Solution and Answer Guide

Guffey/Loewy, Business Communication: Process & Product, 10e, 2022, 9780357129234; Chapter 1: Business Communication in the Digital Age

Table of Contents

[Zooming In—Critical Thinking Answers 1](#_Toc66712713)

[Nordstrom: A Century-Old Retailer Keeps Reinventing Itself 1](#_Toc66712714)

[Zooming In—Your Turn Solution 2](#_Toc66712715)

[Applying Your Skills at Nordstrom 2](#_Toc66712716)

[Ethics Check Answers 3](#_Toc66712717)

[Too Informal? 3](#_Toc66712718)

[Office Grapevine 3](#_Toc66712719)

[How Bad is “Prosocial Deception” a.k.a. White Lies? 4](#_Toc66712720)

[Critical Thinking Answers 4](#_Toc66712721)

[Activities Solutions 6](#_Toc66712722)

# Zooming In—Critical Thinking Answers

Nordstrom: A Century-Old Retailer Keeps Reinventing Itself

* **Wall Street analysts have criticized Nordstrom for its lagging profits in recent months; the company’s bold new ventures have been called a “gamble.” What explains this clash between the Nordstrom family’s vision and the reaction of the stock market??**

Solution

Wall Street investors expect quarterly profits to increase and focus on short-term gains. They are skeptical of companies that prioritize long-term investment at the expense of profits. Nordstrom’s executives, on the other hand, favor the long view. Their heavy investment in high-end stores and neighborhood hubs is unlikely to pay off immediately. Nordstrom is keenly focused on meeting customers’ changing preferences and enhancing their shopping experience, merging online and offline shopping. The Nordstrom family wished to take the company private to “ensure that the company has the flexibility to successfully navigate a challenging retail landscape at a critical time when the public market for retail stocks is highly volatile and increasingly focused on short-term results and risks.” By continuing to measure retail success by sales per square foot, analysts are using irrelevant criteria, one consultant claims. Nordstrom recognizes that an economic model that excludes online results is outdated; shoppers visit stores but tend to make their purchases online. *[Kapner, S. (2017, September 10). Nordstrom tries on a new look: Stores without merchandise. The Wall Street Journal.]*.

* **Why does Nordstrom allow only *approved and trained* employees to use company-owned social media accounts, logos, and videos on behalf of Nordstrom?**

Solution

Nordstrom understands that employees who post on its behalf on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, or Twitter are acting as company representatives, not private individuals. Whether positive or negative, their behavior reflects on the company’s reputation. Nordstrom clearly wants its representatives to speak with one voice and not engage in questionable behavior. The company may also be implying that not all employees have the requisite writing and communication skills. In fact, any mention of how exactly Nordstrom staff should write is noticeably absent. This omission suggests that the company carefully handpicks whom it wishes to represent it to protect its corporate image (the phrase *approved and trained* suggests selectiveness).

* **Why do Nordstrom’s social media guidelines emphasize ethical behavior and ethical communication?**

Solution

Organizations such as Nordstrom have core values, or principles, that guide their day-to-day business activities. For example, Nordstrom is committed to an unparalleled customer service experience that has translated into strategic decisions that emphasize proper conduct. A “fabulous customer experience” is impossible without fairness and solid ethics. Customer relationships thrive on trust. Reputation is fragile; it takes very long to build but is easily damaged.

[[return to top]](#_top)

# Zooming In—Your Turn Solution

Applying Your Skills at Nordstrom

* **You are an intern in the User Experience and Optimization division overseen by Jamie Nordstrom, president of stores. You are learning about the "Nordie" ethos of truly believing in helping others and genuinely loving customer service. As the former chairman Bruce A. Nordstrom put it: "We can hire nice people and teach them to sell, but we can't hire salespeople and teach them to be nice." Naturally, this means being kind online.**
* **The intern supervisor wants you to study Facebook interactions among customers and Nordstrom representatives to learn about the friendly, casual tone employed in such virtual encounters. How are the Nordstrom posters helping their Facebook followers? What are some of their most prominent strategies? Read several days' worth of Facebook posts. Summarize your observations in an e-mail. Refer to Chapter 8 for information about how to draft an e-mail. Be sure to select two or three specific posts representing a pattern or strategy. For example, discuss particularly successful responses, whether they are prompted by an inquiry, complaint, or praise.**

