

# Business Communication Reports, Letters & Email

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# How We Communicate

- CVs, Resumes
- Email, Web site, FAQs
- Letters, Newsletters, Brochures, Articles, Catalogs
- Advertisements, Notice Board, Pamphlets, Signs, Press Release
- Presentations, multimedia, talks
- Reports, Manuals, Proposals, Books

# Which Reports?

Sales Reports

Inspection Reports

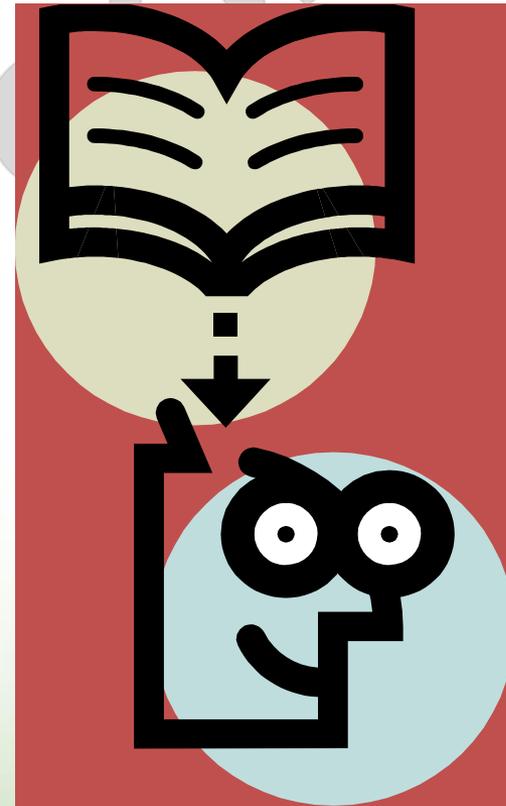
Annual Reports

Audit Reports

Feasibility Reports

Progress Reports

White Papers



# Technical Writing Reports

- Proposals
- User Manuals
- Technical Manuals
- White Papers

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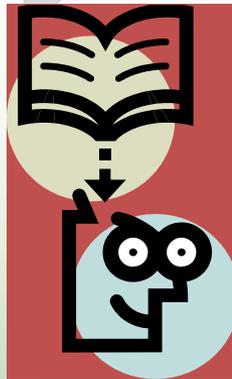
# Classification of Reports

- Formal Reports and Informal Reports
- Information Reports
- Analytical Reports
- Recommendation Reports

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# 5 Steps to Report Writing<sup>1</sup>

1. Define the problem
2. Gather the necessary information
3. Analyze the information
4. Organize the information
5. Write the report



# Organizing Reports

- Comparison/contrast
- Problem-solution
- Elimination of alternatives
- General to particular
- Geographic or spatial
- Functional
- Chronological

# Words, Words, Words

- UK English and US English
  - International English and Indian English
- Denotation and Connotation
  - Let me know when you're free next week for a meeting.
  - Could you let me know what times you have free?
- Tone
  - Terry is hung up on trivial details.
  - Terry is meticulous and takes care of details that others sometimes ignore.

# Writing Style

- Brief writing style
  - Omit needless words
  - Combine sentences
  - Rewrite
  - Campus Jewelers' main objective is to increase sales. Specifically, the objective is to double sales in the next five years by becoming a more successful business.
  - Campus Jewelers' objective is to double sales in the next five years.

# We do IT in Style!

- Chicago Manual of Style
- Elements of Style by Strunk & White
- Dictionary
- Microsoft Manual of Style
- AMA Style Guide

# Anatomy of a Report

- Cover Page
- Title Page
- Letter of Transmittal
- Table of Contents
- List of Illustrations
- Executive Summary
- Report Body
- Appendices

# Report Body

- Introduction
  - Purpose and Scope; Limitations, Assumptions, and Methods
- Background/History of the Problem
- Body
  - Presents and interprets data
- Conclusions and Recommendations
- References or Works Cited
- Appendixes
  - Interview transcripts, questionnaires, question tallies, printouts, and previous reports

# Letter of Transmittal

- Background
- Summarize conclusions and recommendations
- Minor problems. Thank those who helped.
- Additional research necessary
- Thank the reader. Offer to answer questions.

# Sales Proposal<sup>2</sup>

- Budget
- Objectives
- Strategy and Tactics
- Schedule
- Results
- Closing

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# Document Design

- Use no **more** than **5 FONTS**.
- Use no more than 5 **col**ors.
- Use glossy paper.
- Use white space.
- Use templates.
- Use parallelism.
- Avoid *double emphasis*.

# Future Reports

## Proposals

- 250-page reports
- 90-minute oral presentation
- 50-page summary

## Reports

- Multi-media
- Web

# FAQ and CE

- Questions
  - You, We, I – personal pronouns
  - Standards for reports
  - How long?
- Common Errors
  - It's a common error! Its consequences are great!
  - Singular & Plural errors.
  - Neutrality (he/she, John)

Business Communication  
**Letters & Emails**

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# Correspondence Costs Money

- Dartnell Institute, 10-minute message
  - \$13.60
  - \$20.52
- Plan, compose, revise 1-page letter
  - 54 minutes
- Average Proposal (engg firm)
  - \$500,000
  - \$1,000,000

Rwitin wastes time and damages relationships.

