

A faint, stylized illustration in the background shows two people, a man and a woman, facing each other. Between them is a large gear with a laptop screen in the center. The man is on the left, wearing a blue shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a green shirt. The gear is blue and white, and the laptop is blue. The overall style is flat and modern.

NEGATIVE MESSAGES

NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Use to deliver:

- Refusals
- Rejections
- Recalls
- Apologies

For example

Job Application Rejection

Product or Service
Discontinuation

Denying a Refund Request

Employee Termination

Any news that can create a
hardship for the employee.

PURPOSE OF NEGATIVE MESSAGES

A negative message serves the following primary functions:

- convey the bad news

- gain acceptance for it

- maintain as much goodwill as possible with the audience

INDIRECT APPROACH

When to use indirect approach:



When the bad news is personally upsetting

When the bad news will provoke a hostile reaction

When the bad news threatens the customer relationship

When the bad news is unexpected

The indirect approach is created by placing the key idea in the close instead of in the opening.

See manual pages 111-114 for further details, understanding and objectives on the topic (How to organize negative messages).

WHAT ARE BUFFERS?

Statements that allow to delay the negative message when using indirect approach

Softens the impact of bad news

Respects the reader

Establish a positive or neutral tone

BUFFERS: ALLOWS YOU TO DELAY THE NEGATIVE MESSAGE WHEN USING INDIRECT APPROACH AND SOFTENS THE IMPACT

Buffer Type

- Appreciation

Purpose

- Thank the receiver

Example

- Thank you for reaching out to us
...

Buffer Type

- Facts or neutral start

Purpose

- Set the context

Example

- Your request was reviewed by our finance team ...

BUFFERS: ALLOWS YOU TO DELAY THE NEGATIVE MESSAGE WHEN USING INDIRECT APPROACH

Buffer Type

- Compliment

Purpose

- Acknowledge strengths

Example

- We were impressed with your experience

Buffer Type

- Understanding

Purpose

- Show empathy

Example

- We understand how frustrating delays can be . . .

FORMAT OF NEGATIVE MESSAGE

Buffer statement

- Positive or neutral statement that establishes goodwill.

Explanation

- Explain the situation: Why there is an issue.
- Rationale for negative news: Help reader understands the ‘why’
- Add concrete details

Break the bad news

- State the negative news

Redirect

- Focus on possible alternatives, solutions, or upcoming actions

Closing

- Goodwill close: End on a positive note

**See manual
pages 115-119
for further
details,
understanding
and objectives
on the topic
(The parts of
a negative
message).**

Task: Identify The Components Of Negative Message

Redirect

- However, you are welcome to take vacation before and/or after the project rolls out. As compensation, HR is providing IT staff with three extra days of paid vacation.

Explanation + Break the bad news

- Summer is traditionally a time when many employees are out of the office and demands on the servers are reduced. In order to minimize the disruption to staff throughout the company, the IT department will be rolling out a server replacement project during July and August. Because this project will need to be completed in a more compressed time frame, no vacation requests in July and August are possible for staff in the IT department. As a result, your request for vacation during August has not been approved.

Closing

- We look forward to receiving your revised vacation request soon.

Buffer

- Thank you for submitting your request for 10 days of vacation (your maximum entitlement) in August.

PRACTICE: NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Task: Imagine that you work in the hospitality industry. You work in the IT department. Your boss has arranged a training session on the topic “Using Social Media in the Hospitality Industry”. You are required to attend this training session, but due to certain unexpected reasons, you cannot attend the session. Write a negative news e-mail to your boss informing that you cannot attend the training session. Follow the Indirect approach.

Paragraph 1: Create a buffer statement



Paragraph 2:

State the rationale for your refusal based on the genuine and acceptable circumstances (At least two to three statements). Add concrete details

Break the negative news



Paragraph 3: Provide any possible alternative or solution that can compensate your refusal.



Paragraph 4: End on a positive note that emphasis on maintaining positive relationship