Solution

Answers will vary, but generally Nordstrom’s interactions with customers are warm, compassionate, and casual. They seem to be driven by a genuine desire to help, answer queries, resolve problems, or commiserate. Nordstrom representatives come across as real human beings, not corporate shills. The followers in the following exchange even step in to help the Nordstrom representatives quell the discontent that seems to grow after one disappointed customer begins to vent and others chime in. Students could also be asked to find examples of posts by Nordstrom representatives that could be rewritten because they seem too casual or show misspellings, missing commas, and more—as rare as such grievous errors may be, given that Nordstrom handpicks its social media representatives. One of the social media use guidelines admonishes users to be humble, meaning that Nordstrom employees should deliver excellent customer service but not brag about it because mistakes do happen. More advanced students could be prompted to look for this attitude of humbleness or respecting customer privacy.

[[return to top]](#_top)

# Ethics Check Answers

Too Informal?

* **Executives typically spend 80 percent of their workday communicating. Thanks to Slack and other internal communication platforms, some top managers come close to 90 percent. One CEO complained that an entry-level hire pinged him on Slack to find out where his kids go to school. Why was the CEO unhappy?**

Solution

The CEO complained because he may have felt that the question was too personal or trivial; it was not work related. The boss may have felt communication overload. A flattened management structure implies an egalitarian relationship between top management and rank-and-file workers. It suggests an informality that may confuse workers because it appears to erase boundaries that perhaps should be respected. This is why young workers must develop emotional intelligence, so that they can avoid faux pas attributable to misreading social cues.

Office Grapevine

* **Like a game of telephone, the grapevine can distort the original message because the news travels through many mouths and ears at the office. Knowing this, can you safely share with even a trusted colleague something you would not comfortably discuss with everyone?**

Solution

Aside from the advantages and the general accuracy of the office grapevine, participating in this informal communication channel can spell trouble. Meaning can be distorted, and even colleagues we trust may mangle our words or reveal a secret with which we entrusted them. On the other hand, savvy workers are able to work the grapevine to their advantage by purposely leaking their work-related accomplishments. Similarly, by tapping into the grapevine, they may be able indirectly to expose a coworker who clearly did wrong. Although honesty generally is the best policy, sometimes directness is not the smartest option.

How Bad is “Prosocial Deception” a.k.a. White Lies?

* **We all tell lies intended to benefit others daily, for example: “Your presentation was terrific” or “I can’t believe you were passed over for promotion.” Meant to spare others’ feelings, such fibs are thought to be harmless, perhaps socially necessary. However, even compassionate lies can harm people, claim researchers studying prosocial deception, for instance, if the white lie gives the incompetent presenter false confidence. Compassionate people, say researchers, lie more than others. How can you determine when a small lie may be appropriate?**

Solution

Answers will vary.Experts suggest the following guidelines: **Be kind.** Brutal honesty can be selfish. A well-intended lie can be merciful when there are no long-term consequences. **Consider the timing.** The truth is best avoided when the other person cannot make any changes at the moment. **Provide reassurance**. Sometimes people are not asking for honesty but may be fishing for a compliment to feel better. **Learn a person’s general preference for the truth**. Know the target’s tolerance for the truth before a situation involving potential lying emerges. **Examine your own motivation**. Do you want to make the other person really feel better or do you want something in return, say, a gift or affection? **Don’t lie if the truth is likely to come out.** Don’t praise a poor presentation when other team members are likely to offer more sincere critiques. **Be honest if you want someone to change**. It’s best not to overlook a high-stakes issue such as substance abuse or growing obesity to prevent embarrassment or dodge an argument. **Remember the Golden Rule**. Ponder whether you would want to be on the receiving end of the lie you are about to tell. *[Source: Bernstein, E. (2017, June 5). When Is it OK to Lie? The Wall Street Journal.]*

