

PART THREE

MESSAGE DESIGN

CHAPTER 7

**The Appearance and Design of Business
Message**

The Appearance and Design of Business Message

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Learning Objectives

This chapter will give you a brief overview of both traditional formats of written communication, such as letters and memos, and newer communication styles such as email, etc. developing as a result of the exploding technology.

The Appearance and Design of Business Message

Why appearance and Design important in Business Communication?

- In the traditional forms of written communication, your receiver forms a nonverbal impression of you based on the overall appearance and the format of the message.
- For example, if you send your resume enclosed with a covering letter, will communicate something about you even before your receiver reads a word of it.
- Therefore, it is important to give special attention to the medium used most often for written message to person outside your organization.

The Appearance and Design of Business Message

Business Letters

- The medium used most often for written messages to the person outside your organization is **business letter**.
- The many type of styles and formats of modern processing systems and printers can enhance the appearance of your message and create a positive impression.
- The elements of appearance that help produce favorable reactions are:
 - Appropriate stationery
 - Correct Letter Parts
 - Layouts

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Stationery & Envelopes

Quality, Size Colour

- Good company stationery is most often at least 25% cotton content, and white, cream, or light gray in colour.

Letterhead

- Letterheads usually occupy no more than 2 inches at the top page.
- It includes the firms name, address, telephone numbers, fax numbers, email address, URL address, name of department, branch office sending the correspondence.
- This information may be printed engraved or embossed but most of the time it is simply printed.

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Envelopes

- Return address should be printed or typed like the letterhead style usually on the top left side of the envelope or on the back side of envelope.
- The address of the receiver should preferably be typed on the central portion having equal distance from all the sides of the envelope.
- Addresses should always be typed in block form, with all lines aligned on the left. Information in the address should be listed in the following order:
 1. Name and title of receiver
 2. Name of department
 3. Name of organization
 4. PO Box No. (If applicable)
 5. City
 6. Country (If letter being sent abroad)
 7. Telephone no. (In case of sending message via courier)

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Standard Parts of the Letter

Most Business Letters have following parts:

1. Heading-Letterhead and Date
2. Inside Address
 - i. Courtesy Title and Name
 - ii. Executive or Professional Title
1. Salutation
2. Body
3. Complimentary Close
4. Signature Area
5. Reference Section

Heading- Letterhead

LETTERS FOR LIVING

472 South 4th
San Romano, Texas 40023-1300

Date

January 15, 2007

Inside Address

Ms. Sylvia Muree
Communication Director
Sogood Products, Inc.
Franfort, KY 47001-2233

Salutation

Dear Ms.Muree:

You are reading example of modified-block form of business letter. This is form is characterized by all parts of the letter except the date, complimentary close, and signature section beginning at the left margin.

Body

In this example, the date and complimentary close both begin at the horizontal center of the page. (The date could also be placed so that it ends at the right hand margin. Likewise, the complimentary close could start to the right center so that longest line in the signature areas ends at the right hand margin.) Company and business titles are typed on fourth line below the complimentary close. The signer's title may be typed on the line below his or her name; or if it is long, it can be split and typed on two lines.

This letter uses mixed punctuation, which means that there is a colon at the end of the salutation and comma after the complimentary close. No punctuation is used after the date or after any line in the inside address, except after an abbreviation, such as "Inc."

Complimentary Close

Sincerely,

Signature area

Francis Seago, Director
Customer Services

Reference Initials

EEL:mo

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Optional Parts of the Letter

When appropriate, any of these optional parts can be included:

1. Attention Line
2. Subject Line
3. Enclosure Notation
4. Copy Notation
5. File or Account Number Notation and Mailing Notation
6. Post Script

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1. Heading-Letterhead & Date

- A heading shows where the letter comes from, and if it is letterhead stationery, it is usually at the top center of the letter.
- Usually the date is typewritten two to six lines below the last line of the letterhead-at the left margin, centered, begun at the center, or placed so it ends with the right margin.
- Date sequence in American business is month, day, year- 5/5/2006. However in Europe, Latin America, Asia the date sequence is day, month and year. In order to avoid confusion and as the companies globalize, more people write out the month to avoid confusion. e.g. March 5, 2006.

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2. Inside Address

- Always blocked at the left-hand margin.
- It includes the name and address of the individual to whom the sender is writing the letter. Order of the items is:
 - Courtesy Title and Name
 - Professional titles should be used such as Doctor, Professor or traditional courtesy title Mr., Mrs., Mrs., or Ms. When in doubt about a woman's preference use Ms. plus her own name and surname.
 - Current trend suggest Ms. as the courtesy title for all business or professional women regardless of their marital status unless they have a professional title that takes the precedence.

