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## Communication in the Business Environment

Many students have encountered writing only within a literary world of creative expression. Business writing lives in a different world. (If you nonetheless insist on a literary reference, the literary model for business writing is Hemingway [1].)

- Business writing requires action. Business writing requires short sentences. Business writing does not mumble. Business writing does not wander. Business writing is brutal.

*NOT - The effective expression of ideas and concepts within the world of the business community demands, even necessitates, that that expression be delivered in a straightforward and unimpeded fashion often exemplified by bursting paragraphs each comprised of a series of brief sentences.*

- Arm yourself.<sup>1</sup> All analysis is based upon assumptions. Analytical assumptions may be wrong despite all best efforts and intentions. Analysts should arm themselves by clearly expressing the limitations of their model and analysis. Saul Gass (1996) relates the following:

Dantzig (1982, p.46) tells about describing the concept of linear programming for the first time in public at a meeting of the Econometric Society (circa 1948).

After my talk, the chairman called for discussion. For a moment there was silence; then a hand raised. It was Hotelling's (the famous statistician and economist). I must hasten to explain that Hotelling was huge. ... He said devastatingly: 'But we know the world is nonlinear.' Then he majestically sat down. ... Suddenly another hand in the audience was raised. It was von Neumann (the famous mathematician and inventor of game theory). 'Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman,' he said, 'if the speaker does not mind, I would like to reply for him.' Naturally, I agreed. Von Neumann said: 'The speaker titled his talk "Linear Programming." Then he carefully stated his axioms. If you have an application that satisfies the axioms, use it. If it does not, then don't, and he sat down.

- Focus on the product. The analysis is the product. The analyst is not the product. Delete all constructions that use "I think ...", "I calculate ...", "I analyze ...", etc. To paraphrase, there is no 'I' in analyst. The point is that thinking, calculating, and analyzing should not depend upon the vagaries of some "I". Proper thinking, calculating, and analyzing is proper thinking, calculating, and analyzing. The introduction of the personality "I" diminishes the effectiveness of business writing.

Everything will be alright.

*NOT - I think that everything will be alright.*

The second statement is weasely. The second statement does not inspire confidence. The first question to ask of the second statement is of "I's" capacity for competent thinking. Do not substitute the royal "we" or other self-identifier in an attempt to avoid "I". And finally, for the would-be analytical netizens, never ever use "IMHO" or such. Decision-makers may or may not have opinions. Analysts have no opinions, humble or otherwise.