[[return to top]](#_top)

# Critical Thinking Answers

1. **All this talk about interpersonal skills and future-proofing your career may make you nervous, especially if your communication skills are shaky. Do you think workers today can be successful if they lack communication skills and write poorly?**

Solution

Each of us probably knows at least one example of a highly successful dyslexic person or a poor writer who is admired and thrives in the world of work. However, such cases are the exception rather than the rule. Surveys of employers find over and over again that woefully unprepared young job applicants fall behind in their careers and are not promoted if they are even hired in the first place. The workforce of the future will depend on interpersonal skills to find and keep meaningful employment as automation will gobble up entire industries. The good news is that writing and communication skills can be learned and honed.

1. **Sharing various digital media impulsively can lead to embarrassment and worse. Have you or has someone you know ever regretted posting a comment, photo, or other media online?**

Solution

Answers will vary. Some students may be too embarrassed to admit to serious blunders on the Internet, whereas others may be willing to share. Ask students how such slip-ups could affect their chances of finding employment. You could also discuss the permanence of our data and the so-called right to be forgotten that the Europeans have asserted against Google and other Internet search giants. The concept means that people wish to not be haunted by their indiscretions practically forever.

1. **Despite laws dictating a 40-hour workweek, many young Chinese tech workers work the dreaded 9-9-6 schedule: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week. How do you feel about work-life balance? What effects on your health and personal life do you anticipate?**

Solution

Answers will vary, but most students are probably aware that being constantly tethered to their jobs with smart mobile technology comes at a price. A potential overreach by the office is the dark side of convenience and 24/7 connectedness facilitated by smart devices. The distinction between work and leisure is becoming blurry, and workers are expected to be always on duty. The whole concept of time off will most likely shift. Businesses with a global reach are always on and never sleep, according to experts. Depression, anxiety, sleeplessness and other negative effects of constant stress have been reported. Some companies are setting boundaries and establishing a culture that allows for disconnecting and recharging. The work-life imbalance will continue to be a hot topic.

1. **Critics complain that texting and instant messaging lead to *textspeak,* poor writing characterized by acronyms, abbreviations, and emoticons. Others have claimed that emoji help supply important missing cues in lean media channels that are “toneless” otherwise. What do you think?**

Solution

The author of *The Atlantic* article cites a sociolinguist who says that emoticons and emoji are revolutionizing language and add intention to a statement in e-mail, a lean medium. Business communicator Will Schwalbe is quoted as saying that in the absence of tone in e-mail and other lean media, people read negative tone into it. Emoticons make for a more cheerful, friendly communication, Schwalbe says. A Scandinavian study has found that emoticons reduce negative interpretations. In addition, even work e-mail is becoming more casual and emoticons more acceptable. However, a career coach cautions that emoticons and emoji should not be used with superiors or clients. Warn students that they will not find uniform acceptance when using nonstandard expressions of this kind. Young office workers need to consider their audience.

1. **Ethical Issue: Author and entrepreneur Dave Kerpen believes that doing unto others as we would want done to us is insufficient. He prefers the *Platinum Rule*: Do unto others as *they* would want done to *them*. “The Golden Rule, as great as it is, has limitations, since all people and all situations are different. When you follow the Platinum Rule, however, you can be sure you’re actually doing what the other person wants done and assure yourself of a better outcome.” Do you agree? Why does Kerpen think the Platinum Rule beats the Golden Rule?**

Solution

The Golden Rule is an ancient moral principle; therefore, it may feel odd that someone would question it. However, Kerpen—and Tony Alessandra before him—proposes shifting the perspective from the self to the other. Instead of judging others by our own needs, he suggests that we focus on what the other person wants. He admits that it’s a lot harder to put ourselves into someone else’s shoes, but he believes that understanding someone else’s perspective is more powerful in business as in life than imposing one’s own needs and wants onto others. A possible critique of Kerpen’s and Alessandra’s approach is that it’s impractical and perhaps occasionally impossible to know what other people may want done unto them. We tend to know our own minds better than those of others and the Golden Rule accounts for that.