# Making Messages Effective

**C**lear

**C**omplete

**C**orrect

**S**ave reader's time

**B**uild good will



# Complaint Letters

- Nursery – Plants worth \$572
- Dry and wilted. One came out by the roots when I took it out of the box.
- Please send me a replacement shipment immediately

# Response 1

After ruling out problems in transit, I discovered that your order was packed by a new worker who didn't understand the need to water plants thoroughly before they are shipped. We have fired the worker, so you can be assured that this will not happen again.

Although it will cost our company several hundred dollars, we will send you a replacement shipment.

Let me know if the new shipment arrives safely. We trust that you will not complain again.

# Response 2

Sorry we screwed up that order. Sending plants across country is a risky business. Some of them just can't take the strain. (Some days I can't take the strain myself!) We'll credit your account for \$572.

# Response 3

...it isn't our fault. The box clearly says "Open and water immediately." ...If you pull by the leaves, you will pull the roots out. Always lift by the stem. Since you don't know how to handle plants, I'm sending you a copy of our brochure, "How to Care for Your Plants." Please read it carefully... ..to avoid disappointments in the future.

We look forward to your future orders.

# Response 4

Your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> has come to the attention of the undersigned.

According to your letter, your invoice #47420 arrived in unsatisfactory condition. Please be advised that it is our policy to make adjustments as per the Terms and Conditions...

“...make an exception on your order receipt...furnish us detailed written information as to any damage.”

... you must comply with our terms and see that the necessary documents reach the undersigned by the close of the business day on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.

# Response 5

You'll get a replacement shipment of the perennials you ordered next week.

Your plants are watered carefully before shipment and packed in specially designed cardboard containers. But if the weather is unusually warm, or if the truck is delayed, small roots may dry out. Perhaps, this happened with your plants.

The violas, diitalis, aquilegias and hostas you ordered are long-blooming perennials that will get even prettier each year. Enjoy your garden.

# PAIBOC

**P**urpose  
**A**udiences  
**I**nformation  
**B**enefits  
**O**bjections  
**C**ontext



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# Audience

- Writer
- Initial audience
- Gatekeeper
- Primary audience
- Secondary audience
- Watchdog audience



# Communicate across Cultures

- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Regional and national origin
- Social class
- Religion
- Age
- Sexual orientation
- Physical ability



# Bias-free Communication

- **Managers and their wives will...**
- **Managers and their spouses will...**
- **Manpower** – Personnel
- **Manhours** – Hours or working hours
- **Manning** – Staffing
- **Workman** – Worker, employee, writer
- **Chairman** – Chair, chairperson

# Bias-free Communication

- Plural nouns and pronouns
  - Supervisors must...their departments.
- Use you.
  - You must work for your department.
- Substitute with article or revise sentence
  - Supervisor...time sheet for the department.
  - The nurse will fill out the accident report.

# Pictures



# Letter Contents

- Reference, Date, Address, Salutation, Subject (B/A), Body, Complimentary Close, Enclosures
- Dear Glenn: or Dear Mr Helms:
- Sincerely, and Cordially,
- Open (Dear Glenn) and Closed (Dear Glenn:)
- Second Page – Reader's Name, Date, Page Number

# Formats for Letters and Memos

- Open and closed punctuation
  - Full stops at end of addresses
  - Full stops in abbreviations (am/pm)
- Block and Modified Block
  - Date and Signature
  - Subject Line – Optional and Rare

# Meeting Agenda

- Time and place
- Whether each item is presented for information, for discussion, or for a decision

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# Minutes of the Meeting

- Decisions Reached
- Action Items
- Open Issues

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# Emails

- Minutes a day - average worker?
- 49 minutes
- Hours a day - top managers?
- 4 hours
- Formats are still evolving
- What % felt misunderstood (2000)?
- 51% (tone)

# Subject

- Be specific, concise, and catchy.
  - 28 characters
  - Will Attend 3 pm Meeting EOM
  - Travel Plans for Sales Meeting
  - Your Funding Request Approved
  - ASAP, BTW, FYI, IMHO
  - Smileys 😊

# Body of the Email

- Brief
- Important points at the top
- Bullets and numbering
- Emphasize (NOT)
- HTML (letterhead)
- All rules of good writing

# Mailing Lists

- Your boss could be reading!
- Posts are archived.
- Avoid using company email address.
- Avoid conversations (one liners).
- Do not rush to lists.

# Netiquette

- Never flame.
- Use FULL CAPS only to emphasize a word or two.
- Send messages on a need basis.
- Recipient's work practice (one long or several short messages)
- Quote briefly (B/A) while replying.
- Attachments

# Covering Letters

- Brief
  - 3 paragraphs, bullets
- Focus on
  - Major requirements
  - Differentiators
- Research
  - Web, friends, colleagues

**Tip:**

**Do not plead.**

# Resume or Curriculum Vitae

- Name, Address, Contact Details
- Objective, Education, Experience, Languages, Personal, References
  - Reverse chronological order
- Personal details – Age, marital status, children (US laws on discrimination)

# Resume Tips

- Two pages maximum.
  - Less important details on 2nd page.
- Highlight strengths, not weaknesses.
  - Job hoppers -- period
- Create for each company.
- Use templates – but enhance them.

# References

1. Business Communication, Kity O Locker and Stephen Kyo Kaczmarek, 2004
2. Better Business Writing, The Sunday Times, 2002
3. Model Business Letters, E-mails & Other Business Documents (sixth edition), Shirley Taylor