**PROPOSAL FOR IMPROVING COMMUNICATION**

Proposals are a typical form of workplace communication. Your instructor will assign one of the three following options for the proposal assignment.

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OPTION A: INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION IMPROVEMENT PROPOSAL**

**Learning Objectives:** Your underlying task is to demonstrate that you understand communication concepts taught in this course. To this end, you'll define and explain appropriate communication terminology and propose how you can implement these concepts to improve your own communication. This assignment offers you an opportunity to

* apply your understanding of communication theory toward improving your communication competence
* write a professional proposal

**Assignment Description:** Submit a word-processed individual proposal (approximately 1500 words) in which you (a) analyze your use of a communication concept of your own choosing and (b) propose one or two concepts from the text you can apply to improve this aspect of your communication. Both the problem and solution must involve communication concepts taught in your COMM 1010 class. You may use the text Self-Assessment tools for ideas.

**How to Prepare:**

1. Think of one specific unwanted communication habit you are currently using but would like to improve upon. Please note: it is only your OWN ways of interacting that you can change; **do not expect or attempt to change another person’s communication habits. Examples:**

**-**improve your communication in a team project (Chapters 8 & 9)

-monitor your own nonverbal messages during performance appraisals (Chapter 9)

-listen more attentively in your classes (Chapter 3)

-interact more productively with an uncooperative co-worker (Chapter 5)

-negotiate rather than act combatively during conflicts (Chapter 5)

-deliver less ambiguous instructions to co-workers (Chapter 1)

-respond more constructively when you receive critique from your instructors (Chapter 5)

-organize your oral presentations more clearly (Chapter 10)

-manage your anxiety of public speaking (Chapter 12)

-work more effectively with a classmate from another culture (Chapter 2)

1. Now identify one or two of the specific communication concepts we've studied in this course that might help you improve your communication competency. It will be easier to write your proposal if you choose a narrowly focused concept (e.g., use of the communication model; listening; nonbiased language; unequivocal messages; upward, downward or horizontal communication; formal or informal networks; organizational culture; clarity of messages; listening; nonverbal expression).
2. Review the course material regarding your chosen concept. Mark the pages where you found this material; you'll need to cite specific pages from the text in your proposal.
3. View the sample student proposal.

**Audience Analysis:** The purpose of a proposal is to persuade your reader (in this case, your instructor) that your proposal will bring about positive, lasting results. Consider the following so you can adapt this proposal to your reader’s interests.

Your proposal makes a statement about who you are. Write so it reflects the best you can be. Aim for ZERO errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. If your proposal is sloppily written, your reader may assume you are a careless person. The reader will be less likely to value the recommendations in your proposal. A flawless proposal builds your credibility, so your reader is more likely to accept your ideas.To “sell” your proposal, you'll need to supply convincing evidence that

* your plan is feasible, is cost effective, can actually be implemented, and will produce results (citations from your text are an effective form of evidence).
* you have a strong grasp of communication knowledge (i.e., evidence that you know what you're talking about). You can do this by including vocabulary and principles you’ve learned in class and by describing specific examples of how you can apply these principles.
* you can communicate effectively via written language. Grammar, spelling, neatness, and format will add to or detract from your credibility (see Adler & Elmhorst, Appendix II, Business Writing, ‘Writing Well’).

**Content and Format for this Proposal:** Your proposal should be arranged under several headings, as follows. Use a heading for each section except the title page.

***Title Page***: On the title page, center the following information. Each item should be on a separate line, single-spaced: title of the report; (skip two lines); Submitted by [your name]; college name; class and section; date submitted.

**Overview:** Start the overview on a new page. This section serves as a preview of the contents of your report. This section should only consist of about six to ten sentences.

Your goal in the overview is to convince the reader that your proposal is worth reading. One effective approach is to briefly summarize the problem, then briefly state how your proposal will solve that problem. End with a strong constructive statement about the value your recommendations will bring to the organization, team, class, friendship, or family. In the overview, be very brief and get right to the point. Reserve the details about your proposal for later. Use powerful language (recall Chapter 4), but be very sincere... don't oversimplify or exaggerate your claims. It wouldn't be realistic to claim that you evolve to instant, perfect communication overnight. Communication habits take a LONG time to change.

**Description of Problem:** Convince your reader that a communication weakness exists that needs to be managed. Be specific. Integrate terminology from the text as you identify what is wrong. Include page references from the text. Provide one or two specific examples of the weakness. It might be helpful to include quotations of words you've said that were problematic and a description of the ways others have reacted to your communication. Consider how these drawbacks impact the organization, team, friendship, or family as a whole.

**Resources and Constraints:** This section will be probably be shorter than the problem description and recommendations sections. Take stock of the current situation. What resources can you identify that could help you improve your communication? The text is one example. Excellent role models might be another resource. How can you use these resources to help you improve your communication? Describe any constraints that are likely to impede your progress in improving your communication habits. For example, if you are working three jobs and taking a full-time class load, your ability to put time and effort into this project is likely to be curtailed. (If this were the case, you might realize that improving your communication habits can bring lifelong benefits, so you might suggest in your recommendations that you will drop one job or not take as many classes at a time, to enable you to work on your life skills.)

**Recommendations:** This is the most crucial section of your proposal. This will be the longest section of your entire document. Propose how you plan to improve the communication weakness. Describe exactly what you plan to accomplish. Detail the specific steps you will take to achieve your objectives. Be realistic. Be specific. If you quoted examples of detrimental language in your problem description, it would be helpful to include here some examples of effective phrases you could substitute. Explain why your plan is desirable for the organization, team, relationship, and for you. Show why your plan is feasible. Your recommendations should demonstrate that you are personally "engaging" with the concepts learned in this class. You don't need to quote directly from the text, but include page references so the reader can look up the concepts easily.

**Summary**: Summarize the problem and the recommendations. Explain how these recommendations, if adopted, would improve communication. Be as specific as possible. End with a strong, constructive message about the importance of this proposal. Add a gracious closing statement (e.g., you are looking forward to implementing the plan; you are expecting constructive results; etc.).

**Works Cited**: You’re required to integrate several references from your communication text. Identify your source in two places.

-Use **parenthetical citations** within the body of your paper when you refer to information from your readings. Here's an example: (Adler & Elmhorst, p. 23).  
  
- At the end of your report, include a section titled **Works Cited**. Cite your text in APA or MLA style.

Adler, R & J. Elmhorst.(2012). Communicating at Work (SLCC Custom Edition). Boston: McGraw Hill.

-You’re only required to cite your text. If you include optional additional sources, list them in a recognized format (such as APA or MLA) in alphabetical order, according to authors' last names.

## Grading Criteria: Refer to the Scoring Guide for this assignment.