[[return to top]](#_top)

# Activities Solutions

1. **Fact Checking: Digging Deep to Spot Fake News**

Solution

Students may need guidance in correctly inputting search terms or their browsing may end in frustration. Ask them to pick a current topic, for example, flu vaccine and run it through one or several fact checkers at once. The students will come across various reputable authorities explaining the risks and the efficacy of flu vaccine while debunking common misconceptions.

Checking on Elon Musk may yield rich results as the brilliant but flawed entrepreneur and inventor tends to deal in grand ideas and outrageous claims. To avoid fiery political discussions of controversies, it’s useful to limit the discussion to business-related news stories and controversial claims to be adjudicated.

A shout-out to college and public librarians is in order. Tirelessly they compile resources to help library patrons with their research and separate the wheat from the chaff. We found the website of the university libraries at the University of Colorado, Boulder particularly helpful. Their research guides at <https://www.colorado.edu/libraries> have been invaluable.

Discussing the funding of fact checkers could present a teachable moment. Following the money is often revealing of biases and untrustworthiness.

1. **Exploring Remote and Flexible Work: Meet Distributed Companies**

Solution

Personal views of remote work will vary; not all business disciplines lend themselves equally to employment with distributed companies. Most of the talent sought-after and suited for remote work is recruited from among IT professionals, software developers, designers, finance experts, and project managers. However, FlexJobs lists pre-screened positions from many additional job categories, for example, accounting, advertising, customer service, engineering, human services, manufacturing, retail, and sales, as well as jobs for writers, artists, and translators.

Automattic is an Internet company that developed and maintains digital platforms such as WordPress, Jetpack, Gravatar, and more. The fully distributed company has more than 800 workers in 68 countries speaking 84 languages. AnswerConnect provides business answering, web chat, appointment taking, and call center services. On LinkedIn, the company canvases for remote workers with attractive videos that depict an appealing, stress-free, self-designed lifestyle of working from home. inVision is a distributed company that provides a design platform for other Internet firms—with clients ranging from Airbnb and Amazon to Netflix and Lyft. Short for top talent, Toptal is itself a platform connecting qualified individuals and global organizations. Toptal offers huge benefits to remote workers. The few who qualify are free to vacation and work whenever they want and anywhere they want as long as they get their work done and attend virtual meetings.

Alternatively, students could be tasked with listing the advantages and disadvantages of telecommuting and asked to evaluate them in a cost-benefit analysis.

1. **Analyzing the “Holy Grail” of Interpersonal Skills: Iowa Core**

Solution

Answers will vary. This assignment offers many options. Aside from the questions listed, students could be asked early on whether they are surprised by any of Iowa’s “universal constructs.” Are some more self-evident than others? For example, under *Flexibility and Adaptability*, what does “17) meet the challenges of new roles, paradigms and environments,” “19) balance one’s core beliefs and the appropriate reaction to change,” or “20) respond to dissonance in productive ways,” mean? How could we illustrate “9) combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new” and “10) think divergently”? The most astute participants with well-developed critical-thinking skills may conclude that, unlike technical skills, interpersonal or professional skills are more elusive and difficult to measure. A Capgemini and LinkedIn study claims that more than half of global organizations believe “the talent gap in soft digital skills is more pronounced than in hard digital skills” and that it impedes their digital transformation. *[Beach, G. (2018, June 26). Hard-pressed by soft skills, CIOs face talent challenge. CIO Journal.]*

1. **Facing Screen Time**

Solution

Findings will vary. The generalization that young people today are digital natives and as such must all be extremely tech savvy may not apply equally to all students, not even the millennials among them. Taking stock of students’ social media and technology use can be important for getting to know the class and its members’ preparedness. Assign the inventory activity to small groups or collect written responses from individuals if you fear that students might hesitate to admit that they do not fit the stereotype of the hyperconnected contemporary and do not own the latest electronics, particularly given that gadgets tend to be expensive. You may also want to ask about attitudes: how important are smartphones and staying connected with friends via text, chat, Facebook or Instagram to the students? Do they see any disadvantages in being connected nonstop?

