

## **Chapter 2 – Leadership Communication Purpose, Strategy, and Structure**

### **Teaching Notes**

Chapter 2 provides instruction on developing communication strategy, including analyzing an audience, and on organizing written and oral communication for different purposes and audiences. The primary objectives of Chapter 2 are to teach students to do the following:

- Establish a clear communication purpose.
- Develop a communication strategy.
- Analyze audiences.
- Organize written and oral communication effectively.

Students will use the techniques introduced in this chapter throughout a leadership communication course. In particular, the students need to master the strategy framework and learn to apply it in most communication situations. With the rapid-fire communication typical today in Tweets and texts, the students seldom slow down to think about their audiences, media, messages, etc., with much care. Therefore, the instructor will probably need to keep emphasizing the importance of developing a communication strategy, particularly for any complex or important communication. Having the students complete the applications in this chapter will ensure they master the concepts and are able to apply them.

Instructors will probably want to start the class by going through the PowerPoint slides for this chapter. After going through all of the slides, the instructor may want to have the students do Application 2.3 in class.

### **Application 2.1: Case Study: Superior Foods**

#### **The Case: Superior Foods Corporation Faces a Challenge**

The Superior Foods case offers several interesting strategy choices in relation to organizational structure of the message (direct vs. indirect), media selection, and spokesperson. Because the employees will be receiving bad news in a context that is also quite uncertain, we recommend that these messages be designed using an indirect organizational structure. The audience will be negatively predisposed to hearing this information, so building a foundation of facts and explaining the circumstances will be important to establishing management credibility before announcing the layoffs. The instructor should consider media or channel choices and spokesperson designation in

tailoring the assignment to meet the needs of the class. In-depth audience analysis is particularly important in this case: students must focus on identifying the information and “feeling” needs of the employees as they develop the communication strategy.

In addition, this case is useful in helping students learn to think about their purpose and how they might generate ideas to develop an argument. The instructor might want to have them use a decision tree or idea mapping for example or jump right into the Pyramid. An example idea mapping response is included below.

### **Approaches to Teaching**

The case may be used to help students learn to develop a full communication strategy or as a writing exercise. The instructor can compare and contrast the direct vs. indirect approach and discuss when and why the indirect approach might be preferred.

**1. Strategy Instruction.** If you choose to teach this as a strategy exercise, you may want to begin with a 15-20 minute discussion of the broader context to establish some shared assumptions before you start work on the case. Students may wonder if layoffs are necessary or whether the company might adopt other methods to scale back production. Students will wonder how the company would choose the employees to be laid off, how long the layoffs might last, whether medical coverage would be available to employees during that time, etc. The class may choose to establish and work with a common set of assumptions; or, if the case is assigned as an individual effort, the instructor may ask students to list any assumptions they make on a separate sheet of paper.

Once the class has agreed on some shared assumptions, you could break them into groups of 4-6 to spend about 15- 30 minutes discussing the strategy. Students should identify the specific information and “feeling” needs of the audience, consider who the best spokesperson is, discuss the pros and cons of various channels to communicate most effectively, and determine appropriate timing. Groups may decide that a meeting would be better than a written document, or they may prefer a meeting followed by an e-mail or internal memo that lays out the facts so that employees can take the memo home to share with their families. Groups should use **Exhibit 2.1** to guide their discussion of the strategy.

After the group discussion period, groups may gather to share their conclusions; the instructor may use this as an opportunity for students to make an extemporaneous oral presentation to the class.

**2. Writing Instruction.** If the instructor plans to use the case as a writing exercise, the group should first establish a shared set of assumptions. Students should next work together or independently to structure a pyramid or other organizational device to guide their writing, after which they should draft the e-mail or memo assigned. Each student could return to the next class session with the memo for peer review and discussion, if desired.

The instructor could assign one of the following three writing assignments (listed here in order of difficulty from easiest to most difficult):

1. Memo or e-mail communicating the company's situation (basic information about the mad-cow disease and restriction on exports) and inviting employees to a meeting where they can learn all the details.
2. Post-meeting e-mail providing key information and explaining the details of the layoff; this e-mail could be designed as a handout for employees to take home after the meeting.
3. Memo or e-mail actually announcing the layoffs (possibly inviting to a meeting as well).

