



Newsletter, July 2016

In this newsletter, you will find current announcements and a summary of the articles found in this month's issue as a preview of the articles that will be published in October 2016. The registration for the 81st Annual International Conference of the Association for Business Communication is also on the horizon.

IJBC Announcements

Seeking Research Collaborators

The Center for Management Communication at the Marshall School of Business is seeking research collaborators in a teaching project that involves undergraduate students from across the globe working in virtual teams. Dubbed the “Virtual Business Professional Project” and co-sponsored by IBM, the six-week assignment gives students real-world experience using communication and collaboration technologies employed in today's corporate environment. Using the IBM Connections platform, students plan and hold virtual meetings, co-author and collaboratively revise documents, use project management tools, and create online presentations. Researchers are currently gathering both quantitative and qualitative research from students to learn more about how they use technology in teams, intercultural communication, and leadership. To learn more about the project, please visit <https://www.marshall.usc.edu/faculty/centers/cmc/virtual-business-professional-project>.

Upcoming Conference

The 81st Annual International Conference of the Association for Business Communication will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on October 19 through 21, 2016. The conference theme is “Enchanting and Engaging our Stakeholders in Business Communication.” The conference will be held at the Hotel Albuquerque in Old Town. Online registration for the conference will open in mid-July. More information about the conference can be found at <http://www.businesscommunication.org/page/2016-annual>.

IJBC Notes

IJBC's current average time from submission to first decision is 40 days. Its average time from submission to final decision is 63 days.

2014 Web of Science® Estimated Impact Factor is 0.706

2014 Ranking: 79/241 Economics, Econometrics and Finance (miscellaneous) | 103/236 Business, Management and Accounting (miscellaneous) (Scopus®)
Source: SCImago 2014 Journal Rankings

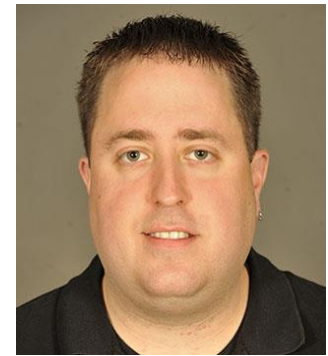
Featured Articles from July 2016

Email and Face to Face Organizational Dissent as a Function of Leader-Member Exchange Status

Anna Turnage and Alan Goodboy



The purpose of this study was to examine whether leader-member exchange status (in-group vs. out-group) of employees explains differences in organizational dissent (i.e., articulated, latent, displaced) via e-mail as opposed to face-to-face. Participants were 166 full-time employees working in a variety of organizations. Results indicated that out-group employees were more likely to express articulated dissent through e-mail, whereas in-group employees were more likely to express articulated



dissent in person. The results of this study suggest that the quality of the supervisor-subordinate relationship is important in determining how contradictory opinions are communicated in an upward manner via e-mail. Communicating these subordinate opinions in person to a supervisor, instead of sending an e-mail, may be indicative of a better working relationship. Furthermore, e-mail may be a positive venue for out-group employees, previously unwilling to question management, to dissent.

Organizational Sensemaking: Interpretations of Workplace “Strangeness”

Larry Erbert



The goal of this study was to examine employee interpretation of strange, unusual, and unexpected workplace experiences. Interviews were conducted with 22 employees of a large national insurance firm in the Midwest that were intended to capture the story theme, employee response, attributions or assignments of causes, and degree of organizational change. Results indicated that the most common *strangeness* experience themes were lapse or lack of professionalism, general uncertainty, threat to the internal organizational environment, and embarrassment. Employee responses to strange experiences included greater efforts toward information seeking, assistance giving, use of humor, and accommodation

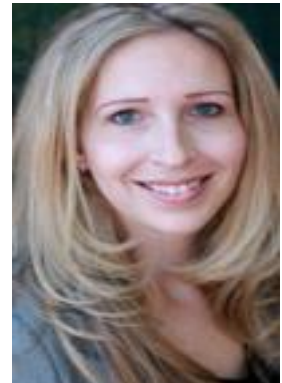
to others in the organization. Causal attributions revolved around themes of communication, organizational change, and the nature of personal problems in the workplace. Finally, change themes included “no changes,” consequences for employee actions, and improvements (improved communication, teamwork, problem-solving, conflict management).

Acting and Reacting: Work/Life Accommodation and the Blue Collar Worker

Renee Cowan and Jamie Bochantin



This study examines blue-collar employees' experiences with work/life. More specifically, the strategies used by skilled and unskilled employees when making work/life accommodation requests are uncovered and detailed. Using qualitative methods, the authors found that blue-collar employees use both proactive (circumvention, relating, factual appeals, and honesty) and reactive (ultimatums and other-focused appeals) strategies when seeking work/life accommodations.