Screen Time and Digital Wellbeing are helpful apps in establishing totals per day, but the statistics provide a nuanced picture of mobile technology use. Time spent looking up reference tools and reading, for example, may be less harmful than time spent binge watching, texting, and posting on social media. Recent studies claim that American adults spend more than ten hours daily interacting with their smart devices. They may be setting a poor example for their teenage kids

1. **Practicing Critical Thinking: Analyzing the Opening Case Scenario**

Solution

This activity takes place over the entire semester. Student teams have a choice of 1 of the 16 two-part case studies in the textbook. Each team must fully research the company in the case study using outside resources, answer the questions presented, and prepare and deliver a group presentation about the company. This excellent long-term project helps students develop critical thinking, teamwork, research, writing, presentation, and other important interpersonal and professional skills.

1. **Polishing Those Interpersonal Skills: Introductions**

Solution

This e-mail or memo is an excellent way to assess students’ writing skills and, at the same time, get to know them. Don’t grade this assignment, but be sure to write a friendly comment on all papers or in all e-mail replies to demonstrate that you have an interest in them as students and as individuals.

You may want to use the profile function in your institution’s learning-management system to request that students create a professional profile covering the information requested or additional information you may want to gather. This assignment may be revisited later in the term to practice professional online presence (e.g., in a LinkedIn profile) when you cover employment communication. If you are tech savvy and teach smaller classes, you may want to try introductions by tweet in 140 characters or fewer. These messages might include a tiny URL taking the recipient to a profile, website, or other virtual location. More information about using LinkedIn is provided in Chapter 15.

1. **Exercising Those Interpersonal Skills: Introduce Your Team**

Solution

Decide whether you wish your class to (a) interview a group member and introduce that person to the group or (b) have each class member introduce himself or herself to the entire class. Class size may help you decide. Encourage students to consider this a casual introduction. However, it is a good opportunity for students to not only learn about each other but also start to develop the skills needed to speak in front of a group.

The informal oral assignment induces students to start thinking about their employability skills. It could be more structured by asking students to write the information they find out in the interview to create a short biographical sketch. The purpose is to have them start thinking about their professional presentations of themselves and others on professional social media sites such as LinkedIn and in other forums of public opinion. If students are not on LinkedIn yet, explain to them that it’s about time they set up an account and created at least a basic profile!

1. **Honing Your Communication Skills: What Employers Want**

Solution

Students may work in groups or individually on this project. Consider grouping them by their majors. Provide poster board and glue sticks for each group to mount their job posts. In a lab, a computer with a projector could display the results. You may want to have a spokesperson from each group come to the front of the classroom to report the group’s findings.

