



PREFACE

For more than thirty-five years, the International Association of Business Communicators (2005) and the IABC Research Foundation have endeavored to provide professional development programs and groundbreaking research that shares “best global communication practices, ideas and experiences that will enable communicators to develop highly ethical and effective performance standards.” This book, as evidence of that mission, provides a substantial base of practical knowledge and insights about effective corporate communication and its impact on organizational success.

This handbook is the fourth edition of a project that began in 1981 as *Inside Organizational Communication*. It was published three times under that title (Reuss & Silvis, 1981, 1985; Wann, 1999). Each successive edition increased in content to reflect the changing concerns of organizational communication and its impact on organizations—large and small, public and private, for profit and not for profit. Here in 2006, the exhaustive collection of articles warranted a new title: *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication*.

The goal of this book is simple: to provide both conceptual understanding and practical applications of the elements of organizational communication. It presents a broad understanding of corporate communication, business communication, and organizational communication. Based on a survey of scholarly literature, we use these three terms—*organizational communication*, *corporate communication*, and *business communication*—interchangeably to describe these internal and external communication functions of an organization or company.

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My sincere thanks to the chapter authors; their expertise and wisdom made this book possible. Special thanks go to the IABC Accreditation Council for their insights into the process of developing this collection. It is my hope that communication practitioners at all levels, educators, and those outside the communications field will find insights and understanding from this book that contribute to organizational success.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME ABOUT

Organizational communications is a vast, dynamic discipline, its practice affected by society and technology. To address every facet of organizational communication would fill many books of this size. Many periodicals and books are published every year giving new insights and highlighting research concerning its many facets. For these reasons, this book could not cover every facet. We instead address the most universal and pressing concerns in this edition of *The IABC Handbook of Organizational Communication*, as defined by an expert panel of professional communicators.

All sound communications projects begin with research. After reviewing the contents of the previous three editions of *Inside Organizational Communication* and the findings of a brief content analysis of current communication periodicals, I developed a list of potential topics for inclusion in this book. This list of topics was categorized, and an online survey addressing the topics was sent to an expert panel of communication professionals for review. The panel consisted of the members of the IABC Accreditation Council and a random selection of accredited business communicators from around the world. The results of the survey provided support for the framework and organization of the book. The respondents also asked that this edition reflect the international nature of business communication, new and traditional practical applications, and case studies and compelling research.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE READER

This book is designed and organized with a number of different readers in mind. If you are new to the world of corporate communication, the chapters in this book bring to the fore issues that are critical to understand and master in any organization. If you are a professional communicator, this book provides new insights on traditional and emerging issues in organizational communication. If you are a corporate executive outside the communication discipline, this book will help you understand the importance and reach of communication within your organization and with external stakeholders.

Understanding occurs when people ask questions and share information. This book follows suit. Like any other handbook, it may be read in a number of ways. First, it may be read from cover to cover. If you are interested in all facets of organizational communication, you will enjoy starting at the beginning of this book and reading through to the end. The book's organization builds from general topics to specialty interests. Predictions for the future conclude the collection.

Second, readers may choose to skim the book for topics of interest or topics related to a current challenge. This book touches on issues of interest to those new to the field of organizational communications as well as seasoned professionals.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANIZED

When addressing the 2005 IABC International Conference, renowned political consultant James Carville used three adjectives to describe successful communication: *simple*, *relevant*, and *repetitive*. I use those same three adjectives to describe the content of this book. Much of the insight and advice about communication that is shared in these chapters seems *simple*. And complex concepts are outlined here in simple models to make them readily accessible. The topics addressed in this book represent what our panel of experts agreed was most *relevant* for communicators and other organization associates to understand about the process of organizational communication. Finally, many communication concepts overlap, and thus these elements are discussed directly and tangentially in a number of chapters. This *repetition* is necessary to fully appreciate the context of corporate communication.

This book is organized into six major parts. Part One serves as an introduction to business communication and addresses some universal premises concerning corporate communication. The chapters in this part introduce readers to the complexities and structures of corporate communication. The universal concepts of excellence, trust, culture, ethics, and measurement are reviewed to set the foundation for the role of corporate communicators today. These chapters provide fundamental axioms as well as testimonials.

Part Two, by far the largest part of this book, focuses on the current challenges of managing corporate communications and organizational communication. Cultivating a culture of communication is critical within any organization. The authors share insights into successful planning, implementation, and management of corporate communication. The strategies they review are fundamental to successful communication management.

Part Three contains six chapters that explore the common threads and evolving issues in the practice of employee communication and internal communication networks. At the heart of each excellent organization or corporation is a trusted

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and honored internal communication program. Integral issues of relationship building, employee engagement, change communication, and internal branding are highlighted here as key to developing that trusted internal program.

Part Four apprises readers of the role of public relations in the corporate communication program. A host of external publics await business communicators. These stakeholders will have an impact on the reputation and success of our organizations in reaching their goals. The chapters demonstrate the need for a strategic approach to managing external relationships.

Part Five addresses key concepts of marketing and brand management and its place in the corporate communication program. The chapters in this part, punctuated by testimonials and case studies, bring to life the internal impact and external challenges of marketing communications. Here, professionals share their insights and expertise for developing excellence in corporate performance through marketing communication programming.

Part Six reminds readers of the need to look to the future. The seven chapters that end the book challenge corporate communicators and their organizational colleagues to be prepared for new trends and issues that will continue to make an impact on successful organizational communication. The chapters here echo back to the issues presented in Part One. The issues of measurement, knowledge management, integration, technology, and emerging trends will continue to affect our organizations. Most notably, new values for the new workplace will ground new and seasoned communicators in the values that matter in our daily lives.

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