Workplace Communications

Introductory

Copyright Information

Disclaimer

Revision 1-3   December 2010

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Written Communication

Objectives

1. Identify and use elements that assist in effective written communication.

2. Identify and use a range of simple business documents.

 Task

Name four types of documents: Email your answers to your tutor.

Business Correspondence

Letters, memoranda, faxes and e-mail are the fundamental means of communication in every business.

Surveys have shown that managerial and professional workers spend much more time writing letters and memoranda than they do on any other writing task.

From the point of view of written communication as public relations, letters are the most important of all documents. Letters provide the most personal contact that much of the public has with a business organisation. Frequently letters are an organisation's sole contact with an individual, so recipients form their total impression of an organisation from the letters it writes. Carelessly written, arrogant or incomprehensible letters can do untold damage.

Guidelines for Business Correspondence

1. Decide what you want to say.

2. Put it in sequence.

3. A paragraph for each step.

4. Immediately identify the subject.

5. End by pointing the way ahead.

6. Use short simple sentences.

7. Use correct punctuation.

8. Use simple words

The Business Letter

Unlike a personal letter that you may write to a friend, the business letter is a very formal letter and is usually found on a letterhead.

The Letterhead

The letterhead contains a lot of very important business information. It is generally used by a business to quickly identify the business and to provide contact details.

The information that can generally be found on a letterhead will include the business name, business logo, the address of the business (or Post Office box), telephone and fax numbers, and perhaps email and World Wide Web addresses.

Sometimes a letterhead will also contain a company motto although, this is more commonly found at the bottom of the page.

The Letter

There are many parts to a business letter that are not found in a personal letter. Not every letter will use all features, but it is important to know them because, you may be called upon at any time to use any or all of the features.

The next page provides an example of a business letter. Identify the following elements of the letter:

> Date
> Inside address
> Attention line
> Salutation
> Letter title line
> Body
> Formal close
> Signature
> Writer's identification
> Enclosure notation and under separate cover notation
> Carbon copy with names displayed.

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25 February 2004	[Date]
The Personnel Officer Whitely Real Estate 78 York Street CHARTERS TOWERS QLD 4820	[Inside Address]
ATTENTION Ms Alyssa Whitely	[Attention line]
Dear Alyssa	[Salutation]
RE Paid Leave	[Letter title line]

Please be advised that due to your endless loyalty and hard work you have been granted six months leave with pay. I value your efforts and wish to display my gratitude. Please find enclosed two first-class tickets to Bali for yourself and a friend. [Body]

If you wish to contact me for any reason, you can call me on (07) 4787 52 22.

Yours sincerely	[Formal close]
J. 8. Cooper	[Signature]
Joshua Cooper Chief Executive Officer	[Writers Identification]
Enc 1	[Enclosure notation]
Cc Ms Pickford	[Carbon Copy]

It is very important that all business letters are dated. This is so that the receiver knows when they have been sent and also so that you have a record for your own files. It is especially important that correspondence be dated for record purposes. Generally the date should be in the form: day, month, and year.

Inside Address

The inside address is the name and address of the person to whom the letter is being sent. It is made up of several parts including the receiver's title, organisational name, and the receiver's address.

Attention Line

An attention line is often used on a business letter so that it is drawn to the attention of its intended recipient. This is especially important when communications have previously taken place with a particular person within an organisation. The attention line makes sure the letter gets to the person whom is aware of the dealings that have previously taken place. (Used when the inside address does not specify the intended recipient.)

Salutation

The salutation is a formal greeting used on a business letter. It should always begin Dear . It is also protocol to address them as Mr, Miss, Mrs or Ms in all business dealings, even if they are known personally.

Letter Title Line

The purpose of the letter title line or subject line is to make it clear to the receiver exactly what the body of the letter is about.

Body

The body of the letter is where you include all the information. The body generally consists of at least three paragraphs - the introduction, the middle paragraph(s) and the concluding paragraphs. The introductory paragraph introduces the letter theme. The middle paragraphs are used to develop the subject matter of the letter and should contain all the important information. The concluding paragraph allows you to make a clear and courteous statement and indicate what particular action is requested of the recipient.

Formal Close

The formal close, also known as the complimentary close is used to indicate the end of the letter and to thank the recipient for their attention. In a letter where the name of the recipient is not known, it is customary to use *Yours faithfully*

Signature

The sender should sign all business letters. This is considered a courtesy and demonstrates that the sender has given the matter their personal attention.

Writer's Identification

The writer's identification is used to indicate who has sent the letter and their organisational title. This is important so that the recipient knows to whom a reply should be sent.

Enclosure Notation

The enclosure notation is used to inform the recipient that something has been included with the letter. This may be a cheque, invoice or some company information. In place of the abbreviation Enc, sometimes the notation Attach may be substituted. If multiple enclosures are referred to in a letter, the notation may read for example Enc3 to indicate that there are three attachments included.

Under Separate Cover

This notation, while not commonly used, is used to indicate that something related to a business letter has been sent separately. For example, a letter to acknowledge receipt of an order may be sent and a parcel containing the order itself may be sent separately.

Carbon Copy

If copies of the letter have been sent to other people, a notation at the bottom of the letter is used to indicate this to the recipient. The notation is cc: followed by the names of the people who have been sent copies.

