Business Messages

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Business messages

Business messages refer to any communication undertaken for the purpose of business. In business set up, such communication is mostly in written form. It is always persuasive in nature. The purpose of such communication is to communicate efficiently and clearly while catering to the needs of the receiver. As a result, it becomes necessary to choose the right medium for conveying the message. Selection of medium can be done on the basis of one's intention to communicate and the type of receiver. Such communication can be made effective by being reader-oriented, specific, friendly but clear and emphatic. To be more precise, written communication needs to be planned.

Planning business messages

One needs to plan his business message by taking into consideration various aspects, such as:

Purpose: What is the purpose of the message? Whether the sender wants to share information, solve a problem or request a favour?

<u>Receiver</u>: The receiver's background, his needs and his likely response determines the message planning.

<u>Information</u>: The sender collects and analyzes the information relevant to his purpose. Then, he organizes it in such a way that it effectively conveys the message to the receiver.

In the next step, the sender drafts the message, then revises and edits it if necessary. The business message has clarity, simplicity, accuracy, completeness, conciseness, relevance and courtesy. The good business message has all the seven Cs of communication.

1. Correctness

A letter must be correct in terms of spelling, grammar and use of language. Incorrect language creates a bad impression of the sender. It may also convey a wrong meaning. The business message should be tidy in appearance. Any mistake in typing, corrections made in ink, uneven spacing or carelessness in spacing brings out glaringly the inefficiency of the sender. Appearance of the message depends on the layout as well. One should ensure that the message has proper margins on all sides. At the same time, there should be even spacing between words, lines, paragraphs and parts of layout. The sender should ensure that facts, days and

dates, time and numbers should not be incorrect or incomplete.

2. Clarity

The letter should be clear at the first reading. Clarity can be achieved by using short and simple sentences. Ambiguous words, jargons or technical words should be avoided. In other words, simple, common and concrete words should be used. Proper punctuation should be used to make the message sensible. The business message should be developed in a logical sequence.

3. Conciseness

Conciseness means expressing much in few words. In other words, the sender should use as few words as possible without sacrificing clarity or courtesy. The sender can be concise by leaving out unnecessary words and details. The sender should also know to reduce unimportant ideas to phrases or even single words.

4. Courtesy

Courtesy is consideration for other people's feelings and needs. The sender's selection of words, the style, and the manner reflects his/her courtesy towards the receiver. The main purpose of being courteous is to

make the other person feel comfortable. One can be courteous by being attentive and prompt in responding.

5. Consistency

The business message would be effective only if it is consistent in its content. There should not be too many ups and downs in the content that might lead to confusion in the mind of the receiver.

6. Concreteness

Concreteness in business messages can be achieved by avoiding vague and abstract expressions. Facts and figures communicated should be specific. The receiver understands the factual details better.

Therefore, it is advisable to say "there has been 50% increase in the sales this year" instead of "there has been a tremendous increase in the sales this year".

7. Credibility

All the principles of communication would turn useless if the element of credibility is missing in business communication. Credibility is a matter of trust between the sender and the receiver. Credibility can be developed by showing concern and compassion, demonstrating cooperation with good intentions, being sincere, genuine, consistent, correct, complete and

clear. One should not only learn to accept responsibilities but also avoid exaggerations and doublespeak. At the same time, the receiver should also exude trust in the sender and respond accordingly.

According to Asha Kaul, the seven Cs have distinct relevance in business messages.

C's	Relevance
Correctness	Builds confidence
Clarity	Makes comprehension easier
Conciseness	Saves time
Courtesy	Improves relationship
Consistency	Introduces stability
Concreteness	Reinforces confidence
Credibility	Builds trust

(Kaul 19)

The business message can be a letter, an e-mail, a memo or a report.

The appearance of a letter can make the difference. Good quality paper should be used to type the letter. Typing should be neat without corrections or cancellations. The business letter usually consists of three to four paragraphs wherein the opening paragraph may have only one or two sentences; the middle

paragraphs consist of the main message; and the closing paragraph may have only one sentence. A continuation sheet should be used if the letter does not fit on a single sheet.

We shall first discuss the parts of business letter.

Parts of Business Letter

The essential parts of a business letter are: heading, the date, reference, inside address, subject, salutation, body of the letter, complimentary close, signature, enclosures, copy circulation, post-script and reference initials.

Heading: The heading of a business letter has the name and postal address of the firm, e-mail address, web-site address, telephone number, logo of the firm and so on. The name and address of the firm are usually at the top of the page and that too at the centre.

The date: The date is usually written on the right hand side corner below the heading. It can be written as

15 May 20--

Or

May 15, 20--

Abbreviations are avoided while writing the date.