### Questions for Discussion

- What key questions would you have if you were an employee?
- What questions do you think the laid off employees will have?
- How does Shroeder want the employees to feel about the company, and what can he do to sustain the morale of the employees who are not being laid off?
- Who is the best spokesperson for the communication – Ben Shroeder or Jason Starnes – and why?
- What is the best medium for communicating this idea – an email, memo, meeting, or perhaps some combination of media?

### Instructor Analysis Prior to Teaching Superior Foods Case

The following are some assumptions you might choose to make before approaching the assignment:

- The layoffs will affect 25% of the workers, or about 100 people, and the company will lay off those most recently hired. *The exact names of those who will be laid off have not yet been decided, but the company will know within 48 hours.*
- The layoffs will last for at least three months, and could possibly last for a longer time.
- The production shutdown will involve only parts of the plant.
- Employees will still have access to the company's health care, and will be eligible for unemployment assistance from the government.
- The company is not unionized.

The table below summarizes some additional analysis the instructor may find useful.

### Superior Foods Case Communication Strategy Analysis

Component	Analysis
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The situation is very uncertain; Schroeder does not know how long the layoffs will be needed.</li> <li>• The timing makes communicating any bad news difficult. Is it better to announce layoffs before Christmas or after?</li> <li>• Superior is a large international company, but the Nebraska City plant employs only about 400 workers, so it is a relatively small, family-friendly group with a casual corporate culture.</li> <li>• The workers may be from a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, so the communication needs to be clear and straightforward rather than complex.</li> </ul>
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ben Shroeder needs to inform the employees of the facts of the decision and be sure that they have all the information they need.</li> <li>• He wants to make the employees feel that they are being treated fairly, to minimize any angry responses or violent actions by disgruntled employees, and to ensure that, when he needs to re-hire them, most of them will be able to return to the company.</li> <li>• Shroeder also needs to ensure that the morale of the employees who are not being laid off stays reasonably high; they need to feel that the actions are fair and are being taken to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Nebraska plant.</li> <li>• The communication needs to be complete and consistent with other Superior Foods messages so that if it is conveyed to secondary audiences (such as friends, neighbors, and possibly even media reporters in the city) the company's message is still complete and clear.</li> </ul>
Audiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The employees are the primary audience and the secondary audiences might include friends, neighbors, possibly city officials, and the media.</li> </ul>
Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary audience needs to know the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Why is this happening?</li> <li>– Are we in any danger of getting the mad cow disease?</li> <li>– How will the company select people to be laid off?</li> <li>– Were any other options considered by management?</li> <li>– When do the layoffs start?</li> <li>– How long will it last?</li> <li>– What should I tell others about this?</li> <li>– Will the laid-off workers get unemployment?</li> <li>– Will those not laid off have other job responsibilities in the meantime?</li> <li>– How can those with jobs help support those who got laid off?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The meeting presentation should be organized in an indirect way, starting with the facts about the situation (probably in chronological order) and what steps Superior Foods needs to take to ensure the long-term viability of the plant.</li> <li>• Next, the details about the layoffs should be reviewed.</li> <li>• Finally, the employees need to be told where to go for additional information</li> </ul>