Letter Styles

Generally there are three letter styles that are used for business letters. These are the Fully Block letter, the Block letter and Semi-block letter. The advent of computer-based word processors has largely seen the demise of the latter two styles in favour of the Fully Block style business letter.

The Fully Block Letter

With the Fully Block style letter, everything is aligned on the left-hand margin. An example of a Fully Block style letter is shown below.

> ### Richlands Management Services
> 27 Esplanade   Telephone: 07-40567821
> CAIRNS QLD 4700   Fax: 07-40567834
>   Email: richlands@iig.com.au
>
> 21 July 2004
>
> The Marketing Manager
> Crows Travel Service
> 341 Piere Street
> **MELBOURNE VIC 3240**
>
> ATTENTION Mrs Cathy Crow
>
> Dear Mrs Crow
>
> **SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINERY TOURS**
>
> I refer to your brochure that states that South Australian Winery Tours focusing on the premium red wine range are to commence in the next season.
>
> Please send me price details on this special offer.
>
> Yours sincerely
>
> *Charles Nhong*
>
> Charles Nhong
> Director

The Block Style Letter

With a block style letter, the date, formal close, signature and writer's identification begin at the centre of the page. All other parts of the letter begin on the left-hand margin.

Richlands Management Services

27 Esplanade
CAIRNS QLD 4700

Telephone: 07-40567821
Fax: 07-40567834
Email: richlands@iig.com.au

21 July 2004

The Marketing Manager
Crows Travel Service
341 Piere Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3240

ATTENTION Mrs Cathy Crow

Dear Mrs Crow

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WINERY TOURS

I refer to your brochure that states that South Australian Winery Tours focusing on the premium red wine range are to commence in the next season.

Please send me price details on this special offer.

Yours sincerely

Charles Nhong

Charles Nhong
Director

The Semi-block Style Letter

Very similar in structure to the Block style letter, the only difference between the two is that in a Semi-block style letter, the first line of each paragraph in the body of the letter is indented five spaces. CLOSED punctuation is normally used with Semi-block letters.

28 March, 2004

Mr K. Thomson,
74 Gilmore Road,
KYOGLE NSW 2174

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter of the 26th March in which you expressed an interest in our Consumer Awareness Course.

The Consumer Awareness Course is a weekend course held at our premises in Blackstone Road. Our next session is being held on the weekend of 19 and 20 May. Closing date for acceptance is Friday, 9 May at 4.30 p.m.

I have enclosed a leaflet about the Course containing relevant information on topics covered, meal arrangements and costs. You might also be interested to note that there is an opportunity for questions and problems in our "Let's Have Your Say" session.

Thank you for your interest and if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

Alison Olsen,
Public Relations Officer.

ao : tr
Enc.

(Note: Reference initials are the initials of the person who dictated the letter and are followed by the initials of the person who typed it.)

Types of Business Letters

Letters are used for a variety of purposes in the business environment. Letters provide a more formal means of communication between a business and its clients than many other forms of contact. Letters should be prepared using the accepted standard of at least three paragraphs: introduction, body and conclusion. Following are examples of the types of situations you may encounter. Remember to expand the information into three paragraphs.

Acknowledgement

Letters of acknowledgement are sometimes sent in response to a letter, telephone call, order and so forth. For example, you may receive an order in the mail from a customer and in response; it may be sound practice to send a letter of acknowledgement.

> Dear Ms Machielse,
>
> Thank you for your order for 15 large 800 x 600 picture frames. our order is currently being processed and we hope to ship your order within 14 days.

Complaint

Letters of complaint will sometimes be received by a business organisation in response to customer dissatisfaction with products or services. You may have to deal with letters of complaint or may need to write letters of complaint yourself. Sometimes a customer may also ask for a refund or replacement. This is known as a claim.

> Dear Sir or Madam,
>
> I recently purchased a watch from you and after a week, the watch has stopped working. I have returned the watch and ask that it be repaired or replaced as soon as possible

Covering Letter

A covering letter is generally sent along with goods that have been sent. It generally states what has been sent and may include a statement about further product or service offerings.

> Dear Ms Simpson,
>
> Please find enclosed one dozen Staedtler Overhead Projection Markers, which were on back-order with us.

Letters of Confirmation

Letters of confirmation are used to confirm arrangements that have been made. This is a formal way of recording agreements that have been made in person or over the telephone.

> Dear Mr Campbell,
>
> In response to your inquiry on 6 September, I wish to confirm your booking on our 19-day tour to Europe. The tour will depart on 1 October at 9.00am with a stopover in Japan and return on 21 October with a stopover in Hong Kong.

Letters of Request

When specific goods or services are required, it may be necessary to write a letter of request. This may include requests for bookings, quotes and so on.

> Dear Mr Sharma,
>
> I would like to ask for a quote on the following items at your earliest convenience:
>
> 10   Toshiba Satellite 2400 Laptop computers
> 2   Iomega Zip drives
> 1   Canon Laser Printer

Letters of Enquiry

A letter of enquiry is generally a letter asking for information. Generally these will be brief and to the point.

> Dear Mr Bosnich,
>
> Please supply me with information concerning the upcoming Better Business Training Seminars including cost, dates and venues.