Extracting Meaning and Relevance from Work: The Potential Connection between the Listening Environment and Employee's Organizational Identification and Commitment

Kendra Reed, Jerry Goolsby, and Michelle Johnston

This study explores an organization's listening environment as a mechanism used by employees to interpret organizational information and translate signals into meaning and relevance, culminating in identification with and commitment to the organization. Firmly grounded in theory and research from diverse academic literatures and research traditions, especially Social Learning Theory from Social Psychology, hypotheses are developed and then tested in a carefully designed study. Data collected from employees in a high-performing manufacturing organization offer an ideal setting for testing hypotheses, while holding other contextual variables constant. Statistical findings imply that employees who perceive work environments as being facilitative of interactive communication between and among employees respond with heightened attachments to organizations. The study's results admonish scholars to include listening in future studies of business communication and organizational behavior, while managers are encouraged to assess the mechanisms their organizations use to facilitate an organizational listening climate at work.



A Study of the Employment of Denial during a Complex and Unstable Crisis Involving Multiple Actors

Matthew Bamber and Simon Parry



This study reviews the uses of denial through a complex and unstable crisis: the *Deepwater Horizon* tragedy in the Gulf of Mexico. Denial is typically viewed as a binary response—“we did not do this”—with a binary intended outcome—“and therefore we are not to blame.” The authors argue that this interpretation is overly simplistic. They found that Transocean and Halliburton executed a strategy consisting of distancing and (counter)attack to shift blame, whereas BP pursued a strategy dominated by compassion and ingratiation intermixed with carefully used denial to share blame. This form of blame-sharing is a hybrid of denial and acceptance. BP accepted responsibility but argued that others were responsible, too. The authors’ analysis also shows that deny-response options were restricted or relaxed dependent on situational and intertextual context. They find that the tone of the involved parties’ releases became significantly more aggressive as the situation developed toward its legal conclusion and as they responded to one another’s progressively more hostile releases.



Upcoming in October 2016

Non-Financial Information in Investor Communications

Alexander Laskin

Communicating Briefly: Technically

Keri Stephens and Ashley Barrett

Corporate Social Responsibility and the Communication Imperative: Perspectives from CSR Managers

Vidhi Chaudhri

Managing Difficult Workplace Conversations: Goals, Strategies and Outcomes

Graham Bradley and Amanda Campbell

The Effects of Leader Motivating Language Use on Employee Decision Making

Jackie Mayfield and Milton Mayfield

IJBC Editorial Board

Each newsletter profiles a selection of board members for our readers.



Menno de Jong is Professor of Communication Science at the University of Twente in Enschede, Netherlands. De Jong's main research activities are conducted within the areas of corporate and organizational communications and technical and professional communication. He is interested in role of communication in maintaining lasting relationships between organizations and their employees in processes of change, innovation and decision making, and to identify the role of communication in maintaining a balance between organizations and their external stakeholders. In the area of technical and professional communication, de Jong is interested in communication design processes, including the role of applied communication research (for example, usability testing, communication audits, mystery shopping, and identity, image and reputation research) in intercultural communication, and in the competencies and skills of communication professionals (e.g., empathy, practical wisdom). He has published in numerous journals and is Editor-in-Chief of *Technical Communication*.

Irene Pollach is Associate Professor in the Department of Business Communication at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. Pollach's research interests include corporate communication, top management teams, CSR and reputation, CSR and legitimacy, social media, and online privacy. She has published in various communication journals.



Geoffrey Cross is a Professor of English at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Cross received his M.A. and Ph.D in English from Ohio State University and an M.A. in Journalism from the University of Missouri. He teaches rhetoric and composition, business and technical writing, American Literature until 1900, and ethnographic and other qualitative research methods. His research interests include verbal-visual composing, group writing, visual design, writing-across-the-curriculum, and ethnographic research methods.

Kim Sydow Campbell is a Professor at Culverhouse at the University of Alabama. Her Ph.D. is from Louisiana State University. Her research interests include health literacy, leadership communication, qualitative research methods, scholarly publishing, and technical communication. In 2013, she was named the Kitty O. Locker Outstanding Researcher by the Association for Business Communication for the work she has produced over the past 25 years, which includes books, chapters in edited collections, online professional development courses, and articles in the top journals in business and technical communication. She has also won research grants from

the Association for Business Communication and the Society for Technical Communication. Dr. Campbell served as editor-in-chief of the IEEE Transactions on Professional Communication from 1998 through 2008. IEEE honored her with the Emily K. Schlesinger Award for Distinguished Service in 2007 and the Alfred N. Goldsmith Award for Contributions to Engineering Communication in 2009.



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The Association for Business Communication (ABC) is an international, interdisciplinary organization committed to advancing business communication research, education, and practice.