Item examples include "I enjoyed interacting with this team very much," "I wanted to remain a member of this team," and "There was a feeling of unity and cohesion in this team." Individual team members provided ratings with the collective group as the target on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from disagree (1) to agree (5). Cronbach's alpha estimate of internal consistency for this sample was .91.

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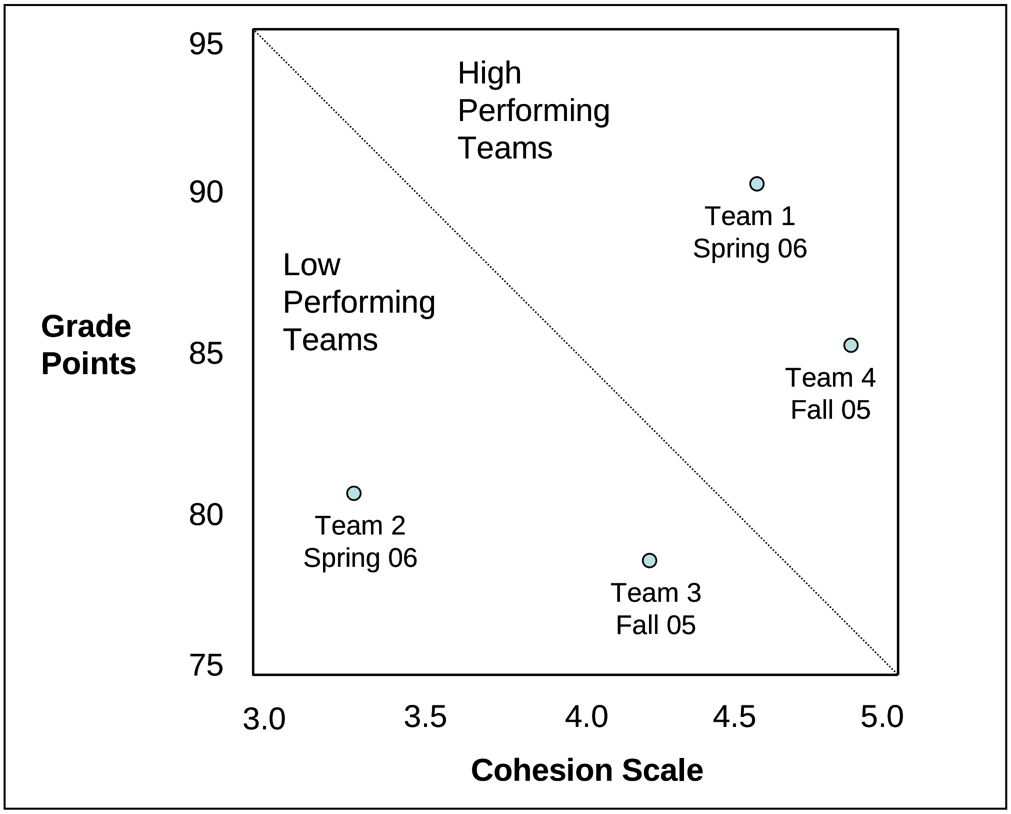
Selection of High and Low Performing Teams

After charting the scores for the performance measures, we were able to identify the high and low performing team for each semester. We chose to omit 3-person teams from the selection (one each semester) because, in both cases, the teams lost members due to withdrawals and were at a disadvantage due to the required work load. We defined success as having the highest grade points *and* having comparatively high scores on cohesion. Conversely, the low performing team was designated based on the lowest grade points and lower scores on cohesion. Figure 2 provides a comparative view of the scores by semester for the selected high and low performing teams.

Figure 2
Comparative View of Scores: High Performing versus Low Performing Teams



Qualitative Analysis

Given the selection of high performing and low performing teams, we used a qualitative approach to identify the factors that impacted performance from the student perspective. We collected data from multiple sources at several points in time, guided by protocols recommended by grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Initially, we obtained responses through four open-ended questions at the mid-term project kickoff. At the end of the semester (conclusion of the presentation), we collected responses to four open-ended questions that were included as a part of the project questionnaire. Additionally, after the semester ended, the second author conducted semi-structured one-on-one telephone interviews with members of the high

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performing and low performing teams. Table 2 provides the Midterm Project Kickoff Survey open-ended questions, the End-of-Semester Project Questionnaire open-ended questions, as well as the telephone interview questions used to frame the dialogue with each student.

Table 2
Survey and Interview Questions

Midterm Project Kickoff Survey (open-ended questions)

- What expectations do you have for your team? Explain.
- What are the reasons you think your team will be successful? Explain.
- What are your team's greatest challenges? Explain.
- If you could change one thing about your team, what would it be? Explain.

End-of-Semester Project Questionnaire (open-ended questions)

- What contributed to any failures your team experienced?
- Describe any special challenges you encountered working virtually.
- What one thing, if done differently, would have made your team more successful?
- Do you have suggestions for making this project a better learning experience for future classes?

Semi-Structured Telephone Interview Guide*

- What words would you use to describe your virtual team? Give an example of each.
- What have you learned about working virtually?
- What practices have contributed to your ability to be a successful virtual team?
- What practices have contributed to your failures as a virtual team?
- Describe any special challenges you have encountered working virtually.
- What would you do differently if you could start over?
- What advice would you give to virtual teams to enhance their success?

* Other questions emerged during the interview process.

Qualitative research uses an evolving and emerging inductive process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Findings in the form of themes, tentative hypotheses, and grounded theory can emerge from the research. Questions of "how" focusing on discovery of meaning and understanding are predominant rather than questions of "how much" or "how many" (Yin, 1994). This focus yields exploratory data that can support further research.

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One of the most important data sources is the interview (Yin, 1994). In the style of the ethnographic interview, the focus of the interview is to learn from people rather than study them (Spradley, 1979). By seeking the knowledge of team members, we could build on their shared experience. To discover this insider view, we took on the role of the student while the interviewee served as our teacher. The focus of this process was to listen for the meaning of actions and events as perceived by those who experienced them.

Analysis involved multiple levels of coding. In open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), data are conceptualized by giving them labels. Then, the concepts are grouped into categories that are more abstract in nature. Their labels can be taken from the literature, created by the researcher, or even lifted from the words of the informants. Categories can be viewed by their properties or attributes and their dimensions.

Data collection and data analysis are iterative, tightly interwoven processes. "Inductive and deductive analyses are mixed. When a theme, hypothesis, or pattern is identified inductively, the researcher then moves into a verification mode, trying to confirm or qualify the finding" (Huberman & Miles, 1994, p. 431). Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) while coding data, we compared data with previous data coded in both the same and different groups. This method of continuous comparison encouraged reflection and facilitated analysis.

The second level of coding is axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this component of the analysis, the researcher "puts those data back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories" (p. 97). Categories are specified with enhanced precision "in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of those strategies" (p. 97). Through a complex analytical process of deductive and inductive thinking, we not only related subcategories to a broader category in a set of relationships but also connected these relationships to data. The process of proposing and verifying patterns against data, produced patterns that were grounded in data.

Selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) is the process of identifying the essence of the story revealed through the data and analytically formulating the story line by relating other categories to the core category. This is a complex integration process that relates categories in ways that can produce theory that is grounded in the research data.

Results

Midterm Project Kickoff Survey

The results of the open-ended survey collected at the mid-term project kickoff are presented in two groups—unsuccessful teams and successful teams. In this survey, students described their expectations and anticipated challenges.

Unsuccessful Teams. Unsuccessful teams started with high expectations for their groups. They expected team members to meet all deadlines and put forth good effort. Members believed that

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they would work well together. As one stated, “We work well together; we are not shy, and we are very open with what we think we should do.” Some cited as challenges the full schedule of team members and the need to maintain good communication and time management. One member was concerned and foresaw some of the problems. That member commented, “The age of my team members or more so the maturity—some of them are too laid back about work and responsibility for my tastes.”

Successful Teams. Successful teams anticipated good work from their team members. As one stated, “I am confident that we will achieve an ‘A’ on this assignment.” They described their team as mature, open, honest, respectful, responsible, organized and hardworking. Most members anticipated that time management would be one of their greatest challenges.

End-of-Semester Project Questionnaire

The results of the open-ended surveys collected through the end-of-the-semester project questionnaire are presented in two groups—unsuccessful teams and successful teams.

Unsuccessful Teams. Unsuccessful teams knew that they had made many mistakes in the project. They described the following things as contributing to their failures: the need for more rehearsals, inadequate preparation, insufficient face time, procrastination, and the lack of open-mindedness from the leader. Many of their challenges were also related to communication issues. As one person commented, “Sometimes in a discussion board response and e-mail, the tone was misunderstood. This is very important to me, to be able to see someone’s face when agreeing or disagreeing on an issue.” Another stated, “People did not check the discussion board enough or failed to respond to postings and e-mails.”

Successful Teams. Successful teams described their positive team experience, although they also shared their mistakes. Some members said that they did not ask enough questions of the instructor. As one explained, “All of the things we needed improvement on could have been fixed with a few questions.” Some criticized their closing, the need for better graphs, and more extensive research. They also thought they should have spent more time rehearsing the presentation. One member commented on the lack of focus on the “big picture” by saying, “We worried about the individual tasks rather than what needed to be conveyed.” They also mentioned the hazards of virtual classes. One explained, “I believe in-person forms of learning demand a higher level of accountability. We missed certain deadlines because our schedules varied so much.”

Telephone Interviews

The interview data is grouped by the following categories that emerged in the qualitative analysis: Team Membership, Action Plan, Communication, Goals, and Leadership. Under each category, results are presented in two groups—unsuccessful teams and successful teams.

Team Membership: Unsuccessful Teams. Unsuccessful teams described their members as being “too laid back”—either not participating at all or not participating to the necessary degree. No one seemed to care if they were doing their part in a timely way. As one member said, “There

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was not enough urgency or commitment to the project." Procrastination and a lack of motivation was commonplace. As one student explained, "This project was just last on the list." When they met, they did not stay on topic. As one said, "Other things were on peoples' minds." Some stated that they were not motivated because it was not the best group (with immature members) or it was not an interesting topic. The "laid back" style was so common in one group that some said it led to "groupthink." As one member put it, "Our group was not as diverse; laid back personalities; too similar." As another said, "We didn't question each other." Members described themselves as successful at getting along but an academically unsuccessful group. As one person explained, "You need to respect each other, but you don't need to be friends. You can be more honest when they're not your friend." Being successful requires dedication and commitment—two things lacking in these unsuccessful teams.

Team members also described themselves as being "too trusting" and "too patient." As one member stated, "When we began, I thought everyone would be dedicated. I got the feeling they would try hard. Everyone said they were doing their work. I didn't ask to look. By the time I realized it, it was too late." As another member said, "When face-to-face, people are easier to read." Members also described themselves as "too patient." "People did not get upset when deadlines passed and stuff came in late. They acted like it was not a big deal."

Even members who described themselves as more on task in previous group projects allowed the group to negatively influence them. As one stated, "I didn't prepare as well; I'm normally not like that; I let them influence me, and I paid for it; I was tired of doing it all myself (in prior groups); I tried the team thing; I will take charge next time." As another put it, "The challenge is how to deal with team members that don't take it seriously; maybe I should have done it all myself. I don't know what would work with those people."

Team Membership: Successful Teams. Successful teams described themselves as being cohesive, working well together, and being honest. As one explained, "We all just clicked; not very much strife or disagreement; not a lot of poking, prodding, or reminding due to the personalities. When it's there, it's there, and when it's not, it's not." They described themselves as being honest with each other: "Especially if we didn't feel comfortable with the work; we would ask for help." They understood that virtual teamwork required more discipline and were aware of the pitfalls and the need for good time management. Students seemed to know "in advance" of the challenges, and thus they were ready to put forth more effort. The successful teams described their groups as mature. As one explained, "I've been on other teams in the past that were not as successful because people didn't know how to balance. This team had maturity and knew how to balance; they understood the importance of adhering to deadlines."

Action Plan: Unsuccessful Teams. Having an Action Plan with tasks appropriately assigned, sequenced, and followed is essential for effective virtual team projects. But as one student stated, "We never referred to the Action Plan after the day we worked on it." Another said, "I didn't think to look at it." And as another said, "We set Action Plan deadlines. We started with the best of intentions, but things got ignored. Things got pushed back; people gave excuses; we did not gauge work at the end." Also, team members felt that working virtually made it more difficult to determine individual strengths. As one person put it, "People picked tasks that were not their strengths. People just said they would do it." Teamwork requires effective time management

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skills, but as students indicated, procrastination was a common weakness of the unsuccessful teams. As one student indicated, “Many take online classes because they don’t have the time, but, in reality, online classes often take more time.” Students said that they had difficulties getting things done with work, other school classes, and their families. Others also stated, “We delayed too long before getting started.” Having so many weeks to do the project actually encouraged many to delay in starting it. As some explained, “I did things last minute. This class was a low priority in relation to my harder classes that are directly related to my major.” As another said, “Follow through is important. You need to do what you say you’re going to do; you need to take due dates seriously because it affects the whole group.”

Action Plan: Successful Teams. Successful teams had an Action Plan and were better at following it. As one student explained, “Everyone was on the same page. We split the work evenly, and everyone did their part. People just did it; we said we don’t have time to mess around. No one had to pick up anyone’s slack. You didn’t have to remind people.” As another student explained, “I knew what I had to do each night.” Even in successful teams, there were some problems adhering to the timeframe specified in the Action Plan. As one student described, “We got behind and lost track of deadlines. Some did not make it a priority because it was online. We got it done two weeks before; I knew that we had to do it now—not the night before.”

Communication: Unsuccessful Teams. Effective teams function as a team rather than a collection of individuals. In unsuccessful teams, this was lacking. Communication is a major challenge in virtual classes yet a requirement for real teamwork. As one student said, “There’s such a time delay when working with others virtually.” Plus, as another described, “You lose something in relationships when it’s all virtual. It’s hard to read people. It’s like talking to a computer—not a person.” Many shared their frustrations with communication. As one stated, “It was hard to get in touch with everybody. It would be days or a week before you’d hear from some people on the team. I don’t remember the ground rules (respond within two days); we said to be timely; that’s not a week.” There were complaints that no one responded to email. People justified delays because they were preoccupied with other classes. Many felt that meeting face-to-face would have helped their situation although the unsuccessful teams actually met several times. Students described few phone conversations. As one explained, “I always talked to voice mail.” And another commented, “I never took the time to store the numbers. It was not important enough to look up the numbers.” Email was frequently used, but as one said, “I’m not on the computer often so it was hard checking my email frequently enough.” Most said that it just took too long to get responses. They tried using the discussion board, but as a student explained, “Most used the discussion board, but the turnaround time was too slow; it could take days before people got back.” As another explained, “The bulletin board works for some things, but it does not work as well to relay important information.” Being a member of an unsuccessful virtual team can be quite lonely. As one student said, “I didn’t feel as involved because my work was at the end.” Students didn’t have an understanding of what others were doing and were isolated as they individually did their work. One student added, “Virtual teams are on their own; communication within the team is difficult, and there is no dialogue across teams. In a classroom setting, teams can also learn from each other.”

Communication: Successful Teams. Successful teams were significantly better at communicating than the unsuccessful teams. Students seemed diligent in checking emails and the discussion

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board and having voice conversations. As one student explained, “We were able to communicate and keep in touch with each other. If I had questions, I could call and would get a response in a timely manner. All got on the phone. Email was our best friend for this project. Our team did well; responded to emails and kept in touch.” One student added, “We had a rule to check email three times a week, and we shared cell phone numbers. Two times people were going out of town so they would call and let us know they would not be responding.” And another said, “We used the discussion board regularly—even 2-3 times a day toward the end.” One added, “Discussion board postings got responses later that day or the next day the latest.” Another stated, “We posted often to the discussion board—at least 5-6 times per week. There was great interaction. It was a good tool.” Another commented, “If I didn’t see something, I posted and got a quick response.” As one student described, “We used the discussion board for most interactions; used email as a back up.” Another said, “We emailed and people responded. We knew the project was important, and it was important to talk.”

Successful team members stressed the point of good communication. As one said, “Communicate, communicate, communicate. Be sure everyone is on the same page. Double-check.”

Successful teams understood the value of genuine teamwork. As one explained, “You must remember that you are a team. It’s not just your project. You must understand that everybody has their thing to do. I knew that if I messed up, it would waste others’ time. We made sure not to waste others’ time.” Successful teams also saw the value of communicating with and working with others. As one explained, “We assigned people to teams of two to do tasks. There was never one person doing a task alone. We had to keep each other accountable. You might have one partner for one task and a different partner for another task. It is important in a team project to have someone to soundboard off of. We caught each other’s mistakes.”

Goals (Guidelines / Grading Criteria): Unsuccessful Teams. Students cited that their lower grades were partially due to not following the guidelines of the project and not being clear on the grading criteria. As one explained, “We didn’t understand the rules; we followed the book example instead of the rules of the instructor. We read rules individually—not together– we didn’t know how to format; it was not what he wanted.” Students cited problems because they did not pay attention to the grading criteria. As one explained, “We did not cover points on the criteria. We forgot about it; just didn’t think about it.” Another stated, “We didn’t know how the paper needed to be done; nobody knew we were doing it wrong.” Another added, “We didn’t realize till the day of the presentation the problem, and then it was too late.” And another explained, “Not reading the assignment/instructions correctly was our biggest downfall.” As one student said, “We didn’t read the rules thoroughly; we were not clear on the overall goal.”

Goals (Guidelines / Grading Criteria):Successful Teams. Even successful teams had some problems following guidelines. As one student admitted, “We had to change our PowerPoint the night before. We didn’t listen to the audio explanation for the PowerPoint until the night before it was due. Only then did our team captain listen to it and realized we had problems.” Another student added, “I was not clear that if we said ‘no’ that we should have recommended another course of action.” And one student commented, “We should have talked to the teacher more to know what he was looking for.”

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Leadership: Unsuccessful Teams. A major deficiency in the unsuccessful teams was the lack of good team leadership. As one student explained, “No one took the lead so one overbearing person just did it. That person was not a true leader. She did not delegate; she just did it herself. She gave us stuff to do, and then she changed/edited our work. It almost felt like it was not our work—just hers.” One student commented, “A team should not have a leader like the one in this group: that person hindered us. That one person felt like they could make all the calls.” As another stated, “She was domineering and ignored others’ contributions. Once your ideas got ignored, you thought ‘whatever’—I just didn’t care as much; I didn’t care to go the extra mile.” As another said, “She changed my slides 15 minutes before presenting; she should have left them alone; it was like talking to a brick wall. She didn’t trust others; I was fully capable of being trusted; we were not together as a group to decide; she just decided everything. She took over and wrote the paper and told people what to say.” As another commented, “She got tired of waiting on people.”

Leadership: Successful Teams. In the successful teams, the leadership role was also ineffective. As one student commented, “We did not have a leader who said to get on track. He apologized; he had a full life; he had personal stuff.” But in the successful teams, the group managed successfully by working together. As one explained, “We had no leader: we all made decisions together; we all played a major role.”

Discussion

Midterm Project Kickoff Survey

On the onset of the project there were similar expectations and challenges voiced by both the unsuccessful and successful teams. All started with high expectations and were aware that there were challenges when working virtually.

End-of-Semester Project Questionnaire

Students were realistic about their successes and failures. Most saw online communications classes as a challenge, and some thought a hybrid course would be a better format. Even successful teams conveyed the need for more in-class time.

Telephone Interviews

Team Membership: The Dark Side of virtual teams begins with understanding the attributes of team membership that contribute to failure. Based on unsuccessful team experiences, the following member characteristics contributed to their problems: too laid back, too trusting, too patient, unmotivated, and procrastinating. These laid back virtual teams patiently trusted and tolerated behavior that was detrimental to the team. Bad behaviors were exacerbated in a virtual environment where “out of sight” also contributed to “out of mind” behavior. These unsuccessful virtual teams were neither “on time” nor did they work “to the necessary degree”—the keys to team success. When individuals procrastinate and put the work on the back burner, the whole team is negatively impacted. Students who are not skilled in balancing the requirements of their classes and personal life are not good team members. Also, virtual teams with members who are

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too “alike” can also lead to problems. In the unsuccessful teams, they tended to agree too easily with each other. “Getting along” did not contribute to doing good work. These membership traits had an additional destructive component: these “dark” behaviors often negatively impacted others on the team who otherwise would have been more productive members. Additionally, this negative team experience appeared to add to the cloud that many members had of team projects and enhanced their perceptions of the flaws that would predictably emerge in future teams.

Virtual courses require more discipline than traditional courses. Mature students are better able to handle this less structured learning environment. Students skilled in time management tend to be more successful. Additionally, students who were more successful described themselves as being honest with each other.

Action Plan: Establishing a reasonable Action Plan and then sticking to it is essential for team success. An Action Plan provides the structure to guide performance. An Action Plan must indicate tasks required, person (s) responsible, due dates, and deliverables. Having a realistic Action Plan and monitoring the timeline and due dates are vital. Everyone must take deadlines seriously, make alterations in the plan, when necessary, and use the plan to guide their work.

Working virtually can also be challenging because of the lack of face time for members to get to know each other and see individual strengths. Understanding student strengths is key to positioning a virtual team for success. Students do not succeed just because members “pick” their own tasks. Students can pick tasks that are not their strengths. Students were more successful if they chose tasks based on their strengths and preferences. Following this practice, however, could make one question how much students learn in a virtual team project if students only take responsibility for tasks in which they already possess the skills.

Communication. Effective communication is essential in any class, but even more so in a virtual class. Communication seems to be the item most talked about as the source of the unsuccessful teams’ problems. In the successful teams, communication was effective and in the unsuccessful teams, communication was poor. Ironically, the failing virtual teams felt a solution to their problem would have been to meet more face-to-face, but successful virtual teams were successful without meeting face-to-face. These successful teams suggested the need to have more face-to-face time mainly to rehearse their presentation. Virtual communication makes it hard to read people and to learn content. Additionally, without interaction with other teams taking the same course, they missed out on the learning that can be derived from other groups.

Virtual teams must act like teams and not a collection of individuals. Yet, too often, teams divide the work and then work independently with minimal communication. Successful teams understood the value of working together and developed processes to ensure that the necessary interaction took place. By working in pairs, one team encouraged enhanced opportunities for communication and the ability to get feedback. Members in unsuccessful teams were much more isolated.

Goals (Guidelines/Grading Criteria). Communication between students and the teacher to understand all facets of the project is in itself a hurdle when working virtually. A successful project team must understand the project goal and be clear on the guidelines of the project and

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the grading criteria. But according to both unsuccessful and successful teams, this information was not clearly understood prior to the day of the presentation. Without frequent teacher feedback, which is typically reduced in a virtual environment, teams can neglect expected guidelines and criteria. Without attention to this essential information, virtual teams are setting themselves up for failure—without even realizing it. Working virtually, without ongoing face-to-face interaction with the instructor puts more pressure on the team members to be sure they are clear on the rules of the game.

Leadership. Leadership is important to virtual team success, and avoiding a bad leader is vital. If there is no single leader, then the function must be distributed among the team members. The key role of the leader is to ensure that everyone understands the guidelines and criteria, follows the ground rules, and adheres to the Action Plan. The leader should avoid nagging and should not act unilaterally or dominate the group.

Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the "dark side" of project teams in an online environment and identify concrete actions that an instructor can take to improve team performance and satisfaction with the process. Based on the insights gained from this study, we offer the following recommendations organized by the five categories that emerged from the analysis.

Team Membership

Having the right people on a virtual project team is important for effective teamwork. Having the wrong people on the team is a source of ongoing challenges.

1. Send a notice prior to registration that describes course requirements and needed skill sets. Caution students to consider the time demands of the course.
2. Provide teams with strategies for dealing with members who do not take the project seriously. Promote individual accountability as well as team effort through the grading process. For example, a peer assessment that can impact student grades will allow students and the instructor to monitor individual contribution if the assessment is submitted periodically throughout the semester.
3. Ask students to include the role "devil's advocate" in the team assignments. The person in this role will be responsible for promoting debate and discussion to encourage broader thinking and avoid groupthink.
4. Evaluate the value of the grade assigned to the project. Some laid back and procrastinating traits may be moderated if the project counts more toward the final grade. Individual effort may increase if the consequences are more significant.

Action Plan

1. Create a model Action Plan for students that includes examples of tasks, responsibilities, due dates and deliverables. Require submission of the completed Action Plan for grade points.

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2. Schedule due dates throughout the project for drafts of deliverables to earn grade points. For example, research must be submitted by a specific date to earn points.
3. Provide the teams with a structured process that encourages individuals to pick tasks where they genuinely possess strengths and thus can provide the greatest contribution to the team. For example, team members can complete a questionnaire on background and strengths and discuss prior to making project assignments.

Communication

Clear steps must be established to support effective communication.

1. Require students to establish ground rules for communication at the beginning of the project. The ground rules should define the methods that will be used for communicating (e.g., email, phone, discussion board), the times and frequency for using each method, and expected response turnaround times. The team should also decide the consequences for members who violate ground rules (incorporate in the peer evaluation).
2. Provide teams with example guidelines for effective decision making.
3. Ask all team members to exchange telephone numbers and email addresses.
4. Ask teams to assign partners for each task to enhance accountability, interaction, and communication.

Goals (Guidelines/Grading Criteria)

Effective teamwork requires an understanding of the goals, guidelines, and criteria of the project. Teams tend to experience “information overload” because so much information is shared at the beginning of a project. Any confusion in what is expected by the instructor can lead to missed opportunities and unexpected negative outcomes for the team.

1. Post all project guidelines and grading criteria in a central location on the course Web site. At the beginning of the project, special effort should be made to ensure that all guidelines and criteria are distributed, discussed, and understood.
2. Use rubrics to communicate criteria for all graded deliverables.
3. Include the checkpoint “Review Guidelines and Criteria” as an item that occurs periodically on the Action Plan.

Leadership

Leadership facilitates effective teamwork and can be a critical factor for success for a project with a tight timeline and complex deliverables. The role of the leader is typically to help members adhere to guidelines and criteria, follow ground rules, and stick to the Action Plan.

1. Provide a process and suggested criteria for each team to help select the project leader.
2. Provide a suggested list of responsibilities for the team leader and make sure the team discusses and agrees on guidelines for productive leadership behaviors.
3. Arrange for individual coaching of each leader throughout the project.

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Limitations of the Study

Several limitations should be noted in relation to the execution and application of this research. First, data was gathered from four teams: two teams in the Fall '05 semester and two teams in the Spring '06 semester. The application of the findings from this research is limited because of the small number of students interviewed (18). Gaining insight through additional semesters and thus more students would enhance learning and transferability. Next, only students taking virtual communications classes were studied. Possibly a different type of course, such as marketing, would have presented different outcomes. Also, virtual classes from only one university were studied. If data had been gathered from students at other universities, additional insights may have emerged.