Orders

Generally, orders should be on a proper order form. If however, your business does not use order forms, you may be re uired to write a letter in order to order goods or services. When writing a letter of order, it is important that the following details are provided:

- A complete description of the goods or services required
- The number of items ordered
- The price of each item
- The total price of the order
- Contact details
- Delivery details

> Dear Mr McCarthy,
>
> I would like to order the following:
>
> | Quantity | Item | Cost per unit | Sub-Total |
> |---|---|---|---|
> | 5 | Boxes Floppy Disks | $9.00 | $45.00 |
> | 1 | Daewoo 15 inch monitor | $235.00 | $235.00 |
> | 3 | LS120 Superdisk Drives | $175.00 | $525.00 |
> | | | TOTAL | $805.00 |
>
> Please forward the goods to the above address as soon as possible.

Punctuation in Business Documents

When writing business documents, there are two punctuation styles that are generally used.

Open Punctuation

In open punctuation style, only the body of the letter is punctuated. The date, inside address, salutation, formal close, writer's identification and so on have no punctuation. Open punctuation style is particularly common in the fully block style letter.

Civil Engineering Services
29 Aspley Street
AYR QLD 4806

Telephone: 07-47830560
Fax: 07-47832467
Email: civil@burdehin.com.au

24 August 2004

The Executive Manager
Atlas Engineering
341 Augustine Street
ADELAIDE SA 3240

Dear Ms Jackson

INTERNATION FARMING ENGINEERS' CONFERENCE

I recently attended the International Conference, "Farming Engineering - The Emerging Problems", where you spoke.

I enjoyed your address and the perspective you have on women in this emerging industry.

Yours sincerely

Charles Nhong

Charles Nhong
Director

While a workplace may favour a particular style, it looks more professional if either OPEN or CLOSED punctuation is used, but not a combination of both. Check with your workplace to see if there is a preferred style, but aim to adopt a consistent style throughout all letters.

Civil Engineering Services

29 Aspley Street,
AYR QLD 4806

Telephone: 07-47830560
Fax: 07-47832467
Email: civil@burdehin.com.au

24 August, 2004

The Executive Manager,
Atlas Engineering,
341 Augustine Street,
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Dear Ms Jackson,

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Yours sincerely,

Charles Nhong

Charles Nhong,
Director.

Practical Activity

Prepare two business letters dealing with a routine matter you believe is commonly addressed in a small business.

Prepare both letters in the same format. You may choose what format the letters are in however you must nominate the format to your tutor when you submit the letters.

When you have completed both letters you are to email or fax these to your tutor. Do not forget to produce a cover sheet that provides your name, your tutor's name and return contact details.

Other Documents

Objectives

1. Messages are written on designated message pad.

2. Simple correspondence and reports are drafted and presented for approval and signature within designated timelines.

3. Text is written using clear and concise language.

4. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are correct.

5. Intended meaning of correspondence is readily understood by recipient.

6. Information is self-checked and presented for fre uent progress checks by designated officer.
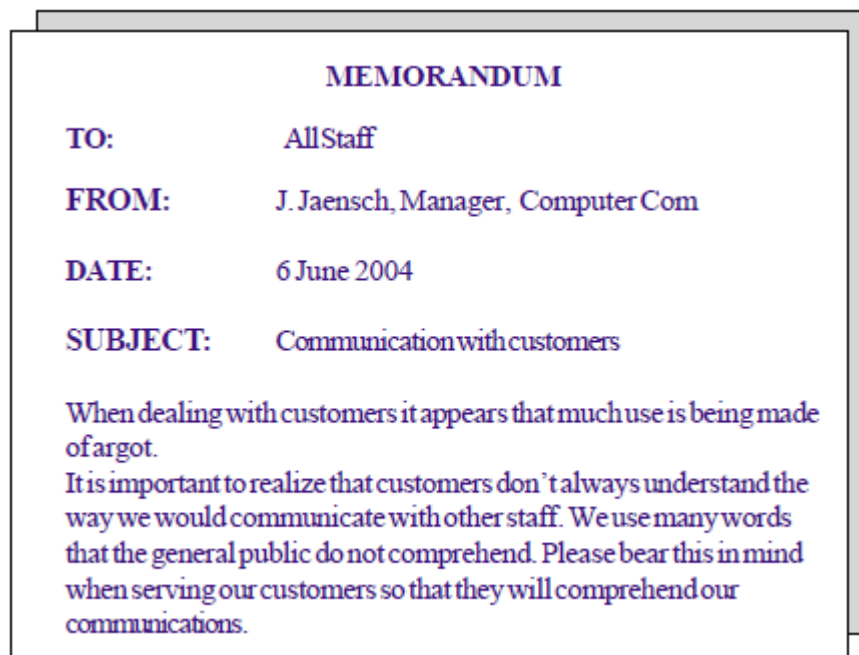
Memorandums (Memos)

The memo is a less formal means of communication that is often used by business to circulate internal messages. Regardless of the purpose of the memo, the message should be relatively short and to the point.