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3. Salutation

- The salutation is typed on the second line below the inside address, two lines above the body and even with left margin.
- Examples of traditional and comparatively recent salutations are:
 - Dear Mr. [Ms., Mrs., Miss.] Doe- When the first line of an inside address is the name of an individual
 - Dear John [or Mary or nickname]-When you'd address the individual this way in person and when it is appropriate for you to do so.
 - Dear Koo Hong Chuan,-Most often used in East Asia; family name is first then given name, then comma.
 - Dear Manager [or Executive, Human Resource Director, Admission Director, or an appropriate variation]-When first line is a position within an organization and you have no name.
 - Dear Ladies and Gentleman [or Member of, Committee Members, Professional Women, etc]-When you are addressing a company, group, or a department and you don't know the a specific person to contact.
 - Dear Customer [or Homeowner, Executive, Student, Occupant, Member of]-For messages that omit the inside address such as sales letters or announcements.

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4. Body

- Generally the body of all the letters should be typed single-spaced, with double spacing between the paragraphs, before and after the salutation, and before the complimentary close.
- When the body of the letter is two or more pages, each page beyond the first is headed by the addressee's name, page number, and date. This information is typed at the top of the sheet with the same margins as the first page.

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5. Body

- Generally the body of all the letters should be typed single-spaced, with double spacing between the paragraphs, before and after the salutation, and before the complimentary close.
- When the body of the letter is two or more pages, each page beyond the first is headed by the addressee's name. page

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6. Signature Area

- You can include in the signature area several identifications such as:
 - Name of your company
 - Your signature
 - Your type written name
 - And your business title
- Your signature is pen-written above your typed name, which appears three two five lines below the complimentary close.

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7. Reference Section

- The reference section may include information about the message composer, the typist, and sometime word processing date.
- Your initials as the composer of the message along with the last line of the signature area (your name or the title) or one or two lines below that. Here some examples:

MLO/mb

MLO/MB

MLO:mb

MLO:MB

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Optional Parts of the Letter

1. Attention Line

When you want to direct a letter to a particular person or title or department in an organization, you can use an attention line. It is useful in the following context:

- **When the writer does not know an individual's name but wants the message go to a particular title (sales adjustment manager) or department manager (personnel)**
- **When writer knows only the person's surname and therefore does not want to use that name in salutation.**
- **When writer expects that the addressee travels often and wants the letter to be attended to promptly by whoever takes care of the addressee's business.**

Placement of the attention line is usually between the inside address and salutation, with blank line before and after it. It may be flush with the left margin, indented with paragraphs, or centered.

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2. Subject Line

- The subject line helps tell the reader at a glance what your letter is about.
- The subject line may include or omit the word ***subject***.
- It is usually placed on the second line below the salutation and centered, or it may be placed flush with left margin.
- The typing may be capitals and lowercase and underlined or all capitals.

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3. Enclosure Notation

An enclosure or attachment notation is included to remind or alert the reader to check for additional pages of information.

- One enclosure is a unit that can consist of one or more pages
- When enclosure are especially important, it is desirable to list the enclosure notation with their document titles, for example.

Enclosure: Resume

Photocopy of Passport

Photocopy of National Identity Card

Photocopy of Post Graduate Qualification

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4. Copy Notation

- When persons other than the addressee will receive a copy of your message, you note the by writing “c”, “pc,” “copy” or “cc” followed by the names of these persons just below the reference initials or the enclosure notation.
- When you do not want the addressee to know that other persons are getting a copy of letter, type “bc” (blind copy) or “bpc” (blind photocopy) and the recipients’ names **on the copies only**

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5. File or Account Number of Mailing Notation

- To aid in filing and quick retrieval for both the sender's and reader's company, some firms require that file, loan or account number be typed above the body letter.
- Mailing notation words such as Special Delivery, Certified, or Registered Mail, when applicable, may be typed a double space below the date line at least a double space before the inside address.

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1. Postscript

- To emphasize a point already in your letter or to include a brief personal message unrelated to letter, a postscript, typed or handwritten (with or without “P.S.,” “PS” or “PS:”) may be added below everything else typed on the page.

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Letter Layout

- Open and mixed punctuation are the two forms most used in American business letters.
- In open punctuation, no line of any letter part (except the body) has any punctuation at the end unless an abbreviation requires a period.
- In mixed punctuation, a colon follows the salutation; a comma follows the complimentary close.
- The writers, especially those in Asia and Great Britain, use a comma in place of a colon after the salutation.

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Letter Styles

Business letters are usually arranged in of the letter styles mentioned below:

1. **Full Block:** Every line begins at the left margin. This is a common format because it is quick and easy to set up.
2. **Modified-Block:** The date, complimentary close, and signature sections begin at the horizontal center of the page or are placed so that they end near the right-hand margin. Attention and the subject lines may be intended, centered, or begin at left margin, where all other parts begin. This letter style is used often and is attractive on page.
3. **Modified-block with paragraph indented.**
4. **AMS (Administrative Management Society) simplified style.** AMS has been in use since the 1950s, but is not widely used.

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Memorandums

- In contrast to letter, which goes outside your organization, the memorandum goes within your organization.
- It is the most common form of communication between people or departments within the same organization.
- The stationery, parts, layout and envelopes are somewhat different from the letters

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Email & Stationery Requirement

- Managers using E-mail send the messages to their colleagues, eliminating the need of stationery.
- However, receiver may print out the message on computer paper.
- For more permanency, a copy of E-mail memo is often reproduced on higher-quality stationery.
- Preprinted memo stationery may include MEMORANDUM and the company's name (but not address).
- Many companies decide on their own formats.

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Standard Parts of the Memorandum

- Standard memos consist of a heading with TO, FROM, SUBJECT, and DATE.
- On preprinted office forms, the word message may also appear.
- Unlike the letter, the memo requires no inside address, salutation, complimentary close, or full signature
- It is NOT USUAL to sign the memo at the end along with a personal, handwritten note.

Optional Parts of the Memorandum

- Optional parts are items such as reference initials, enclosures, file numbers, routing information, and the sender's department and telephone number.

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Layout of the Memorandum Body

- The body of the message is the most important part of the memo because it contains your message.
- In general, you can use the same guidelines, principles, and organizational plans for the memo as far as the letter.
- Unlike that of a letter, memo body is not centered on the page.
- First lines usually begin a triple space under the last of the memo headings regardless of the message length.
- Left margins are usually lined up evenly below the headings
- Single or double spacing between the paragraphs is conventional
- For memo pages beyond the first, headings are the same as those of business letter: reader's name, page number, and date.
- Reference initials are typed a double space below the body at the left margin.
- Copy Notations may be placed after the reference initials or near the top of the memo between the TO and FROM.
- If only your business title appears in the FROM line, or if the FROM line is omitted, you should sign your name a few space below the memo body.

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Special Time Saving Message Media

1. Email

- Writing conventions for electronic mails are still emerging, but generally email is marked by informality and speed.
- Formats can vary considerably from one sender to another
- Receiver have varying comfort levels with messages sent electronically; some receivers always print out message in hard copy to give it their best reading.
- At present, E-mail formats are generally a less formal combination of letter and memo conventions, with memo headings for internal and external communication, but often with salutations and closing more like letters.

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2. Facsimiles (Faxes)

- For immediate communication, many organizations use a fax, which is fast growing means of sending and receiving messages.
- Basically the system transmits identical images electronically, from senders machine to the receivers.
- That machine may be a fax machine or a computer with software capable of sending a fax from your computer to another computer.

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3. Telegrams, Mailgrams, Telexes

- Older forms of electronics communication that operate on the same wires and satellite set up of telephone system are telegrams, mailgrams, and telexes.
- Its limitation is the charges, which are based on number of words, therefore conciseness is important.
- Mailgrams are used when you need to reach a number of people simultaneously in writing on the next business day.
- In general mailgrams and telegrams are less expensive than phone calls, especially if the message must be transmitted a long distance.
- A telex message is keyboarded on a word processing system and then sent over a telegraph lines to compatible receivers. Telexes are, basically, electronics messages that use telegraph lines for transmission.

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4. Teleconferencing

- Teleconferencing is growing in popularity for the companies whose interests are increasingly global.
- It is often less expensive to bring together people located at distant geographical sites by arranging a teleconference rather than have them physically come together. There are three ways you can make this kind of arrangements:
 1. **Audio:** audio conferencing uses telephone lines to set up a group conference. Everyone in group is able to speak to everyone else.
 2. **Video:** Video conferencing uses closed-circuit television, in which every participant can see, hear, and talk to others. This form of communication is gaining popularity because of improvement in technology and decreasing costs.
 3. **Computer:** Computer conferencing uses computer terminals to link participants. People can send and receive messages in real time (while they are actually sitting at their computer terminal) from other members of group.

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END OF CHAPTER 7