Conclusion

This study points to the "dark side of online teams and highlights the difficulty that undergraduate students may have with a demanding project in an online environment. Without the face-to-face student interaction and contact with the instructor afforded by the traditional classroom environment, both the students and instructor have to work much harder (and smarter) to insure successful outcomes. The five problem areas that emerged from the student experiences provide a useful framework for planning interventions to improve both student learning and satisfaction.

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Effective Instructions in a Globalized Middle East/Arabian Work Environment: Providing the Fit between Workplace Communication and Oral Communication Education

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Abstract

While a great deal of emphasis has been made on communication being the lifeblood of any organization, there has not been sufficient evidence on the fit between the oral communication in daily work and the curriculum offered in business schools. A Japanese study indicates an intense oral culture in the workplace with growing importance of interpersonal and small group communication experiences including translation, negotiation, teamwork and active listening.

The public speaking course which is the only oral communication prerequisite of the undergraduate program of the college of Commerce and Economics in Sultan Qaboos University, Oman conventionally is a straight take on the much tried out speechmaking process. The author has primarily gravitated towards an oral communication training module in the classroom conducted over a period of fifteen weeks of a semester which covers exercises on conversations, listening, recall, giving instructions, feedback, informative presentations, group meetings, group discussions and persuasive presentations. This paradigm shift has to hinge on tried out theories related to organization as well as be backed by actual evidence of its applicability in the globalized Omani workplace. For instance, stages of anticipatory socialization and encounter as proposed by Jablin's Organization Assimilation Theory are used by Suwichit Sean Chaidaroon in teaching effective giving of instructions and feedback (Chaidaroon, 2003).

Therefore, this paper is a focused, preliminary study on the composition and nature of effective instructions to employees in the major employing organizations of the business graduates some of which are multinational companies. This would in turn leverage appropriate organizational theories to be used as a framework in the public speaking curriculum and provide a fit between the composition of oral communication education and communication in work in a globalized work

Introduction and Literature Review

Employment, especially new employment, is a challenge for most organizations as the focus of the knowledge society is retaining competence. It is equally daunting for the new comer who faces new situations and has to imbibe new skills and knowledge (Filstad, 2004). The 'new social contract' of employment obscures any lifelong loyalty from either the employer or employee and many business schools lately have a focus on enabling students to think of themselves as small businesses and their careers as a progression of contracts with several corporations (Eisenberg and Goodall Jr., 2004).

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The primal point of verbal communicative interaction of a newcomer with an organization is in the instructions taking of processes, practices, and norms of behavior either through an organized means of induction program or through informal learning from colleagues and superiors. The encounter stage in Jablin's Organization Assimilation theory (stages of anticipatory socialization, encounter, metamorphosis and disengagement) is found to be crucial to help employees adjust to their new workplace. A simple, time- and cost effective way at this stage would be to provide new employees with effective instructions from immediate supervisors (Chaidaroon,2003). The elements of such communication impacts the kind of organizational socialization a newcomer experiences, which sets the tone and tempo of employment and organizational commitment. Therefore, it is of particular significance to a new age knowledge economy worker whose organizational commitment is as long as the next best job offer.

Traditional business communication and organizational behavior literature describe three types of communication flow in the workplace: upward, downward, and horizontal communication. Though the modern trend is to describe collaborative management, in the process collaborative communication (teams), workplace learning would be incomplete without elaborating more on the first typology. Such communication especially effective instructions on the global view of things as well as job execution (with simultaneous feedback) would be rated highly in achieving the kind of organizational socialization which would impact organizational loyalty, commitment and effectiveness.

Organizations require workers to have a shared vision, be committed to corporate culture, and understand the global picture. Therefore, employees are required to become 'discourse workers' with a renewed identity of being verbal about their work in relation to themselves and to others. This is a point of departure from recognized traditional roles of top down management commands/ instructions, which allowed workers to satisfactorily do particular jobs for many years (Scheeres, 2003).While the new work order requires a global vision with the traditional role of doing a job, the task of instructions giving becomes enmeshed in a new order of communication and a new integrated form of learning. It becomes pertinent to explore the nuances of this new phenomenon in this increasingly globalizing work environment.

All types of learning including individual cognitive processes, social and cultural learning impinges on a newcomer's organizational socialization (Filstad, 2004**)**. The very fundamental communicative act of instructions giving or the 'how to do' of a job (and simultaneous feedback) is the first visible step in orientation to an organization. This, as understood above, is not treated as an act separate from its emotional and societal content and hence makes for interesting pedagogical challenges particularly so when providing future employees for the Middle East businesses which operate in the nationalization process context. The nationalization process (replacing expatriates with local cadre) and its context merit a different study altogether but in this research it would be important to keep in mind the salient features of such a process:

1) There is a transition, in the process an exchange/ transfer of information predominantly in the form of oral communication.

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2) The transition is mostly between expatriates (of different nationalities and cultures) and nationals, which make for intercultural dimensions.

The quest is therefore on for a theoretical base which addresses ‘the learner as a human being in general, as a member of the present late modern globalised market and risk society, and as a specific individual with a personal life history, situation and future perspective’. Workplace learning has gained momentum in the past few decades because of the trend towards modernization, which implicates workers in a fast paced change ridden workplace such that traditional classroom education cannot suffice. An interesting aspect of workplace learning as described by Illeris (especially as it refers to adult learning) has three integrated dimensions which are cognitive, emotional and social-societal. Cognitive dimension would develop meaning and functionality in the form of knowledge, skills, understandings; Emotional dimensions would provide sensitivity and mental balance through patterns of emotion and motivation and attitudes; and through the social-societal dimensions, sociality would be developed through potentials for empathy, communication and co-operation. The whole picture is important because cognitive professional content learning can be divorced from what happens in the emotional and social- societal dimension. This learning concept figures well in the modern day thrust for competence development and retention which has assumed unprecedented significance for reasons mentioned above (Illeris, 2003).

The literature contends that contemporary management has the onus to facilitate individual learning in a way that it becomes ‘explicit, systematic and intentional in order to capture it in the form of new or improved practices, procedures, products and services’. This has to be the concern of the entire organization particularly the managers who assume a new identity as a practical author of learning. People learn competencies in the university of work life but this has its own pitfalls in that there seem differences in learning abilities across the board as in an academic setting (Pavlica, Holman and Thorpe, 1998,Filstad, 2004). While some absorb fast, others require assistance as they rarely reflect on existing possibilities and alternatives. The individual has little space for introspection and learning as he/she is flitting from task to task. This necessitates a paradigm shift in the role of manager from that of a teacher to facilitator or catalyst to learning. The social and conversational aspects of learning should be geared in a way that the learning becomes ‘explicit, systematic and intentional in order to capture it in the form of new or improved practices, procedures, products and services’.

The study has been spurred by the growing need of business and in particular oral communication education to move beyond theoretical frameworks to actual workplace requirements especially so when the Middle East economy requires competent national workforce. Though the Middle East work environment, in particular the Omani work environment has not progressed far from traditional management practices and the bulk of the economy is fuelled by small businesses, it is worthwhile to note that there are premier organizations recruiting new order workers. The premier organization focused in this study has allowed new practices of management that pervade management texts to be

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visible in the company documents, mission statements and core values. The trend therefore is to implement new practices of management in the process, fostering a new order of communication and a new model of learning. All these and more have direct implications for refurbishing the objective of the oral business communication curriculum from a workplace/ learning perspective.

Methodology

As a first phase of research, the study focused on the nature and composition of formal instructions giving in a multinational, new generation bank in Oman in the Middle East with Head Quarters at Muscat. The methodology of the study was to observe participant trainees of the branch operations course of the induction program, more specifically the verbal instruction on account-opening module in day one, which is the first and most basic process, required by branch personnel. The entire module was conducted over two days in three sessions of two hours each. This (induction training program) would generally replicate top down management commands/ instructions and minimal upward communication in the form of feedback but on hindsight it was a laboratory for wide ranging social, cultural and conversational interactions as well as individual cognitive processes. The study had an ethnographic approach primarily because of insufficient literature on the specific area of instructions giving and the lack of a suitable instrument to be replicated. Moreover, the specific requirements of the industry merited an isolated focused study on what comprised instructions- giving in inducting employees. The observations of the study gave scope for a survey instrument to be administered on the participants. This provided for cross-triangulation, the findings of which are beyond the scope of the paper. Also some of the findings of the study were correlated to the 'in class observations' made on scenarios role-played in the instructions giving module of public speaking course of the spring and summer semesters offered by the researcher.

In the light of the above discussion made on learning for the workplace, it was important for a seminal step to be made on this area to examine the culture in which such formal instructions giving took place so as to develop culture specific insights. The observations were frame worked using the findings of Suwichit Sean Chaidaroon, which described effective instructions from supervisors to have global orientation, step-by-step procedures, ongoing feedback and an environment of balance between freedom and rigidity (Chaidaroon, 2003). However, the study was not limited to such parameters and all vital characteristics of the training program was observed and recorded. Pertinent observations relating to global orientation, types of communication used, the optimum use of bilingual medium of instruction, quantum of feedback generated process assimilation (step-by- step procedures), and work life accountability was made.
In the results and discussion section of the paper, the observations are made interposed with some actual communication recorded in italics and findings are recorded at appropriate intervals.

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Participant Profile

There were a total of twenty-one trainees in this batch, eleven female and ten male. Only four were degree holders of which three were university degree holders; one was a degree holder from a private college in Oman. Two of the degree holders were females and two were males. Seventeen trainees were diploma holders; thirteen had a simple diploma while the designation for three trainees were higher national diploma offered by the private colleges affiliated to Western Universities and one was a GNVQ Diploma. Five trainees were majored in Accounting; the major of eight trainees were directly or indirectly related to Computer studies, four of which were in Information Technology, two in Information System, one in Computer Hardware and one in Computer Programming. Two trainees had their diploma in Tourism Management and there were loners in Operations Management, English, Electrical and Communication Technology, English and Computer studies and Business Administration.

Performances in their last academic course ranged from satisfactory to very good; since all of them belonged to different academic background there could be no consistent grading of performance. Three trainees had a GPA of above 3 on a scale of 4, two of them were above 2.5 on a scale of 4; another three were in the range of 2- 2.5 on a scale of 4 and one had a GPA of 1.96 on a scale of 3.Another three had a VERY GOOD RATING, five were rated as GOOD, two trainees had a score in the range of 71% to 74% and one trainee was classified as a 'C' student. This information seemed vital to do a preliminary ranking of the competence of trainees since more than half of the trainees had no prior work experience. Out of the nine trainees with prior experience, the highest experience was for a trainee with five years at an Electricity billing company. Two trainees had previous experience in banking industry, three in tourism, one in an international hotel, one in a privatized telecommunications company, one in a private school and one as receptionist in a private electronic company. The period of experience ranged from six months to five years, of which only two had above two years of experience. Only one trainee belonged to the capital of the country; the rest of them hailed from different regions in the interiors.

Results and Discussion

Day One Observations

The researcher and trainer arrived well before time to the well maintained premises of the training wing. Participant trainees trickled in, formally dressed in masaars (head-dress for men) and black abaayas (traditional gowns) for women with an occasional colorful scarf and the training flags off at the stipulated time. The trainer (hereafter mostly referred to as 'he') described the order of the training course which was to have commenced with a Human Resources induction program on the organizational function of layers of management, compliance with country's laws, Central Bank regulations, prevention of money laundering, some tips of customer service, telephone skills but had been postponed to the end. The current branch operations course would be for three weeks starting from the day which would cover all aspects of branch

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operations. Every Thursday of the week, there would be rigorous assessment and trainees would have to score 70% at least in each assessment. On successful completion of the course, the trainees would be posted to branches. This course would not cover all the smallest details but would give an overview of all products and services. In the respective branches there would be an on- the- job training in the relevant departments.

The instructor started the process instruction with a call to duty and set ground rules.

> *Like I see some people come here to sleep-Try to grasp as much as possible-' Please participate-'Stand in front of colleagues-speak for 3- 5 minutes-Try to know subject as much as possible- Do it with full heart-make sure you understand-Questions can be asked- I'm here to answer.*

In the middle of the course, he introduced a System called MIE used in branches and Headquarters which had two processes 168 and 175 for adding customers and opening customers respectively.(This was elaborated upon subsequently in the practical hands-on sessions). That this was the tip of the iceberg and that there were around 150 processes to be absorbed was met with a wide-open mouth reaction by the trainees. The trainer reiterated:

> *Don't say it's difficult- Try to store whatever you can.*

Findings:
Communication ranged from straight directives to some friendly banter mixed with directives in order to swathe the communication in a normal amicable base. Though an overall subtle, imperative tone is observed, the instructor means to be as friendly as the environment permits at the same time drawing attention to the fact that this was serious business as well. This is an element of balance between freedom and rigidity, which is much appreciated and ideal in instructions giving.

He talked about twenty-seven different modules that would be handled in these sessions, briefly explaining each of them using Arabic at least at seven solid instances to facilitate understanding. English however, was the main medium of instruction.

Findings:
Communication at this stage is instructive and does not give any leeway for trainee participation. It could have been more interactive as the researcher observed this cross-functional training could dilute the objectives for specific personnel in specific functions in the branch. The explanation as found out in private conversation was that all trainees needed such training as much as to pitch in the absence of personnel as also to give an overview to customers on the occasion of any urgency.

He gave a brief introduction about his qualification, experience and enhanced credibility by saying that he had major hands-on experience in international and local banks with a track record of three years in the current bank. He got them to introduce themselves by names and not the age (as he joked it would create problems for the lady trainees.)

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Don't meddle with computers.

Subsequent to this instruction, he talked about some trainee in the past that had entered a trillion figure for transaction which got to be too cumbersome to delete afterwards. A single digit entry or trillion-digit entry would give the same applicability for future usage. The crucial point was:

It's all a matter of understanding.

He transited to the first module of instruction on 'Account opening' after giving an assignment for oral presentation on the module on 'Confidentiality of Bank Accounts' detailed in the training kit both in Arabic and English. This was unexpected as the researcher listened to feedback from a few trainees:

We thought we were going to work at the branch straightway'

Findings:

Instruction has a flavor of expertise, credibility, local knowledge and international experience, which is the general thrust of the bank. Moreover, it acts like a buffer to serious discussion. Ground rules are set as in any training session as also in real life work situations, which are negotiated through real life examples.

The first module on Account opening was formulated as a PowerPoint based lecture, loaded with information to be used as basic guideline for the instruction. The first statement made was bilingual (Arabic, the local language and English, the international language) and emphasizing a point:

First impression is important- Job knowledge, customer service, attitude and behavior-I'll give you some tips –when a customer comes in –get him seated- give him the right forms, attitude is important, attitude and behavior are both important.

He mentioned about required documents and importance of signature and commented that forty percent of audit comments were on account opening. The importance of customer service was emphasized again and the concept of Quality Checks was introduced where audit department of the Headquarters would send customers to bank for mystery shopping (the term is not described well). This point was emphasized by citing two of his own experiences as a customer while working at another bank and after he joined the bank as staff. In both cases the points focused were on giving the right instructions to customers and to avoid making mistakes. The final word was

Please don't make mistakes- In the event of any mistake try to be as polite as possible.

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Findings:
Account opening per se is a very vital function in a bank's function but knowledge of this function is ultimately a customer satisfaction factor. Using bilingual mode of communication (which is the pattern of communication for the rest of the course,) an indirect emphasis is made on a being the 'face of the bank'. This can be read along the lines of traditional Arabian hospitality but the focus is on an international globalized outlook of most modern companies. Communication is again very real world based because it has a tinge of reality drawn from own life examples and veiled in such communication is the thrust on accountability. Global organizational objective of providing best customer service is also stranded into the pattern of communication. Though it may be later presented in a different HR induction program of three days scheduled at the end of three weeks, it has shown its presence in the communication. The instructor strives to create change in the cognitive, emotional and social- societal domain in the form of knowledge, skills, understandings, sensitivity and mental balance through patterns of emotion and motivation and attitudes, sociality through potentials for empathy, communication and co-operation (Illeris, 2003). Organizational wisdom is transmitted throughout the course.

The first topic covered in this module was the 'need for identity documents'. 'Know your customer'- a new concept is introduced. This is clarified with the practical issues surrounding this concept. Practical advice was given on when a customer approached to open an account.

Don't stare at him- He should not think he is a thief.

However, identifying information had to be obtained- Labor card /Civil ID for photo identification of expatriates and nationals respectively which had to be xeroxed in the bank itself(a copy from outside could be a forged one). However, the outside copy should be accepted in front of the customer and later on discarded without the knowledge of the customer. There is a relevant doubt at this stage by a male trainee on signatures.

Findings:
Serious instruction is imparted through the tone of the instructor. However, he realizes the flip side of intensifying this instruction and gives the comment mentioned in italics above. The comments made reinforce the instruction retention. The practical, invisible steps to be followed are also part of a process of socializing and orienting trainees to the inner working world of the bank and associating them with inner circles of the most prestigious bank in Oman.

Make sure of identity'-'You can involve in big problems if we mistake identity.

This is a rejoinder to a well drawn out explanation on 'money laundering', an extension of the instruction on "know your customer'. The concept may have had mixed reactions across the board for trainees coming from diverse backgrounds and hence Arabic is used interspersed with English as medium of instruction. This mistaken identity could lead to serious consequences for staff involving the highest judging, punishable authority in the

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country. The final word is in such cases was that the staff would be treated as a criminal unintentionally. He associated money laundering with the laundry shop describing the etymology of the word, which aids in retention and recall. Procedures for this process were listed out and stress was made on xeroxing at the branch itself. Attention was drawn to special points in the case of loan processing:

Forging of signatures if the customer was allowed to carry loan documents home stressing on the importance of supervisor attending to loan processing;

New development by the police authorities who had issued smart ID for locals and expatriates which had not been co-coordinated with banks in which case, it was required to enter both the new and old ID numbers. In the case where old ID was not available, the bank could obtain it from the police authorities since the central bank records were coordinated according to the old ID.

With this,the instruction on 'need for identity documents' was concluded.

Findings:
Local and international knowledge has been incorporated to introduce the concept of 'know your customer'. Sufficient imperative with localized examples and real life happenings should make this affect the cognitive, emotional and social- societal domains of a worker. He blends sufficient background information into the concept instead of listing out the documents for Account opening. Strong directives aid in creating the aura of importance around this requirement. Localized knowledge assures the practicality of implementing the directive. Class room instruction and role play on instructions giving observes the same thing that 'must- do items' must be directives and there was no need to water down the tone of instruction. This observation is made by students of public speaking course in the summer school of 2006**.**

The next topic was account opening forms. The procedure and requirements for proper customer instruction was described with the importance of mailing address (with all relevant details including PO Box, contact details, email ID). He gave hands-on account of how the bank was outsmarted by a competitor just because of incomplete customer details and that if full details of customers of a special menu of a popular multinational fast food chain were sourced, the bank could have even more because it could provide a whole range of services. This was re-emphasized when discussing internet banking where such lack of information would create problems of inventory, wastage of time and paper (money).

After a brief while, he again repeated the concern over wastage of paper in the bank and the need for correct mailing addresses. Specimen signature card required for corporate accounts and the scanner to scan such document was demonstrated. Vital personal information about staff receiving their staff ID numbers was then presented.

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Findings:
The focus is on competition and how to be on the winning edge. The trainees are strategically placed in the bigger picture of things giving them a sense of how one can pitch oneself in the competition. Orientation process is seen unfolding as the responsibility of each staff to contribute to the general upkeep of the branch. Reinforcement strategies are also used whenever there are key issues being discussed. A key theme projected is that the bank owed its success to the efforts of these potential employees.

The minimum balance to be maintained in savings account and current account established by the Central Bank (the highest governing body) which is verified by inbuilt system checks was explained differentiating it from the average balance which had no significance in this requisite. The bottom line was proper communication of such information to the customer. A feedback by a lady trainee triggers more discussion as the instructor realizes the mindset of trainees.

> *Banking services don't come free- Oman thinks we are making profit but a 50 million RO(1 RO(Rial omani)=2.577US Dollar) profit in the whole scheme of things is insignificant. Rents have to be given-An ATM machine used to cost 25000RO though now it costs 10000-Rents have to be paid for housing the ATM's, cash kept idle.*

He talked of the interest rate of 9% of which a portion will accrue to the central bank as per banking rules.

> *You can't invest everything- Can you take something from (Lulu) hypermarket and claim it free at the cash counter- because banking service is intangible- (they) think it is free.*

The significance of shareholder's net worth of millions of Rial Omani was highlighted in the discussion on profit generation.

> *If one started a shop in Ruwi high street – one would expect profit, then what about millions of RO investment?*

'When we say service, we mean business' –this motto of a multinational bank was used as the foreground to emphasize the importance of profit making. A motto –'Excellent service-Higher charges' was developed in situ for the participants referring to the credo of the multinational bank which is 'if a customer comes down the stairs looking at the wall- think of how to charge him'.

> *The customer should be happy to pay the charges.*

The exceptional cases exempted from minimum account balance and the stipulations for current account were mentioned which completed the rule of Minimum Account .All the instruction was reiterated in Arabic to reinforce the concept.

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Findings:
Instruction is directive enough on the key issue of informing customers about this requirement. In the process, the allied activities of the bank and its different implications are expressed in a bid to orient the trainees to the global objective. The researcher observes the overall thrust of the training to acclimatize trainees to profit generation for the organization in a bid to break the mold of the trainee from a customer to in-house personnel**.** An attitude change with a strong grounding in the concepts is envisaged in this instruction. The bank of late has been a trendsetter in introducing the concept of corporate social responsibility while running a campaign to make awareness of the increasing debt burden incurring from personal loans (a bane of the modern younger generation who are caught in a vicious cycle of personal debts outbalancing income). While the bank is a profit oriented private sector new generation bank and this campaign calls for a lot of initiative and drive, it does not percolate down to induction training of the branch employees. This could have its own reasons as we see the trainees at the other side of the fence and the trainer feels the initial need to orient them to the bare essentials of the functioning of the bank before trudging on to higher order objectives. Trying to locate the policies of another progressive multinational bank in retrospect equates the bank and its prospective employees on an international playing field.
It is important to note that the feedback from the lady trainee generated such discussion. Though feedback is not ongoing, feedback in spurts and intervals generate discussion, which though not intended by the trainer often diverts the trainees from procedural instruction to global picture. Such allowance for feedback would divert instruction to a general discussion, which would nevertheless be useful in trainees getting a slice of corporate work life. The theme in process is a scheduled Branch Operations Course and there is an overall Human Resources orientation course of three days slated at the end of the course but objectives of the latter course get ensconced in the previous one. Ideally, the course could be targeted towards achieving both objectives. Does it defeat the very purpose of instructing procedures and get diluted in overall discussion? The efficacy of such an attempt is worth researching.

Next, new staff facilities were clarified which was the provision of a current account with the bank but with no issue of check books. To justify this point, a past trend was cited where a staff with 200 RO salary would buy a BMW car and issue monthly checks of 250 RO to the car agencies**.**

Findings:

Institutionally set boundaries/norms are drawn at this stage and are precursor to norms developed in the branch. The instructional climate (in bits and pieces of information) sets a tempo on expected behavior as not being a no- holds barred work life. This serves as a smooth transition from educational life, which probably would have been bound by rules and regulations. However, accountability, monetary implications and providing the face to the outer world are not one of the major prerogatives of educational life Therefore, as seen here, the role of the trainer is to glide down the much-traveled path of instruction and friendly directives to drive home important tenets of accountable work life.

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The next section is Customer's signature. After a recap of past instruction on this topic, the rules of applicability were drawn based on a real life happening where an esteemed customer who had non- interest bearing deposits of 200000RO in the bank, met with an accident and could not sign with his right hand. Neither was willing to oblige as the supervisor refused saying that the clerk could handle the case (passing the buck). The final word was to sign after recovering from the disability. He obtained a letter from the central bank and withdrew the whole amount.

> *At the going rate of 9% the bank would have earned 18000RO per year. He was not flexible- so the customer was lost- use your brain and comply with procedures.*

He further added about not causing embarrassment for customers especially when an illiterate customer was involved. Changes in signature, which could be risky was narrated through a hypothetical case happening in a popular Lebanese restaurant where signatures could be learned by some intruder and used for his/ her advantage. The specific procedure for handling such a case was then instructed. The researcher observed some comments in Arabic from male and female trainees related to this discussion.

Findings:

While monetary considerations take predominance, the leeway to staff to use their freedom and mind is encouraged in such cases such that it can contribute to profitability. The trainee gets a first hand report of conflict of authority so characteristic of workplace. Customer service is highlighted; security issues are given utmost importance while the trainer's primary objective of managing such cases is achieved.

At this stage he announced a quiz due to take place on the Thursday of that week and moved on to the section on Power of Attorney (POA) holders. The Arabic translation of the term-Sanad Wakala was mentioned for future references. The basic definition was given that it was used in connection with the account of deceased/retired person handled by another person 'appointed by court'. (This is prompted by the lady trainees.) Other usage specifications for POA were also instructed.

Findings:

Feedback or prior knowledge recall is seen in this stage. The communication is strictly instructional. It might as well be referred to from a manual but this instruction will associate a frame of reference for future cases when it has to be handled upfront. How much of the procedures get downloaded in the mind is subject to more testing but the theme association can be assured.

Two quiz questions were then drafted to give trainees a flavor of the quiz which had a separate section for answering the questions (obviously testing the ability to strike the right button).

The instruction hereafter, concentrated on special cases of Account Opening

The first special case discussed was the Joint Accounts. He defined it in Arabic and while instructing on basic procedure pointed out associated security issues.

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Findings:
Communication is one way and basically directive as it borders on certain security issues. Participative discussion is not ideal as ground truths have to be dinned in as and when appropriate.

Further details of the oral presentation assignment on a module in branch operations course were then presented. (The researcher later witnessed a scene in the instructor's office where two lady trainees wanted to duck the assignment because they were not confident to take the floor. The instructor smiled giving an impression that things had to follow protocol.)Sensing an overall reluctance, the trainer highlighted the importance of English language and made the case for improving English if one had to advance in career. Reading was the only good alternative to be immersed in a language as against attending courses which could do minimal help.

Findings:
At this stage, instruction has evolved to a general and pervasive nature. The instructor is still in control but he gives a world view and through the climate of instruction is trying to create a prerequisite for career development. This view is generally held by the market that English proficiency is at a low premium among graduates in the workplace. While the instructor hinges on his proficiency in both languages to clarify important procedures, the global objective of really being a local, global bank is achieved by stressing the importance of proficiency in a global language**.**

Minor's Account opening, the next section, was described through a real- life scenario. The bank employed secondary school graduates as trainees who opened accounts for minors providing them with ATM's which proved to be a fatal mistake. There was no way to rectify the mistake as contemporary law prohibited taking children to court.

So please note that minors cannot open an account.

This was reiterated in Arabic. He described the different categories of guardianship possible and the documents required for this special category.

