



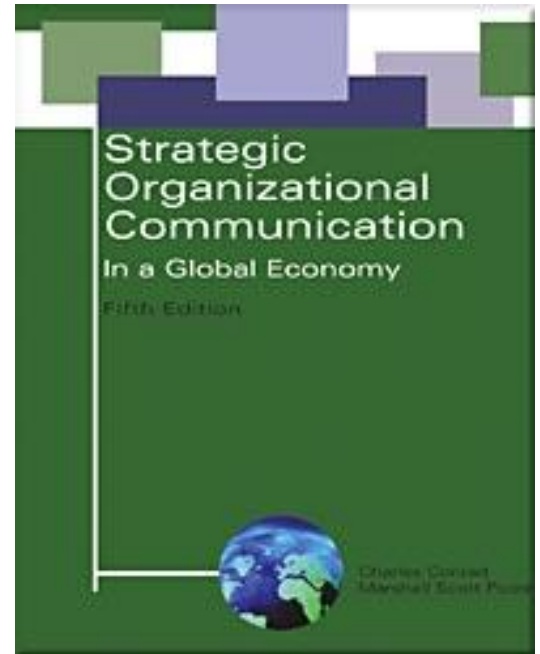
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Strategic Organizational Communication In a Global Economy (5th Edition)

[Conrad, Charles & Poole, Marshall Scott](#)
[Wadsworth Publishing, 2002.](#)

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Current Issue

Archives

Editorial Info

Search

Interact

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Now in its fifth edition, *Strategic Organizational Communication* remains in the forefront of organizational communication textbooks. This text both maintains the strengths of previous editions, and expands upon them in several ways. A strong point of previous editions has been an extensive literature review grounding the discussions. This continues in this edition. The bibliography and chapter notes continue to provide relevant citations as starting points for additional investigations. This makes this edition appropriate as a main text for advanced undergraduate classes and a supplementary text for graduate seminars. A second strength is its expanded discussion of the closely related areas of globalization, new organizational forms, and information technology. Unfortunately, these discussions are interspersed throughout the book, so the reader must integrate them on his/her own. A new chapter dedicated to globalization presents a particularly cogent discussion of several basic economic principles and their influence on current organizational thought and behavior. A third strength remains its conceptual basis in what Conrad and Poole call the 'action-situation-adaptation' cycle. The authors emphasize that actors make strategic choices about how they will operate in organizational life. Over time, these choices become taken for granted assumptions that define the opportunities and constraints actors possess when facing daily challenges. Actors then strategically adapt to these situations-but these behaviors tend to reproduce those same situations. An understanding of this cycle can provide a sense of empowerment to students beginning careers. Further, the literature reviews are effectively organized and presented through the lens of this model.

This conceptual grounding of the text, ironically, is a problem in two ways. First, the approach is simply stated-very complicated. Heavily influenced by structuration theory, the concepts and processes in this model are difficult to describe and summarize in an easy fashion. This is a challenge that must be addressed especially in undergraduate courses. Second, there are times when presentations of basic material are not as clear as they could be. For instance, the characteristics of a bureaucratic organization are best presented with a summary table, augmented by appropriate discussion. Folding this type of summary into the overall conceptual model as an example of an organizational constraint is counter-productive to understanding the

nature of the theory. A second limitation of this text is its continued cursory treatment of social network analysis. While chapter five focuses on Network Strategies of Organizational Design, the conceptual and methodological complexity of the emerging field of social network analysis is presented in less than one page. A final limitation of the text is the lack of representation of developments in other closely related fields. Recent research in Organizational Behavior has focused on Social Capital Theory. This approach argues that the position an actor has in his/her web of relationships provides access to differential resources. A second example is Transactive Memory Theory from Sociology. Both approaches have wide implications for Organizational Communication scholars and have been successfully applied in the field, but have yet to be represented in texts.

Charles Conrad and Marshall Scott Poole continue to provide an excellent contemporary treatment of the field in the fifth edition of Strategic Organizational Communication In a Global Economy. The text is an ideal choice of text for advanced undergraduate classes, supplementary material for graduate seminars, and an excellent resource for anyone seeking an overview of the field of Organizational Communication.

[Back to Top](#)

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