Planning
Business Messages

Effective Business Messages

Purposeful	
Audience-Centered	
Concise	

Three-Step Writing Process

1 Plan →

Analyze the Situation

Define your purpose and develop an audience profile.

Gather Information

Determine audience needs and obtain the information necessary to satisfy those needs.

Select the Right Medium

Select the best medium for delivering your message.

Organize the Information

Define your main idea, limit your scope, select a direct or an indirect approach, and outline your content.

2 Write →

Adapt to Your Audience

Be sensitive to audience needs by using a "you" attitude, politeness, positive emphasis, and unbiased language. Build a strong relationship with your audience by establishing your credibility and projecting your company's preferred image. Control your style with a conversational tone, plain English, and appropriate voice.

Compose the Message

Choose strong words that will help you create effective sentences and coherent paragraphs.

3 Complete

Revise the Message

Evaluate content and review readability, edit and rewrite for conciseness and clarity.

Produce the Message

Use effective design elements and suitable layout for a clean, professional appearance.

Proofread the Message

Review for errors in layout, spelling, and mechanics.

Distribute the Message

Deliver your message using the chosen medium; make sure all documents and all relevant files are distributed successfully.

Analyze Your Purpose

Right Timing?

Right delivery method?

Realistic purpose?

General Purpose *(To inform, to persuade, or to collaborate with Audience)*	Specific Purpose *(What specific purpose are you trying to accomplish?)*

Is it acceptable in the org?

Develop an Audience Profile

- **Identify primary audience**

- **Determine size**

- **Determine composition (Background, education??)**

- **Gauge level of understanding**

- **Project expectations and preferences (What do they want?)**

- **Estimate probable reaction (what to do for skeptical response? Favorable response?)**

Gather Information

Formal Sources	**Opinions of Others**	**Employees or Customers**
Interviews	**Company Files**	**Audience Input**

Provide Information

Complete

(Who, what, when, where, why, and *how.)*

Accurate

(A date provided Is a promise made!)

Pertinent

(Address Interests)

Ethical

(Avoid unnecessary Omission!)

Business Communication Channels and Media

Oral Channel	Written Channel
•Face-to-Face	•Memos
•Telephone	•Letters
•Meetings	•Reports
•Voice Mail	•E-mail
•Videotape	•Websites
•Teleconferencing	•Instant Messages

Selecting the Best Channel and Medium

- **Style and tone (Formal/Informal?)**
- **Feedback**
- **Audience perception**
- **Time (urgent?)**
- **Cost**
- **Audience expectation**

Relating to the Audience

"You" Attitude

Positive Tone

Credibility

Polite Treatment

Bias-Free Language

Corporate Image

The "You" Attitude

Instead of This	Use This
To help us process this order, we must ask for another copy of the requisition.	So that your order can be filled promptly, please send another copy of the requisition.
Instead of This	**Use This**
You should never use that type of paper in the copy machine.	That type of paper doesn't work very well in the copy machine.
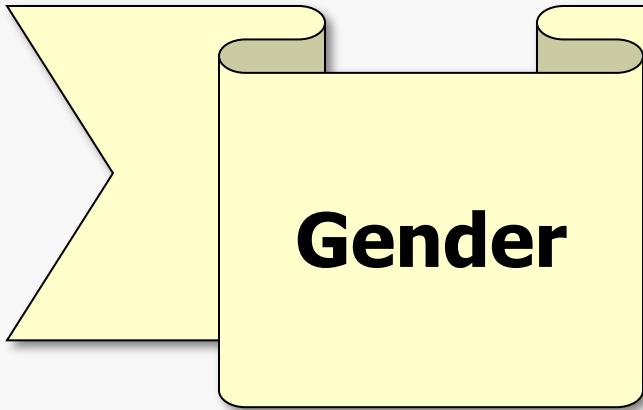
Emphasize the Positive

Instead of This	Use This
It is impossible to repair your vacuum cleaner today.	Your vacuum cleaner will be ready by Tuesday.