Findings:
A real life fiasco sets the background for vital instruction and the core idea of not opening an account for minors may be augmented by written instructions and practice at a later stage.

Instruction on 'Opening accounts for illiterate customers' was introduced with a remarkable statement.

> *They are a very smart group, can cause problems, so deal with them carefully.*

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Illiterate customer was a special category supposed to have a passbook. An actual case was described where the customer had two passbooks and he mistook the first book balance of 3000RO to be added to the second book balance of 3000RO which was actually carried over. Finding no appeal with the teller and the manager, the customer approached the waali (mayor) of his region. The case was made out to be one of cheating by the bank and it had to do a lot of dialogue to clarify the truth of the accusation.
He reiterated that 'they are a very smart group' when he recounted a story of an illiterate customer who did not follow the sequence of depositing money and scooted away without depositing the cash. After a few days, he returned back demanding his cash. The illiterate customer obviously sensed by hindsight that there was communication gap among employees and staff co-operation was not exactly conducive.
This creates a ground for a trainee to enquire as to what was the right procedure. The right procedure and unique features of this category are instructed.

Findings:
Cognitive dissonance and as well as reinforcement are two strategies used to take care of this special segment. The underlying implication is that the communication to this special segment has to be flavored with local knowledge. This has also been a pertinent observation made by students in the instructions-giving role play exercise conducted during the 2006 summer semester in the Public Speaking Course. The implication of higher-up in such cases could create bad blood for the branch in general as well as the employees involved. An innovative strategy is used by the instructor as he uses narrative technique and the organizational wisdom is embedded in the storyline. It gives scope for the trainees to formalize what is being internalized. There is also a call for trying to build favorable lines of communication between employees and avoiding personality conflicts while handling job related issues.

Account opening of deceased pensioners and account opening of communities and religious organizations were the last two special category accounts. The characteristics of these categories were explained. Two vital documents were identified for the first category namely the Qarar Sharee (this is a list of pensioners issued by the sharia court) and Sanad Wakala(Power of Attorney) which has to be matched with the certificate issued by the pension authority
Prior approval of the relevant Government Ministry was important for the second category as it could entail issues of harboring unlawful activities.

> *This could put us in problem- as after opening an account it would be difficult to control the account.*

Findings:
These are very close issues and familiar turf for an average citizen here. Imperative tone is used which realizes the gravity of the issue. Though these are very special categories, it definitely would be of recurring interest to the participants as the issues associated with this case are contextual.

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The trainees was packing to go home when the Human Resources official arrived with a huge box containing a long array of letters and documents that officially assigned them to a proper contract with the bank(the researcher could see extended yawns, muted reproofs). Instructions were given step by step on where to sign. A comprehensive HR document and an IT security guideline document were provided. Nevertheless, it was their first official day at the job and socialization into the last minute deadlines of corporate life. The HR person socialized such that he seemed familiar with everyone and was addressed on a first name basis, a reflection of general camaraderie in the bank environment. Later on the researcher came to know that he was the one who recruited them (which need not guarantee such close interaction).

Conclusions

Communication ranges from serious, straight directives to participative discussion depending on the issues in context. A balanced environment of freedom and rigidity is maintained though sometimes the interaction tends to be monologic. Feedback is not controlled but not generally forthcoming; however, the incidence of feedback generates valuable insights. Imperatives are negotiated through the prism of real- life examples, local and international knowledge. Prior knowledge recall, reinforcement, cognitive dissonance, narrative techniques are other successful strategies used to effectively instruct. Orientation to the global picture takes almost equal footing with procedural knowledge in instruction which effects all-round changes in the cognitive, emotional and social- societal domain. The participants are familiarized with the conflicting issues at workplace and thrust is given to overcome such issues. Security issues which are unique to the industry are highlighted. Grounding in institutional norms and accountability in work life is thereby a by-product of this instruction.

Limitations and Implications for research:

This is a seminal study on one part of a module of the induction program. It can be repeated on several modules and pertinent observations can be formulated to form an effective quantitative research instrument which could be employed to compare formal and informal induction in the industry in terms of effectiveness. This can lay the grounds for a successful model to be used in pedagogy as well as organizational training.

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Atmospherics in the Cyber World

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Abstract

The field of study which addresses the store environment and its impact on retail sales is known as atmospherics. Store atmospherics impact emotional reactions, which in turn affects consumers' attitudes towards the store. Ultimately, these elements have direct influence on the popularity and success of the store. This paper explores how the ideas of retail atmospherics may be applied to website designs. In the 12 plus years since the introduction of commercialism to the Internet (1994) the nature of atmospherics has only been limitedly addressed. Physical stores provide the yardstick (and context) for studies on retail environmental atmospherics. However, there are substantial differences in the way that people behave in the physical and in the virtual world. This paper includes an investigation of the attributes in the physical world (Brick and Mortar) which can be directly translated to the web and offers the Cyberspace Atmospherics Model (CAM) as a method to facilitate design decisions.

Introduction

Retailers spend a great amount of effort and resources focusing their activities on attracting consumers, building relationships, and enticing people to make purchases (Babin and Dardin, 1996). Most retailers are not capable of surviving, let alone flourishing on just a single sale. Consequently, anything that a retailer can do to improve the consumers' experience will help solidify a relationship between the consumer and the retailer. In this regard, the store's layout (lighting, ambiance, and associated environments) has long been recognized as being important in creating shopping atmosphere and the right ambiance for consumers. Boris Emmet (1930) found that department stores focus a great deal of attention and resources on providing consumers with the utmost in ornate and exotic shopping environments. Kozinets et al. (2002) indicates that the importance of store environments to retailers' success is unsurpassed.

The field of study which addresses the store environment and its impact on retail sales is known as atmospherics. Kotler (1973-4, p.50) defines atmospherics as "the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers that enhance the purchase probabilities." Donovan and Rossiter (1982) indicate that store atmosphere impacts emotional reactions, which in turn affects consumers' attitudes towards the store. They found that atmospherics had an effect on consumer spending, enjoyment, engagement, amount of time within the store and the likelihood of returning.

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The present state of research examining store environments draws its theoretical underpinnings from environmental psychology and the Stimulus-Orgasmic-Response (S-O-R) paradigm (Turley and Milliman, 2000). The S-O-R paradigm is used to explain and present evidence pertaining to numerous environmental cues (e.g., color, lighting, music, crowding, and fragrance) and the related effects on buyers' internal states and responses. Basically, "store atmospherics" are the elements of a store's environment that have the ability to influence consumers' moods and behavior (Swinyard, 1993). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) first empirically tested the S-O-R framework. The atmospheric elements were operationalized as "stimuli," individuals' (or shoppers') emotion changes as "organism," and the resulting behaviors as the "response."

A variety of metrics have been used to try to capture the effect of atmospherics on consumers (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Havlena and Holbrook, 1986). The de facto standard is "*P-A-D*" - Pleasure, Arousal, and Dominance (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974). The P-A-D framework specifies individual reactions toward environment stimuli along the three prescribed dimensions. These responses determine the desire to remain within or leave a setting and the willingness to spend money while there (Bennett, 2005, p. 133). In the literature, the three dimensions are commonly used to represent the "organism" aspect of the S-O-R framework

a) The Pleasure aspect entails whether individuals perceive the environment as enjoyable or not enjoyable.
b) The Arousal dimension assesses how much the environment stimulates the individual. Playing slow instrumental music, for example, may result in slower customer movement and might attribute to a decrease in arousal.
c) The Dominance element relates to whether individuals feel dominant (in control) or submissive (under control) in the environment. Mehrabian and Russell (1974, p.19) indicate dominance is contextual that "an individual's feeling of dominance in a situation is based on the extent to which he feels unrestricted or free to act in a variety of ways."

Empirical evidence shows that the pleasure and arousal dimensions are related to the consumer reactions toward environment stimuli in both retail and non-retail environments, but the effect of the dominance dimension is unclear (Russell, 1980; Yalch and Spangenberg, 2000). For example, Donovan and Rossiter found that shopping behaviors were related to only the pleasure and arousal dimensions. Even with the inclusion of the dominance dimension, Yalch and Spangenberg found mixed results for the relationship of shopping time and the three dimensions. As a result, the dominance is either considered a minor factor or is simply not measured (Russell, 1980).

"Flow" is another aspect of atmospherics. According to its founder, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1977, 1988) flow is "the holistic sensation that people feel when they act with total involvement" – the point when everything comes together. Flow happens when a person engages in an activity with total involvement, a high degree of concentration, and great interest. According to Chen, H., Wigand, R. and Nilan, M. (2000), the characteristic of being in a "flow state" within a web environment, includes a high level of focus on the interaction, a loss of self-awareness, absorption in the immediate task, and intense interest in the activity. The "flow state" is pleasurable and causes individuals to feel they are fully in control (Bennett, 2005, p. 135). Bennett indicates that flow is important even within charitable websites, where images are often less than pleasurable, "the viewers still can become engrossed with a site's subject matter and

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begin to share the charity's passion, commitment, and desire to make a difference in a troubled world" (p. 136).

Research has shown that store environmental attributes have an affect on "stickiness"- the ability of the store to attract, entice, and encourage customers to purchase products initially as well as repeatedly (Sharma & Stafford, 2000; Fiore, Yah & Yoh, 2000). From the retailers' vantage, the more consumers visit and the more time they spend at the store; the more they will be exposed to the organization's products, services, and messages (Korgaonkar and Wolin, 1999). Korgaonkar et al. found that the amount of time users spent online to be positively correlated to individuals' intention to shop online. Intentions are important. They are an indicator of the consumers' willingness to: 1) stay in the store, 2) repurchase, 3) purchase more in the future, and 4) recommend the store to others (Baker et al. 2002**;** Hightower, Brady and Baker 2002**;** Macintosh and Lockshin 1997). Sanchez (2001) puts it into perspective: "stickiness = relationships = loyalty = revenues."

A weak point in the traditional retail environment is that it is relatively fixed. It takes great effort to rearrange product layouts to keep them fresh. It is literally impossible to match a physical store's environment to the taste of each potential consumer. Further, stores no longer compete in just local markets; today retailers also need to be concerned about their Internet competitors. To compensate, many physical retailers have adopted a "reactive" strategy, with the introduction of their own sites, or a "proactive" strategy of doing business solely through Internet channels (e-tail) (Turban, 2006).

E-Tail vs. Physical Environment

E-tail is not catalog sales and there are clear differences. Some of the differences include: the method consumers use to do product comparisons, product delivery time, supplier delivery cost, supplier facility cost, and personal/social interactions (Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszewski, Lutz, Sawyer, and Wood, 1997).

While the physical store atmospherics is very inflexible and expensive to manipulate this is not true with e-tailing (selling over the Internet). The Internet permits businesses to present products in a way that are deemed interesting to individual viewers based on each user's specific preferences. These preferences can be adjusted allowing the users to update their own profiles, or by company monitoring of user behavior (what sites are visited, which terms are searched for, and what pages have been visited) though intelligent techniques. These techniques range from "mining" the merchant's web server logs to monitoring through intelligent software agents.

Another important difference includes the ways consumers are exposed to the products – images on the Internet are not limited in quality or quantity based on traditional economic production cost. Therefore, with little cost to the retailer, a variety of images can be presented and the images can be manipulated using color, brightness, enlargement, rotation, as well as additional product description, research, and information on use and maintenance.

Within the traditional physical environment, organizations have tremendous control on which elements they chose to use and how they present them. The organization can use this power to overwhelm the senses if they so desires; this can not be said about the online environment.

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Internet based sales (e-tailing) offers some tremendous advantages; however, it suffers from the high cost of customer acquisition, low customer commitment, intense price pressures, time lags caused by delivery, and uncertainty due to the invisibility of the other party. Further, consumers might allow the online organization to have 17 inches of viewable (monitor) space surrounded by potentially hundreds of "real world" distractions, which can take the consumer out of "the flow".

The use of the Internet for commercial purposes has led many practitioners to discover that the concept of customer (or user) focus is difficult to achieve. Just the concept of defining a customer is often troublesome. Is a customer someone that visits a website, or someone that makes a purchase online? What if information was gathered online to make a purchase at a physical location? Thus, the traditional focus toward the customer is difficult at best, causing many developers to view their sites in terms of users or visitors rather than customers.

The consumer brings to the website many cultural and psychological dimensions. Keen and McDonald (p.19) indicates that an important aspect of creating customer wealth and value requires that an organization's website should "provide information and interaction in an intuitive and flexible manner." The site must demonstrate "a focus on designing the customer experience rather than on the customer being subordinate to the company's administration and operations."

Forms of Cyber Atmospherics

Physical stores provide the main context for studies on retail atmospherics. Because e-tail stores differ meaningfully from physical stores, e-tail atmospherics is a distinct research area. "Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2001, 2003) laid the conceptual foundations for the extension of the S-O-R paradigm to e-tailing. They provided empirical support for significant effects of site atmospherics on shopper attitudes, satisfaction, and a variety of approach/avoidance behaviors" (Sautter, Hyman and Lukošius, 2004, p.14). An important often ignore construct is that online shoppers operate simultaneously in two distinct environments:

1) the physical environment in which human-computer interaction occurs, and
2) the online store environment that is virtually experienced.

The challenge is to integrate knowledge of these online atmospheric effects into a broader model of shopping behavior. Marketing exchanges in virtual stores bridge two distinct environments:

1) the online store environment, the website aesthetics, navigation, flow, and
2) the operator's personal space where s/he sits when interacting with a website. While this dual environment directly and indirectly affects the way consumers respond to shopping experiences, the organization only has control of the virtual component. Consumers can view the same website at two distinct locations (one at work and one at home) and have two entirely different experiences.

Signage

The physical stores need to be concerned with things such as: restaurants, restrooms, elevators, product location, exits, etc. Signage for these features is very important. In the virtual store it

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could be argued that symbols are more important than that of the physical store, because shoppers do not have physical cues or access to store clerks for help. Signage has been expanded in a virtual store to promote navigation, to enhance site credibility, and sponsor integrity/reputation. Additionally, graphic brand marks from certification and rating services; such as eTrust, Verisign and BizRate, are used to indicate their stamp of approval on certified sites. Credibility can also be derived from design elements such as affiliate linkages (Putcha, 2001).

Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2001, 2003) proposed that, like in the offline context, eRetailers create an atmosphere that affects shopper reactions. They developed and tested a "P-A-D" online model which confirmed that online atmospherics play a similar role to that of offline atmospherics in a physical store. Childers et al. (2001) and Mathwick, Malhotra and Rigdon (2001) confirm that "although utilitarian qualities of online shopping (ease and convenience) are important predictors of attitudes and purchase intentions, the hedonic aspects of the Internet play at least an equal role in determining these factors" (Broekhuizen and Jager (2003, p12-13).

The Senses

The use of environmental attributes available for web designers are severely limited compared to the traditional physical store. Elements which include a sense of smell, taste, and touch are not yet commercially viable. Typically the online environmental attributes that can be manipulated are sight and sound. Most atmospheric elements that are second nature in a traditional physical environment can not be used on the web. While three dimensional objects can be simulated, this often means trading resources such as (download) time or screen "real estate". Another technique that seems to work well in the physical environment – product density (how close together items are located) does not necessarily translate well onto the web.

Interfaces

The online "interface" impacts the consumers' desire and willingness to shop. The interface relates to the customers sense of being in the store. The more comfortable and connected the customers feel the more willing they are to be involved. Consequently, "know thy customer" becomes the mandate. To the virtual retailer, this means that they need to pay attention to "consumer desires and behavior**"** picking a target population to aim for will not guarantee success. It has become extremely important for the virtual retailer to collect customer (viewer) information in order to incorporate their needs, wishes, and preferences in the design and development phase of the virtual store environment (Vrechopoulos, et. al, 2000).

According to Gehrke et al. (1999), the design of a web storefront is very important for customer satisfaction and constitutes a critical success factor to any online store. Virtual stores' convenience features (layout, organizational features, ease of use) can help set customers' expectations. In virtual store environments the user interface design is essentially the only thing linking the consumers to the retail store. As such, the success of the store depends on the interface and the underlying design issues (Lohse and Spiller, 1998).

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The World Wide Web (WWW) permits users to easily gain and acquire information. Users can skim through websites, bypassing sites that fail to meet their needs or fail to capture their attention. If organizations want users to come and stay at their site, they need to make their websites "sticky." Net lingo dictionary defines stickiness as the notion that the website has a compelling reason for users to frequently come back (http://www.netlingo.com/). When it comes to making a site sticky, "Content is king" (Nielsen, 1999).

Personalization

Personalization, or the ability to give individualized attention, is often cited as an important driver of satisfaction in traditional service settings (Bitner, Booms, and Tetreault, 1990; Brown and Swartz, 1989). Suprenant and Solomon 1987 (p. 87) offer complex definitions of personalization that "refer to any behaviors occurring in the interaction intended to contribute to the individuation of the customer". Studies on personalization have focused on customization of website content and shopper communications (Coner, 2003). Given the predictiveness in the retail settings, application of traditional approaches to personalization as a socially dependent construct should augment knowledge of e-tail atmospherics (Mittal and Lassar, 1996; Suprenant and Solomon, 1987).

Customers want to feel special. They do not want to be just a name or a number. They want personalization in their business interactions. In this regards, the success of new marketing campaigns, sales promotions, and customer support initiatives must focus on the customer rather than the product. In the long run, success hinges on an organization understanding its customers (Firstlogic p.1). "Technology enabled", customers can easily be offered "full-capability" in the creation of a shopping environment based on their own preferences and wishes (Vrechopoulos et al., 2000). E-Customers have very low costs associated with a website, simply enter a new URL address, and they are on a competitor's website (Turban, 2006). Given these disadvantages and the current competitive realities, the store (and website) environments clearly play a significant role in the differentiation of individual retailers.

Satisfaction

Ho and Wu (1999) were among the first to empirically study e-satisfaction. They suggested several antecedents of customer satisfaction of the online shopping environment: including logistical support, technological characteristics, information characteristics, homepage presentation, and product characteristics. Szymanski and Hise (2000) study of e-satisfaction found that convenience, site design, and financial security were dominant factors in determining consumer satisfaction (McKinney, 2004).

E-Tail Atmospherics

The entire subject of retail atmospherics is a result of the application of environmental psychology in retailing. Store atmospherics are sensory or environmental cues used to influence a consumer's evaluation of the retail surroundings to elicit a behavioral response (Hedrick, Oppewal and Beverland, 2004). Analogous to brick-and-mortar retailing, in e-tailing, factors like website organization, server performance, product data, search options, and shopping carts have all been found to influence shopping behavior (Falk, L., Sockel, H., and Chen, K. 2003; Turban,

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E., Lee, J., King, D. and Chung, H.M. 1999). Atmospheric effects include increased "visit" time (Lacher and Mizerski 1994**;** Yalch and Spangenberg 1990), mood (Swinyard 1993), and purchase intentions (Babin and Attaway 2000**;** McGoldrick and Pieros 1998). Store atmospherics encompass cues such as color, lighting, scents, sounds, layout and furnishings. Bitner (1992) proposed that consumers view the store environment as a composite of three dimensions: ambience, space/function and signs, symbols and artifacts (Hedrick, 2004).

Maintaining a consumer friendly shopping site is essential to the success of internet retailers. Therefore, it is important to understand the variables that contribute to satisfaction among internet consumers (McKinney, 2004). Two major dimensions of variables that affect shopping behavior are:

1. External variables -- window displays, entrances, etc.
2. Interior variables -- the layout and design of a store (e.g., traffic flow, allocation of floor space, layout of merchandise, traffic patterns etc.) as well as music, odor, and lighting.

External variables greatly affect store traffic and sales. Interior variables have been found to impact sales, increase time spent in the store, encourage unplanned purchases, and influence perceptions of price value. Eroglu, Machleit, and Davis (2003) categorized online atmospheric variables in two ways, high task relevant and low task relevant where:

1. High task relevancy is defined as cues that facilitate and enable consumers to achieve their goals: examples include merchandise descriptions, price, terms of sale, delivery / return polices, and pictures of merchandise.
2. Low task relevant atmospheric cues include site information not relevant to the shopping task, such as colors, borders, background patterns, typestyles and fonts, animation, music, and decorative pictures.

Store environments influence shopping behavior through mediating emotional states. The store environment contains various stimuli that can be perceived by the customer's senses. Each of the stimuli can influence a person's internal (or organism) state, which can then influence the approach or avoidance responses (Mehrabian and Russell 1974). For example, store music, colors, odor (scent), lighting, and density of merchandize among various variables can all be varied to project specific images for the intended clientele -- be it an "upscale image", a folk image, or a college image.

Fiore & Kimle (1997) indicate that affective (mood) arousal or expression is only one of many channels through which store atmospherics influence customers. They suggest that store atmospherics can also affect consumers through sensory and cognitive channels as well. The cognitive channel, involves activities associated with understanding or creating symbolic content (Fiore, Yah and Yoh, 2000). Much of the cognitive activity which can be fostered through store atmospherics has as its foundation semiotic communication. Semiotic communication involves a vocabulary based on signs and symbols. The pervasiveness of semiotic communication as it relates to products themselves has been well documented as it leads to consumption.

Effective atmospheric elements in physical stores may be unavailable or even undesirable in the e-tailing environment. For example, the layout of the store can be approximated to the display

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space on a webpage; however, the physical store layout must now be standardized and any change in either environment would require a change in the other. Ideally, e-tailing marketers have endless access to product display space by creating many web pages, but spreading products across many pages increases consumers' search cost and cognitive effort. Other examples include scents, and touch (which can not be experienced online) and face-to-face interactions (in cyberspace it is not the same as in physical stores). Therefore, plausible atmospherics for physical stores must be examined for their applicability to the online world. The section below provides an assessment of atmospherics in the cyberspace.

Mandated Features

Certain features have become mandates within the cyber environment, such as:

Ambient Conditions, which are the "background conditions that exist below the level of immediate awareness" (Aubert-Gamet, 1997, p.29). The research typically focuses on reactions to sensory cues in physical stores. In this vein, studies of ambient conditions consider visual cues (e.g., lighting and color), auditory cues (e.g., music and noise), olfactory cues (e.g., scents), and tactual cues (e.g., temperature) (Griffitt, 1970). For virtual settings, the range of ambient conditions is constrained by current technology; specifically, only visual and auditory stimuli are now used. Even though auditory stimuli are possible in e-tailing stores, its use should be cautioned. See a more elaborated discussion on music and time below.

Cyber-Interactivity, which is becoming a strategic tool to improve the quality of websites for attracting users and keeping them engaged at a site. Sautter, (2004, p. 16) presents interactivity as a design characteristic of virtual store environments. Interactivity is seldom considered a one-dimensional construct. One popular conceptualization is to view it in the following five dimensions proposed in Ha and James (1998): playfulness, connectedness, reciprocal communication, choice, and information collection. Chen and Yen (2004) reported in their empirical study that the playfulness, connectedness and reciprocal communication dimensions (in increasing order of significance) were related to the quality of commercial websites.

Usability, the ease of use in online contexts, which has also been a primary component of usability (Swaminathan et al., 1999) or efficiency (Zeithaml et al., 2000). Usability for cyberspace concerns not only the usefulness of certain offerings (i.e., website content), but also the user interface that delivers such offerings. Shoppers want sites that are valuable and easy to use. Features that aid the users can help retain visitor interest. Although interface usability is crucial for an e-tailing site to foster a pleasant online experience, caution should be exercised when overly relying on it as the sole factor to boost online sales. Since interface usability can be easily imitated, its long-term competitive edge is less salient compared to factors, such as customer confidence in the web business and relationship services (Kotha, Rajgopal and Venkatachalam, 2004).

Navigation, with which **"**factors like website organization, server performance, product data, a search option, and shopping carts all contribute to a positive web shopping experience. Easy navigation on a website for a consumer who wishes to buy through the net is a major facilitating factor" (Sivakumar, 2003). Similar to usability, navigation is a basic requirement for a functional and well-designed e-tailing site. To some (e.g., Elliott and Speck, 2005), it is part of the usability

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construct that fosters ease of use and gives e-retailers a strategic tool to lower consumers' search cost. Despite the crucial role of navigation in the quality of e-tailing sites, research has been inconclusive on its effect on sales. Ranganathan and Grandon (2002) reported that navigation structure had no significant impact on online sales, but others (such as Swaminathan, Lepkowska-White and Rao, 2003) have supported such a relationship.

Searchability, or the friendly search options that add to the convenience of the consumer. The search feature is used in two ways:

1. finding the site through major search engines, and
2. locating information within a site.

The design of the site and how many resources are invested in the site does not matter if users can not find the site. High placement of a site in search results from the major search engines is a strategic goal for e-retailers. Most users do not have the patience to go beyond the first several pages of search results. Chen and Sockel (2001) reported that high placement on major search engines may be influenced by playfulness and reciprocal communication features on websites. These features increase link referrals (or backward links), which is one factor that carries weight in the placement results of modern search engines, such as Google and Lycos. The other aspect of "searchability" is functionality within a website. This capability is considered equally important, because if products can not be located on a website, customers will go to another site. From a consumer stand-point the competition is just a few clicks away.

Trust, which early electronic commerce research (e.g., Neuman, 1996; Strader and Shaw, Gardner and Thomas, 1997) has documented that security is a major concern for most users who attempt online shopping. Online buyers are likely to lose faith in Internet security when they do not have an opportunity to examine the products, the transaction processes, and the credibility of the sellers (Chen, 1999). Trust in Internet commerce as a whole (George, 2002) and trust in target vendors (Elliott and Speck, 2005) have all been confirmed to be related to a consumer's attitude toward online purchases.

System Response Time, which is inversely related to computer user satisfaction (i.e., the longer the wait, the greater the dissatisfaction). Industry standard suggests that a website should load completely within 8 seconds (Falk, 2000).

Attracting the User

Engaging people on the WWW can be an arduous task - various usability studies show web users to be a fickle and impatient group (Nielsen, 1997). According to the Media Metrix Jupiter December 1999 report, an "average" web user will spend less than a minute reviewing a webpage (www.mediametrix.com). For the most part, the Internet acts as a "pull" technology; the user goes to a website to get information. An underlining premise of the "pull" approach is that the users are capable of finding appropriate sites to obtain the information they want. In this regard, users must be able to locate a site, determine it to be of suitable value, and then have a desire to return (stickiness). To facilitate "stickiness" an organization needs to learn about the users' preferences and then relate to them with a personalized product or service. It must find a way to engage them (Yoo and Kim, 2000).

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Most web browsers support graphics. Graphics can be used to enhance a website – "a picture is worth a 1000 words." Images can also be detrimental to a site. The effects of large (or too many) graphics will slow down the display of the webpage, confuse the viewers, and dissuade the users from staying on the site. Graphics can obscure the navigation of a website, a condition that Flanders and Willis (1998) calls Mystery Meat Navigation (MMN). MMN happens when users are faced with navigational choices with no clear explanation of where a link will take them. Oftentimes, the link is not visible until the user physically moves the mouse pointer (cursor) over a clickable area on the screen.