1. **Focusing on Writing Skills: So You Think You Won’t Have to Write?**

Solution

1. Everyone writes in today’s workplace—and probably more than people ever did in the past. In professional workplaces, e-mail has become the most important communication channel. Texting is less important, but it has its professional applications. Regardless, all messages sent in the workplace must be businesslike and effective. This means they should be clear, concise, courteous, complete, and correct. They are indeed *real* writing and require more skill and preparation than e-mail and texting to friends. What’s more, as companies grow larger and become less cohesive, the written word becomes even more important. Because fewer people are working side by side, written messages replace face-to-face conversation. Those who can craft clear messages will be most successful.
2. Estimates suggest that nearly 90 percent of all business messages involve written communication. Conducting business in any field—even in technical and specialized areas such as information technology, accounting, engineering, marketing, and hotel management—involves some writing. Tech giant Google found that its best teams were interdisciplinary and benefited from collaborators with strong interpersonal skills. Billionaire investor Mark Cuban recently predicted that within a decade, liberal arts degrees would be worth more than traditional programming degrees because liberal arts majors learned to think and collaborate—and write. *[Agarwal, A. (2018, October 2). Data reveals why the “soft” in “soft skills” is a major misnomer. Forbes.]* Moreover, when individuals are promoted, their writing tasks increase.
3. In the current work world of tightened budgets and economic downturn, only a few upper-level executives still have secretaries or administrative assistants who type their messages. Most managers and executives now write their own e-mails, memos, and letters.
4. Some companies employ technical writers to prepare manuals, documentation, and public documents, such as annual reports. Rarely, however, do these specialists write everyday messages (internal reports, letters, e-mails, memos) for employees.
5. Today’s style-, grammar-, and spell-checkers are wonderful aids to business writers. They can highlight selected trouble areas and occasionally suggest revisions. What they can’t do, though, is organize and write the document and ensure its total accuracy. These tools are also not capable of catching all errors, especially commonly confused words and punctuation.
6. Books and computer programs can provide dozens of ready-made letters or pattern paragraphs for which businesspeople merely fill in the blanks. When these letters are appropriate and well written, they can be useful time-savers. Often, however, such letters are poorly written and ill-suited for specific situations. Most messages demand that writers create their own original thoughts.
7. **Exploring Work-Life Balance and Tweeting About It**

Solution

Answers will vary. Examples could look something like this:

* ***Tweets:***

*Digital nomads: Toptal allows unlimited travel, vacations, and, yes, work from anywhere* *https://preview.tinyurl.com/y7fdjmvm* (124 characters)

[Work from anywhere in the world. (n. d.) *Huffpost*.]

*Are smartphones and social media to blame for lost work/life balance? http://tinyurl.com/pafppw2 #worklifebalance* (112 characters)

[Harden, H. (2015, January 3). Why work-life balance is a myth. *The Huffington Post.*]

*Survey identifies five trends that have killed work-life balance http://tinyurl.com/o6ah8xx #worklifebalance* (107 characters)

*Note***:** To facilitate the character count for Twitter, be sure to enable “column” to show up on the bottom of the MS Word frame. Open the pop-up menu that will allow you to select “column” by right-clicking the status bar on the bottom of the MS Word window and checking the appropriate box. In Word for Mac, highlight the intended tweet including the shortened URL. On the bottom bar, click where the word count appears to reveal characters with spaces

* ***Social Media Posts:***

*Compelling advice from an executive coach: The idea of work/life balance is flawed because a perfect balance can’t be achieved.* Do you agree?[Mike Harden, *Huffington Post*, 23 words]

*The article discusses a study of full-time workers who experience much pressure because they are always on call and struggle to balance work and leisure. Is your life well balanced?* [Akane Otani, Bloomberg Business, 30 words]

*Note*: A social media post is usually written with the expectation that it will elicit a response.

* ***Summaries:***

*Executive coach and blogger Mike Harden decries the comingling of work and leisure. He blames mobile devices and social media for sapping workers of time, thus shortchanging their families because they are always plugged in. He advises that workers remain flexible and prioritize what is important to them each day and to try to be fully present.* [Mike Harden, 568 words, summary is 57 words]

*An Ernst & Young survey of 9,700 workers worldwide found that the respondents struggle with balancing work and leisure. Employees are stressed out by long work weeks, greater obligations for their families and on the job, by always being on call, lackluster job opportunities, and by the absence of parental-leave benefits*. [Akane Otani, 512 words, summary is 10 percent of that, 51 words]