Reference: Reference number is given on the left corner after the heading. It is usually opposite to the date and in the same line.

Inside_Address: The inside address has the name and address of the receiver. It is written on the left below the reference number. This address is same as the postal address.

Subject: The subject is written below the inside address, five spaces away from the left margin.

Salutation: It is written next to the left margin, below the salutation. It is a way of greeting the receiver. 'Sir' or 'Madam' is used while corresponding with Government departments. 'Dear Sir' or 'Dear Madam' is the most commonly used salutation for a business letter. The salutation may or may not end with a comma.

Body_of_the_letter: Body of the letter follows the salutation. It can be divided into three parts, viz. the introductory paragraph, the main body and the concluding part.

Complimentary_close: This is a formal yet polite way of closing the letter with a respectful phrase. It is normally in congruence with the salutation. 'Yours faithfully' is the most common formal closing for business letters. 'Yours truly' is less formal and is used between persons

familiar with each other. 'Yours sincerely' is very commonly used in business letters.

Signature: The signature is usually hand-written. The name and designation of the sender are generally typed below the signature.

Enclosures: The enclosure is written after the signature near the left margin when there are documents to be sent along with a letter. It can be written as 'Encls: One' or 'Encl: 1) Type of document'.

Copy Circulation: Copy circulation or CC is written when copies of a letter are to be sent to some other people other than the actual receiver.

Post-script: Post-script or P.S is written when the sender wishes to add something to the body of the letter. It is used to convey some important information in a line. It is necessary that the sender signs the P.S as well.

Reference initials: It is customary to type the initials of the person who has dictated the letter followed by the initials of the person who has typed the letter at the end of the letter, close to the left margin.

The design in which the different parts of the letter are placed on the letterhead is known as layout. In any kind of layout, the parts are placed in the same order but there is variation in the indention and paragraph styles. The business letters are usually typed in modified block

form. In this layout, the date and the complimentary close are typed on the right. The salutation and the complimentary close are followed by a comma. The paragraphs begin at the left margin, and there is double space between the paragraphs.

Memo

Memo is an abbreviation of memorandum. The Oxford Dictionary defines memo as "an official note from one person to another in the organization". It is a brief message circulated within the organization. It is an integral part of inter and intra-departmental correspondence. The purpose of a memo is either to inform, to instruct, to convey a policy decision, to suggest or to record/report an agreement. The memo is short, to-the-point, clear and positive/neutral in tone. Depending on the purpose of the memo, it can be classified into: documentary, congratulatory and disciplinary memos.

Memo follows a stylized format and includes receiver's name, sender's name, date, subject, opening line, main body, closing line, signature and enclosures (if any).

Format of Memo	
To	:
From	:
Date	:
Subject	:
Opening line	: Reason for the memo
Main body	: Instruction/Information
Closing line	:
Signature	:
Enclosures	: (if any)

Project report writing and presentation

Number of programmers offered at universities incorporate industry-related project as part of their curriculum. At the end of a stipulated period, students are required to prepare project reports. A project report is a document prepared after the detailed study and analysis of various aspects of a task assigned over a specific period of time. It is always written at the completion of a project done with a business organization. It is usually analytical in nature. The purpose of a project report is to present one's answer to the project problem(s) and to communicate the ideas and methods used to obtain the answer.

The project report should always be written in a simple language. It should be concise, logical and sequential covering the entire scope of the project. The project report should have the components of 1. Cover page, 2. Title page, 3. Declaration, 4. Certificate (by the college and the business organization) and 5. Acknowledgement 6. Table of Contents, 7. List of figures, 8. List of Tables, 9. List of appendices, 10. Abbreviations, 11. Chapter 1, 2, 3…, 12.References and 13. Appendices on separate pages in the same order. The main headings and sub-headings should be clearly listed in the table of contents. Such project reports contain four chapters wherein the first chapter gives introduction of the business organization, the second chapter summarizes literature review of the project problem, the third chapter narrates research design and the fourth chapter presents results, conclusions and recommendations (if any).

Once the final draft of the project report is approved by the supervisor, the student has to give a formal presentation on the report. Such presentation should be well-organized and structured. One should dress smartly, look confident, work on body language, modulate voice and speak enthusiastically to make an effective presentation.

Synopsis

Business messages refer to any communication undertaken for the purpose of business. The purpose of such communication is to communicate efficiently and clearly while taking into consideration the needs of the receiver. There are two important aspects of such communication: 1) it is mostly in written form and 2) it follows a proper format. In order to communicate effectively, one should be fully aware of formats of business messages.