"If you build it" is no assurance that visitors will come (Shaw, Gardner, and Thomas, 1997). Determining what to deliver through web pages is essentially an integral part of web-based projects. A vast amount of information could be relevant to a user (consumers) but delivering superfluous information can impede consumers from making good decisions (Bettman, Johnson, and Payne, 1991).

While it is clear that building the user's behavior and experience into the website is a desirable strategy; not all information or features chosen are of interest to all users (Pereira, 1999, Rosenfeld and Morville 1998). A user's behavior is partially dictated by their skills and experience. The adage is people use the things they know and understand (Krug 2000, Nielsen, 2000, Chen, Sockel, and Falk, 2003). Studies have found skills and experience to be a good indicator of user expectations (Cadotte, Woodruff, and Jenkins, 1987; Smith and Swinyard, 1983). Chen and Sockel (2001) demonstrated that features that include the dimensions of playfulness and reciprocal communication are influential to the visibility of business websites in public search engines.

Many organizations seemed to have forgotten the first rule of development, "have a goal!" The goal of a site should be decided long before a keyboard is ever touched! While presentation is important, graphics should be added sparingly and only when it adds value to the presentation and not just for the sake of "eye candy." While there is a movement towards broadband by consumers, not everyone has it. Therefore, it is important that <u>all</u> graphics support the website's message.

Internet shoppers want sites that are not only easy to use but contain things that interest them. They want the site to present information in an enjoyable and easy to understand context, one that adds value to their experience (Fogarty, 2000; Eighmey, 1997).

Time, Music and Shopping

Time is an important factor in retail shopping, partially because studies have shown a significant correlation between time spent shopping and the amount purchased (Isen, 1989). Also, time is argued to be as much a constraint on consumption as money. Consequently, it is reasonable to expect individuals to budget their time, including shopping times. In the end it boils down to "people simply don't enjoy waiting."

Music in the brick-and-mortar stores is often manipulated as an environment stimulus to affect shopping time and product evaluation. The nature of music - foreground music or background music has a differential effect based on the age of the shoppers. Music also affects actual

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shopping times. Individuals tend to stay longer when listening to slow music compared to no music or fast music (Milliman, 1982). The loudness of the music & song length may also make a difference. Yalch and Spangenberg (2000) reported that the relationship between store music and time spent in the store may be complicated. Individuals, who had a choice on the duration of shopping, shopped longer when listening to less familiar music. Music, however, did not have an effect on product evaluation when duration of shopping was not controlled. When subjects were listening to familiar music but were constrained by a fixed amount of time to shop, they were more likely to evaluate products. As Yalch and Spangenberg indicated, manipulating music by offering a familiar atmosphere in the hopes to increase sales may not achieve the intended effect. In a similar line of research, Sullivan (2002) reported that spending in a restaurant was not related to tempo and popularity of the music, but it was positively related to softer music. The amount of time and money spent in supermarkets were related to shoppers' degree of preference in the background music, but tempo and volume of the music did not have such an effect (Duncan, 1996). Based on the above studies, the collective effect of music on user behaviors may be mixed. Perhaps individual characteristics of music (such as liking of music, volume, and genre), rather than music in a collective way, may have a more salient effect on certain user behaviors. This effect may not necessarily be in the form of immediate sales, but may be linked to better user experience, such as satisfaction or possibility for product exploration.

In the online e-tailing environment, background music could have a very different effect on user behavior. First, background music increases bandwidth consumption. This will slow page loads and can hampers user experience, especially on low-end Internet connections (e.g., dial-up connections). Second, background music exposes a shopper's online activity to his current environment, which may possibly cause embarrassment. Unlike shoppers in physical stores, online shoppers visit e-tailing sites at their convenience. This may be during the time between meetings, short breaks at work, or even during important events. Even though the shopping may occur in a legitimate environment for an understandable reason, background music could still distract others in the same work environment. Third, some music characteristics are outside of the e-retailers' control. For example, the volume of music is typically in the hands of online shoppers. Music quality could be affected or even distorted depending on the quality of speakers on the shopper's end. Fourth, empirical findings (e.g., Abdinnour-Helm et al., 2005) suggest that background music on e-tailing sites is considered annoying and could result in low user satisfaction and low perception of ease of use. For the above reasons, e-retailers are recommended not to use background music, unless it is the target of interest for consumers.

CAM - A Cyberspace Atmospherics Model

Presented to this point in the paper, though not exhaustive, has been a list of items crucial to the development of an e-tailing environment that will attract and persuade consumers (users). The Stimulus-Organism-Response paradigm, with "*P-A-D*" (pleasure, arousal, and dominance) as the description of the organism, established the behavioral framework for the discussion of e-tailing atmospherics. The forms of cyber atmospherics, e-tailing atmospherics, mandated features for cyber environments, and elements attracting the users (consumers) were detailed. In an attempt to both capture the e-tailing design elements and provide a usable tool for e-tailers, a cyberspace atmospherics model (CAM) is proposed.

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CAM is constructed around four well-recognized marketing ideas:

1) The targeted website consumers (as identified by demographic or self-select)
2) The consumer's value set
3) The design (or atmospheric) elements of the website
4) Mass customization – personalization & culturalization

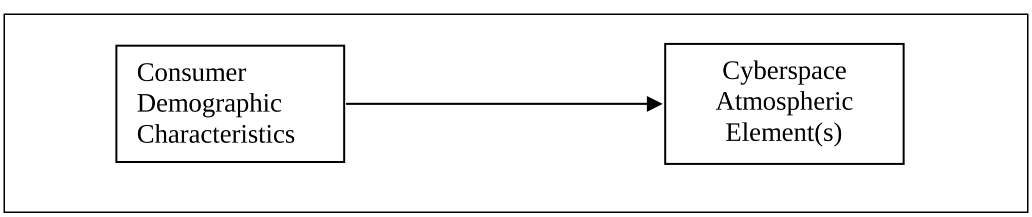
CAM and Demographic Characteristics of the Targeted Consumers

One of the weak points of the traditional retail environment was that it is fixed. It was what it was, the same for everyone. Within the traditional environment, the organization had tremendous amount of control on how they presented their atmospheric elements. This gave the organization the power to overwhelm senses, if they so desired. The same can not be said about the online environment, where the customers might allow the organization to have 17 inches of viewable (monitor) space, shared with the distraction of the surroundings. Slight distractions can cause consumers to be taken out of the realm of influence.

While a horde of constraints exist for e-tailing, Internet based online sites have a power that most physical environments do not, that is they can tailor the presentation to a particular user. This ability to customize the website concurrently to different consumers via things such as the forms of cyber atmospherics, e-tailing atmospherics, mandated features for cyber environments, and elements attracting the users (what will hereinafter be referred to as cyberspace atmospherics) enhances the organization's ability to attract and benefit the users.

The classic marketing concept indicates an organization should try to satisfy the needs of customers through a coordinated set of activities. These concepts are fully compatible and applicable to e-tailing and website design. In short, the elements used in a website's design (its cyberspace atmospherics) should try to give the targeted cyberspace customer a pleasurable experience. These individuals tend to view the selected market's demographic characteristics only as a referent to decision making. To make it clear that a market's demographic characteristics need to be considered before making cyberspace atmospherics decisions, CAM uses the following scheme 1:

Scheme 1 - Classic Approach



Scheme 1 by itself could lead designers to consider the market to be homogeneous. This could lead designers to think that some e-tailing environmental atmospheric elements or stimuli (S) such as navigation, pictures, background colors or music will influence most people within the target group similarly. Further, this may lead to the belief that these stimuli will trigger in each individual market member's organism (O) and its pleasure, arousal, and dominance to produce an approach or avoidance response (R). CAM proposes that to determine the "right" mix of stimuli for the desired result from individual market members, designers need to look beyond demographic characteristics to focus on the market's values.

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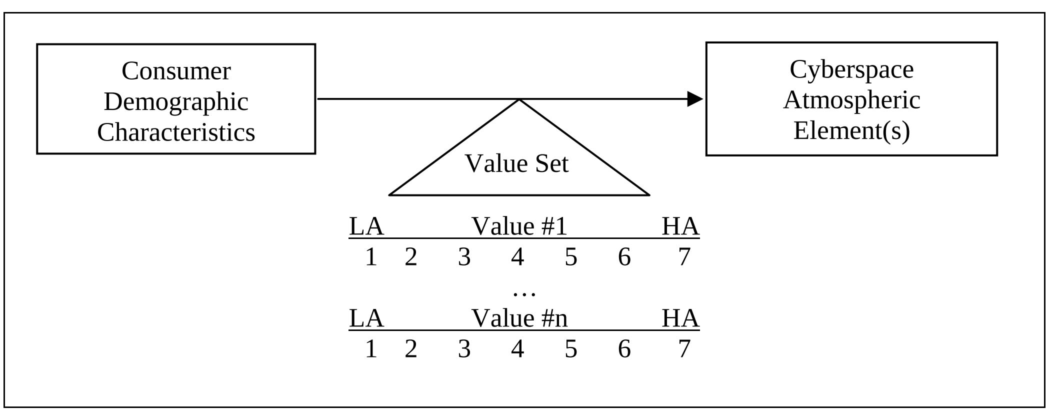
CAM and the Value Set of the Targeted Market

The consumer brings to the website many individual cultural and psychological dimensions; especially the behavioral component called values. To capture the fact that demographic characteristics possess personality and other psychological-social factors that, in turn, have an influence on attention to, comprehension of, and emotional reaction to the cyberspace atmospheric elements, CAM incorporates values into its operational process. While consensus is yet to be reached in terms of how to measure values, there appears to be a generally accepted definition of values. Howard and Woodside (1984 p. 4) defined values in two parts enduring beliefs that:

1) a specific mode of conduct is personally or socially preferable and
2) a specific end-stage of existence is personally or socially preferable.

Vinson, Scott, and Lamont (1982) identified four ways that values may be used in marketing: market analysis and segmentation, product planning, promotional strategy, and public policy. Howard and Woodside (1984) looked at the different roles that values play in terms of extensive problem solving, limited problem solving, and routine response behavior and stated that, "values affect a buyer's recognition of a problem. Values are the broad functions common to all personalities. A value is either consciously or unconsciously a standard or criterion for guiding behavior," (p. 4), and they (1984) concluded that, "different consumers form different choice criteria according to their value systems," (p. 5). Similarly, Pitts and Woodside (1984) stated that, "values also appear to hold promise as useful market segmentation variables," (p.55). Specifically in the context of retailing, a few research projects (Allen, 2001; Erdem et al., 1999; Kim et al., 2002; Shim and Eastlick, 1998) have examined the relationship between values and attitudes and behaviors pertaining to consumers' choices of product classes, brands, store outlets, and shopping malls. CAM uses scheme 2 to depict how values may be viewed as mediating the consumer's attention, comprehension, and emotional response to cyberspace atmospheric elements.

Scheme 2 – Approach mediated by the Consumer Value Set



Scheme 2 informs the designer that the target market has demographic characteristics accompanied by a particular set of values that will operate in assessing cyberspace atmospheric elements. Research relating demographics and values support this scheme. As an example, a study by Crosby, Gill, and Lee confirmed earlier findings that, "there are age group differences

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in values," (1984 p. 209). They concluded that, "cohort-historical, maturational, or some other age-related influence on values is present," (1984, p. 214).

Though there is no fixed list of values, CAM provides 69 values that the designer may use (see Table 1). These values are compiled from Rokeach's (1973) terminal and instrumental personal values and Hawkins, Best, and Coney's (2001) self-oriented, environmental-oriented, and other-oriented values. CAM provides the designer an ordinal continuum to select values that may be deemed to best represent the market. CAM uses a semantic differential scale with extremes from 1, meaning Low Applicability (LA), to 7 indicating Highly Applicable (HA). CAM does not set any rules for defining the meaning of a value or how the designer determines the applicability of a value to the market. Indeed, given that the meaning of a value can have inter- and intra-cultural differences this permission affords the designer the opportunity to identify unique domestic or global markets. Once a value is defined for the targeted consumer(s), the designer is to determine (by intuition, experience, or consumer surveys) the degree to which a value is applicable to the targeted consumer(s). After scaling all 69 values, clearly those values rated in the low applicable range (say 1 to 3) should be eliminated from consideration. Arguably, a risk avoiding designer may choose to lower the cutoff rating's range (say 1 to 2), while the risk taking designer may increase the cutoffs (1 to 5). In the end, the designer will have a data base concerning the values to be used in the design of cyberspace atmospheric element(s).

This scheme represents how the designer is to first identify the demographic characteristics of the target consumer(s), second assess the degree to which a value is applicable to the target consumer(s), and third recognize that the selected applicable values are to be used in designing cyberspace atmospherics.

Recoding Consumer Value's Reaction to a Cyberspace Atmospheric Decision

The operationalization of this aspect, of CAM proposes that successful cyberspace atmospheric decisions result from properly determining whether the applicable values of the targeted consumer(s) will respond in a favorable or unfavorable way to the decisions. This is in line with value-attitude-behavior hierarchy which proposes that within any given consumption choice situation, abstract values affect midrange attitudes that lead to specific consumer behaviors (Homer and Kahle, 1988). Relating marketing decisions to values is also in line with Reynolds and Gutman's (1984) means-ends chain research: ".....a means-ends chain is a model that seeks to explain how products or services are linked to ends, which are a person's values," (p. 156). Furthermore, the means-end chain, "offers a view of how values guide behavior by formulating a model of how values, which are very general in nature, relate to consumer choice, which is very specific," (p. 156).

When the designer contemplates the use of a specific cyberspace atmospheric element or set of elements, s/he needs to determine how each of the selected HA values might react to the element(s). Essentially, this allows the designer to put him/herself in the consumer's position and think about (and react to) the element(s) from the consumer's perspective; this is often an ignored state in marketing decision making. In this regard, CAM has the designer view each of the target consumer's values as if it they are gatekeeper reading and interpreting a cyberspace atmospheric element(s) (this gate-keeping activity represents the cognitive component of behavior). CAM argues that as a designer thinks and feels from the consumer's perspective

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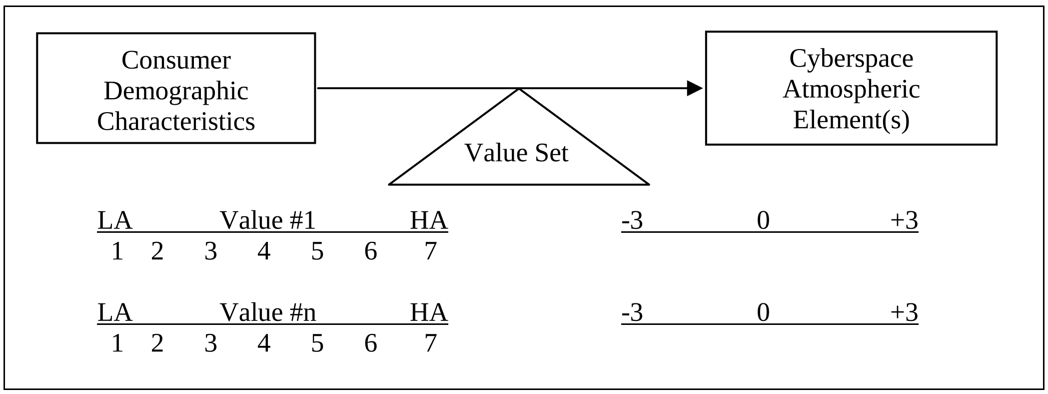
about how a particular value might interpret or read the atmospheric element(s), intuitively the designer will come to recognize whether the value produces an acceptance, rejection, or apathetic reaction to the element(s) (the affective component of behavior). To help the designer record the affectation, CAM modifies scheme 3 by attaching to the right of each value continuum and under the cyberspace atmospheric element(s) a disposition continuum. The disposition ranges are from a strong liking (+3) to a strong disliking (-3). The center location of the disposition continuum represents ambivalence or apathy (0). Further, this approach depicts how each value performs the gatekeeping activity and has an emotional response to the element(s).

Scheme 3 – Approach mediated by the Consumer Value Set



Scheme 3 is the decision tool that facilitates the designer in determining final cyberspace atmospheric elements(s). CAM gives the designer a worksheet to analyze the target consumer's overall perceived response towards proposed specific cyberspace atmospheric element(s). To further the decision design, the designer can quantify the overall perceived response towards any one element or set of elements (PRa) under consideration for the website by summing the recorded disposition (D) of each value times the applicability rating of the value (V):

$PRa = \Sigma\,(V \times D)_n$ where n = the total number of values selected the in the scaling process of scheme 2

Given the total number of values selected (n) there will be an upper limit (assuming all value's V have a D = +3) and lower limit (assuming all value's V have a D = -3) between which PRa will fall. Though the risk taking and risk avoidance mentality of the designer will be a factor in using PRa, CAM suggests a general decision rule:

> Consider any cyberspace atmospheric element(s) that has a positive PRa within 75% of the upper limit; reject any element under 75% of the upper limit.

Discussion

Following the operational aspect provided by the CAM model allows the organization greater insight into how values can be used to select specific cyberspace atmospheric elements. Using

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the overall scheme of the CAM model should allow it to be employed as a worksheet for cyberspace atmospheric decisions.

A viable organization is constantly making cyberspace decisions concerning the forms of cyber atmospherics, e-tailing atmospherics, mandated features for cyber environments, and elements attracting the users (consumers). In a number of cases, as the literature indicates, these decision-makers tend to consider one atmospheric element in isolation of other elements. Consumers seldom respond to isolated atmospheric elements. What consumers do respond to is holistic interrelationships between atmospheric elements (an interrelationship that has synergistic dimensions). The results from the CAM model are often for the entire webpage of cyber atmospherics, not just the individual elements that compose the combination. Therefore, CAM could be used to explore various interactions between and among selected cyberspace atmospheric elements.

CAM was introduced to facilitate holistic assessment and to be used as a decision making tool concerning cyberspace atmospheric elements within website designs. CAM uses a discovery approach when contemplating the processes and elements in website design. Users of websites experience each separate atmospheric element within an interrelated local set of atmospherics. This local collection of cyberspace atmospherics can be unique depending on the site. CAM allows the users to separate these interrelated cyberspace atmospherics and evaluate them. CAM also affords the website designers the opportunity to make cyberspace atmospheric decisions within the context of the sensory (seeing and hearing the elements), cognitive (the gate-keeping activity of the each value relative to the element(s), and affective (overall feelings towards the element(s) (PRa)) components of the consumer.

The CAM model can be used by large corporations or small operations. Although CAM has a simple mathematical construct (PRa), a small operation can ignore measuring the values (using the 1 to 7 scale) and the degree of disposition a value feels towards an atmospheric element(s) (using the -3 to +3 scale). CAM is just as effective as a decision making tool when it encourages a small operation to intuitively determine the consumer's values and intuitively judges the reactions that the values may have towards the contemplated website design.

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APPENDIX

Table 1 **Atmospheric Matrix**'s **69 values**

Comfortable life	Exciting life	World of peace	Equality
World of beauty	Family security	Freedom	Happiness
Inner harmony	Mature love	National security	Pleasure
Salvation	Self-respect	Wisdom	True friendship
Social recognition	Ambitious	Broad-minded	Capable
Cheerful	Clean	Courageous	Forgiving
Helpful	Honest	Imaginative	Independent
Logical	Loving	Obedient	Fatalistic
Polite	Responsible	Self-control	Individual
Collective	Adult	Romantic	Child
Masculine	Feminine	Competitive	Cooperative
Youth	Hero worship	Work to live	Performance
Status	Tradition	Change	Risk taking
Safety	Problem solving	Nature loving	Active
Passive	Materialistic	Leisure	Hard work
Technology	Information	Abstinence	Humor
Serious	Immediate gratification	Sensual gratification	Sense of accomplishment

The sixty-nine values were compiled from various literature on values (e.g., Rokeach, 1973; Hawkins, Best, and Coney's, (2001) list of other-oriented, environment-oriented, and self-oriented values).

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Project Management Techniques for Service Learning Projects: Writing to Connect Academic and Professional Worlds

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Abstract

Service learning projects can be daunting–for both students and teachers. However, business communication teachers can adopt written documents from industry to manage these projects. As part of the service learning project, the management tools —*themselves written documents*— can capture student interest and help ensure project success.

Based upon a pilot test in a Spring 2006 advanced business communication course, this paper identifies project management documents for use in service learning projects. It demonstrates how these may provide instructors with both insights and methods to intervene, as needed. These project management documents also give students a means to manage their projects and to ensure accountability as they cross from academic to professional worlds.

Service Learning Project Background

As Co-editors Rebecca Worley and Marilyn Dyrud acknowledged in their preface to *Business Communication Quarterly's* June 2006 Focus on Teaching: Service Learning, Part I: "Students take more seriously and become more involved with projects that simulate real-world communication needs." (p. 184). Indeed, "service-learning makes communication—the heart of composition—matter, in all its manifestations…students and instructors feel a greater sense of purpose and meaning in the belief that their work will have tangible results in the lives of others." (Adler-Kassner, Crooks, Watters, 1997, p. 2).

In service-learning projects, at least the ones that provide "writing for the community," [1] the teacher serves as a high-level project leader of multiple teams. Project management documents can help the teacher manage— and they help students succeed in meeting project requirements *and* improving their professional writing skills. Project management

[1] The author of *Writing Partnerships* (2000), Thomas Deans, proposes a taxonomy describing three paradigms for community writing: writing *for* the community, writing *about* the community, and writing *with* the community. When students write *for* the community, they enter a client relationship with a nonprofit organization to produce workplace documents. If students write *about* the community, they are writing primarily academic documents that use service learning as reference sources. In the third category, writing *with* the community, students work with local activities and neighborhood residents in creating materials for public discussion—a type of literate social action, with writing serving as a means to a civic end. See especially pages 16-19.

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documents help network key personnel in a service learning project's success: students, instructor, and client.
The project management tools I used in a new advanced business communication course (Spring 2006) were documents that were written by individual team members as well as the teams themselves. Because we were working in the rapid pace of a ten-week quarter, having multiple documents written both by individuals and the team saved time yet still provided accountability. The documents included:

1. an "engagement" letter / memo of understanding (written by the project team leader)
2. a project workplan (memo and Gantt Chart developed by the team)
3. status report e-mails (written by each team member)
4. a style sheet for longer documents and PowerPoint or Website creation
5. a transmittal letter (written by a team member and signed by all)
6. a performance evaluation and project assessment (written by each team member and, possibly, the service-learning project's client)

Some service learning projects begin with letters of inquiry as students work to identify and secure a project (Bowdon and Scott, 2003, p. 65; Bush-Bacelis, 1998, p.22), but because we had a short ten-week quarter for this project, the students began in project teams created to address specific projects and clients.[2]

Documents Keep Students, Client, and Instructor Informed

After the team met with the client for the first time, the team created a team name and logo, which become part of the team's letterhead. The team's project leader wrote an "**engagement letter"** (or, if we had an internal client, it would be more of a "memo of understanding") that confirmed generally what the team planned to produce for the client's organization. Any specific preferences (like frequency of client-team meetings or status reports) were also confirmed here. The project team members and the instructor were given copies and were cc'd on the letter, inviting any needed clarification or revision to the project itself.

Within a week after the initial meeting and engagement letter, the team created a short **workplan or Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) and Gantt Chart**. These documents provided a concise plan of action that the team would follow, week by week, to produce promised products (in a business communication course, those products or "deliverables" are themselves written documents—a grant proposal, a new or re-designed website, a set of instructions, a PowerPoint presentation, etc.).

The WBS functions as a more detailed blueprint for the project team members; individual names are assigned to each work task, and due dates or "milestones" are indicated and

[2] The instructor has contacted potential clients and confirmed a commitment for a project that requires one or more written deliverables. Each client has visited our class (in this case, the previous quarter, March 2006) to give a short, 10-15 minute "pitch" for his/her organization and its needs.

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then appear on the Gantt Chart. The classic Gantt Chart (a type of bar chart created early in the 20th century by Henry Gantt, a time-and-motion efficiency expert) provides a visual reminder that the team or the instructor can refer to when checking to see if the project is “on schedule.”

Approximately a week or ten days after the workplan was written, individual team members sent an **e-mail status report** to the instructor. The chance to hear from each team member about the service learning project’s progress was very helpful. For example, sometimes the project’s team leader may have a different assessment than the rest of the team members. Or one team member will express problems or insecurities to me that haven’t surfaced to the team’s attention. Such discrepancy is worth exploring—ideally, early warnings allow problems to be resolved before they become major obstacles.

Some of the service learning project deliverables required a **style sheet** when individual authors were creating parts of a whole product. For example, students created a style sheet to determine font size and color of headings and text; slide background color and logo usage; and transitions/ animations for the PowerPoint slides to be used by a client at freshman orientation sessions. Another project team created a grant proposal portfolio, with a brochure, letter of inquiry, organization history, etc. This required a style guide for acronym spelling, logo usage, and font styles, sizes, and colors.

The **transmittal letter** marked a formal closure to the project; it included a list of project deliverables that accompanied the letter. It expressed thanks to the client and most also included recommendations for the client’s organization and future projects. Like the engagement letter, this document was written by one member of the team (typically the team leader) on team letterhead and then was approved by the team and signed by each team member.

The conclusion of the project required each member of the project team to complete a **performance evaluation** form that assessed all team members’ work (including a self-assessment). The form was accompanied by a **short memo** to the instructor that included the student’s final report on the service-learning project, summarizing “lessons learned” and recommendations for future projects. Ideally, the client provided written feedback (sometimes only oral comments) too. Of course, this final memo from the students is the critical opportunity for reflection that connects service and learning: “reflection is the glue that holds service and learning together to provide [optimal] educative experiences” (quoted in Cooper, 1998, p. 55). While reflection is not a project management tool, it does contribute to the project’s successful learning outcome.

Summary: Transparency, Accountability, Good Will—and Good Reflection

Project management documents can effectively shape a project’s development and final deliverables. By analyzing and breaking down a large project into smaller sub-project activities, with specific students responsible for these activities to be completed on specific dates, the project workplan provides tools for students to plan and to achieve.

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By encouraging communication through the letter of engagement, the workplan, and the status reports, these project documents *create an expectation of both transparency and accountability.* The project is not a "black box" with the students expected to emerge, weeks later, with a finished product for a final grade. Rather, periodic project documents are written to an audience (instructor and client) to invite questions and feedback. As the instructor, I appreciated getting concise and clear visibility into various student projects. These documents helped me to do a better job facilitating the service learning. The documents invite feedback through comments and grades—intervention follows if needed (one of my four teams needed a team meeting with me, to strategize for different methods to work with a client who wasn't giving much feedback and who had missed two meetings with the team).