1. **Speaking or Writing: Explore Media Richness**

Solution

* 1. Text or e-mail, possibly call your division sales manager, if it’s not going to disrupt the meeting, depending on the importance of the meeting and your role in it. As a junior member of the team, you would want to call to provide immediate feedback, adjust to the audience, and deliver your message quickly. A telephone call is not as rich a medium as a face-to-face encounter, but comes closer than a text message or e-mail in conveying positive emotion and a personal approach.
	2. Calling is out of the question because it’s only 5 a.m. Pacific time (PST), and your questions—while time sensitive—are not urgent. If the queries are not too involved and lengthy, you could send an e-mail; otherwise, a brief message simply requesting that your colleague call you back seems sufficient. You could phone a little later, at 8:30 or 9 a.m. PST. If you and your collaborator share an application that allows instant messaging or live chatting (e.g., Skype for Business, Slack, Facebook Messenger), set your status to *available* to signal your readiness and to see when your collaborator goes online. Before you do so, however, check your company’s policies on appropriate Internet, e-mail, and social media use. Some businesses prohibit or limit the use of instant messaging to prevent abuse such as harassment and security risks. If you have your colleague’s cell phone number, texting at 8:30 or 9 a.m. to ask for a callback is also an option.
	3. Policies flowing downward from management to subordinates should be written. They produce a permanent record, are economical, promote comprehension and recall, allow precise and uniform expression, and give the audience flexibility in when and how to receive the content. Although Axel has two employees in mind, he should not single them out. The policy should be directed to all employees, most likely in an e-mail or intranet post.
	4. When an immediate answer is required, the message should be delivered orally, by telephone, possibly by text. In this instance, you may need to follow up with additional questions. If the matter is particularly urgent, a face-to-face visit may be necessary as long as it is feasible and the person is nearby (i.e., in-house). Oral communication provides immediate feedback, can be adjusted to the audience, can be delivered quickly, supplies nonverbal cues, may create a warm, personal feeling, and can make a big impact. The message is traveling horizontally between coworkers.
	5. Messages as traumatic as termination should always be delivered in person—one-on-one or with a limited number of participants. Oral communication provides immediate feedback, can be adjusted to the audience, supplies nonverbal cues, and shows greater compassion than a written message.
	6. Responding to an upset customer should always be done orally, if possible. The best procedure is to first call the customer and explain what happened. Oral communication allows you to show sympathy, apologize, and suggest possible alternate solutions. After the telephone call, it’s wise to follow up with a written message confirming what was said. In most cases e-mail would be the channel of choice, although in particularly grievous cases, when formality is desired, a business letter sent by mail may be more appropriate. The written message clarifies the situation, creates a permanent record, promotes comprehension and recall, and generates goodwill.
	7. Explaining a committee’s findings should be done in a written report traveling upward. Such a report provides a permanent record and is convenient to distribute. It provides precise and uniform expression. However, such a report lacks the richness and immediacy of oral communication and cannot be adjusted to respond to the receiver’s comments or questions. Depending on the context, a face-to-face briefing to management with visuals (slideshows) may be called for. Slide decks also provide a record, albeit a less formal one than traditional reports.

The National Business Ethics Survey will probably spark a lively discussion about workplace behavior. To protect the guilty and to avoid putting individuals on the spot, a classroom discussion should probably be general, focusing on the unethical behaviors, not on the students’ individual responses, unless they decide to share their attitudes publicly. Alternatively, you may choose to examine the study with your students without surveying their responses. Evaluating the questionable workplace behaviors alone, with the Five Questions to Guide Ethical Decisions could be an invaluable teachable moment for your students. Naturally, the discussion can be held asynchronously on Blackboard or Moodle.

1. **Probing Active Social Media Users’ Attitudes Toward Ethics**

Solution

The National Business Ethics Survey will probably spark a lively discussion about workplace behavior. To protect the guilty and to avoid putting individuals on the spot, a classroom discussion should probably be general, focusing on the unethical behaviors, not on the students’ individual responses, unless they decide to share their attitudes publicly. Alternatively, you may choose to examine the study with your students without surveying their responses. Evaluating the questionable workplace behaviors alone, with the Five Questions to Guide Ethical Decisions could be an invaluable teachable moment for your students. Naturally, the discussion can be held asynchronously on Blackboard or Moodle.



*Source: National Business Ethics Survey, Social Media Week.*

1. **Doing the Right Thing: Resolving Ethical Dilemmas**

Solution

Students responses will vary, of course. They should apply each question from the “tools for doing the right thing” list and explain their answers in relation to the dilemma.

[[return to top]](#_top)