It is sound practice to include on all memos:

Date
Subject
 To
 From

When writing memos, the language should be as simple as possible. You do not want to confuse the reader with technical terms, nor do you want them reaching for a dictionary to understand what you are saying. Make your point as simply and briefly as possible. If you use a technical term, it might be sound practice to put it in simplified form in brackets. It is also important to avoid long complicated phrases.

Below is a memo written in complicated language.

MEMORANDUM

TO: AllStaff
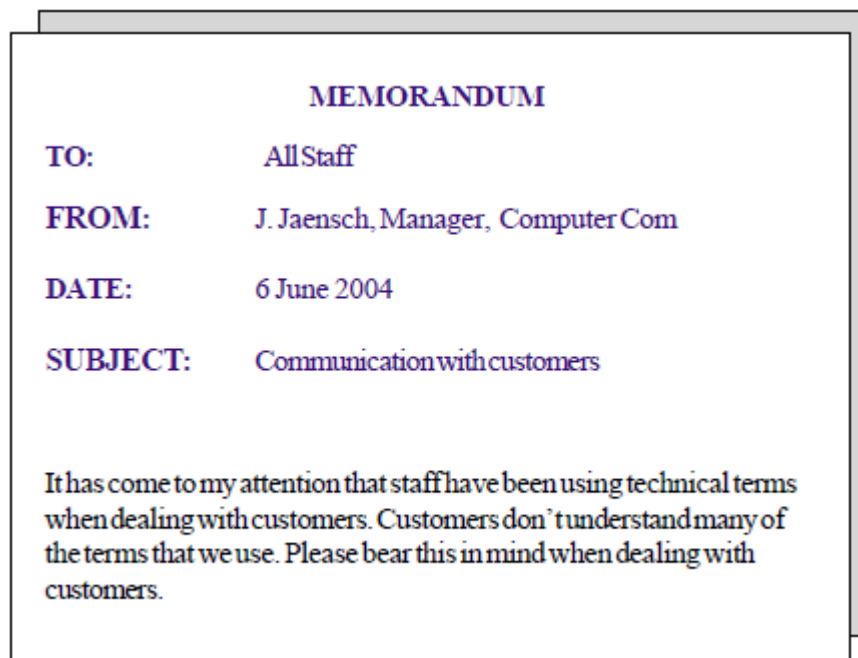
FROM: J. Jaensch, Manager, Computer Com

DATE: 6 June 2004

SUBJECT: Communication with customers

When dealing with customers it appears that much use is being made of argot.
It is important to realize that customers don't always understand the way we would communicate with other staff. We use many words that the general public do not comprehend. Please bear this in mind when serving our customers so that they will comprehend our communications.

Here is an example of how the memo may be redrafted to simplify the meaning.

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Staff

FROM: J. Jaensch, Manager, Computer Com

DATE: 6 June 2004

SUBJECT: Communication with customers

It has come to my attention that staff have been using technical terms when dealing with customers. Customers don't understand many of the terms that we use. Please bear this in mind when dealing with customers.

When dealing with customers it appears that much use is being made of argot. It is important to realize that customers don't always understand the way we would communicate with other staff. We use many words that the general public do not comprehend. Please bear this in mind when serving our customers so that they will comprehend our communications.

If the memo is about an unpleasant topic, do not use threatening language - be polite and courteous at all times. Abusive messages will generally be met with hostility. Avoid the use of fiery language and do not embarrass the reader if referring to them in a memo.

Some organizations use a pre-printed memo pad that can be purchased from newsagents or stationery suppliers. Alternatively, businesses may choose to have their own memo forms printed or use a standard memo form that can be stored in a computer system and printed out as required.

Suggestions for Writing Effective Memos

- Write a memo only when necessary.

- Use a standard form.

- Keep to one page if possible.

- Organise material so it is easy to see and read: use lists, headings, outlines and white space.

- Use side headings in full caps or underlined; easy to see.

- Use block or indented style to show paragraphs; be consistent.

- Make headings precise and meaningful.

- Identify subsequent pages by subject, date and page number.

- Omit a complimentary close.

- Develop a clean, to-the-point writing style.

- Present yourself as a well organised, logical, no-nonsense, relevant thinker.

Practical Exercise

Open your word processor and load the template for Memorandums. Complete this template using the second example of memos from this section. Save and email as an attachment to your teacher.

Structuring Material

Any information, if presented haphazardly, can be ignored or misunderstood making it worthless. Readers do not know what to do with information unless they are guided by the writer, and can see an organized purpose about it. The writer has to organize the information in such a way that it provides the reader with the background, and the facts that lead to a certain conclusion.

Putting Your Findings into Order

Having collected your findings the next thing is to sort them into a logical sequence. Different kinds of sequence suit different topics, though often two or three will all be suitable, if used in different parts of the same report. The following are some of the many different ways of presenting your finds.

1. Order of time

Used for response about a series of steps or events, or any other type of information that is related to the clock, the calendar or the time sheet. For example, a salesman's daily report or a report on an accident.

2. Order of location

In dealing with areas, dimensions and parts, report headings can follow the most obvious path or the one that is easiest to explain. For example, a study of future markets for a product may discuss the potential for sales in the city first, then the potential in the country, then the potential overseas.

The description of a building may take the route of the person inspecting the premises: "ground floor, upper floor, garage, yard".

A report on an organisation structure could work from the top positions down to the lowest, or the other way around.

3. Order of importance

Headings may be arranged in order of ascending or descending importance. If the report stresses the need for a certain course of action, a strong ending is important. Reasons are therefore presented progressively with the strongest arguments given last. On the other hand, it may be desirable to state the most important ideas first. Reports on company policy begin with the most important points because the reader is likely to pay more attention at the beginning.

A survey of a company's competition may consider the smaller competitors first, then the threat of larger rivals.

4. Order of familiarity

If your reader does not know very much about the subject of the report, begin with details that are familiar to him or at least easy to understand and then work towards the more difficult ideas.

5. Order of acceptability

When some recommendations are likely to be less acceptable than others, move from the most acceptable to the least acceptable. Agreement with the initial points can help to lessen objections to the others.

6. Order of process

This is similar to order of time. It is useful when describing a manufacturing programme, or the assembly of various parts to make a complete product.

7. Order of usefulness

In many reports there are some kinds of information that must take precedence over others, to help understanding, or to allow comparison with other reports in the same series.

8. Parallel order

In a comparison of two or more things such as different brands or models, there should be parallel treatment.

Another type of parallel order is called "pairing". Examples include such arrangements as Questions and Answers; Problem and Solutions; Before and After; Cause and Effect.

A Question

Q. Is there a place for humour in business correspondence?

A. Probably less than anywhere else in the business communications area. To most people, business reports must be treated seriously. Humour will lower the credibility of your report, so leave it out.

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Facsimile (Fax) Messages

Generally the fax is used in the business environment for the transmission of short messages or urgent (non-personal) messages. The fax generally is not as formal as a business letter but corporate fax forms will generally have much the same information as a business letterhead. Regardless of the type of business concerned, there should be some information common to fax forms. This should include:

> To whom sent
> Who fax is from
> Date sent
> Number of pages included
> Subject

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Charters Towers Q 4820
Tele: +61 7 47877940
Fax: +61 7 47877940
E-mail: Training@AADES.edu.au
Web Address: http://www.AADES.edu.au

A.A.D.E.S. Training

Facsimile

To: _____ From: _____

Fax: _____ Pages: _____

Date: _____ Cc: _____

Re: _____

☐ Urgent ☐ For Review ☐ Please Comment ☐ Please Reply ☐ Please Recycle

● Comments:

Electronic Mail (Email)

Email is becoming an increasingly important means of communication in the business world. There are no set standards for email messages, but generally they are an informal means of communication between businesses. They provide a quick, cheap method of communication with the added advantage that documents however formal, can be sent as file attachments.

Regardless of the nature of the email message, there are some things that should be included. These are:

> The name of sender
> Date
> Subject
> Email address (although this is generally displayed automatically)

Email can be used for both internal and external business communications. The main advantage of email is the speed with which they are delivered. However, email also has its disadvantages including the fact that there is a small chance that email messages can go astray and only persons with a computer and email can send and receive messages.
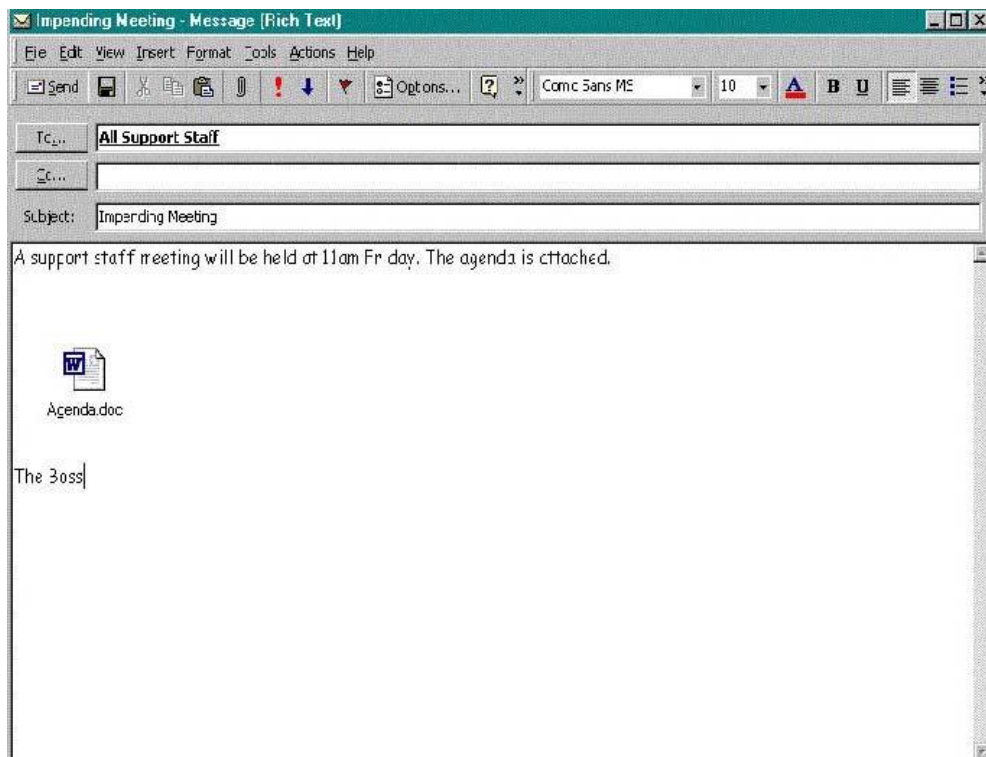
Production of Document

Objectives

You will be required to demonstrate your competence by producing a document which:

- Uses language that is applicable to the task and audience.