The status reports and final personnel and project evaluations encourage accountability for one's actions. All students know from the first day of class that there will be a "judgment day" for team performance. The instructor's facilitation of the service learning project does not equate simply to the "instrumentalism" that J. Blake Scott warns against (see his article, pp. 289-306, in the Special Topics: Civic Engagement and Technical Communication, *Technical Communication Quarterly* Summer 2004). Rather, the status reports and final memo of assessment encourage students to question their learning experience and to make recommendations both to the teacher and to the client.

I believe that because the instructor has taken the time to introduce students to "real world" project management tools**—** and because these documents are meant to encourage planning, time management, fair work distribution, and performance accountability as well as critical reflection**—**students perform to the best of their capabilities. Clients also are reassured about the professionalism of the students and their commitment to completing the project on time. In short, the documents contribute to the mutual trust that is so important in a project's success.

And from this good will, good results seem to follow: after this year's Spring Quarter service learning project, all four of the clients asked if they could again work with a student team on another service-learning project. And, we now have a waiting list as our reputation grows. I consider the written project management documents the foundation of that good reputation.

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*For a useful overview to project management, see Wikipedia's "Project Management" (http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Project_management&oldid=66678634) . Accessed July 30 and July 31, 2006.

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Multilingual Websites with Open Source Content Management Systems

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Abstract

Open source content management systems can be installed free of charge on an entity's servers or web hosting account, and provide a way for organizations to develop multilingual web sites. There are some challenges in finding a good open source content management system, but there are several that can fit a variety of needs. An example CMS is Plone, which has strong support for different languages, and which also integrates tools for managing the translation of content.

Introduction

The purpose of this article is to introduce the concept of an open source content management system that can support multiple languages, and to relate a journey of exploration that allowed the author to create a sample article in ten different languages, using the Plone system.

What is Open Source?

The term "open source" basically means software that can be downloaded and used free of charge. The creators of software not only provide the files, but also allow anyone who is interested to download the "source code", which allows another person to more easily improve upon or otherwise add something to the original program. What has happened in effect is that an entire global community has sprung up, where teams of mostly volunteer programmers have joined forces to create new and innovate software, which provides a free alternative to commercial software.

Content Management Systems

The purpose of a content management system is generally to make it easier for an individual or organization to manage online content.

For example, the majority of websites are created manually, where each page that you see was created by a program such as Dreamweaver, and when something needs to be changed, someone needs to find the file that corresponds to a given page, make the change, and upload it to a *server*.

(When you make a web site, you ultimately need a web hosting account, at a company like www.hostway.com. The web hosting company maintains a set of specialized

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computers called servers, which are connected to the Internet continuously, so when a person views your website, they are downloading the web page from the server to their own computer, using an internet browser such as Internet Explorer or Firefox. You can set up your own web server, and come companies and educational institutions have their own web servers, but most entities end up getting a separate web hosting account.)

So when your website gets bigger, maintaining it can become more challenging, especially if you have multiple people working on it, if there are different versions of articles or content that you need to keep track of, and especially if you're thinking about making a multilingual website, where you have the desire to make some or all of the content available in different languages.

What a content management system does is to allow you to concentrate on the content, essentially. In a sense, a content management system is like having a person maintaining your website for you. You create the content, and the content management system, or CMS, creates the appropriate files, places them in the right spot on the server, and keeps track of them in case you ever need to make changes. CMSes are especially helpful for organizations and websites where you want to have a variety of people all contributing content to the website. All the participant needs to do is to go to the Internet, log on to the CMS, and add their content, by typing it in, uploading a document, etc.. Whoever is administering the CMS can log on, create a new user, and allow new participants to add, change, or delete content.

One of the most helpful and useful things about a CMS is the ability to set permissions, where you can set a desired amount of access to different parts of the site, so some visitors may be able to read the content, and others may be able to submit, but only specified people might be allowed to delete, for example.

Another nice thing about a CMS is that you can involve people in making a website without requiring them to be technically proficient. That is, typically a web page is created by a web developer, who understands all the related technical issues and is often the person who is "uploading" the content to a web server. So in many situations, certain people create the content, and then pass it along to a web developer, who is the one who puts it up there. What a CMS does it provide a way for anyone with an Internet connection to contribute to a given site. It can certainly help to have a developer still involved, especially if there may be the need to customization, so a CMS doesn't affect the job security of web developers. In fact, web developers may like CMSes, because in certain cases, instead of having to upload and maintain a site, they can help participants to have direct access to content, so that the developer can concentrate on other things, such as customization.

Multilingual Websites

It used to be that multilingual websites were only within the grasp of organizations and corporations with large budgets. There are enough challenges with making a website, let alone trying to have versions of the content in different languages. But increasingly, more

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websites are offering content in different languages, and I believe that open source content management systems may open the door for some entities with limited resources.

To be sure, to make a website in different languages, or to offer content in different languages, there's no reason you have to have a content management system. You could create the original language version of a website, and then, with careful file management, you could have the text of the site translated, make a copy of the files, and have a link to another version of the site. Alternatively, it may be possible to translate some of your content and make it available as a download in PDF format (For more info on PDF is, see http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/adobepdf.html).

But sooner or later, you may come to appreciate some of the things that a content management system can do, including allowing you to create user accounts so that anyone with an Internet connection, anywhere in the world, can easily add or modify content on the site. And when changes need to be made, the ability to keep track of particular versions of content on the site, known as *version control*, is an important feature.

With multilingual websites, not only will you have different versions of content in a specific language (such as the original, final, latest version, etc.), but a particular version of an article might be translated into different languages. This is where a content management system could end up being your best friend.

Translation Management

In this article, I wanted cover some basic concepts, and then relate how I personally ended up looking at content management systems. The thing that interests me in CMSes in particular is that some of them have built-in *translation management* – the ability to help a person keep track of different language versions of content. For the research that I am interested in doing for my PhD dissertation, I knew that I couldn't afford a commercial content management system, and I was excited to learn that there were open source CMSes that had some of this ability.

What excited me the most is the idea that I could create multilingual content, without necessarily having to delve into the complexities of how to incorporate all the different kinds of language characters on a Web page. And it was also exciting when I realized that an open source cms could potentially allow me to create the native language version of an article on the site, and then give direct access to a human translator, so that a new language version of an article could be fairly easily added.

A Note About Machine Translation vs. Human Translation

Machine translation is a process where computer software translates content from one language to another, with varying degrees of success. In general, you get what you pay for. If you use computer software to translate material, you may be able to save time and money, but the accuracy of translation will come nowhere near a human translating it. It's

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not unheard of for a company or organization to “try” translation software, and then to end up hiring a professional translator in the end to “fix” things, but this could end up costing more than it would have cost originally to translate content.

My own personal recommendation is, if you’re thinking about creating and releasing content in different languages, use human translation, whether paid or volunteer, and whenever possible, have the translation actually reviewed by another person. One area where a content management system can help is by allowing a native speaker to log in to your website, and have a “managed” environment to create a translation of a particular article. This can make it easier and more realistic to work with “volunteer” translation, or in the case of a corporate website, with bi-lingual speakers.

In the end, there’s no real substitute for professional, human translation, but volunteer translation seems like at least a second best.

(Note: Even though machine translation is still in its infancy, a man named Franz Ochs has made some significant advances at Google Labs, using a lot of processing power, and a technique whereby human translated texts are analyzed, to “teach” the computers to translate better. So while good machine translation is not really available at the moment, don’t be surprised if the folks at Google make it more available. For more information, keep your eyes on: http://googleresearch.blogspot.com/2006/04/statistical-machine-translation-live.html)

Case Study: Plone

I am not an authority on content management systems, but I concluded that the best way for me to relate the information I’ve learned for this presentation is to recount some of my own explorations.

One of the lessons that you quickly learn about open source software is that as with translation, in some ways, you get what you pay for. In other words, the software may be free, but it can take an investment of time to determine what you need, and to get things running. Still, for me, I didn’t have any alternative, so I just began looking into things, drawn by the vision of a website where visitors could click on little flags, to see versions of content in their own native language – the dream of making content accessible to a global audience.

I began by developing a list of target languages that I ultimately wanted to develop content for, and this is one of the considerations that has an impact on what content management system will serve your needs. Most if not all content management systems have the ability to allow a person to create links between pages, and if all you need to do is create a bilingual English/Spanish site, for example, you might not even need to use a “multilingual” CMS per se – this is because some languages are easier to display on the Internet than others.

But I wanted to imagine what it would be like to think of a "top ten" list of languages, which might cover a significant portion of a global Internet audience. My list isn't meant to be definitive, and it is somewhat arbitrary, but I ended up wanting to have the ability to display and manage content in: English, French (which covers a significant part of Africa as well as France and other countries), German, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Arabic.

It is more challenging to display more "complex" characters such as Chinese and Japanese, so I was looking for an open source content management system that could handle these languages. It was also important to me to be able to handle Arabic – and this was a cutoff point for some CMSes. There is a technical standard called UTF-8, which is basically a standard that allows for the display of more complex characters, so if a CMS supports UTF-8, then it opens the door to a number of languages. However, Arabic reads right-to-left, and that brings a new twist to the picture.

Downloading and Installing

The nature of content management systems is that at some point, someone is going to have to download and install the specialized software on a server. For me, I had some technical ability, but I realized that it may be a bit over my head to do all of the installation myself, so my goal was to find a solution where I wouldn't necessarily have to install it. The goal of this article isn't to try and cover the technical intricacies of downloading and installing – but be aware that at some point, someone is going to have to do it. This may involve working with a developer, or as I show below, sometimes the web hosting company can set up the CMS for you. And when the CMS is up and running, most or even all of the subsequent development of your site can be done from simply logging in to the system from an internet browser, and using the automated features of the system. In other words, in many cases, once you get past the hurdle of installing the system, you may be home free.

Technospeak: For those of you who are technically inclined, basically most open source CMSes require a web server running software such as PHP, etc. – and in many cases, your existing web hosting account may support a CMS. In most cases, you end up needing to download a tarball or compressed archive of some kind, unpacking it on the server, and configuring some kind of database connection, such as MySQL. Also, in some cases, you can install a CMS on your own personal computer, to try it out "locally".

Comparison Shopping

I discovered a pair of helpful sites that allow the CMS explorer to take a closer look at a content management system before trying it out in earnest:

CMS Matrix (www.cmsmatrix.org) – This site allows you to select various CMSes, and generate a feature comparison, so you can see if a given CMS has the particular features you are looking for.

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Open Source CMS (www.opensourcecms.com) – This site allows you to actually try out many CMSes, without having to install them yourself. It's a great tool for taking a closer look at things without having to make arrangements for downloading a CMS and getting it installed somewhere.

Open Source Host (www.opensourcehost.com) – The great thing about this place, and some other Web hosting providers out there, is that they offer an option for a "push button" installation of some of the popular content management systems. Open source host goes very far in this regard, offering very reasonable prices, and installing the content management system for free. So for something like 8.95$ USD monthly, you could get started with a content management system, and not necessarily have to hire a developer, or be all that technically inclined.

What Led Me To Plone (www.plone.org)

There are a number of different multilingual capable CMSes out there (you can do a comparative check on CMS matrix, just as I did), but my requirements and discussions with various people led me to try out Plone. What caught my attention with Plone was that it supports right-to-left language display, such as Arabic, and this made it a winner in my eyes.

What you start realizing when you look into open source CMSes is that they have varying levels of features, and varying levels of support in a developer community. What this means is, that in the open source world, the number of developers who like a particular product, in part determines how good the product is. A group of 3 or 4 friends might get together and make a content management system, or a brilliant individual developer might create something, but there are limits to what a small group of developers can do on a volunteer basis, and the thing that makes an open source project shine is the growth of its developer community.

So the ideal combination in some cases is that a for profit entity, such as a sponsoring corporation, provides some funds to a foundation, which is connected to an open source project. And then you would have a good developer community, with people from around the world contributing. These considerations weren't immediately apparent to me, but I started realizing that it's a bit of a Wild Wild West in the open source CMS world, with quite a large number of projects out there. And when you start looking closer, you can see some signs of how much support there is, such as how many people are involved, how many features there are in a given CMS (by comparing ones at www.cmsmatrix.org for example).

So I am not claiming that Plone is "the best open source CMS", but it has a good feature set, it seems to have fairly deep support for multiple languages, and it was the first CMS I came across where I was able to test it and achieve my goal of taking a simple article, translating it into my ten languages, and having each of these versions accessible through language selection flags.

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Plone has its advantages, and its disadvantages. It seems to be fairly powerful, but I found that it didn't seem to have many companies where you could order a web hosting account and get Plone pre-installed. I ended up getting an account at a company called Zettai, in the Netherlands (www.zettai.net), and I'm working on learning enough so that I can get Plone installed on my own server. I've also had conversations with some developers who feel that Plone is very processor-intensive; this means that it can use of a lot of power on the web hosting server computer. For small websites with small audiences, this is no problem. But for the global website creator with dreams of large audiences dancing in their head, the challenge is that when you have a lot of people "hitting" a website and it is processor-intensive, the site may respond slowly. With Plone, there are fixes, such as having a fast server, and other technical tweaks which can be done. But I mention it to say that Plone is not perfect.

However, at the risk of getting this paper rejected for transgressing the boundaries of academic decency, I do have to say that Plone was my first love. I ordered the hosting account, and started exploring the features, and found a "product" in Plone called LinguaPlone.

LinguaPlone – CMS Add-ins

Usually a multilingual-capable CMS doesn't start out that way – someone comes along and develops an "add-in" that extends the ability of the CMS to include multiple languages. In the case of Plone, the LinguaPlone add in brings in a feature that caused me to fall in love with the system. And the LinguaPlone add-in comes with Plone, you simply need to "turn it on", so to speak, when you have Plone up and running.

Basically what LinguaPlone allows you to do is to define what languages you want to "enable" on your website, and when you start enabling different languages, you begin to realize how much power is lurking beneath the surface of a content management system, especially if you've ever worked with traditional ways of making websites, where you have to manually create pages and keep track of them.

I was overjoyed to find that there is built-in support for over 100 languages in Plone; basically this means that some people over time translated the Plone interface, so that when you enable the new language, all the "built-in" text that displays in Plone is already translated for you. For example, when you visit a site that is powered by a CMS, you see many familiar features, such as a place to log in, different menu items to click on, and so on. So the great thing about a "pre-translated interface" is that all of the content management side of things has already been translated, so again, you can concentrate on the content. In other words, if you want to add content in ten (or 100) different languages, you wouldn't need to translate "log in" and every other standard element on your website – the only thing you'd need to translate is the titles and text of your articles.

So using LinguaPlone, I immediately set out to enable my ten target languages, and created a simple article in English on how to make a peanut butter sandwich. And then,

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for testing purposes, I used the free machine translation service at babelfish.altavista.com, and made translations of the very short article.

Translation Management

The other aspect to Lingua Plone that is helpful for working with translated content is the fact that it has “translation management” built-in. This means that it has a few tools that make it easier to work with making the various language versions of a particular article.

When you enable a new language in Lingua Plone, basically what it enables you to do is to go into a particular article, and “translate into” a new article. It doesn’t mean that it translates it for you, but provides you the tools to manage the translated content, right in the interface.

For example, with my peanut butter article, the Lingua Plone interface opened up the English version of the article, and I selected the option to translate the article into Spanish. And the interface opened up a series of windows so that I could manage the English and Spanish versions side by side. In my case, I copied and pasted the English text into the machine translation website, and pasted the Spanish version back into the interface. But the value of this system is that it would allow you to have a professional or volunteer translator log directly into the system and access the content.

Note: In some cases, you may find that you want to keep the original language version of an article in word processing format for translation. It is typical to create multiple column tables, so that an individual row might contain an English paragraph in one column, and the space for the Spanish equivalent in another column, for example. This can also be done in spreadsheets such as Microsoft Excel or the free Open Office spreadsheet (www.openoffice.org). The purpose of using such a document format is simply to make it easier for the translator, who can open the document up, and translate your content on a paragraph by paragraph basis. In the case of a CMS, if a translator preferred this format, you or a colleague could always take the content and “bring it in” to the CMS.

Language Selection – per article

Another feature of multilingual websites that I had wanted to explore (and exploit) was a way to select between different language versions of the site. There are a variety of approaches, including displaying a written form of each native language as menu items to choose from (ex: www.irna.com), or little flag icons. While flags can have political repercussions in some cases (ex: Taiwanese may not appreciate necessarily having to click on the People’s Republic of China flag to access the Chinese version of a site.), I felt like it was a reasonable option – and I was in a situation where ANY option was great.

When you have taken an article, enabled the appropriate language, and then translated that article, what Lingua Plone does is to make an additional language flag available at each article.

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Language Selection (Global)

I was thrilled to have the ability to work with content in different languages period, and it was nice to have language selection on a per article basis, but what I really wanted is to have "global language selection", so that when a person visited the site, they could pick their language at the top of the site, and then see everything in that language.

Fortunately, someone in the Plone community had developed a tutorial on how to "customize" Plone to add in this ability, to get global language selection. (For those who look into Plone and are similarly interested, see: http://plone.org/documentation/how-to/languageflaglocation2.1.)

CMS Limitations – The Customization Question

One of the limitations (or advantages, depending on how you see it) of CMSes is that they almost always come with some kind of template. The purpose of a CMS is to provide a framework for the development and delivery of content. So the more you wish to customize the "look and feel" of a website generated with a CMS, the more you have to invest in learning how the CMS works. And in some cases, you may end up needing a developer to help.

If your focus is on the content, and you don't need to conform to a pre-existing visual design, then a CMS can be great. If you have an existing website, and in the end, you need the content handled by the CMS, to conform to this pre-existing visual design, then it will take more time and resources – but it can be done.

For me, it is likely that I will not have the resources to do significant customization, so I will be able to make do with the existing "templates" that are available in open source CMSes, but the question of customization is certainly something I'm interested in learning more about.

The Result – How To Make a Peanut Butter Sandwich

So I created the test content at www.ifuedu.com/cftw, and it is still likely that by the time of this presentation, you will be able to go to the url (or an updated one may be linked to from that address), and see the fruits of the exploration.

The result of the exploration is simple, but very satisfying, to know that a content management system can allow an individual or entity to create truly global content, with a reasonably professional look and feel.

Alternatives and the Nature of Open Source

I have been exploring Plone, but heard more recently about some positive developments of a competing CMS called Joomla. It has a complicated genealogy, but in short was an

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offshoot of the popular Mambo CMS. At the time of writing (Summer of 2006), a new version 1.5 of Joomla has been announced (www.joomla.com), that hasn't been released yet, but which will address many international and multilingual considerations.

The advantage that Joomla has is that it may be slightly more accessible to more developers, in terms of the underlying code, and easy of customization. It may also be less processor intensive.

The moral of the story is that the open source community moves at Internet speed, and it pays to be out there and learning about material. By the time of the conference, I may be using Joomla to do my research and testing, as compared with Plone. And there are admittedly other options out there that I am not even aware about (please feel free to enlighten me: tkelsey@iit.edu). I have heard that Typo3 is used in Europe and has good support, and I'm sure there are others.

Conclusion

My goal in this article was to introduce the existence of multilingual-capable open source content management systems, and to encourage readers to explore them as a potential way to develop and deliver content to a global audience. At present, there are still limitations faced in having to pay professional translators (or convince volunteer translators) to translate your content, but essentially, the fact that there are open source CMSes period is a great thing, especially when there are ones that are increasingly supporting the creation and delivery of multilingual content. A large corporation can eat multilingual websites for breakfast, using expensive commercial CMSes that one could only dream about accessing. But as an individual, an open source CMS can allow you to go a long way towards creating and delivering content for a global audience, without having to have a big budget.

I wish you the best in your own exploration!

Resources

www.cmsmatrix.org – feature comparison of various CMSes
www.opensourcehost.com – ex: $8.95 USD for a starter account, free CMS installation.
www.opensourcecms.com – allows you to test live CMS installations
www.plone.org – an option to consider for a multilingual-capable CMS
www.joomla.com – another option, especially when version 1.5 is available

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Field Project for Business Communications: Warm Welcome to the Real World!
Teaching Notes and Project Outline

Priscilla Berry, Jacksonville University

Abstract

The necessity for the business classroom teacher to effect, simulate, and ensconce the students into a real business environment prompted the creation of this field project used in a business communications class. The project is also applicable to other business disciplines. The paper sets up the rationale for the project, provides teaching notes, and a detailed outline of the field project. The learning outcomes meet multiple course objectives for research, writing, verbal, and non-verbal business communication skills. Built into the project are professional experiences in networking and the development of interpersonal skills. A grading rubric is included that may be used to demonstrate outcomes for the Accrediting Association of Collegiate Schools of Business and measurement of learning outcome for the assurance of learning goal.

Introduction

The latest wave of inventions for pedagogical advancement in the teaching of undergraduate business courses is the experiential connection for students to the outside business world. This mirrors graduate business schools, which often require experience infield before admission to their program. Many undergraduate programs are also eschewing the heavy upfront emphasis on theory and putting students early on into practical application scenarios. While theory must not be abandoned altogether, the trend is obvious. The objective is to place the students not in simulations of the real world, but into an actual real world work environment. The focus is to help students learn concepts in context and teach the written, verbal, and non-verbal business communication skills needed to execute those concepts. Colleges of Business are teaming up with for- profit and not- for- profit businesses and putting students on job sites from day one. Professors are doing everything with students from building golf courses to managing million dollar portfolios.

The prevailing attitude is that introducing visceral experiences initially makes the teaching of theory more meaningful and possibly more palatable. It may be a concept that helps eliminate the sophomoric question or unspoken attitude about how all this relates to my life. This proposed new classroom environment calls for a different way of seeing traditional assignments. Just as the *Writing Across the Curriculum Movement* of the late 80's is now an entrenched concept on most college campuses, I suspect that *Working Across the Curriculum* may be the next trend to emerge. Furthermore, because of the media attention focused on figures like David Miller, who is on the move for higher educations reform, I believe it will not take as long to be realized as the writing movement.

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This paper details a transition field project that provides the student hands-on practice with skills that students need to perform business communication functions successfully. The project accomplishes more than one course objective and provides the exercises for the development of multiple skills in research, writing, interpersonal, and networking experience. The exposure to the business environment serves to provide the students a close view of life in their chosen career field.

This outline also includes rubrics for teaching and grading that may meet the Accreditation Association for Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) outcome measures. The project concludes with the presentation of a formal long report in *American Psychological Association* (APA) format. It challenges students to venture into the real world; and it forces them to make some commitment to a career choice. They are forced to think and act professionally and to be pro-active in finding and linking to a practicing professional in the employment field of their choice. Part of the focus is to assist students to begin the process of business networking while they are still assigned to the classroom.

The project can be a final exam, introduced mid-way through a 15-week semester to allow students time to make an appointment with a suitable subject. The project can also be broken down into components and parts assigned throughout the semester. It is possible to form teams in the class and use the professional interview as discussion material for a team project. Teams could, for example, discuss their interviews, and provide feedback to the instructor by submitting team minutes of the session.

I constantly talk to my Business Communications classes about professional attitudes and the necessity of professional standards in all business communications. One student last semester, having all he could stand of being so challenged about professionalism for a career, declared that he just wanted a "job" after all, maybe as a sheriff's deputy, so he could ride around in a car and help people. I smiled to myself and told him that he could interview a sheriff's deputy and complete the project, since it was too late to drop the course. He lined-up a connection and spent two weeks riding in a squad car. You can guess the results. He came back after the experience declaring how much writing was a part of the officer's job responsibility, how demanding the standards were for accuracy, and how many time he heard the word professional conduct. This student's epiphany produced awareness to the relevance of what was happening in the class discussions. Wow, what a difference the real world can make in attitude.

The surveys taken from the students, following this project experience, paint a clear picture. First, students initially see it as "hard" and there is trepidation and mild resentment because they are challenged to go outside their comfort zone. They need to be encouraged and directed. I am careful not to provide the specific leads, but I provide specific ideas for developing the leads. There is much opportunity to talk one-on-one about career choice. Students, who use this project at its highest and best level, are offered internships by the companies they interview, some have found full-time employment as a result of the project connections, some have completely change their

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career track and majors as a result of the experience. A larger number have refined and narrowed down their career choice as they discover more about the industry and the profession.

The following guide provides the instructional methods for the Field Project and functions as a handout for students.

Professional Portfolio Presentation

Interview a practicing professional, not a relative, or a person on campus. Ideally, this individual would hold a career position you intend to pursue. Select an individual who—occasionally or as a routine part of their duties— formally writes for a specific audience for a variety of specific purposes. When you make the appointment, ask for five samples of writing, which he/she considers representative samples of the work required in their position.

1. Set up a mutually agreeable time to interview the person. Be clear about your expectation and be specific about what you require.

2. Before you go to the appointment, **research the industry** and include in your completed report the following information:

- Web site reviews of other similar corporations within the industry: image, design, information, focus, themes, etc.
- Financial Data on relation of the industry to the National Economy
- Structure/Relationship of the Industry in terms of Globalization
- Industry information in terms of sector of the economy
- Legal and Ethical Issues in the Industry
- Data on technology and the industry
- Industry history on diversity challenges
- Typical (or atypical) pattern of management, i.e. bureaucratic or team environment

In the formal report, this research information is documented according to APA guidelines.

3. **Research information about the company/corporation**, before you go to the interview, and include in your report the following information from your research and the interview:

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Profile the Corporation:

- Statement (formal or informal) of corporation's philosophy or mission statement
- Discuss Chain-of-Command within the corporation; include a diagram, if available.
- Discuss how communication flows within the corporation, may add chart
- Physical Plant – size – location(s) include any interesting facts
- Number of Employees – Levels of employees
- Total Operating Budget (or some financial figure which is a matter of record)
- Other – Information of Interest

This information is documented, where appropriate, according to APA guidelines; note the APA pattern for documenting personal communication.

Profile the Interviewee:

- Give Title and Formal job description / indicate the interviewee on the chain of command
- List and Evaluate the duties (areas of responsibility) of the interviewee
- Assess Business Etiquette and Personal Appearance:

  1. Dress
  2. Body Language – Non-verbal Messages
  3. Signs of Confidence/Nervousness/Notes
  4. Symbols of Power, Success, Competition
  5. Office configuration and where you sit in relationship to Interviewee

4. Discover the Facts:

- Ask for current copy of their résumé, if available, or ask for a short run-down of their job history.
- Note how much writing is a part of their job function.
- Learn what preparation they had for writing: high school, college, workshops, and/or training.
- Find out what they believe is the best preparation for writing in the business world and their profession.
- Request the individual to share what is most challenging about the kind of writing they do, and what is rewarding.

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- Explain methods they use to "think outside the box." Ask to what extent they can rely on forms for their communication.
- Ask for and use, as part of the summary for this project, any special message the interviewee has for writing in the business world.
- List Professional Associations to which they belong and all the professional publications they read for business. Ask how much of their time is spent in reading for their work and how much time the professional activities require.

5. Questions to Use for Discussion

- How did you locate your current position? (Network, etc.)
- How did you prepare for your job interview?
- Is your undergraduate degree related to your current position?
- What skills do you have that help you the most?
- What skills do you not have that would help you in your career?
- How often are you evaluated in your position and how are you evaluated?
- How much crisis management is involved in your work/writing?