*Superior Foods Case Communication Strategy Analysis (continued)*

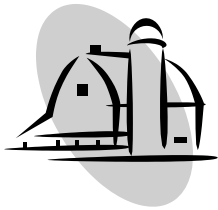
Component	Analysis
Medium/ Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shroeder may want to start with a memo laying the foundation for the information to come. The details of the layoff should be delivered in a meeting, since this is a relatively small company and people will want to hear the news from Shroeder.</li> <li>• Shroeder should offer a short presentation followed by a question and answer session so that everyone feels that management is hearing his or her concerns are. (Depending on the organizational design of the company, Shroeder may want to tell his senior managers first and then move into a meeting with the line employees).</li> <li>• Next, Shroeder should distribute a memo that reiterates all the facts; workers can take the memo home to help share the news with their families. The memo should have the phone number for the Human Resources department and the website information available so people know where to get answers to any questions they forgot to ask at the meeting.</li> <li>• If the company has an “intra-net” website or video capabilities, the meeting presentation could be recorded for any employees who are unable to attend.</li> <li>• The meeting should be held as soon as possible. Once the company decides on the names of those being laid off, the individuals should be notified in person by their supervisors.</li> </ul>
Spokes- person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shroeder should be the main spokesperson since he is the Nebraska plant manager and has the highest credibility.</li> <li>• Jason Starnes could deliver the message, but it would probably seem to the employees that Shroeder was “ducking” the responsibility and leaving it up to the corporate office, so Shroeder really needs to be the primary spokesperson. For additional communications with employees, mid-level managers may assist.</li> </ul>
Timing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The meeting should be held as soon as most of the facts are known so that rumors do not get started and reduce morale any further.</li> <li>• Again, the difference of announcing the layoffs before or after Christmas has to be considered. See the media section for information on sequencing of the various channels.</li> </ul>
Feedback/ Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shroeder can evaluate the effectiveness of his meeting and memo by gauging several factors:</li> <li>• The level of questions to him and to the Human Resources representative.</li> <li>• The number of incidents of openly disgruntled or aggressive employees.</li> <li>• The level of media coverage.</li> <li>• Morale: during the lay-off period, the company should meet with remaining employees or use a survey to measure morale.</li> <li>• Number of skilled employees who are still willing to return to the company after the layoff period.</li> </ul>

## Example Response to E-mail/Memo for Superior Foods

### Purpose Statement for Ben Shroeder's E-mail/Memo to Announce Layoffs and Invite Employees to the Meeting (See assumptions in Instructor Analysis)

Ben needs to inform the employees of the facts of the situation, ensure them that they are not in any danger from the mad cow disease, announce the reasons behind and need for production cutbacks and the temporary layoffs, and provide complete information on the meeting (time, place, etc.)

His e-mail/memo needs to convey that, while they do not yet have all the information, the layoffs will be administered fairly and are necessary to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Nebraska plant. Conveying these ideas will help maintain the morale of the workforce that is not being laid off. The communication needs to be complete and consistent with other Superior Foods messages, so that if it is conveyed to secondary audiences (such as friends, neighbors, and possibly even media reporters in the city), the company's message is still complete and clear.



*The Metroburg application offers an example of a pyramid. For this application, we have offered a sample idea map below the strategy table.*

### **SUPERIOR FOODS CORPORATION**

To: All Employees  
From: Ben Schroeder, Plant Manager  
Date: January 5, 2013  
Subject: Meeting on Company Response to International Import Bans

As many of you have read in the news, the U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, better known as “mad cow disease,” in a single Holstein cow in Washington State. As a result, many of our international customers have banned imports of beef products from the United States. We will be able to store many of our processed meat products until the bans are lifted. In the meantime, we must take definitive action to ensure the survival of our company. This memo outlines our situation and the steps we are forced to take in response to these bans. I invite all of you to a meeting this afternoon at 3:00 p.m. in the main conference room, where I will give you more information.

### **Our Products Are Safe; Our Market Position Is Not**

Our rigorous safety and inspection standards have made Superior Foods one of the most trusted names in the industry. Mad cow disease has not been found in any of our variety meats and we have every reason to believe all our products are safe. However, seven countries have already imposed either partial or total bans on U.S. imports; the result is that the international market for our products has closed. Senator Nelson is busy working on behalf of the State of Nebraska to lead international efforts to ease the bans, but we expect at least a three-month period in which our products will only be sold here in the U.S.

### **We Must Cut Back Production**

Without international markets for our products, we have no choice but to reduce our production levels. We believe these reductions will be temporary, but they are essential if we want Superior Foods to survive. If we cut production approximately 25% for several months, and produce only products that freeze for easy storage, we will be best prepared to meet the balance of supply and demand when the bans end. If we over-produce our products, prices will drop, causing further long-term disruption to our business.

I have always valued our ability to communicate openly with each other here at Superior, so I wanted you to know, as soon as possible, what our action plan must be. An unfortunate but necessary consequence of production cutbacks is that temporary employee layoffs will be needed. The details are being worked out. We will reassign duties and adjust schedules to determine the minimum number of layoffs required and be sure that the layoffs are fair. If you are affected, your direct supervisor will notify you personally by the end of the day.

