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xxii EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

## V Effective Communications

Written communications need to be effective, i.e. convey the intended message in a clear and concise manner. In order to achieve this objective, it is necessary to consider both the audience that will receive the information (and act upon it) and the nature of the information itself. In some situations a formal, fully detailed report is required; however, quite often a condensed form of communication (e.g. memorandum) is satisfactory.

Peters and Waterman (1982) identified several factors that were common to successful American companies. One of these factors was the implementation of a system of effective communications within an organisation. Two of the most successful companies, United Technologies and Procter & Gamble, required that all communications were in the form of a 'mini-memo' of one page maximum length.

In some chemical engineering departments, the length of student design projects tends to increase each year or to have stabilized at a rather voluminous 'norm'. Students refer to previous projects and usually assume that their length is acceptable and required. Quite often student projects are unnecessarily lengthy and much of the 'extra' information is attributable to other sources, e.g. Perry (1984), Kirk-Othmer (1978-84) etc., and could be replaced by an appropriate reference.

We believe that all student projects, including the design project, should contain only **necessary** information. Extensive background information for a project should be reviewed, summarised and referenced, whereas only new mathematical developments and relevant design equations should be included and referenced to the original source. Essential information should be included in the main body of the report and all additional information, data, calculations, etc., presented in appendices. The design project report should be presented so that it can be assessed by someone with a background in chemical engineering, but without any particular knowledge of the chosen process. The following features should be included in the written report to facilitate an assessment of the proposed chemical plant design.

- (a) A one page summary at the beginning of the project detailing the project specification, the work performed, major decisions, conclusions, etc. This summary includes both Parts I and II.

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