6. Use the following guidelines in the interview

- Be prompt to arrive and prompt to exit
- Shake hands and wait to be asked to take a chair
- Restate your purpose, briefly.
- Be Organized.
- Use <u>a</u> notebook, which looks professional, with all the questions written out – leave room to make notes or record responses.
- Begin by establishing a rapport with the interviewee:

Specifically – set the context for the interview: "I am here to discover/learn some personal strategies you use in writing and information about your career."

- Do not disagree or hold forth your own opinions.
- Let the expert do the talking.
- Be prepared – know the person, know something about the person, i.e.: background, length of the time with corporation, personal likes or dislikes. Research or look for clues in office.
- Respect the interviewee's time limit. Stop within the time frame you set-up when you made the appointment.
- Check your understanding of what the interviewee is saying by occasionally paraphrasing the point the speaker is making.

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7. Critique each writing sample. Use terminology from the text and from class discussion:

- Identify the form of the Communication (sales letter, inquiry letter, etc.)
- Note the subject of correspondence
- Summarize the content briefly
- State the Occasion/Audience/Setting
- Give the Purpose: To Evoke, Persuade, Inform, etc. and give examples of that specific language
- Describe the Method of introduction/Inductive, Deductive and why
- Identify what specific language is used to set tone
- Analyze the Conclusion: Logical or Psychological
- Evaluate the Organization – use specifics from text material to explain
- Determine the level of Language Usage/denote specific words
- Note the specifics of Style (courtesy and tact, the "you" attitude)
- Read for Grammar and Mechanically errors
- Discuss Format: use of bullets, white space, paragraphing (Note letterhead or other such features of format)
- Write an Overall Impression: Effectiveness
- Explain what is done well and what and how the communications could improve

8. Include your evaluation of the following: (do not write in first person)

- Career opportunity/Network opportunities
- Required education and experience
- Role of communication
- Reaction to the interview

9. Make a professional presentation.

Present the material in a professional manner, and organize all the material in a formal long report for business. All parts typed on good bond and presented in a plain manila folder. All parts of the report must follow the *American Psychological Association Style Manual* guidelines for the long report. A letter of transmittal should accompany this long report. Address the letter to the person directly responsible for assigning the project. The report should have a table of contents, and the pattern for organization is title page, letter of transmittal, contents page, executive summary, body of report with internal citations and the reference list.

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Make generous use of headings throughout the report. The body of the report is the research on the industry, the corporation, the information you gather from the interviewee, the collection of the five samples of writing, and the critiques you write. In the critiques, you must include the business terminology that you have learned in the class, see the textbook for a refresher. The sample writings are in a special section, if you do not scan the documents into the report, you may number by hand and make the match to the table of contents. The critique of the business communication sample should follow directly the sample of business communication. Remember all writing and speaking has a beginning, middle, and an end. You may not just begin and you may not just stop!

The thank-you letter and addressed envelope must be approved before mailing. You are responsible for mailing. A copy of the approved thank-you letter should be included in the report as a last item.

This information is a guide for you and the assembling of the report information requires thinking about how to present and how to write a formal long report to your advantage.

Plan ahead and enjoy this project!

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Appendix: Evaluation Sheet

	<u>Field Project for Business Communications</u>	460 points	
5%	Selection of Career Area • Follow Directions • Advance Research	20 points	____________
10%	Elements of the Long Report • Letter of Transmittal • Thank-you letter • Executive Summary • Introduction • Body • Conclusion	40 points	____________
10%	Research and Organization of Material • Internal Citations • Reference List • Headings • Title Page • Contents Page	40 points	____________
15%	Level of Professional Presentation • Management of Material • Use of Research Material	60 points	____________
10%	Format • APA Format • Good Bond Paper/Manila Folder	40 points	____________
20%	Grammar/Mechanics/Style	80 points	____________
40%	Critique of Writing Sample	160 points	____________
5%	Evaluation of Project	20 points	_____________

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Making Teamwork Work

Jan Fermelis, Deakin University (Australia)

Abstract

This paper explores team assignments as an increasingly common component of many university courses. It argues that a need exists for all instructors, particularly those involved in the teaching of business communication, to develop a multi-faceted teamwork perspective which encompasses every dimension of team assignments. Such a perspective should permeate assignment design, student training, assessment of team process as well as product, self and peer assessment and the individualisation of student scores. Each of these facets is discussed with reference to research literature with a number of practical suggestions provided as exemplars for how to make teamwork work.

Introduction

The use of collaborative team assignments in tertiary education has become an increasingly common practice within university courses and business schools (Bolton 1999), Timberlake 2005). Team assignments appear to be here to stay, despite naïve but remarkably common expectations that students know how to work well in teams, are able to function co-operatively and collectively and will somehow develop a suite of interpersonal and teamwork skills either automatically or by osmosis.

What is quite clear is that students are frequently expected to work with each other on team assignments with little theoretical understanding of team dynamics, little training in collaborative processes, little ongoing instructor support and little individual feedback. Assessment practices too often focus on the concrete product of the team assignment without also affording any real recognition to the very process which created it. Uniform grades are generally allocated to each member of the team, regardless of the scale or quality of their individual contributions. Although the key to successful team assignments has been identified as being appropriate instructor guidance (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005), the irony is that even in some Business Communication courses, many students continue to be set team assignments and are left to develop their own approaches and either ‘sink or swim’ (Pritchard et al. 2006;Vik 2001).

Rationale for Team Assignments

There are varying interpretations as to why university students are being set more team assignments. The first is that there is great pedagogical value in students working together in terms of breadth and depth of learning (Jacques 1991; Johnson & Johnson 1975). If it is our aim to produce graduates who are capable of independent or ‘deep’ learning, then it can be argued that it is beneficial for adult students to work together co-operatively or collaboratively (Barnett 1994a; Jacques 1991; Marton & Saljo 1984). Whilst co-operative learning can be instructor dominated, collaborative learning can enable students to work together to explore ideas, gain knowledge and most importantly learn how to learn (Boud 2001). It would be idealistic to try and

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argue that team assignments involve purely collaborative work. In reality, most team members would work independently and co-operatively and also collaboratively, on different components of the assignment task and at different times. Nonetheless, team assignments do allow for the possibility of students learning from each other, immune from the threat of collusion or plagiarism. Being exposed to the ideas of their peers and the valuable experience of working as a member of a team allows for great interpersonal development and 'deep learning' (Gibbs 1992; Ramsden 1992).

Not unrelated to the above is that universities are now more closely attuned to the expressed needs of employers and business organisations for young graduates with stronger communication and interpersonal skills (Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Business Council of Australia 2002; BHERT 2002; Eunson 2002; Hunt, Kershaw & Bana 2003, Kirby 2000; Worley & Dyrud 2001). Teamwork skills constitute one of the most commonly required skills within the workplace with many businesses utilising teams and collaborative approaches (Chaney & Lyden 2000). Governments too are manipulating legislation and tertiary funding to force universities to implement changes in response to the pressures of increasing globalisation, flatter organisational hierarchies and the changing nature of work.

In the face of these business and political pressures, many, if not most, universities have over the past decade developed strategic plans which include specific and generic skills and attributes (Deakin University 2004; Hart & Stone 2002). Graduates are expected not only to have academic knowledge, but also to be able to communicate effectively, learn independently, solve problems and be able to work in teams (DETYA 2000). There are differences of opinion as to whether transferable skills should receive equitable levels of attention within universities to disciplinary knowledge (Candy, Crebert & O'Leary 1994; Halpern 1998), or whether these skills should be embedded within the disciplines (Barnett 1994B, McPeck 1981). However, only the bravest or most foolhardy university would deliberately exclude graduate skills and attributes from their official strategic policy, let alone from their teaching program.

At the same time universities are required to cope in an environment of increased student enrolments and increased workloads but decreased government funding (Fullerton 2005). These compounding tensions have forced universities to do more with less, typically resulting in larger class sizes, higher staff-student ratios and higher rates of casual teaching staff (AVCC 2005; Ballantyne, Hughes & Mylonas 2002; Freeman 1995; James, McInnis & Devlin 2002; Morris & Hayes 1997; Nelson 2002). As team assignments generally result in reduced grading loads and lower costs (Vik 2001; Timberlake 2005), it is not difficult to interpret this as a third pragmatic reason for their increased popularity with instructors and administrators.

If we accept that teamwork skills are important and that team assignments are here to stay, then it is incumbent upon us as business communication instructors to help make teamwork work. Research indicates that students feel poorly prepared for their team work (Hart & Stone 2002) but it is the belief of this writer that there is a great deal that can be done to make team assignments more successful and more effective and the purpose of this paper to make a number of suggestions for appropriate practical strategies.

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A Theoretical Framework for Successful Teams

Interpersonal communication is a topic which appears to be an integral component of many if not introductory business communication courses. Therefore instructors are confronted by an ideal opportunity to use this topic to highlight to their students some fundamental principles of effective and successful teamwork, before students start working together on any team assignment. Whilst all aspects of interpersonal communication are important, it is possible to highlight three areas for students about to embark on teamwork.

Teams are More than Groups

Students need to recognise that teams are not synonymous with groups. People may work together in a group but this need not necessarily involve aiming at any common goal (De Janasz et al. 2006 p.228). Some regard a 'group' as temporary but a 'team' as ongoing (Berge 1998, Freeman 1995), but the critical difference between a 'group' and a 'team' relates to shared commitment and common objective. A group becomes a team when members demonstrate a commitment to each other and to the shared end goals towards which they are collectively working. In an effective team, there is a typically higher degree of cohesiveness and accomplishment than in a group' (De Janasz et al. 2006, McManus 2000).

Within the globalised business sector, operating within a context of high competition and disappearing resources, self-directed teams are becoming an increasingly common response to the corporate need to achieve more with less (Wageman 1997). Teams are vested with more authority and responsibility than are groups and so make more decisions, are more independent, alter their own performance strategies as needed, monitor their own performance and communicate more frequently and work towards articulated and measurable goals (DiSanza & Legge 2005; Wageman 1997).

Without wishing to equate university teams to business teams, there are clearly strong parallels, particularly for students of business communication. Team assignments require team members to commit to their common goal and to work together to achieve it.

Phases of Team Development

While varying terms and labels are used within the interpersonal communication literature, there is general agreement that teams typically evolve through four development phases or stages, regardless of the task or decisions involved.

The first phase is **forming** or **orientation**. Students cautiously but optimistically start to get to know each other, establish roles and begin to define their roles and task. This is followed by **storming** or **conflict**. This stage is characterised by disagreements as students begin to learn more about each others' abilities and team members become more assertive. The third stage is **norming, brainstorming** or **emergence**, as team members begin to make decisions, settle on solutions, achieve consensus and start working together. If teams reach the fourth stage of **performing**, they are really working productively, solving problems, operating with mutual trust and

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understanding and enjoying each other as people (Daft 2003; Dufrene & Lehman 2000; Tuckman 1965; Robbins & DeCenzo 1998; Vik 2001).

If students understand that these stages are quite normal, that some conflict is inevitable and may even be highly beneficial, and that if they persevere their team will progress through the phases they are better equipped to cope with the difficulties of stages two and three. In a following section there are several suggestions about how an instructor can assist teams to navigate the process more speedily and constructively.

Team Roles

Within the assignment, allow students opportunities to experience a range of different roles. These could include **team-maintenance** roles such as encouraging, harmonising and compromising as well as **task-facilitation** including initiating, information giving or seeking, coordinating or procedure setting (Bovee & Thill 2005, Dwyer 2005). Students therefore have opportunities to display or develop **leadership** within any of these roles, as leadership is much more than one member taking control over the whole process. Once again some practical strategies for instructors have been included later in this paper, which can assist students to identify different roles they might adopt, to take advantage of existing strengths and to build up areas of weakness.

Design Assignments for Teamwork

Designing an assignment appropriate for team and for collaborative learning requires skill. It is more than just putting together a set of different questions. Team assignments provide students with a real chance to experience and understand the dynamics of working in a team, to participate in constructing their own team experience and to improve their own repertoire of team skills whilst they are working together. To ignore the potentialities of the process is to waste of the experience, so instructors need to build in opportunities to create a rich and powerful learning environment.

Individual, Co-operative and Collaborative Learning

At varying phases of the team's development process and the construction of the final assignment product, students are required to engage in different types of work and therefore different types of learning. Members co-operate to explore ideas and knowledge, work by themselves in order to complete a greater body of research and also collaborate with each other to 'learn how to learn' within the framework of the assigned project task. For example, early in the assignment period they need to make innumerable decisions about what to include, what to include and how to allocate sub-tasks. Team members might then need to work individually, each researching particular aspects. However, the team then needs to collaborate once again together to combine the outcomes of their individual work. This might require all members to work in pairs or to even cluster together around one computer, collectively synthesising their individual components. This might also require the team to make co-operative decisions about which member works on which editing or compilation aspects of the one document.

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The instructor therefore needs to make sure that the assignment task cannot be completed by the team simply allocating separate questions to separate members. The assignment should be constructed in a manner, which requires co-operation and collaboration as well as individual efforts are all required in order for the task to be completed. These combined efforts can then produce a final piece of work which is superior to what could be produced by the combined separate efforts of the individual team members.

Critical Self Reflection

Once students have been exposed to some of the fundamental concepts of effective team work, then it is important for their learning that they regularly reflect on their own team experiences. One useful way to do this is to maintain a reflective journal throughout the life of the team project (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). Reflective writing involves a recursive pattern of learning as students reflect on their experiences, reflect further as they write them down and then reflect again later when they read over their journal entries. A wise strategy is to write things down as soon as possible after they have occurred and then to make a more critical follow up entry at some later time (Holly 1997).

Another useful piece of advice for instructors is to train students in the difference between describing their experiences and analysing them from an interpersonal perspective. Models of sample journal entries can be more illuminating for students than mere explanations, especially if a range of models is provided. Another tip is to encourage the use of bold for the terms and concepts of interpersonal communication. Students can immediately see for themselves if their writing is focusing too heavily on story telling rather than on critical self reflections.

Journals allow for deep learning (Martin & Saljo 1984) and can be extremely empowering and supportive for students working in a team. They are also useful if the student is required to respond to later questions about their team experiences, either in examinations or even during employment interviews. Interviewers are impressed by an applicant who has reflected upon and is able to articulate their teamwork experiences, positive and negative, and who has developed stronger teamwork skills as a result. All too often interviewer questions about teamwork elicit little more than complaints about the ‘team from hell’.

Journals also have great potential to assist an instructor in assessing the team assignment process. First, a journal can provide evidence for assessment about a student’s growth in teamwork skills. Second, student journals are a potential source of behind-the-scenes information about what happened in the team. Reading the journal entries of all team members can help the instructor to create a total picture of the team: how well the team progressed through the stages of team development; which students performed different roles; when they performed which roles; and even provide evidence of underperforming members variously identified as ‘free riders’ (Morris & Hayes 1997), ‘social loafers’ (Vik 2001), students aiming for a ‘free lunch’ (Johnson & Johnson 1975) or students who ‘ride coattails’ (Dyrud 2001)

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However, to maintain integrity of the assessment process and ensure the authenticity of the journal entries, it may be necessary to retain total confidentiality regarding the entries of any particular student.

Assisting Students with Team Formation

By setting up random teams, an instructor can reduce the risk of isolating certain individuals (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). The consequences may be unpredictable, but if she knows her students well, she can set up the team on the basis of student experience, English skills, gender or even geographic location (Vik 2001). In other situations students are required to form their own teams. They know how important it is to get into a good team (Gordon & Connor 2001), but they also feel unprepared for how to select team members (Hart & Stone 2002). There is evidence that students tend to choose others similar to themselves when forming a team and that local students tend to avoid international students in culturally diverse classrooms (Gordon & Connor 2001). In contrast, students from some cultures, especially Asian cultures, find the collaborative nature of team leaning to be very beneficial (Melles 2003).

There has been relatively empirical research on the preparation of students for collaborative work, or into the impact of training students on their team learning outcomes Nonetheless, there are strong intuitive links between team work and collaborative learning, and a solid tradition of skills training in order to enhance the effectiveness of teams (Pritchard et al. 2006). For example, there are many different strategies to train students make effective choices when they are required to form their teams. The following are examples found by this writer to be helpful.

Pair and Small Team Tutorial Tasks

For each lesson before assignment teams have to be formed, make sure that you include at least one task which requires students to work in pairs or small groups of here or four. At the beginning of the lesson utilise some technique to mix students up so that they are sitting next to another student they do not already know. Whilst working together to answer questions or complete small tasks they will soon get to know each other.

Brainstorm Features of a Desirable Team Member

Run a brainstorming session in which students identify desirable features of team-mates. Early points will probably include features such as friends and similar backgrounds. Try to elicit less obvious features such as the following:

- Lives in a similar neighbourhood
- Has free time at the times I am free
- Has some different skills and strengths to me
- Is interested in the same topic as me (if there is a choice)
- Will not be a free rider/social loafer
- Has similar work practices and ethics to me
- Will not try to boss me around
- Is interested in earning a similar grade to me

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The two final points are crucial to an enjoyable team experience but it is one frequently overlooked by students when forming teams. For a team to have members with mismatching expectations of performance and grades expectations is a recipe for disaster. It is frustrating for an A student to be in a team with other members who are simply aiming for a passing grade. It can be just as annoying for an average student to be in a team of high achievers who are constantly berating him for unsatisfactory work. Therefore it is wise for students to form teams with uniform expectations, unless the instructor has constructed the task to allow for the individualisation of student grades, as discussed in more detail below.

Allow for Speed Meeting

Speed dating has become an efficient way for time-poor professionals to meet future partners. Try a different version to help students who don't know each other but who have to form a team.

Tell the class that they are going to spend say half an hour meeting as many other members of the class as possible, with the aim of identifying who they might like to have in their team. Pre-brief them about the sorts of things they should try to find out about each other but say you are going to limit each meeting to two minutes only. Get all the students out of their seats and start them off. After two minutes, use a signal (for example, clap your hands, or ring a bell) to make them change partners. Continue to do this for the stipulated time period before instructing the students to form their teams.

Introduce Early Easy Team Decisions

Once teams have been formed, there is much that the instructor can do during the forming stage to assist members to get to know each other. After exchanging contact details, one idea is to encourage the team to choose a team name. This can be fun. If there is a choice of options for the assignment topic or task, require the team to collaborate together to produce a list of preferences. For example, if the team is to work on a report, arrange for members to choose between a listing of perhaps six different topics. If they need to deliver an oral report, they can refer to their own diaries and negotiate preferred in class delivery dates. The instructor can structure these small decisions further by specifying that the teams need to respond in a particular manner by a particular date, and allow the team to decide which member is in the best position to take responsibility for sending that email or contacting the relevant person.

Small decisions and tasks force the team to start functioning collaboratively immediately, allow some students to adopt contributory roles, and create some positive team history from the very outset.

Prepare Teams for Bigger Decisions and Problems

There is consistent evidence in the literature that students feel poorly equipped for the challenges of group learning, that they feel unprepared for the problems associated with team assignments (Hart & Stone 2002) and that they lack authority and ability to deal with team problems (Morris & Hayes 1997). Instructors can do a great deal to

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prepare individuals and teams for the larger decisions and greater challenges they will inevitably face.

Once the reams have formed, spend some class time working with them to identify the **characteristics of effective teams**. This could start with the teams brainstorming their own list of tips, with the lists from all teams then being synthesised together by the instructor. The student tips could be incorporated into handouts containing specific effective strategies from the literature (De Janasz et al.2006) and then distributed to students to reinforce and extend those points.

Conduct a similarly brief exercise in **conflict management** in the student teams. SA good example is a role play where one student thinks another student is loafing or procrastinating and not making a roughly equal contribution to the other team members. After the scenario has been acted out, analyse and discuss the strategies used, the attitudes depicted, what worked (or did not work) and why (not).

Teams can be given an **agenda** for their first team meeting which could include points such as the following:

- Schedule agreed meeting dates and locations for the duration of the team assignment. When to meet outside of class is a potential problem for students (Morris & Hayes 1997). Team members need to share their diary commitments so that meetings are either the same day and time each week, or at varying times so that no one member is unfairly disadvantaged.

- Create a team code of ethics comprising norms such as:
    - how decisions are to be made
    - how often and how members should keep in communication with each other
    - punctuality and attendance at meetings
    - the principle of workload equity
    - procedures to follow if a member cannot attend a scheduled meeting
    - how the secretarial role is to be managed to keep track of decisions
    - what the deadlines are for the different stages of the assignment task

It is helpful for instructors to allow some time for **in-class meetings** in addition to out of class meetings (Garbett 2004). This not only enables members to meet up with each other more regularly, but also allows the instructor an opportunity to monitor when she there is a need for her to referee a fight or guide members towards their goal (Vik 2001). If students are maintaining a reflective journal, this type of occurrence is a great opportunity to remind students of the value of recording and analysing what has happened (Timberlake 2005). By working through and learning from a negative experience, they will be even better placed to deal with a similar situation in the future.

If the instructor has been monitoring team progress it is usually possible to avert most crises and to minimise the likelihood of only discovering the problem once it has already reached crisis point (Vik 2001). Despite this, she may still need to occasionally mediate for a **'team at war'**, intervene to make a change in team membership or to provide advice when a member has been fired or has divorced

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themself from the team. It is always a pleasant surprise to this writer how seldom these actually occur. Nonetheless when they do these situations are more helpfully mediated outside the classroom.

Assessment Issues

There is overwhelming evidence that what students dislike most about team assignments is their perception of unfairness and inequity of assessment, when there have been uneven contributions made by different members (Timberlake 2005). Therefore it is crucial that instructors both design and assess team assignments with this in mind.

Process and Product

Assessment in higher education traditionally focuses on the product (Toohey 1996), with little or no recognition of the learning process which resulted in that product. However, if learning in higher education is adjusted to allow for team learning processes (Timberlake 2005), and the objectives of the assignment task include teamwork, 'deep learning' and learning about learning as discussed earlier in this paper, then it is quite inappropriate to ignore the team process when it comes to assessment.

One way for instructors to assess the team process is to elicit qualitative student reflections. This could be in the form of an individual report, team report or even a series of team planning and progress reports. By requiring team members to plan, execute and then report, an instructor is able to monitor and assess the whole team process as well as the varying team contributions and achievements of individual team members.

If students have been required to record self-reflections as an separate or parallel assignment task as discussed above, these reflections could be assessed as either an integral part of the assignment product or as a separate exercise. Reflective journal entries are useful for assessing the development of team skills of both the student author and of their team mates. By reading a series of student reflections, especially by collectively considering the reflections of all team members, it is possible to form a picture of what that student has experienced and what they have learned about interpersonal communication and teamwork skills throughout the team process. Reflective entries are best made regularly, but it is also useful for the instructor to pose a final, overview question to which each student can respond after completion of the team assignment task. A typical summary question might be 'What teamwork skills do you feel you have developed as a consequence of participating in this team assignment?' Such a question would force the student to re-reflect on their earlier entries, and from there facilitate development of a critical overview of what they had learned.

Self and Peer Assessment

In a team assignment, it is the students themselves who are in the best position to assess team processes and the development of their own and of other members' team skills, as one component of team learning. Peer review has been found to prevent

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bickering and improve member productivity (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). Students and instructors view self and peer assessment as a legitimate means of addressing student perceptions of unfairness associated with team learning and the assessment of team assignments (Cheng & Warren 2000; Johnson & Miles 2004; Monk-Turner & Payne 2005; Rafiq & Fullerton 1996, Timberlake 2005; Dyrud 2001). By promoting reflection and independent thought, peer assessment has the potential to facilitate in students a greater capacity to learn and to take personal control of their own learning (Johnson & Miles 2004, McConnell 1999).

Students perceive self and peer assessment as being a valid and helpful means of facilitating greater reflection on their learning and the development of skills such as critical thinking and evaluation (Falchikov 1986; Orsmond 1997; Williams 1992). However, once again there is a need for the instructor to quite deliberately and specifically train students for the process. Without guidance and the establishment of firm criteria and a fair system of checks and, the potential remains for peer assessment to be misused and ratings distorted and. The process can become tokenistic, encourage conformity in return for grades (Boud et al. 1999) or a means of rewarding friends and punishing enemies (Brown and Knight 1994). Therefore there is a need for the instructor to provide coaching for students and use of an incorruptible, valid, reliable and equitable method of including self and peer assessment as a grading mechanism for the teamwork process (Tucker 2006; Tucker & Reynolds 2006). Peer assessment of process can then exist either in parallel with, or integrated into, assessment of the teamwork product.

One strategy is for the instructor to brainstorm with students the features and behaviours which make for a good team member as discussed above. This could be done at any stage during the life of the assignment, but should be revisited before any self and peer assessment device are implemented. For a list of some of the features likely to be nominated by students, refer to Appendix 1.

Students need to be reminded of the ethical considerations and responsibilities associated with assessing students' contributions throughout the assignment process. In order to take the various factors into account as they assessed themselves and each other, it is be possible to design a protocol with a list of features which the students then rate separately. However, in the experiences of the writer, students are well equipped to take them into account and allocate holistic ratings, in response to their own perceptions of their own and the separate contributions of others during the team process.

A holistic ranking enables them to factor in and balance off differential team member workloads and strengths such as a member who contributed well to the process but less well to the product, or the team member who produced great written work but who was somewhat less diligent with the process.

Instructor Assessment of the Team Process

Assuming that the instructor has allowed some class time for students to meet regarding their team assignment, she will be in a good position to draw upon her own observations of the team process. This would include her experiences inside the classroom, ongoing feedback from students, evidence of team disharmony,

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personality conflicts or disputes with which she had been required to mediate, or even requests for a team to divorce a member or vice versa.

A final strategy is to look closely at the team assignment document itself. If students include a detailed list of their allocated tasks and responsibilities within the final document, it is possible to identify uneven contributions in roles, time, or the quality or quantity of written work. Signs of poor collaboration would include contradictory, duplicated or missing information. Poor editing could also suggest poor time management by either the whole team or individual members.

Individualisation of Student Grades

As mentioned above, there is persistent evidence within the literature that students see great potential value in team assignments and team learning but that they feel uncomfortable with the unfairness associated with shared assessment (Garbett 2004; Hart & Stone 2001; Morris & Hayes 1997). Their concern with shared assessment is that underperforming or undercontributing team members will be unfairly rewarded for the efforts of their more conscientious team mate. High grade point average students are particularly concerned (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). Although students regard teamwork as a positive experience, there is consistent evidence that they hold strongly negative feelings towards the fairness of their own grades being dependent on other members of the team (Garbett 2004). The solution to this problem is for student grades to be individualised.

