

Business Communication

Letters and Email

Gurudutt R. Kamath

We will talk about...

Effective Writing

PAIBOC

Letters

Covering Letters and Resumes

Agendas, Meeting Minutes

Email

FAQ and CE

Correspondence Costs Money¹

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

Clear

Complete

Correct

Save reader's time

Build 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.

Response2

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.

Response3

... 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.

Response4

Your letter of the 5th 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.”

Response5

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

PAIBOC

Purpose

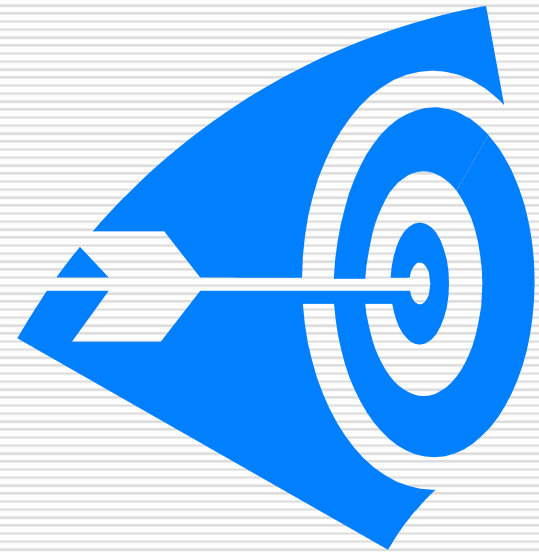
Audiences

Information

Benefits

Objections

Context



Audiences

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

Gender Bias

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.

Basin 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

Avoid full stops at end of addresses

Avoid in abbreviations (am/pm)

Block and Modified Block

Date

Signature

Subject Line – Optional and Rare

Tips

Use Templates

One line letters are accepted

Covering Letters

Brief

3 paragraphs, bullets

Focus on

Major requirements

Differentiators

Research

Web, friends, colleagues

Tip:

Do not plead.

Resumé or Curriculum Vitæ

Name, **Field**, Address, Contact Details

Objective, Education, Experience, **Languages**,
Personal, **References**

Reverse chronological order

Personal details – Age, marital status, children (US laws on discrimination)

Resumé 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.

Meeting Agenda

Time and place

Whether each item is presented for information, for discussion, or for a decision

Minutes of the Meeting

Decisions Reached

Action Items

Open Issues

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, TMOT

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

FAQ and OE

Questions

Resumes -- how long? 1 or 2 pages. Maximum of say 5 pages.

To justify or not?

Common Errors

Spelling

Grammar and punctuation

Clichés – This is with reference to..

Passport details

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