- Contains accurate information.

- Is organised logically (according to the purpose, audience and context).

- Follows a specified structure.

- Is coherent.

- Reaches conclusions.

- Offers recommendations/proposals/options as appropriate to the purpose and document.

- Achieves a stated and given purpose.

- Is appropriately presented in accordance with the organisation's or enterprise's requirements.

- Is completed within the specified time.

The First Draft

Having successfully completed all the planning stages, you are now ready to write your document - well at least the first draft. This is where access to a word processor is very handy because often you may need to draft your documents for perusal by your supervisor.

The process of drafting involves some or all of these steps:

- Writing one or two drafts. Surveys have shown that managerial and professional workers spend much more time writing letters and memoranda than they do on any other writing task.

- Editing.

- Reading your report out loud to 'hear' how it sounds.

- Asking someone else to read your draft.

- Leaving your draft for a time then returning 'fresh' to assess it again.

The Language of Business Documents

As a general rule, the language of business documents is chosen to suit the needs of the reader, and the purposes of the document.

There are however some general guidelines that apply to all reports.

1. Sit in the reader's chair - imagine the reader trying to understand what you are writing.

2. Use 'reader - friendly' language - would you be comfortable saying those words and sentences to the reader 'face-to-face'? Old-fashioned 'business-like' writing is no longer appropriate.

3. Write using your own words: another person's words may have a message hidden 'between the lines' and so the words don't say what you want them to say.

4. Present the facts using unbiased, non-judgemental language: keep the first person out of your writing until you get to the point where you are expected to give an opinion.

5. Construct paragraphs whenever necessary: long sections of unbroken prose 'turn the reader off' from reading.

6. Use simple words: where a large number of technical terms are needed, explain them ina glossary.

7. Check for correct spelling, expression, punctuation: errors create an unprofessional impression.

8. Avoid language that is sexist or discriminatory in any way.

Business Writing Skills

When you are drafting written communications in the workplace, it is important to use simple language, short sentences and uncomplicated words. Written information should be:

Clear

The message should be easy to understand. Keep sentences simple. Use several short paragraphs rather than long and drawn-out paragraphs. Try to limit each paragraph to a single idea or concept.

Bad Example

Pursuant to the reference proposed the undersigned at last night's meeting, I herewith furnish the preparatory documents.

Good Example

Please find enclosed at draft of the report I discussed with you at last night's meeting.

Concise

Use as few words as possible to relay your information clearly. Explain exactly what you mean, do not repeat yourself and do not provide any unnecessary information. Avoid vague references - include specific details.

Bad Example

Ms Byrne was forced to cancel her meeting this morning, due to food poisoning she contracted from a seafood dinner she ate at the restaurant adjacent to the train station.

Good Example

Ms Byrne was forced to cancel her meeting this morning, due to illness.

Argot

Argot refers to jargon that is used in the workplace but may not necessarily mean anything to the general public. It is the particular language that is used by a group but may have no meaning or another meaning to others outside the group. This is especially common in specific purpose

business such as the computer industry. The use of argot should be totally avoided. Use words and phrases that are suitable to convey the intended meaning.

Correct

Correct writing refers to following the specific rules that apply to writing business documents. These rules may be specific to your enterprise or may be general rules that have been discussed throughout this unit. This also includes the use of appropriate language, rules concerning disclosure of information and the use of correct spelling and punctuation.

Bad Example

Greg Wells

Thanks for your stationery order.

Good Example

Dear Mr Wells

Thank you for your letter of 15 August 2012 and for your order for stationery. We are pleased that all of your requirements are in stock and your order will be dispatched today.

Courteous

All business writing should be polite and courteous. Consider the feelings of others when drafting correspondence. Remember that even when the subject is unpleasant, for example, chasing up overdue accounts, there may be genuine reasons for non-payment and you do not want to cause undue upset. Always offer the option of contacting you or your organization to discuss the situation. Never use confrontational language or sound too bossy.

Bad Example

We have received your letter of 17 April 2012. You claim that the sandals you bought are faulty. However, you failed to post them to us, and so we cannot verify your claim.

Good Example

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2012. If you post the faulty pair of sandals to us, we will be happy to forward a replacement to you by return post.

More Tips for Documents

When writing workplace correspondence, it is important to consider the following questions:

- Could I use a simpler word?

- Can I break sentences or paragraph into several simpler ones?

- Is the meaning clear?

- Have I checked the spelling and punctuation?

- Do I need to give my work to someone else for proofreading?

Proofreading

It is good policy to always proofread your work or have another person proofread your work prior to distribution. Work that has errors or an unclear meaning will not create a favourable impression of your work. When proofreading, you should check the accuracy of:

Spelling

Grammar

Punctuation

Figures

Financial data

In many workplaces, it will be your responsibility to prepare correspondence for someone else's signature. In this case, they will generally proofread your work prior to sending and make any corrections or additions. It is a good idea to check the policy in your organization.

When proofreading, you should also consider the tone of the written material. Tone refers to the mood, strength, character or quality of your writing. The tone that you adopt must be appropriate for the intended audience. It is the language that sets the tone of your documents. In the business environment, the tone will generally have a formal, businesslike quality. This includes:

- Avoiding abbreviations such as **you're** and **they're**. These should be written as **"you are"** and **"they are".**

- Do not use slang, argot or cliches.

- Address people by their correct title.

- Avoid sexist or discriminatory language.

A Strategy for Proof Reading

1. Take any passage of about 10 lines that you have written recently.

2. Read it through once for each one of the list below, looking for nothing else but that one aspect. Do not try to read a passage for more than one purpose at a time until you are an accomplished and correct writer.

   a. Punctuation - capitals, full stops, commas, apostrophes, semicolons.

   b. Spelling.

   c. Paragraphing - does every sentence in this passage belong here, or should you start a new paragraph at some point?

   e. Flow of ideas: Check that the sequence of ideas is correct, logical and fluent.

   f. Words: Are any words used that are inappropriate, discriminatory, slang, jargon or too formal?

   g. Sentence variety: Do all your sentences start and finish the same way or is there some variation?

Writing aids

To assist you in writing workplace documents and in getting your message across as simply and clearly as possible, there are a number of aids that may assist you. Many organizations have standard formats or style manuals that they insist are used. There are also many books available from your local bookstore that deal with business writing skills.

Two of the best aids are a dictionary and thesaurus. These will allow you to choose language, which is simple and also assist with spelling. Many computer programs such as Microsoft Word also have an inbuilt spell check function, grammar check and thesaurus, which will assist you in your writing.

Presentation

In order to make a good impression, it is important that all written information is presented properly and professionally. If your business requires that certain documents be presented in certain ways, it is important that these rules are followed.

If there are no set styles and layouts for written information, then it is important to remember that you need to make a good impression. To this end, your documents should be:

- Presented in an appropriate manner (style, language etc)
- Free from errors
- Typed if possible (some handwriting is difficult to read)
- Presented in an appropriate manner
- Clean and unmarked

Keeping records

For all-important correspondence in and out, it is sound practice to keep a copy for later reference if required.

When preparing written information, it is usual practice in the modern office or workplace to keep a copy on file in the computer. This allows easy retrieval at a later stage. If your business organization does not have this facility, it may be necessary to keep a second paper-based copy on file in a filing cabinet.

There will generally be set policies in place in your workplace regarding making and keeping copies of all written information. It is important that you check to see what rules apply in your particular workplace.

Working with timelines

The majority of business communication is only effective if it is timely. Being able to communicate in a timely manner requires an ability to distinguish the urgent tasks from the non-urgent tasks and knowledge of the quickest way of communicating.

In a workplace situation, you will need to establish priorities for written tasks. This will vary depending on the nature of the business. In some business situations, it may be wise to assign priority to the major customers. In other business situations, which are reliant upon bookings, the most important tasks may be handling bookings to ensure efficient operation.

Distributing written messages externally

When you are required to distribute written messages, it is important to consider the fastest and most efficient way to reach the recipient. In the vast majority of cases, Australia Post or a courier service will generally be used for business communications.

In instances where the message is urgent, it may be more suitable to send a fax or email if possible. The limitations of this are that not every home and business has these means of communication. It may also be inappropriate to send some material via fax or email for security or legal reasons. If a written document is required urgently, it is a good idea to check with your Post Office and local courier companies to see what services are offered.

In most business organizations, there will be specific policies and procedures in place for sending written information. It is important to check the requirements of your particular organization for the distribution of both urgent and non-urgent written communications.

Distributing written messages internally

The smooth flow of information within a business is crucial to the daily business operations. The methods used for distributing internal written communications will vary depending on the size and nature of the business. Some businesses may use an internal email system for distributing written messages. Others may require that messages are hand delivered to the appropriate person. Once again, it is important to check if there are procedures in place in your workplace, which you are required to follow.

Practical Exercises

Email your responses to your teacher.

1. Punctuate the following:

    a. Womens shoes are incredibly expensive.

    b. The Girl Guides hall was renovated.

    c. Its late so lets go home.

    d. He shouldnt have bothered so dont come complaining to me if you arent satisfied.

    e. She often forgets to dot her is.

    f. The office managers new rule was unpopular with the secretaries.

    g. The secretarys chair was adjusted by the managers assistant.

    h. The managers smiled when they read the salesmens reports.

    i. Both speakers comments were greeted with applause.

2. Capital Letters

Capital letters are used with surnames, days of the week, months, holidays, titles before a name, specific place names, and important words in titles. In the sentences below, add or subtract capital letters as needed:

1. Last year the meeting was held on a wednesday in june, or maybe it was later in the summer.

2. Do we cross the onkaparinga river before we get to the lake?

3. I understand that captain johnson will speak first and then the senator.

4. The boss has a picture of his mother on his desk.

5. The new salesperson is a republican, a catholic, and he speaks fluent norwegian and chinese.

6. He is also taking history and health eductaion

7. His favourite novel is the catcher in the rye.

3. **Inverted Commas**

Inverted commas are sometimes called quotation marks because their main purpose is to mark direct quotations, or the actual words of a speaker.