### **Today's Meeting Offers More Information**

I know that you will all have many questions and I invite you to join me in the conference room at 3:00 p.m. to ask them. I assure each of you that Superior will do everything possible to support our employees; we will pay for health care for several months and help each affected employee file for temporary unemployment benefits.

I know this is a difficult time; we are a family here at Superior Foods and we will do all we can to help laid-off employees come back to work as soon as possible. I will see you all at 3:00 p.m. to answer your questions about our plan to survive the international bans on imported beef products.

## Application 2.2: Developing Communication Strategy

### The Case: Spree Cruise Lines

This application provides a relatively simple context; most students can imagine themselves as a passenger in this situation and will find it easy to identify with how the passengers might feel and what they would want to know, particularly given all of the cruise line problems recently. . The case does not involve a serious crisis or danger to health, and most likely will not involve a material impact to the company's financial situation; therefore, we avoid the need to introduce some of the complications associated with crisis communications and fair disclosure regulations for a public company.

### Approaches to Teaching

The case is designed to guide students in developing a comprehensive audience analysis and communication strategy for multiple constituencies. It can also be used as a basis for team oral presentations, and may be expanded into a writing assignment if you choose to assign a memo written to cruise employees or a communication to passengers. You may also use this case to introduce students to the delicate nature of social media communications, asking them to develop an approach to dealing with the buzz that has already been generated on Twitter, Facebook, and blogs.

For a focus on audience analysis and communication strategy, you may use the case as an individual assignment or break the class into four to six groups to consider separate audiences. If you are working with groups, you may want to begin with the premise that Spree will need to develop a *comprehensive* strategy and that Tara has initiated the effort by assigning groups to work with the strategy for each of the following audiences:

- **Passengers/customers now onboard the cruise.** You may choose to let the groups uncover the various channels on their own, or you may point out the media already used to communicate to passengers: the ship's daily newsletter, the PA system, announcements at meals, etc. The groups should also consider email, text messaging, or social media channels. The muster station is a true "red herring" in this example, because if the passengers are all called there, they may panic in belief that the vessel is sinking!
- **Employees on the vessel.** You may want to ask the group to consider whether the employees suspected a problem on the previous cruise and whether they might have mentioned it somewhere other than simply in the office.
- **The news media in New Orleans.** You may point out that the Internet café on the ship would allow for passengers to contact people in the home or port cities, so the media may learn of the problem quickly. In fact, considering the social media buzz, groups should assume that the media can and will know about the troubles very soon, if they have not heard already.



- **Spree's shareholders.** You may choose to make some assumptions about the financial implications of the cruise interruption and the potential liability for damages linked with the building vibrations.
- **Future customers/general public.** The general public audience may be combined with news media if the class has only four groups, though special attention needs to be paid to the channels through which messages are sent if this is the case.

NOTE: You may expand to a sixth group by having one group address the **City Government in New Orleans**. Since little is known yet about the nature of the problem in part one of this case, add the information from the Spree Case, Revisited, in Application 12.2. The instructor may also consider whether to add some of this information for the group addressing the shareholders.

Groups can spend the first 30 minutes using flip charts or laptops to record their ideas and develop an audience analysis and communication strategy, using the questions in the assignment and/or Exhibit 2.5 as a template. Astute students may ask to coordinate with other groups during their breakout session; you may allow this, or tell them the company plans to coordinate once all the groups have reported their findings.

### **Debriefing**

The instructor may point out that the Spree Corporation would be sure to coordinate responses for a unified and consistent message with additional facts delivered to each audience as appropriate.

The debriefing can be accomplished as a group case discussion or in conjunction with reports from the individual groups. If time permits, each group could prepare and deliver a five-minute report to the class on their key findings. If time does not allow for oral presentations, the instructor should be prepared to debrief the discussions by asking key questions and listing information on the board for each key constituency, pointing out ways to coordinate the communication in terms of timing, channels, and messages.

### **Example Responses for Application 2.3: Developing Communication Strategy**

For the purposes of the teacher's guide, we have offered an in-depth analysis to address the audience of *current passengers*. In class, each student group would develop a comparable analysis for the group's designated audience. See the table at the end of this sample for some key ideas related to each audience, which might be a student response if you had assigned this as an individual assignment.

