

Lecture : 9

Topic : Principles of written communication for various business documents.

Aims : To understand and apply the basic rules of written communication in formal documents.

Learning outcomes:

On completion of this chapter you should be able to understand and effectively write.

- a) Letters
- b) Memorandums
- c) Meeting Documentation
- d) Briefs
- e) Advertisements etc

Topic outline

- 1.1 Letters
- 1.2 Memorandums
- 1.3 Meeting Documentation
- 1.4 Briefs
- 1.5 Advertisements

1.1 Business letter and Communication Principles

Business letters are often the main means of establishing business relations with the outside world. Therefore, it is vital that letters sent out should convey a good impression. High standards in language and a well – presented business letter may lead to an important business contact.

Business letters must be attractively displayed, grammatically correct, and contain no error in punctuation or spelling.

Types of business letters

There are numerous situations for which letters are produced. The following is a checklist of many types of business letters with which a secretary should be familiar.

Enquiry and reply

Enquiries for information about goods or services are sent and received in business all the times. They should be acknowledged as soon as possible or business may be lost.

Complaint and adjustment

Complaints about goods or services are inevitable and need to be investigated immediately. Steps should be taken to rectify matters if goodwill is to be retained.

Job application, offer and reference

A wide variety of letters pass back and forth in the recruitment process.

Financial

Collection letters, credit requests and credits rating enquiries all come under an organisation's industrial regulations. Legal letters may be written to solicitors regarding overdue payments, defects and contractual problems.

Circulars and mainsheets

To promote goods, services or special events, an organisation may send a letter simultaneously to many recipients. Word processors may be used to personalise messages.

Sales letters

Attracting potential customers in future promotions, new products or services is popular, and special writing techniques have to be adopted in order to put over the products or services in an interesting and enthusiastic way.

Congratulations, sympathy, thanks

Maintaining goodwill is important in business. Thank you letters are often sent after a dinner or other function. Message of condolence may be sent on the death of a business associate or colleagues. Congratulations may be sent to associates on promotion or other achievements.

1. Letterhead
Company's name, address and Tel / telex / fax numbers.
2. References
Initials of writer/ typist (often a filling references)
3. Date
In order day / month / year.
4. Inside address

- Show name, full postal address, town if capitals / post code.
5. Salutation
Dear Sir / Madam / Sirs / John / Mr. England.
 6. Heading
No underscore is necessary when in capitals.
 7. Body of letters
Separate into paragraphs with a new idea in each, with one line spacing between each paragraph
 8. Complimentary Close
With yours sincerely (leave 4/5 lines for signing)
 9. Sender's name
 10. Enclosure Indication
("Enc." is used for one enclosure and if more than one, use "Encs.")

Parts of a Business Letters

A business letter includes a number of elements which should be used:

1. Letterhead

This is one of the most important elements of the letter together with the body of the text. The letterhead provides an image of an organisation. The font style, closures used and the design of the logo all convey message about the company.

The letterhead contains the following information:

- I. The company trading name
- II. Status as limited or public limited company
- III. Address of registered office
- IV. Company registration number

2. Date

The common format is day, month, and year
Eg: 23 January 2003

3. Our ref / Your ref

“Our Ref” is the references of the sender of the letter; it usually comprises the initials of the originator of the letter, the initial of the typists, and a reference to the file. The “Our Ref” information help in locating the letter.

“Your Ref” is the references of the recipient it will enable the recipient to quickly associate the letter with any previous correspondence or files.

4. Addressee’s name, position, organisation and address.

This enables the intended recipient to receive the letter. The name of the addressee and their position in the company is important.

If you do not know a person’ name it is worth telephoning the organisation and asking the telephonists, receptionists or the persons’ secretary to find out. Always obtain the correct spellings, so that your letter is regarded in a more favourable tight.

5. Salutation and close

This is where the recipient is addressed directly. It is usually in the form of Dear xxxx, Yours xxxx.

A simple rule for this is, if you have used the persons name in the salutation, you close with your sincerely, otherwise you use Your faithfully.

6. Subject heading

This provides the recipient of the letter a quick reference point as to the contents of the letter and the matter to which the letter relates. It therefore saves time and helps in prioritising the letter and in filling.

7. Main body of text

This is where the main arguments, points or messages are placed within the letter. Your ability to write good English with sound grammar is important.