If the punctuation was part of the original material you are quoting, then put the punctuation within the inverted commas.

a. She said, 'Do you know where it is?'

b. 'I never want to see that place again,' he cried.

c. 'There is one thing,' he said, 'that you have not considered.'

d. If the punctuation derives from the sentence you have written, then it goes outside the inverted commas.

e. Do not use inverted commas, however, when you are reporting what someone said in your own words, rather than the exact words used by the speaker:

f. He told us that he would be there just after eight.

4. **Verbs**

Place the correct word, so that a singular verb has a singular subject and a plural verb has a plural subject.

a. A roster of duties (is, are) on the notice board.

b. The pliers (are, is) on the work bench.

c. The guest speaker, with his colleagues, (arrives, arrive) on the next plane.

d. Twenty years (are, is) the term of the loan.

e. "Gulliver's Travels" (is, are) still absorbing reading.

f. The ropes tying the crate (was, were) snapped on the wharf.

g. The strength of the gorilla and the speed of the jaguar (continues, continue) to amaze me.

5. Choose the correct preposition from the list to place before the noun.

    By   To   At   For   From   On

    a. He is afflicted _____ gout.

    b. He is reconciled _____ the idea.

    c. He recoiled _____ the suggestion.

    d. He is unfitted _____ the job.

    e. I am susceptible _____ flattery.

    f. This is preferable _____ that.

    g. You must refrain _____ doing that.

    h. She is sensitive _____ criticism.

    i. The officer is responsible _____ his men.

6. Put sentence breaks in the following passage. Use full stops or semicolons, and add the comma and apostrophe where necessary.

The manager said it was difficult to get satisfactory children's toys at present those we could purchase have several faults they are not durable they are not attractive in appearance and they are beyond the average persons ability to buy.

7. **Insert the hyphen where necessary.** (This mark - makes two or more words into one.)

    a. A used car salesman is required.

    b. The water cement ratio should not exceed 0.4 in HAC.

    c. A razor blade is a remover of superfluous hair.

    d. The electrically headed storage system, and the gas heated instantaneous systems, both with simple draw offs, are easily installed.

8. **Place the correct relative pronoun in the space.**

Who   Whom Whose   Which That

   a. The contact clerk did this job last, has left.

   b. Here is the person I recommended to you.

   c. The museum you wanted to visit is closed today.

   d. The person car is parked there, doesn't work here.

   e. I'd like to go through with you several items were left out of the report.

9. **Write the contracted (shortened) forms of the following using the apostrophe:**

   a. are not   b. is not

   c. we are   d. she has

   e. should have   f. I have

   g. they are   h. that is

   i. it is   j. you are

10. **Insert the apostrophe where needed.**

Place the apostrophe mark after the owner or owners, and add a letter s purely for sound, where you think necessary.

   a. The videos cover is lost.

   b. A moments hesitation can lose the race.

   c. A months leave, two weeks absence.

   d. Chief Justice opinion.

   e. Mack and Walters firm.

   f. Urban workers problems.

10. **Put commas in appropriate places to make the meaning clear and the sentence construction correct:**

    a. The witness not being available the case was postponed.

    b. Students whose English is poor find shorthand difficult.

    c. Pilots whose minds are dull seldom live long.

    d. If you would like to shoot the attendant will demonstrate the rifle to you.

    e. As soon she entered the room became silent.

    f. To the young people of forty or more have rigid opinions.

11. **Less is used for quantity, fewer for number**.

    a. There is (less, fewer) petrol in my car than in yours.

    b. (Less, fewer) people arrived than I expected.

    c. The report demonstrated (less, fewer) problems than we anticipated.

    d. There is (less, fewer) need for money than for time.

12. **Use *farther* or *further***

    Farther means 'more distant'. Further means 'to a great extent'

    a. There was no need to pursue the matter any _____.

    b. How much _____ have we to go?

    c. "You must go two kilometres _____ on", the man directed.

    d. We went to the library to obtain _____ details relating to our project.

    e. Have you had any _____ news from our friends abroad?

13. **Use unless or without**

Unless is a conjunction and introduces a clause (a group of words containing a verb). Without is a preposition and introduces a phrase (a group of words without a verb).

    a. Their home will be burnt ____ the wind changes.

    b. I shall not go to the party ____ you come, too.

    c. The boys had to leave ____ hearing the end of the story.

    d. Vicki will not sing at the concert ____ her father agrees.

    e. The goods will not be sold ____ the price is reduced.

14. **Use *like* or *as***

'*As*' introduces clauses. '*Like*' introduces phrases.

    a. I wish I could dance ____ that.

    b. We laughed ____ we had never laughed before.

    c. I have brought you the book ____ I said I should.

    d. ____ her mother, she was a good pianist.

    e. You must do ____ your father tells you.

15. **Use *between* or *among***

We use 'between' when referring to two people or things and 'among' when referring to more than two.

    a. The path lay ____ capitulation or domination.

    b. We searched ____ the reference books for an updated version.

    c. Great rivalry exists ____ Melbourne and Sydney.

    d. The weather is often changeable ____ seasons.