Question #1: See the “approach to teaching” section for a list of key audiences.

Question #2: Audience analysis for the current passenger group

- a) The cruise line needs to inform the passengers about what is happening and why, and what to expect in terms of logistics and possible compensation.
- b) The passengers will want to know:
  - why one engine will be shut down
  - if they are in any danger and if there is anything else wrong with the ship
  - when they will reach the vacation port(s) and home
  - which shore excursions will still be possible
  - how to reschedule or get refunds for shore excursions already booked
  - if they can disembark from the vessel when it docks in Cozumel and, if they do, whether they will be refunded any of their cruise fare
  - what monetary or other compensation the cruise line is willing to give them for the inconvenience (whether they stay aboard or disembark).
- c) The passengers are disappointed that their vacations are ruined and are probably angry. Those who disembark will have to make travel arrangements on their own, and those who stay onboard will wonder if the cruise line is treating them fairly. Passengers probably suspected that the vessel was not functioning properly and may wonder if the cruise line knew about the problem before they left port.

The cruise line would like passengers to feel that the situation was beyond the control of the cruise line and that the company is sorry for the inconvenience. The company wants to make all passengers feel that they have been treated fairly and keep them as future customers. The line wants to minimize complaints current passengers may make to friends, family, and the press as a result of the problems with the cruise and how they felt they were treated. Accomplishing this goal is important to securing Spree’s future customer base as well as keeping the current passengers as Spree customers.

- d) The cruise line will motivate the passengers to accept their message by offering financial compensation along with sincere apologies and by providing as much information about the situation as possible. They should offer an immediate shipboard credit to each passenger as monetary compensation for the inconvenience, make it as easy as possible to get credit for cancelled shore excursions, and schedule additional shipboard activities to make up for the inconvenience. The company may want to consider discounts on future cruises, which could be e-mailed immediately to all customers affected..

Question #3: Communication Strategy (answered for the passenger audience)

- a) Objectives. Tara's personal objectives in coordinating communications with the passengers would be to ensure the shipboard captain and cruise director that she can help them and can be relied on as a resource in the future.

With regard to the passengers, Tara wants to tailor a communication or a set of communication that informs them about what has happened and provides all the information about what to expect. She also wants to ensure that the customers are satisfied enough with the cruise line's response that they will choose Spree if they take another cruise. She wants to minimize the incidents of passengers telling friends and neighbors how disappointing it was and spreading negative opinions about Spree. Her response will impact future marketing efforts, so it is important that customers feel they were treated fairly and with empathy; their vacation expectations were not met.

- b) Spokesperson. Tara should help develop the wording for the communication, but it might be best delivered by the captain since he is in charge of the vessel at sea. Another choice for spokesperson would be the cruise director, although his best role might be to answer any questions after the announcement has been made by the captain. Any follow-up communications to passengers after the cruise has ended can come from Spree's corporate office. If Spree already has a social media presence, those active in those spheres should deliver the message; if not, care should be taken to ensure that appropriate spokespeople respond to the social media buzz as soon as possible.
- c) Channel. There are a variety of channel choices for the cruise line to use: shipboard newsletter, PA system, announcements before events such as the evening shows, letter under each cabin door, etc. If the ship has a list of phone numbers and emails for the passengers, notices could be sent about any special announcements or meetings to expect in the near future as well.

Since many passengers return to their cabins only at night, the first information about the delay of the schedule should come over the PA system during the meal times, since most passengers are in the dining area. At that time, special text and e-mail messages could also note the announcement for those who are not at meals. The announcement could refer to a special issue of the ship's newsletter that has all the details; this document would be posted in public areas and a copy placed under each cabin door. The document could also mention that copies of the details have been emailed to each passenger who provided an email.

Before any of these notices come out, however, each employee on the vessel should be briefed about how to answer questions, especially the dining room staff. The cruise director should make additional announcements at the evening shows and be available to answer questions. After the cruise, individual letters should be mailed to each customer's home with an additional apology and any special offers the company has chosen to make.

The company may also consider the possibility of building a unique landing page on their web site to address any concerns, questions, or complaints that the customers have, with key customer service employees assigned to deal with issues as they come in and keep the FAQ updated. The page could be kept live for a month or so after the cruise and could be used to address future issues more quickly.