Research studies have found that student grades and team performance can both improve when students are aware from the beginning that peer assessment is to be utilised as part of their assessment (Monk-Turner & Payne 2005). One study also found that, given a choice of assessment methods, 69% of students preferred ongoing, anonymous peer assessment (Tucker 2006; Tucker & Reynolds 2006). There is considerable empirical support for the argument that peer assessment is a legitimate means of addressing the perceived unfairness associated with group learning and team assignments (Cheng & Warren 2000; Johnston & Miles 2004; Rafiq & Fullerton 1996; Timberlake 2005).

Instructors need first be mindful to include within their Unit Outlines from the beginning of the teaching semester, information explaining how peer assessment is to be incorporated into the calculation of grades There are severe ethical and legal implications if students are not aware of this from the outset, even for a student who has contributed nothing to the team project (Morris & Hayes 1997). The instructor then has to make decisions regarding how best to obtain quantitative and/or qualitative peer assessment data. She then has to decide how to apply this information to the determination of student grades.

There are many different individualisation models from which to choose. One method is to use ask students to complete a confidential self and peer assessment form such as that included as ‘Appendix A and for the instructor to average the rating for each student. Those whose average is similar to the team average receive the team score. Any students who average significantly above or below the team average have their score increased or decreased by redistributing up to ten per cent of the assignment score for each student involved. Another method is to permit an individual student to

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elect to elect to receive a grade comprising 50 per cent the team score and fifty per cent of the score given to their section of the assignment document. They need to make this request before submitting the assignment and to nominate which section(s) of the document they had completed

A brief, annotated listing of some of other individualisation models is included as Appendix B and this author is about to become involved with a trial of a software program which could make peer assessment a simpler and easier process. Students are able to make regular, confidential, quantitative and qualitative peer assessment on-line. The software automatically makes the quantitative calculations for the instructor, with qualitative information also provided to the instructor as a checking mechanism.

A detailed investigation and comparison of different models is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the major and overwhelmingly popular advantage of peer assessment and individualisation models they respond to the problem of undercontributing and underperforming students in a manner which is perceived as fair and equitable by students and by instructors (Timberlake 2005). The major disadvantage is that most current models are extremely time-consuming to implement and thus any instructor time saved during team grading might easily be lost in the individualisation process.

Conclusion

For teamwork to be utilised more effectively within university courses, there is a need to learn more about how to design team assignments, train students and assess their team work more fairly and appropriately. To learn more requires thorough empirical research into each of these dimensions. Business communication instructors would appear to be particularly well placed to spearhead such research, given the strong role of interpersonal and team communication within our existing programs.

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Appendix A

WRITTEN REPORT
SELF AND PEER ASSESSMENT

Please rate the contributions to your team's Written Report made by yourself and by each member of your team. The purpose of this is to assist us any identify teams whose members contributed unevenly to the assignment task and to more appropriately individualize student scores.

Take into consideration whether each member:

- attended all meetings
- actively communicated with team-mates and responded to others' messages
- contributed ideas
- provided constructive feedback on the ideas of others
- participated in decision-making
- completed work they offered to do or were designated
- contributed work of the required standard and/or form
- met agreed deadlines
- shared the editing/compilation workload

Then allocate each group member a score between 0 and 4:

0 = officially in the team but did not contribute at all
1 = made only minimal contributions
2 = made some contributions, but did less than what was asked/needed
3 = contributed well, at an appropriate level, as required by the team
4 = contributed over and above their share of what was expected by the team

Team Name: ______________________________________ Class No.: __________

Report Topic: ____

Now fill in the names of the members of your group, and circle a rating for yourself and for the other members of the team

Self	Name:………………………………………..	0 1 2 3 4
Member 2	Name:………………………………………..	0 1 2 3 4
Member 3	Name:………………………………………..	0 1 2 3 4
Member 4	Name:………………………………………..	0 1 2 3 4
Member 5	Name:………………………………………..	0 1 2 3 4

The above information will be treated with total confidence.

Thank you

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Appendix B

Ten Methods for Individualizing Team Grades

1. Award one grade for the assignment product and another for the process
The instructor grades the product and the students grade the process by awarding a score for low, moderate or high activity across a range of different factors. The total score for each student is converted to score which is allocated according to a designated split of product and process scores (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996).

2. Add contribution score to (or subtract it from) the team score
Students allocate each other a score for above average, average or below average contributions, which are then totalled. This score is then added to or subtracted from the team score (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996).

3. Distribute individual scores from a pool of scores
One team grade is given which is multiplied by the number of members in a team, who must then individually decide how to distribute the total pool amongst themselves. The average of these distributions is then allocated to each student (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996).

4. Award an equal grade to each student, but allow for the possibility of instructor intervention
Students share the team score unless a member, members or the group approaches the instructor regarding a problem. The instructor then alters individual grades subjectively (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996).

5. *Split team tasks from individual tasks*
The team is responsible for the total project, but then individual students are responsible for particular sections. A uniform score is allocated for the total product, and individual scores for the separate sections (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996). A variation of this is for students to self-elect to receive the total team grade, or a designated split of team and individual scores

6. Issue yellow and red cards
The assignment is designed with divisible, equitable sections. Students work on their individual sections, and continue to swap and review each other's work until the final project is ready for assessment. Students receive the same grade, although 'yellow' or 'red cards' are issued for underperformance which result in removal of the miscreant from the team and the team's loss of its predetermined'Group Performance Mark'. (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996 ,Hounsell, McCulloch & Scott 1996)

7. Award grades in response to team-negotiated percentages
Before commencing the project, the team negotiates the percentage contribution of each team member (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996).

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8. Multiply team grade by 'individual weighting factor'
Grade assignment, and then produce an individual weighting factor by multiplying individual effort ratings by the average team effort rating. Multiply team grade by the individual weighting factor (Conway et al. 1993).

9. Multiply team grade by 'peer assessment factor'
This is a more complex version of the previous model (Lejk, Wyvill & Farrow 1996)

10. Anonymous on-line self and peer assessment
This involves quantitative measures using percentages and a multiple response Likert scale which are then coded and analysed statistically, as well as qualitative comments to elucidate anomalies or unexpected final outcomes (Tucker 2006)

11. Other *methods of individualisation*
Other methods can be found in Brown & Knight 1994; James, McInnis & Devlin 2002; Hounsell, McCulloch & Scott 1996;

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The Gentle Art of "Phishing"

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Abstract

"Give a man a fish," goes an old adage, "and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for life." In Internet parlance, "Teach a man [person] to phish, and he can feast on caviar for the rest of his life." **Phishing** is a type of fraud unique to the Internet. All of us have probably received email from various credit card companies, banks, PayPal, or eBay alerting us to various activities regarding our accounts: break-in attempts, maintenance, or general "suspicious" activity. The message directs the user to a corporate website, which then requests sensitive information, including account number, PIN or ATM number, mother's maiden name, or social security number. While the websites look real, they are actually clever forgeries. Users who follow directions will later find their accounts vacuumed, their credit cards maxed out, and their identities stolen. This paper examines the different types of phishing, techniques used, and pedagogical applications.

Introduction

In *The Compleat Angler* (1668), Izaak Walton describes the art of fishing as a complex craft, "so like the mathematics that it can never be fully learnt; at least not so fully but that there will still be more new experiments left for the trial of other men that succeed us" (p. 224). Angling is a bucolic, contemplative sport, reflective of those who pursue it, "men of mild and sweet and peaceful spirits" (p. 234). Water itself has a mystical dimension; it is "nature's storehouse, in which she locks up her wonders" (p. 237). But beneath the placid surface lies danger: "there be monsters" (p. 232).

In the 350 years following Walton's meditative treatise, fishing has acquired a new face: in the deep waters of the Internet, there indeed be monsters, and the anglers who have succeeded Walton have transformed the serene into the sinister.

This paper examines the contemporary craft of Internet phishing, focusing on the different types, linguistic and technical deception techniques, and pedagogical suggestions. All examples, unless otherwise noted, are emails that the author has received. Since fraudulent messages comprise a significant portion of spam, as instructors we are obligated to alert our students so that, as professionals and consumers, they can avoid the tempting bait offered by Internet anglers.

Some Definitions

The term "phishing" was coined in 1996 (Olimann, 2004) and refers to email that directs users to counterfeit websites. The goal is to collect personal and financial information, which can then be used to make unauthorized purchases, steal identities, or sell sensitive information to identity theft rings. Figure 1 shows a typical phishing email.

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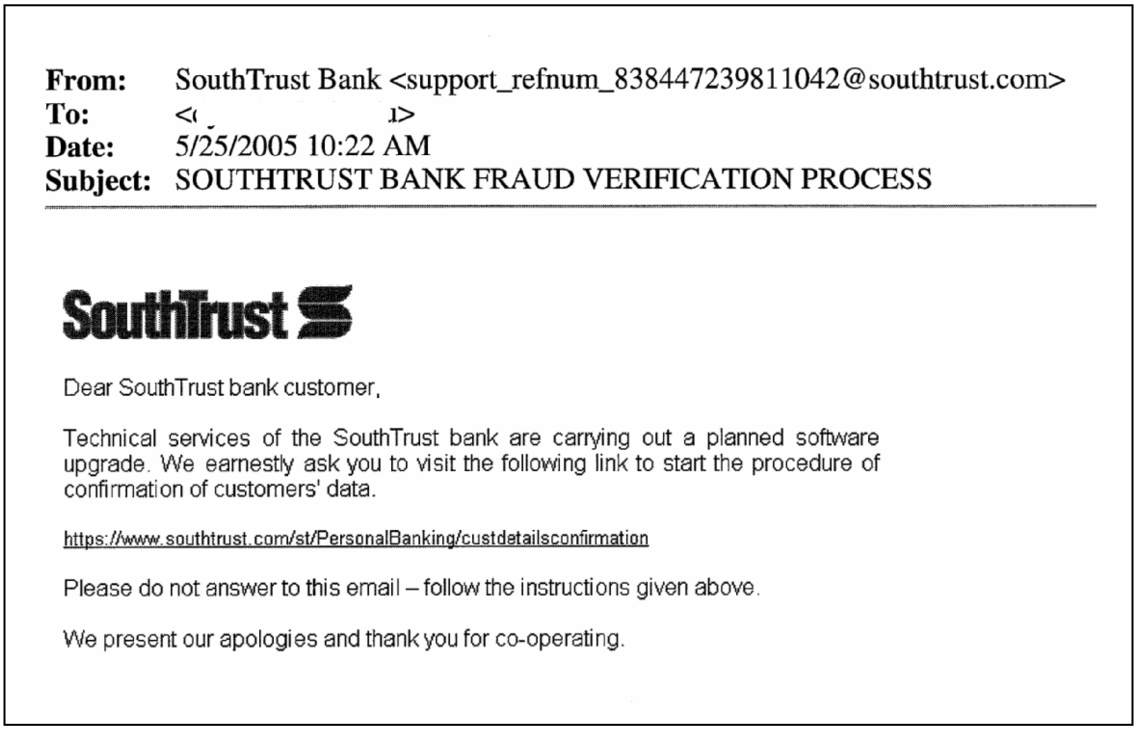

From: SouthTrust Bank <support_refnum_838447239811042@southtrust.com>
To: <(1>
Date: 5/25/2005 10:22 AM
Subject: SOUTHTRUST BANK FRAUD VERIFICATION PROCESS

SouthTrust

Dear SouthTrust bank customer,

Technical services of the SouthTrust bank are carrying out a planned software upgrade. We earnestly ask you to visit the following link to start the procedure of confirmation of customers' data.

https://www.southtrust.com/st/PersonalBanking/custdetailsconfirmation

Please do not answer to this email – follow the instructions given above.

We present our apologies and thank you for co-operating.

Figure 1. A phishing email

When users click on the link, they are directed to a site like the one in Figure 2. In addition to the information indicated, some sites will ask for more detailed data: bank account numbers, social security number, mother's maiden name, credit/debit card numbers, or the highly confidential CVV2 (the three-digit code on the back of credit cards). It is not unusual, however, for the link to be dead, as phishing requires a very tight timeline due to more effective detection tools. In fact, the average lifetime of a bogus website is a mere 5.5 days (MillerSmiles, October 2005).

Typically, phishers cast a wide net; they are part of an orchestrated international network. It is a very sophisticated operation, as Christopher Abad (2005) reports in his analysis of 3.9 million phishing emails gleaned from thousands of chat rooms and botnets. Abad concludes that phishing is "a thriving economic infrastructure," with as many as 250,000 concerted campaigns daily. "Phishing is," according to Ron Teixeira, director of the non-profit National Cyber Security Alliance, "probably the biggest threat consumers face on the Internet" (Sutel, 2006).

The numbers are astonishing. Phishing tends to occur in waves, and, according to a recent Federal Trade Commission estimate, in the US alone, traffic consists of 75-150 million messages a day, amounting to nearly $3 billion in annual losses to individuals and business (Heckman, 2006). Internationally, 2003 business losses totaled $32-39 billion (Drake, Oliver, & Koontz, 2004). About 70 percent of computer users who receive phishing emails believe that they are legitimate, as revealed by a joint AOL/National Cyber Security Alliance study (Kerr, 2005), and a recent AARP study conducted in Washington state notes that about half of survey respondents did not realize that legitimate financial institutions do not use email to ask clients for sensitive information (Heckman, 2006).

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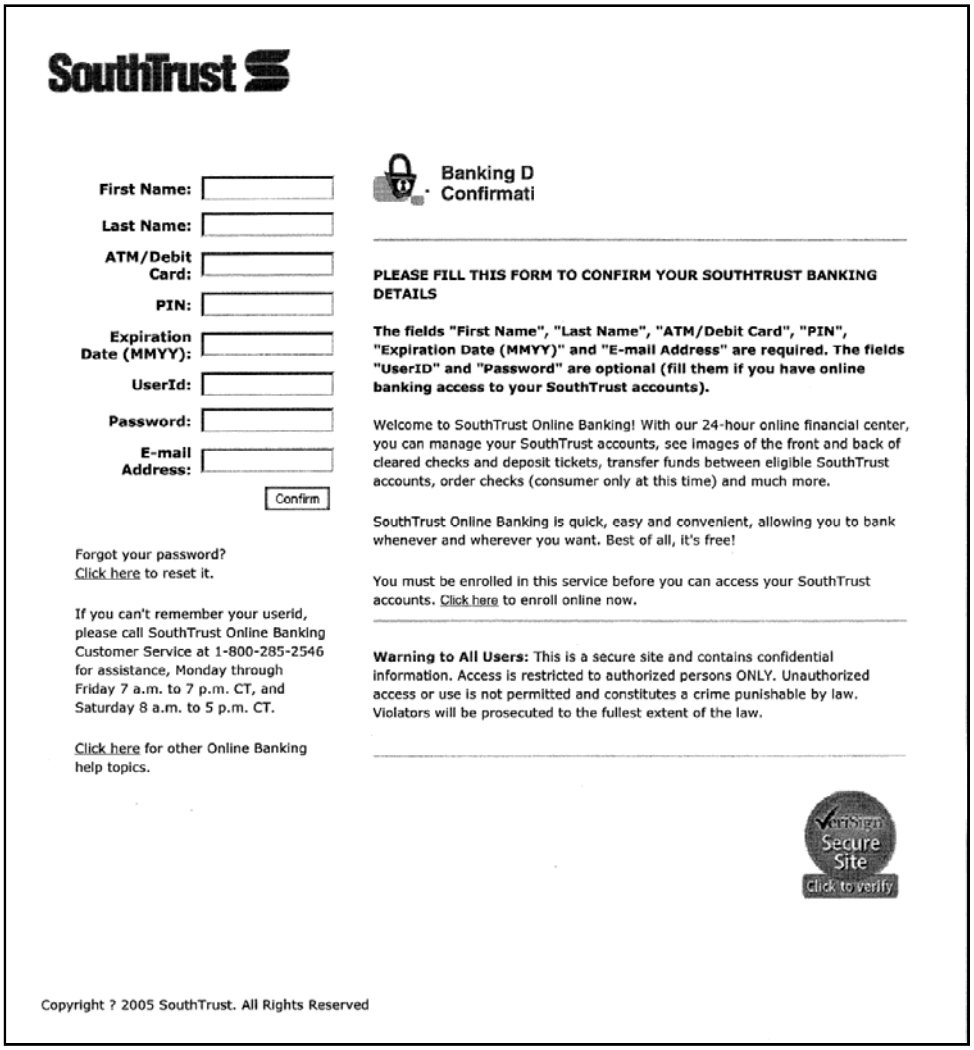

SouthTrust

First Name:
Last Name:
ATM/Debit Card:
PIN:
Expiration Date (MMYY):
UserId:
Password:
E-mail Address:
Confirm

Forgot your password?
Click here to reset it.

If you can't remember your userid, please call SouthTrust Online Banking Customer Service at 1-800-285-2546 for assistance, Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. CT, and Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CT.

Click here for other Online Banking help topics.

Banking D
Confirmati

PLEASE FILL THIS FORM TO CONFIRM YOUR SOUTHTRUST BANKING DETAILS

The fields "First Name", "Last Name", "ATM/Debit Card", "PIN", "Expiration Date (MMYY)" and "E-mail Address" are required. The fields "UserID" and "Password" are optional (fill them if you have online banking access to your SouthTrust accounts).

Welcome to SouthTrust Online Banking! With our 24-hour online financial center, you can manage your SouthTrust accounts, see images of the front and back of cleared checks and deposit tickets, transfer funds between eligible SouthTrust accounts, order checks (consumer only at this time) and much more.

SouthTrust Online Banking is quick, easy and convenient, allowing you to bank whenever and wherever you want. Best of all, it's free!

You must be enrolled in this service before you can access your SouthTrust accounts. Click here to enroll online now.

Warning to All Users: This is a secure site and contains confidential information. Access is restricted to authorized persons ONLY. Unauthorized access or use is not permitted and constitutes a crime punishable by law. Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

VeriSign Secure Site Click to verify

Copyright ? 2005 SouthTrust. All Rights Reserved

Figure 2. Phishing log-in page

Phishing is not a flash in the pan. Since its debut in 1996, the number and scope of attacks have increased to mind-boggling proportions. RSA Security is a firm that tracks global phishing ventures on a monthly basis; in June 2006, “almost 40 percent of all credit unions [in the US] were targeted,” and international campaigns nearly doubled between April and June of 2006 (RSA, 2006). Even the IRS is not immune: phishers operating in 11 countries have hijacked IRS and Treasury Department logos to collect information for identity theft rings (IRS, 2006).

In the past few years, developing technology has allowed phishers to become more discerning regarding audience, resulting in two nuances on the theme.

Puddle Phishing

While many phishing attempts involve well-known Internet entities and financial giants, such as eBay, Amazon, PayPal, VISA, and Chase, puddle fishing refers to targeting smaller financial institutions such as the following:

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- Alabama Credit Union
- Bangor Savings Bank (Maine)
- Bank of the West (California, specifically the East Bay area)
- Charter One Bank (Vermont)
- LaSalle Bank (Illinois, specifically Chicago)
- Montgomery County FCU (Maryland)
- People's Bank (Connecticut)

Phishers still need to refine their targeting techniques, however. I received emails from all of the above. Since I live on the West coast, my chance of having a bank account in Maryland or Vermont is virtually nil.

Spear Phishing

Spear phishing is new variation, emerging within the past year. Whereas general phishers trawl, netting all fish, spear phishers are more like scuba divers hunting a particular species. Spear phishing emails, from writers masquerading as the CEO or other power figures, target employees of one company in an attempt to steal passwords, which then allow them to plant Trojans that steal proprietary data. According to MillerSmiles, an anti-phishing news service based in the United Kingdom, the scam was first unveiled in June 2005 and "shows no sign of abatement" (MillerSmiles, August 2005).

Techniques of Deception

Phishers go to great lengths to deceive their intended victims, and some counterfeit websites are so faithful to the originals that only the most discerning eye can detect the difference. Phishers use both linguistic and technical ploys to steal sensitive data.

Linguistic Lures

It is the language of email, of course, that persuades receivers to part with sensitive information. Phishers play with language using the techniques explained below:

Subject lines and leads. Most phishing emails have subject lines that impart a sense of urgency:

- FRAUD IDENTIFICATION PROCESS (SouthTrust Bank)
- Please Confirm Your Details (Washington Mutual)
- Important fraud alert (Charter One Bank)
- Your account could be suspended! (eBay)
- Account suspension notice (PayPal)
- Please restore your account access (Horizon Credit Union)

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- Attention! Several VISA Credit Card bases have been LOST!
- Fraud Prevention Measures (Bangor Savings Bank)

Given the news media's penchant for sensationalism—stories detailing, for example, the loss of millions of social security numbers from the Department of Veterans' Affairs database—email subject lines indicating fraud or loss of data may alarm the typical user. Even knowledgeable users have succumbed: Laurell Haapanen, a technical editor for a computer company, responded to a Washington Mutual email and later discovered that someone in Bucharest had "cleaned her out" (Heckman, 2006). Texan Timothy May learned of his error only when his credit card was denied at a business luncheon, much to his embarrassment. Soon thereafter, someone in Brooklyn used the stolen information to buy $5,000 worth of auto parts, and others in California bought a fleet of new Dell computers. The lesson learned? "I'll surf the Web and look at stuff, but I don't buy anything online anymore. It's just not worth it" (Krebs, 2004).

Opening paragraphs, or leads, may also sound the alarm bell, although an examination of several documents reveals that phishers tend to copy each other, as shown by these examples:

LaSalle Bank
ABN AMRO

Dear LaSalle Bank customer,

We recently noticed one or more attempts to login intro your LaSalle Bank online banking account for a foreign IP address and we have reasons to believe that your account was hijacked by a third party without your notification.

If you recently logged intro your account while traveling to a foreign country, the unusual login attempts may have been made by you.

RBC Financial Group

Dear RBC Centura customer,

We recently noticed one or more attempts to log in your RBC Centura account from a foreign IP address and we have reasons to believe that your account was hijacked by a third party without your authorization.

If you recently accessed your account while traveling, the unusual log in attempts may have initiated by you.

BancorpSouth
Let's Grow Together.

We recently noticed one or more attempts to log in your BancorpSouth online banking account from a foreign IP address and we have reasons to believe that your account was hijacked by a third party without your authorization.

If you recently accessed your account while traveling, the unusual log in attempts may have initiated by you.

Another strategy in leads is to offer false reassurances, as in the following from PayPal:

> PayPal is committed to maintaining a safe environment for its community of customers. To protect the security of your account, PayPal employs some of the most advanced security systems in the world and our anti-fraud teams regularly screen the PayPal system for unusual activity.

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> We are contacting you to remind you that on July 21 2006 our Account Review Team identified some unusual activity in your account. In accordance with PayPal's User Agreement and to ensure that your account has not been compromised, access to your account was limited. Your account access will remain limited until this issue has been resolved.

Some bogus websites give an illusion of reality by allowing users to link to the real organization's privacy statements or security policies, thereby enhancing the deception. Many also use the "http**s**" citation ("s" stands for SSL, a data encryption program), and/or reproduce the secure verification logo.

Logical reasons. Phishing emails offer persuasive reasons for user action. Charter One Bank, for example, explains that routine software maintenance requires a profile update: "Technical services of the Charter One Bank are carrying out planned software upgrades. We earnestly ask you to visit the following link to start the procedure of confirmation of customers' data." At least five other banks, incidentally, use the identical wording and include this admonition: "This instruction has been sent to all bank customers and is obligatory to follow. Thank you for co-operating." Since even new users acknowledge the constant evolution of software and accompanying needs for replacement, this reason makes sense.

Other emails are more garden variety. A Bill Me Later notice informs me that my current billing statement is available for viewing, and an eBay notice alerts me that my bill for a 17" Dell monitor is still outstanding. I neither use Bill Me Later nor have an eBay account.

Some phishers use intimidation and threaten account closure; the following has been repeated in bank emails from all areas of the country: "This is your official notification from [bank name] that the service(s) listed below will be deactivate and deleted if not renewed immediately. Previous notifications have been sent to the Billing Contact assigned to this account. As the Primary Contact, you must renew the service(s) listed below or it will be deactivated and deleted." Recipients who do not currently indulge in online banking, the phishers wryly note, can enter their "SSN as Username and account number as Password."

Particularly at risk for this linguistic gambit are the elderly or technophobic, those whose computer use tends to be limited to email and holiday shopping sprees. Nancy Boyle, Racine, Wisconsin, responded to warnings from Bank One and eBay that her accounts were being suspended. After posting her social security number and her mother's maiden name, as requested, she discovered $1,800 missing from her bank account and an endless stream of credit card charges from Egypt (Krebs, 2004).

A final ploy offers prizes or money to users who follow the link: Chase Bank will send $20 to those completing a brief online survey, and in 2003, eBay was offering users the chance to win a Mercedes. The following year, "Shadow Crew," a fake company, even offered to send free child porn CDs!

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Technical Decoys

In addition to linguistic lures, phishers are adept at manipulating technical details, by using JavaScript or ActiveX to achieve credible results. The following explains the most common techniques:

Addresses and URLs. Changes in the sender or "reply to" addresses are easy for scammers to implement and equally easy for users to overlook, as two eBay messages illustrate: eBay@eBays.com and eBay@ebay.com. In both cases, the changes, the addition of the "s" and the lower-cased "B," will direct the reply to bogus websites. The real address is eBay.com. Similarly, Bankcorpsouth instead of BankcorpSouth will send the user to a counterfeit site.

Another technique is even sneakier and essentially undetectable. In PayPal, the "l" is replaced with a capital "I." Using a sans serif font makes the replacement difficult to discern: **PayPaI**, with the capital "I", or **PayPal**, with the "l" (see Drake et al., 2004, for many other examples).

The @ is a powerful symbol for phishers. Placed in a URL, it directs traffic to an alternate location, since some browsers, notably Internet Explorer, ignore information preceding the @. FraudWatch International (2003-6), a private company based in Melbourne, Australia, offers this example:

http://genuine-site.com-Verify83kcmdj30dk>Secure32902s;lkjasdfkljad@fraud-site.com

While the first part of the URL looks real, the user would actually end up at the site following the @: fraud-site.com. In fact, the longer the URL, the less attention users pay to it. To further disguise intentions, phishers may replace the @ with its hex equivalent, %40 (Drake et al., 2004; see also "How to Obscure," 2004, and Kay, 2004).

FraudWatch International collects examples of phishing techniques and publishes reports detailing website manipulation. Phishers use several techniques to manipulate URLs, such as replacing the address bar of a counterfeit site with the "real" one.

For example, they may add "hovering" text boxes, using JavaScript to disguise the bogus website address. Figure 3 shows this technique. While the URL looks real, it is actually placed over the phisher's address.