Instead of This	Use This
•Cheap merchandise •Toilet paper •Elderly person	•Bargain prices •Bathroom tissue •Senior citizen
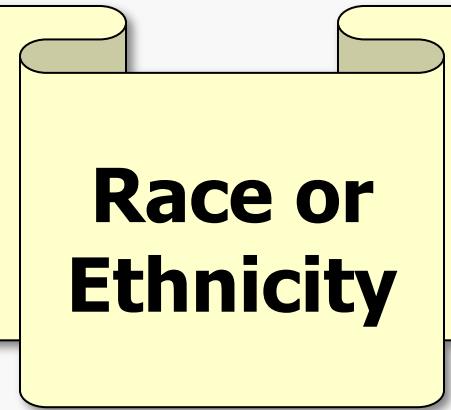
Be Polite

Instead of This	Use This
You really fouled things up with that last computer run.	Let's review what went wrong so that the next computer run goes smoothly.

Instead of This	Use This
You've been sitting on our order for two weeks. We need it now!	We are eager to receive our order. When can we expect delivery?
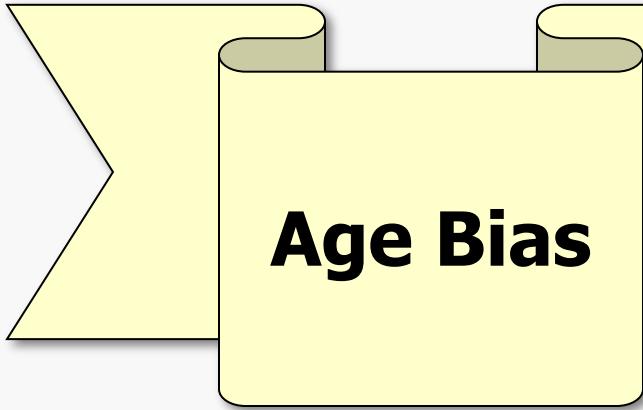
Use Bias-Free Language

Gender

Race or Ethnicity

Age Bias

Disability

Examples	Unacceptable	Preferable
Gender Bias		
Using words containing *man*	Man-made	Artificial, synthetic, manufactured, constructed, human-made
	Mankind	Humanity, human beings, human race, people
	Manpower	Workers, workforce
	Businessman	Executive, manager, businessperson, professional
	Salesman	Sales representative, salesperson
	Foreman	Supervisor
Using female-gender words	Actress, stewardess	Actor, flight attendant
Using special designations	Woman doctor, male nurse	Doctor, nurse
Using *he* to refer to "everyone"	The average worker ... he	The average worker ... he or she
		OR
		Average workers ... they
Identifying roles with gender	The typical executive spends four hours of his day in meetings.	Most executives spend four hours a day in meetings.
	The consumer ... she	Consumers ... they
	The nurse/teacher ... she	Nurses/teachers ... they
Identifying women by marital status	Mrs. Norm Lindstrom	Maria Lindstrom
		OR
		Ms. Maria Lindstrom
	Norm Lindstrom and Ms. Drake	Norm Lindstrom and Maria Drake
		OR
		Mr. Lindstrom and Ms. Drake

Racial and Ethnic Bias

Assigning stereotypes	Not surprisingly, Shing-Tung Yau excels in mathematics.	Shing-Tung Yau excels in mathematics.
Identifying people by race or ethnicity	Mario M. Cuomo, Italian-American politician and ex-governor of New York	Mario M. Cuomo, politician and ex-governor of New York

Age Bias

Including age when irrelevant	Mary Kirazy, 58, has just joined our trust department.	Mary Kirazy has just joined our trust department.

Disability Bias

Putting the disability before the person	Disabled workers face many barriers on the job.	Workers with physical disabilities face many barriers on the job.
	An epileptic, Tracy has no trouble doing her job.	Tracy's epilepsy has no effect on her job performance.

Establish Credibility

Show Your Understanding

Explain Your Credentials

Avoid Exaggerating

Believe in Yourself

Project the Company's Image

- **Be a spokesperson**

- **Convey the right impression**

- **Minimize your own views**

- **Maximize company interests**