8. Signature/Complimentary close

The “signature block is the” part of the letter where the author signs after the close. This is usually located four or five lines under the close with authors name, followed

on the next time by their position or the company name. This is important, as the recipient needs to know who to contact regarding the letter.

9. Enclosures

Indicate the entire bottom, usually about 4-5 lines below the signature block, if there are any enclosure with the letter.

Other essentials (optional)

a) Copy references

If a duplicate of a letter has been sent to an interested party, it is courteous to acknowledge the fact to the letter's recipient with a similar footnote:

i.e. Copy to (3rd party name)
or Copies to (3rd party names)

Do not type cc-unless it is a carbon copy.

b) Continuation Sheets

The second sheet and all subsequent sheets of a letter will be on plain (un-headed) paper. This is in case they should get detached or confused, continuation sheets are headed as follows:

Page

Reference

Date

Name of recipient / The "whatever" Manager
Company's name

National Furniture Sdn Bhd

No.3 Plaza National
Jalan Kerusi
55670 Kuala Lumpur

10 July 2002

RC/MW

ORGANIZING A EXHIBITION

Dear Mr. Wong

With reference to your memorandum, I would like to inform you that the task has been executed. I have made a booking for the central booth of the exhibition. This booth will cost us RM8,000 per day. For the duration of the exhibition, we will need about RM30,000.

There will be 300 exhibitors from all over the country. Chang Mei Suet will head the team. He team members are Wong Yi Onn, Melisa Binte Kamal and Ramesh Kumar. The floor plan of our booth is attached for your reference. We are going to display our posture chair, automatic massage bed and the advanced movement rocking chair. The exhibition organisers provide carpets, exhibition accessories and refreshment.

Copy of the leaflet and brochure have been sent to your office. In case you wish to change the design, please let me know as soon as possible as orders for the printing have to be made by tomorrow.

Lastly, I hope you are satisfied with the arrangements. If you have any doubts please contact me as soon as possible.

Page 2
RC/mc
10 July 2002
Mr. Wong

Yours sincerely

NAME
Secretary

Enc.

Layouts

1. Fully Blocked Style is the easiest to type and therefore increase the typists' productivity. Everything starts at the left-hand margin. This style is becoming common today- see example a layout.
2. Semi Blocked Style
Very much like the fully blocked style but some elements are moved over for balance. The date is against the right hand margin, the complimentary close start from the centre; the subject header may be centralised.
-see example overleaf.

Date _____
Ref _____
Recipient _____

Dear _____

Subject _____

Main Body

Yours _____
Name: _____

Semi -Blocked Style.

Date _____	
Ref. _____	
Recipient _____	

Dear _____	
Subject _____	
Main	Body
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Yours _____	
Name _____	

Fully Blocked Style

References

1. Communication for Business -Shirley Taylor – A practical Approach (3rd Edition)
Pitman Publishing 1999.
2. Business Communication – David Nickson and Suzy Siddons - Heinemann
3. Communication for Business and Secretarial students – LA Woolcott and W R Urwin
– Macmillan Press Ltd.

Tutorial Questions – Week 9

1. Show the blocked and semi-blocked layout styles of a business letter.
2. Draft a letter to your local authority (e.g. MPPJ) complaining of the poor drainage in your vicinity.
You are free to include other details as necessary.

1.2 Memorandum

A memorandum is a flexible and popular internal form of communication, used to

- i) transmit suggestions, requests, instructions
- ii) Motivate, encourage, or discipline employees
- iii) Convey policy changes, decisions and information about the organisation to the staff
- iv) Aid co-operation between departments
- v) Aid co-ordination between departments
- vi) Provide accurate written, confirmation of the details of a oral communication
- vii) Seek or provide information, confirmation or assistance generally.

A memorandum may be sent “upward” or “downward” or “sideways” in the organisational hierarchy, from one person to another, from one department to another or to a large number of staff.

The normal format for a memo would be as follows:

Memo

To:

From:

Ref: Date:

Subject:

Objective of a memo

Message to be communicated.



Style

- a) Salutation and complimentary close are both not used in a memo but the body of a memo must be provided with a heading (subject heading)
- b) Memo should be brief and to the point. Usually they contain one basic idea.
- c) Memos written in the open format or the blocked format
- d) Some memos are less formal than others depending on the audience.
- e) The sender and recipient are usually addressed by job title but many also include the full name.
- f) There may need to be circulation of and this should be stated e.g. Copies to :
- g) It is optional to sign the memos.