- d) **Timing.** The announcements should be made as soon as the employees are briefed and ready to answer questions. The newsletter and email should be ready for simultaneous release, with the newsletter both posted and placed under cabin doors. After the cruise, letters should reach customers within a few days of their arrival home and should direct customers to the web page that contains all information as noted above.
- e) **Cultural context.** The customers are mostly Americans, so they will expect relatively straightforward communications and want the opportunity to ask questions. The communication should be written using clear and concise language rather than "legalese" or very complex sentences. In addition, many of the customers are young and will likely be fairly web-savvy; as such, special attention should be paid to social media such as blogs and Twitter to help assuage concerns that can get out of control there quickly.

In terms of the culture aboard the ship, communication should flow along the standard lines of authority (captain on down to crew).

- f) **Measure of Success.** In the short term, the number of complaints onboard can be measured to see how the passengers are responding to the news. In the longer term, Spree may need to gauge market share from the Port of New Orleans on these cruises, and they will want to track the number of passengers who use any discounts on future cruises.

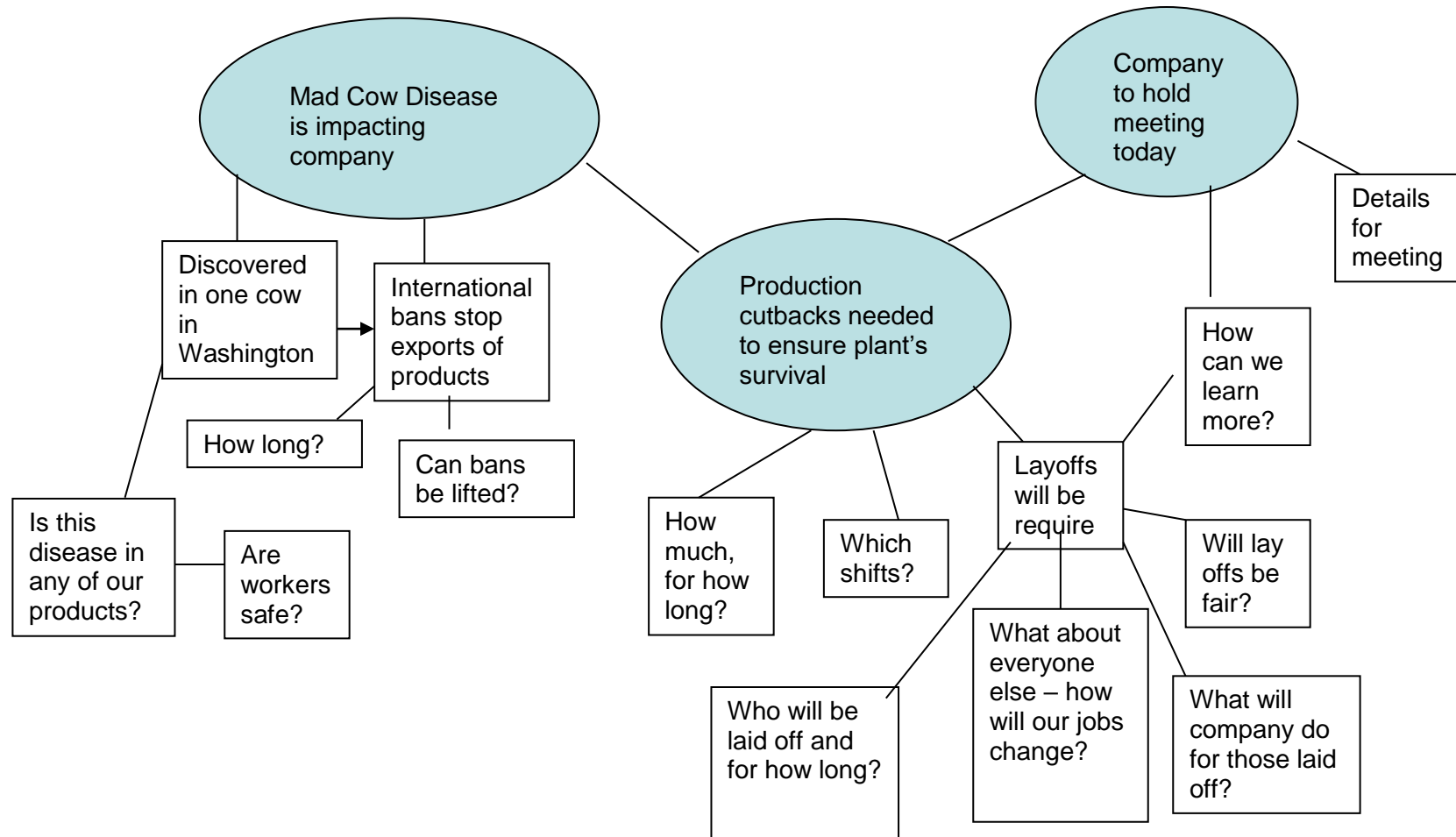
*See strategy table below for other audiences.*

**Strategy Table for Spree Case**

Key ideas for each audience in the Spree communication strategy: (see full example for passengers)						
Audience	Medium	Purpose	Message	Spokesperson	Timing	Measure of Success
Employees on the vessel	Meeting in each area; e-mail follow-ups	Inform. Prepare employees to answer questions, reassure them that the vessel is safe. Employees may wonder if the company knew about the problem; students may make an assumption about the facts if they wish.	Ship's engine needs to be shut down for mechanical purposes, ship not in danger, ports of call limited and shortened, details on compensation for passengers and how to help passengers re-book excursions, etc. Who to send passengers to if they have additional questions.	Captain should speak to next in line crew – then down the chain of command expected on the vessel	Before the news is delivered to the passengers	Crew is able to answer questions and few problems reach the captain's or cruise director level
New Orleans News Media	Phone calls to area reporters and press release to local media (not for national distribution); respond to any inquiries immediately. A press release should also include a hotline phone number and Web page address for media or relatives of passengers needing further information.	Persuade. Maintain credibility with local media that company will offer information and be fair to passengers; provide information before media is contacted by another source; use media as means to connect with general public and future customers	Information on vessel engines and safety of ship; news about limit on ports of call; information on how relatives of passengers can obtain more information (see hotline in medium section).  Student groups will need to decide how to address building vibrations	Tara Hoopes (for a more serious situation, a higher level manager or executive would be required)	After announcement to passengers. Call key media contacts as press release is being distributed.	Limited media coverage – the company can expect to see this as news on the day the story breaks and the day the ship arrives back in home port, but limiting any negative coverage would be most advantageous to the company
Spree shareholders	Assuming that the meeting referred to in the note (on Tara's chair) refers to a meeting being held within the week, the communications could take place during the previously scheduled meeting. If the meeting is not imminent, students may want to consider a special letter or other communication to shareholders	Inform. Advise shareholders of current situation and company's plan of action	Message can be combined into other information on current status of company – it should not be given too much importance, since situation on vessel will not impact company's financial performance significantly; company is handling public and customer relations to minimize market impact. Students should discuss how to handle the issue of possible liability for the historic buildings (insurance coverage, etc.)	Chief executive or other executive already addressing shareholders	At shareholder meeting	Share price steady, institutional investors and analysts do not report on the event.

## Chapter 02 - Leadership Communication Purpose, Strategy, and Structure

Audience	Medium	Purpose	Message	Spokesperson	Timing	Measure of Success
Future customers/ General public	Press releases, advertisements, continued marketing efforts, social media spheres	Persuade. The general public will see <i>local</i> media coverage and hear news from friends and relatives on board through a number of different communication channels. The general public really constitutes a secondary audience, except for the fact that many may be prior or future customers of Spree. Press releases, web pages, blog posts, Facebook updates, and the like can be used to provide information about new routes, ship upgrades, etc. and to show Spree's commitment to customer satisfaction and a modern, safe fleet. Beyond the local news media, students should discuss the pros and cons of communicating specifics about problems on this cruise.	Local media coverage will impact the general public, but nationwide, there is probably no need for a specific message related to the incident. General marketing efforts should continue.  Special consideration, however, should be given to the buzz on social media. If, indeed, that buzz has gone national, it may be important to put information on the company's home page or other social media presences	Marketing and Public Relations staff	ASAP, then at regular marketing/PR intervals	Continued market share strength



Sample idea map for Application 2-1

### **Application 2.3: Using the Pyramid to Organize an Argument**

This application is designed to help students understand the use of the Pyramid Principle to organize information. Instructors not familiar with the Pyramid Principle may want to read Barbara Minto's book of the same name. Instructors will want to emphasize that the Pyramid helps students organize information into a coherent argument so that the audience can more easily comprehend the message. It emphasizes the "top down" approach to organizing and presenting a message.

#### **Approaches to Teaching**

Since the facts are provided in this application, the focus is on deciding how to group the facts logically. This application contains both the pros and cons of the argument, so the instructor should use this opportunity to discuss how to handle the opposing information. Students have two options: one is to weave their refutation throughout the argument, and the other is to confront it up front. The instructor should point out the advantages and disadvantages of each.

This application works well as a group effort. Students should be allowed 15 - 20 minutes to develop their pyramids if working as a group.

The instructor may want to assign an audience for the entire class or assign different audiences for each group; however, leaving the audience open allows the instructor to test the students' ability to recognize the need to have an audience in mind to develop an effective argument.

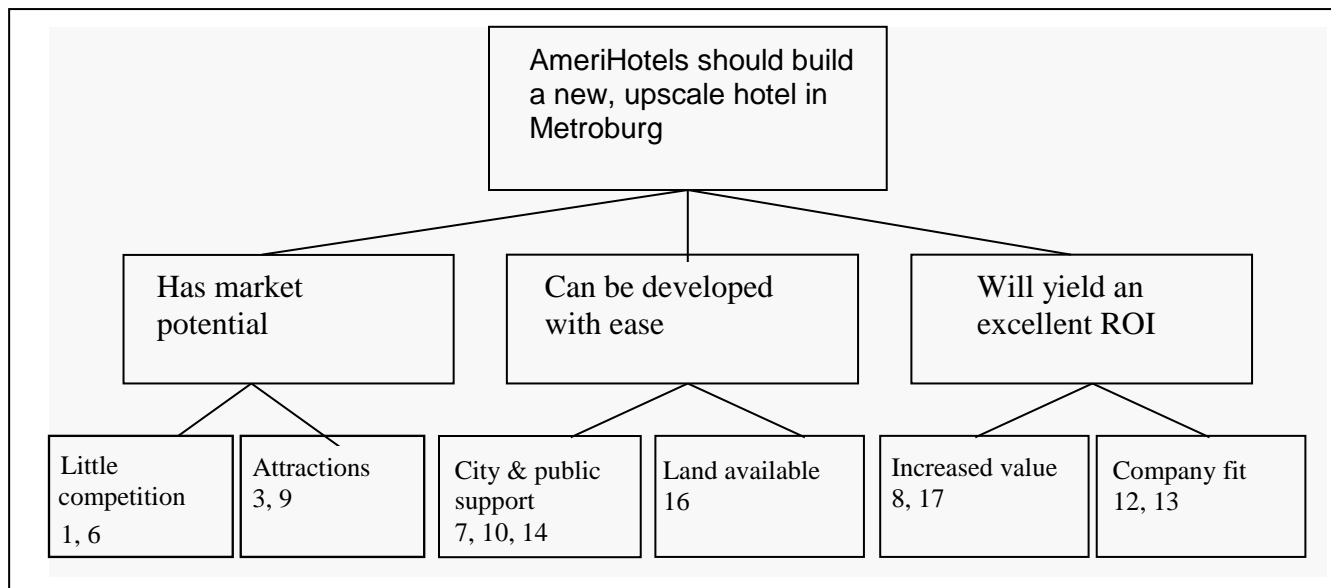
After the students have completed their pyramids, it works well to have a few of the groups present their pyramids to the rest of the class. The discussion should focus on the logic of the pyramid and how effective the message would be for different audiences.

#### **Example Responses to Assignment**

Student responses to this application will differ depending on the audiences they select, but examples of possible answers for two primary audiences for this application follow. Note: the numbers in the supporting boxes correspond to the numbered facts in the application.



### Audience # 1: The Board of Directors of AmeriHotels



### Audience # 2: The City Council of Metroburg