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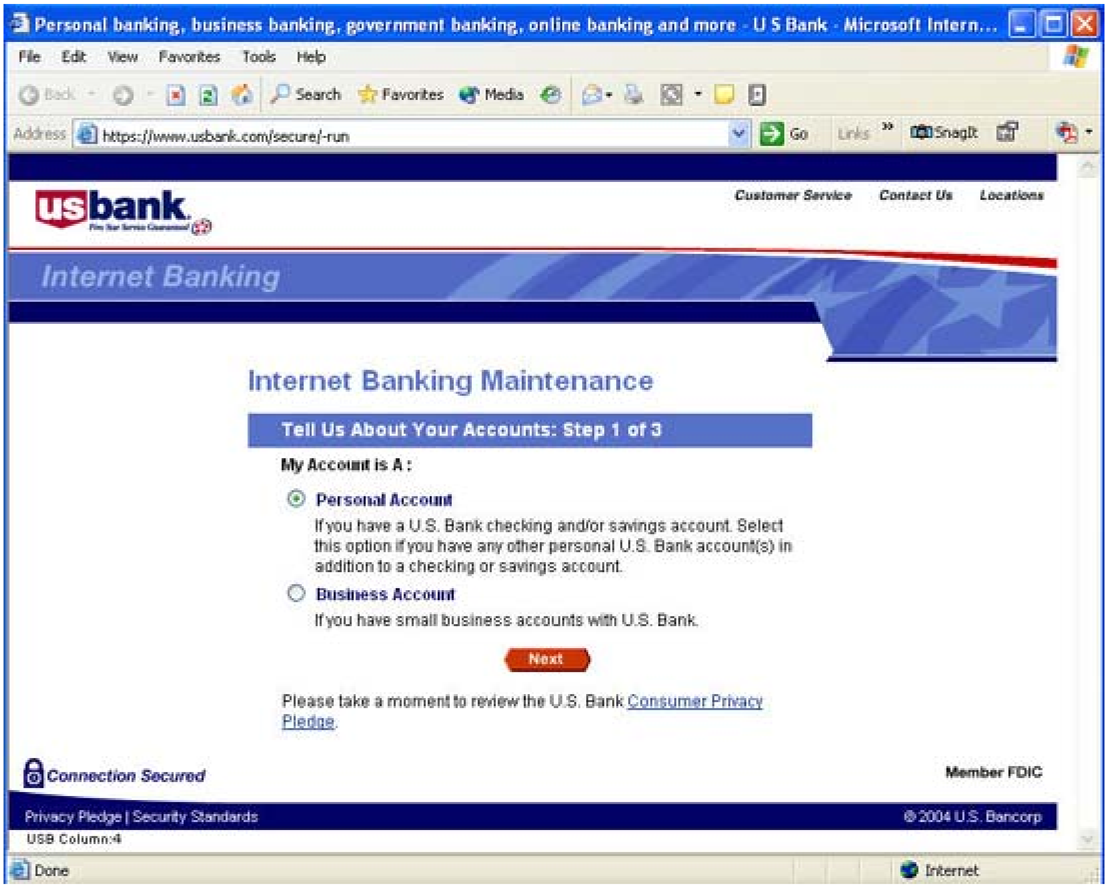

Figure 3. Hovering text box (FraudWatch International, 2003-6)

To detect phony addresses, open the Properties box, which will display the real URL, as shown in Figure 4.

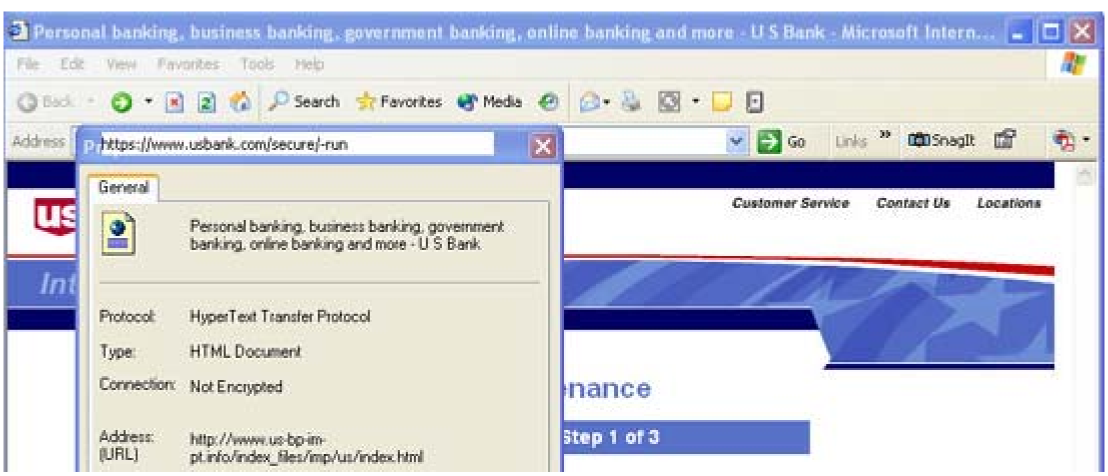

Figure 4. Properties box and real URL (FraudWatch International, 2003-6)

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Less technically adept phishers make few or no attempts to disguise their deception, and simply truncating a URL will take the user to the originating site, often located in Europe or Asia. For example, clicking on the link in an April 7, 2006, PayPal update notice purporting to “reduce the instance of fraud” takes the user to a log-in page; the status bar displays a distinctly different address, http://www.soribook.or.kr/.paypal.comlus/cgi-binlindex.php, than the email “from” line: service@paypal.com. Truncating the address to www.soribrook.or.kr leads the user to a Korean site (Figure 5).

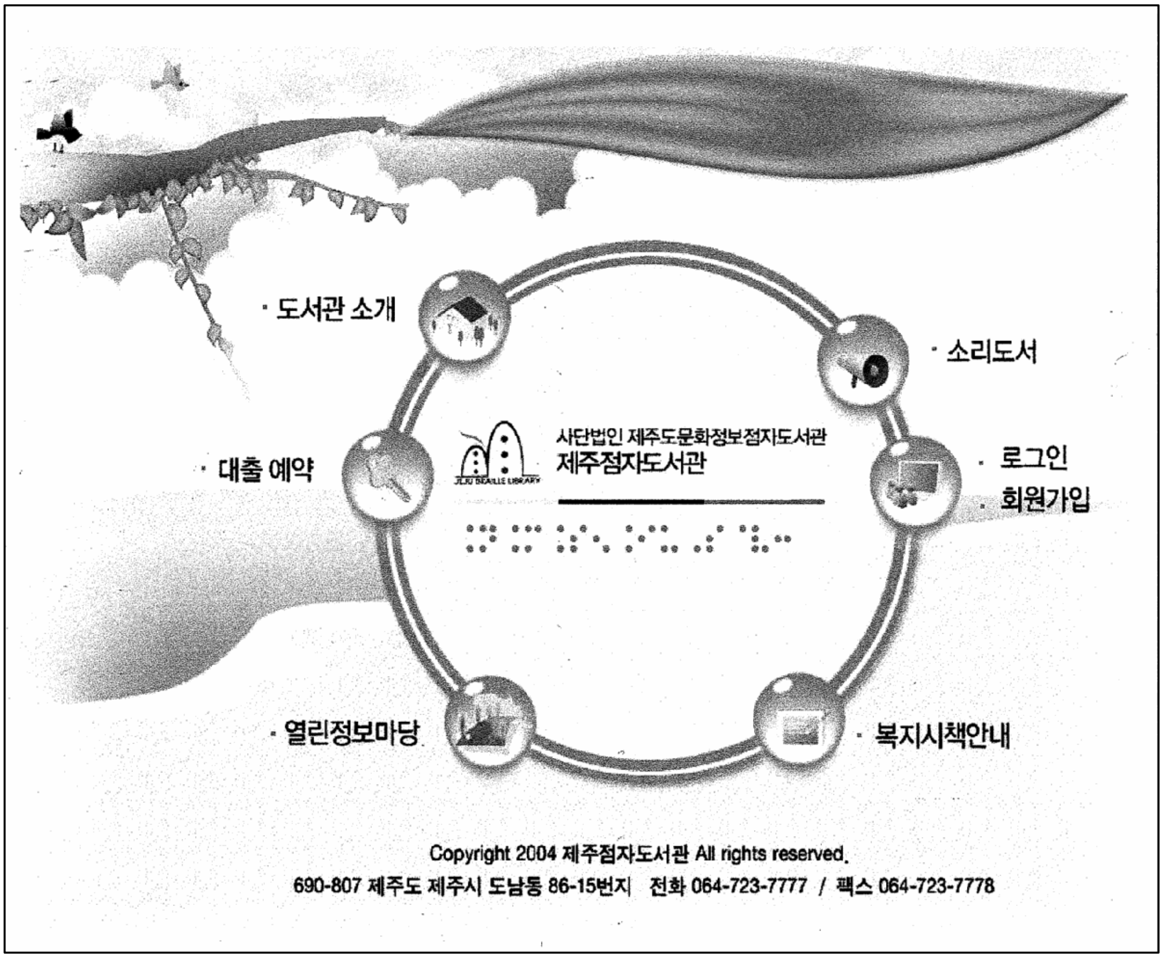
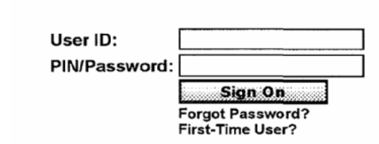


Figure 5. Originating website for PayPal phishing attempt

Pop-ups. Producing a counterfeit website is time-consuming and requires considerable programming expertise. Some phishers, therefore, resort to using real corporate websites and simply add pop-ups rather than reproducing home and log-in pages. Clicking on the link in a recent PNC Bank notice yields this simple pop-up, rather than a counterfeit log-in page.



Whole site counterfeiting. Phishers with a programming background can create convincing replicas of real sites, as shown in Figure 6. Figure 7 is the real PayPal page, downloaded on the same day as the phishing example. On the surface, they look identical. However, more careful scrutiny reveals that the counterfeit page is missing several items, most notably the links to other countries and PayPal-related sites, the secure verification symbol, and, most significantly, the SSL certificate link. SSL is an encryption program intended to ensure that information entered on a company website cannot be transmitted to third-party users, and the certificate verifies the exercise of “due diligence” in protecting sensitive information (Krebs, 2006).

Other variations include the copyright dates, 1999-2005 for the fake site and 1999-2006 for the real one, and membership citations, 71 million for the phishing site and 96.2 million for the real site. The slight differences suggest that phishers are either using dated information or that their site was created in 2005 and has been recycled for the past year.

Many users do not see these small discrepancies, as Delores Hanes, a 77-year-old from Vancouver, Washington, discovered. After responding to a PayPal notice, she realized her error: charges starting accruing to her checking account, Western Union sent an electronic payment transfer to a German address, and someone opened up an AOL account in her name. “It had the PayPal pictures all over it,” she said. “On the surface at least it looked like everything else I’d seen from them” (Krebs, 2004).

The problem is persistent enough to prompt MasterCard and other credit giants to “aggressively combat” such schemes (“MasterCard,” 2004) by partnering with firms such as NameProtect, a provider of detection technology. As a MasterCard senior vice-president stated, “We are confronting identity theft head-on by taking the flight directly to where payment card scams breed and spread.” But that was two years ago, and the problem has hardly been solved; indeed, more phishing scams now exist than ever before. Between December 2005 and January 2006, unique phishing sites increased by 2,600, according to data collected by the Anti-Phishing Work Group (2005, 2006).

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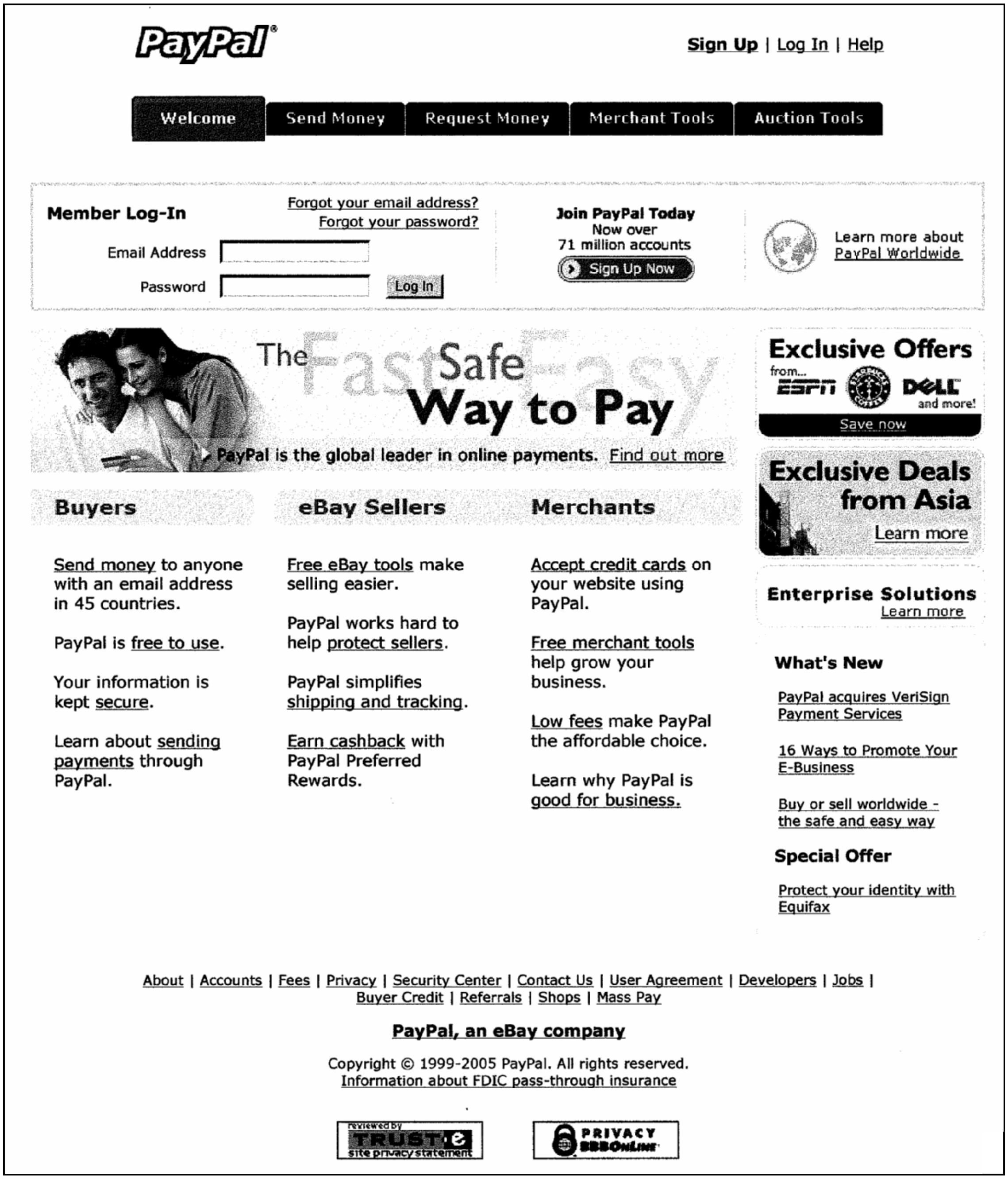

Figure 6. Phishing PayPal log-in page

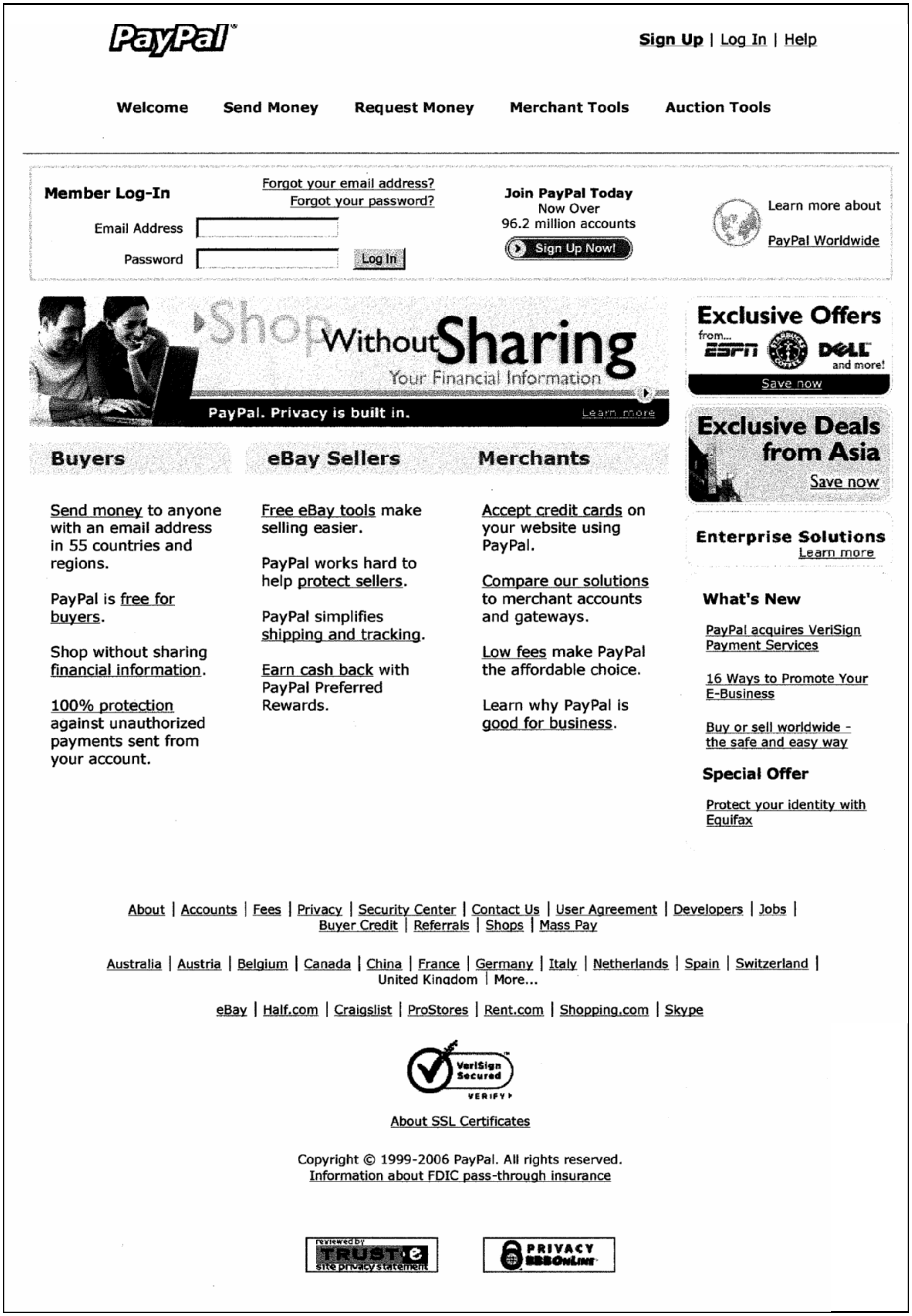

Figure 7. Real PayPal log-in page

Trojans. Perhaps the most insidious technique used is planting undetectable “keylogger” Trojans or worms in the log-in link (Olimann, 2004). They can also be hidden in email attachments or shared files. Once installed, they track keystrokes and allow thieves to steal sensitive data when users log-on to particular sites, such as banks or credit card accounts. A 2005 estimate indicates the existence of about 6,000 different keylogger programs, with as many as 9.9 million affected computers in the United States alone (Zeller, 2006).

Horror stories abound. Joe Lopez of Miami, for example, lost $90,000 after a keylogger Trojan transferred the money from his business account to Latvia, and 55 members of a Brazilian keylogging gang, which collected $4.7 million from 200 accounts, were arrested last February (Zeller, 2006).

Classroom Applications

Phishing lends itself to classroom examination, particularly in classes that explore the rich—and rapidly expanding—area of Internet fraud. Instructors first need to acquaint themselves with the current scams and collect plenty of examples to share with their classes.

Instructional Resources

With the specter of data-snatching malware looming in the background, instructors may be reluctant to link to bogus websites. Fortunately, several watchdog groups track phishing attempts. The Anti-Phishing Working Group (anti-phishing.org) is a consortium of nearly 60 businesses and universities; it maintains a two-year archive that not only displays phishing emails but offers explanations as to frequency and, occasionally, commentaries on effectiveness. MillerSmiles (millersmiles.co.uk) keeps a daily log of phishing scams on its homepage, archives emails from some 395 companies, internationally, and ranks them as to severity of threat. And PhishRegistry (www.phishregistry.org/), created for US businesses and financial institutions, graphically displays monthly phishing activity and a listing of phishing emails. Unlike the other two sites, however, PhishRegistry does not reproduce the original messages.

Activities

Creative instructors can develop a myriad of activities centering on phishing. Listed below are some that students in my Business Correspondence and Electronic Communication & Society classes have found interesting and enlightening.

In The Classroom. If time is at a premium, consider some short, inclass exercises involving language analysis and subject line effectiveness. Many phishing emails display ESL characteristics similar to Nigerian fraud letters. Phrases such as “we earnestly ask” are tip-offs to non-native origins. Some entire emails are laughably non-professional, as in Figure 8, which purports to be from VISA:

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From: VISA Service [VisaCard@visa.com]
Sent: Thursday, February 23, 2006 11:49 PM
To:
Subject: Attention! Several VISA Credit Card bases have been LOST!

Good afternoon, unfortunately some processings have been cracked by hackers, so a new secure code to protect your data has been introduced by Visa. You should check your card balance and in case of suspicious transactions immediately contact your card issuing bank. If you don't see any suspicious transactions, it doesn't mean that the card is not lost and cannot be used. Probably, your card issuers have not updated information yet. That is why we strongly recommend you to visit our website and update your profile, otherwise we cannot guarantee stolen money repayment. Thank you for your attention. Click here and update your profile.

Figure 8. Ineffective VISA phishing example

Other emails include misspellings ("apriciate" instead of "appreciate," "you're" instead of "your," "fallow instead of "follow") that indicate non-professional origins, as do made-up words ("securise").

Looking at subject lines/signatures is also a short activity that students seem to enjoy. Students can examine a number of subject lines for effectiveness, such as these:

- [Bank name] Notice
- Important information regarding your account
- Unlock your Account
- Your Account Was Hijacked!
- Online banking records confirmation
- Important Notice!

Ask students to consider which email, given the subject line, they would open and which point to a phishing attempt. Are haphazard capitalizations or use of exclamation points effective?

Looking at the signature lines of several emails is also illuminating. Some are generically "team," such as "The PayPal Team," "The eBay Team," "The Sky Bank Team," and "The WAMU Security Department Team." In reality, banks never use such signatures. The use of "team" is a dead giveaway that the email is bogus. Some even use the names of persons, such as "Thank you, sincerely, Tricia Doyle, Customer Services." In examining several emails, it appears that Tricia is a very busy person, serving as the customer services representative for BankcorpSouth, USAA Federal Savings Bank, Flagstar Bank, and, undoubtedly, a number of others. John Hartman is equally popular, serving at Sun National Bank, Chase, and Alabama Credit Union. Most users, however, would not notice the repetition, since they are looking at their email in isolation; they are not collecting and analyzing a number of phishing attempts.

In The Computer lab. Instructors who teach in a lab setting can engage in a number of online activities. By taking a "phishing IQ test," students can discover what they know about this type of fraud. MailFrontier (2004) has a 10-item quiz that reproduces original emails; students indicate whether they think the site either legitimate or fraudulent, and, after finishing, they can

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check their answers. In addition to providing the correct responses, the answer page also gives reasons, such as the ones shown in Figure 9. The site also includes statistics and a link to a very cute and useful *Field Guide to Phishing* (MailFrontier, 2005).

This Email is Legitimate	This Email is Phish
How can you tell? Companies such as Chase use email to communicate special offers to their customers. In a good email, look for the links to go to URLs that are expected-chase.com for example. Also, the email should be free of spelling or grammatical errors. Still, fraudsters can fake URLs and their spelling is getting better – so it pays to be wary. The best defense is to **always practice safe browsing.** When email offers like this one offer products and services that interest you – go directly to the company's homepage and find out about them there.	**How can you tell?** Look carefully at the link. See the @ sign? This is a common phishing trick. In some browser applications, when a URL uses an @ sign, everything to the left of the @ sign is disregarded and the browser only reads to the right of the @ sign **When you see or suspect an @ trick, be suspicious.** Look carefully at everything to the right of the @ sign. If you think that the sender of the email has no legitimate association with the domain you see there, suspect a phish.

Figure 9. Examples from MailFrontier IQ test

"Phind a phisher" is an enlightening activity that involves ferreting out the real culprits hiding behind fake URLs. Using either the Properties box or truncating the address can take students all over the world. In my own virtual travels, I've discovered originating sites on every continent except Antarctica.

Research. Instructors who teach classes with a critical thinking component can have students research a number of issues concerning Internet fraud:

- Privacy
- Data protection
- Identity theft
- Legislation addressing Internet fraud
- Detection technology
- Effect of the Internet on business communication
- Case studies involving phishing or other types of fraud
- The future of phishing (instant messaging, pharming)

Any of these topics would make an interesting research project and afford students an opportunity to examine how the Internet is changing both personal and professional communication and redefining who we are.

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Having students examine professional codes of ethics is also an enlightening exercise. While phishers are not considered to be professionals, their actions are not only unethical but illegal as well. Looking at codes is a way of acquainting students with issues in various professional fields. Appropriate codes for Internet fraud include the Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice, Association of Computer Machinery (all available from the Online Ethics Center for Engineering and Science, onlineethics.org/codes/index.html), and the Association of Information Technology Professionals Code of Ethics (available from the AITP, www.aitp.org/organization/about/ethics/ethics.jsp). The Center for Study of Ethics in the Professions, at Illinois Institute of Technology (ethics.iit.edu/) maintains a library of codes, searchable by subject area.

Conclusions

In *The Road Ahead* (1995), Bill Gates paints a remarkably rosy picture of the future of computing technology:

> The global information market will be huge and will combine all the various ways human goods, services, and ideas are exchanged. On a practical level, this will give you broader choices about most things, including how your earn and invest, what you buy and how much you pay for it, who your friends are and how you spend your time with them, and where and how securely you and your family live. Your workplace and your idea of what it means to be "educated" will be transformed, perhaps almost beyond recognition. Your sense of identity, of who you are and where you belong, may open up considerably (pp. 6-7).

In the decade since, all of these things have materialized. However, what Gates didn't predict is the fact that the computer revolution has also allowed for significant changes in criminal behavior. Gates saw computerized information as "totally private": "As long as you protect the password, the information stored on your computer can be held under the strongest lock and key that has ever existed. This allows for the greatest degree of information privacy any individual has ever had" (p. 270).

Ignoring the irony that Microsoft's Internet Explorer offers many holes for adept phishers, the privacy forecast by Gates simply has not materialized. Quite the contrary: computers offer malicious phishers a cornucopia of private information, which they gleefully harvest, violating users' sense of trust. Those who have been phished have been, metaphorically speaking, electronically raped, and they experience feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness.

If for no other reason, exploring Internet fraud in class will help our students be smarter users, both personally and professionally. With more informed users, perhaps then another of Gates' predictions will come true: that computers will function as "symbolic mediators that amplify the intellect" (p. 5).

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