Exercise: 1) As principal of your college, send a memo to all staff informing them of the New Year Holidays and change in parking regulations.

(Include any detail that you think is necessary)

MEMORANDUM

To Kelly Wong
Administration Assistant
From Candy Chan
Executive Secretary
Ref CC/st
Date 10 July 2002

IN – HOUSE METHODS OF DISPLAY

Congratulations on recently joining the staff in the Chief Executive's office. Here are some general guidelines on the format of correspondence preferred in this office:

1. LAYOUT OF DOCUMENTS-----> *Separate the body in to paragraph.*
All documents should be displayed in the fully blocked style with open punctuation. Some specimen documents are attached which will guide you in these requirements.
2. SIGNATURE BLOCKED (LETTERS)
On outgoing letters the Chief Executive prefers his name and title in lower case with initial capitals, i.e.

Sundar Raj
Chief Executive

On some personal memos, no salutation or complimentary close will be required.

3. NUMBERED ITEMS
When items need to be numbered they should be typed alone with no full stop or bracket. Subsequent items should be indicated by decimal, e.g. 3.1, 3.2, etc.

----->No complimentary close is necessary

----->Leave a space here for the sender to sign or initial the memo.

----->Don't forget Enc. (if there are any)

1.4 Briefs

A brief is a short selective form of report or instructions.

The term brief, it should be noted is used to describe two different ideas.

- a) it is a condensed statement
- b) it is also a summary of relevant facts

To prepare, or instruct somebody for a task, decision or meeting.

Summarising skills are important when dealing with briefs, as the objective of summarising is to reflect the original source in a shortened form

When summarising:

- a) include all essential points
- b) include only the essential points and leave out examples or technical explanations
- c) include only the written ideas, not your opinions
- d) preserve the logical sequence of the ideas
- e) always maintain the authors meanings and intentions
- f) Do not copy. Use your own words.

Briefs can be used as instructions or guidance and specification for performance. To do this the brief should be clear, with sufficient instructions.

The structure of a brief can be as follows:

1. Purpose or objectives of task.
2. Information about the market
3. Information about the product
4. Information about the client

Tutorial Question

Prepare a brief for all students in your college, who will be taking part in a cross-country run this Saturday.

Your brief will explain in detail the following: -

- a) Reporting times
- b) Attire
- c) Traffic rules to follow
- d) Safety and first aid

e) Prize giving ceremony

You are free to include other information you think fit. The length of the brief should be in about 250-300 words.

1.5 Advertisement

The commonly used advertising media are

a) Oral, b) Written, c) Visual

Written advertising media

Such advertising can be found in a wide variety of media e.g. national and local press trades magazines, notice boards, and posters or in direct mail set to you.

Such media is usually classified according to:

- a) the type of readers
- b) the production
- c) editorial contents
- d) size of circulation
- e) publication frequency
- f) cost of advertising

Before selecting the medium of advertisements, there are a few factors which will have to be taken into consideration:

- i) you will have to identify your target group
- ii) the media read frequently and its dependability has to be ascertained. For examples the widest coverage of target groups, greatest frequency, credibility and costs.

The message in Advertising

Advertisements have certain functions and communicate strong messages.

Briefly these messages are to:-

- a) attract attention
- b) to hold the attention
- c) to persuade and to induce action

The Selling theme

An effective advertisement will have a main theme or angle and this is done in a systematic way.

- 1) Firstly – List the products features
- 2) Secondly – highlight those features or the unique selling points
- 3) Thirdly – identify those points, which are relevant to purpose.
- 4) Fourthly – express the U.S.P or benefits to the reader
- 5) Lastly – select one unique selling point which will most effectively persuade the customer and write out the “text” or “copy”

The Advertising Copy

In writing the copy, you must keep in mind that it should

- a) attract and maintain interest
- b) explain benefits of the product
- c) create desire for the product
- d) initiate action
- e) encourage and be informative

The Advertising Style

Styles of advertising vary but generally an advertisement should

- a) emphasise the product
- b) have pace and fluency
- c) be informal
- d) will have to appeal to the readers motivation
- e) be credible
- f) be well presented with good use of space, colour, shape, fonts and illustrations
- g) good use of leads (headlines) and catch words or slogans

Tutorial Assignment

Select and product advertisement that you find in the local newspapers, study the style conforms to norms on given above:

