



## Lecture Notes Business Communication Complete

Business Communication (Concordia University)

## COMM 212- Final Exam (First Half) 2013

### Chapter 1- Getting the Message Across

#### Business Communication as a Path to Success

-How to write, speak, and listen on the job reflects who you are professionally, how you treat others, and how you do business. We now have flatter organizations; therefore, team work environments require advanced communication.

-**Soft Skill:** A social, interpersonal, or language skill that complements a person's technical skills. The ability to communicate effectively.

-**Hard Skill:** A technical skill (like tools) a person require for a job.

-Ability to communicate has benefits like: enhanced problem-solving, decision making, increased efficiency, workflow, productivity, improved professional image, group dynamics.

#### Communicating for a Changing World

-**The Knowledge Economy:** The knowledge worker makes and sells idea-based products: software, consulting, financial services, music, designs, etc. Knowledge products have an advantage as their value increases on a global scale. Challenge in a knowledge economy is to ensure continued funding for R&D, continue to draw on an educated workforce and to fight brain drain. The need to explore new and emerging markets, negotiate buy and sell overseas, market products and enter into joint ventures is anchored in effective communications with people from around the world of different ages, races, genders, etc.

-Things we need to consider today: the knowledge economy, flatter/decentralized organizations, business on a global scale, diverse employee base, team work environments, advanced communication technologies (social media).

-**Communication:** Transactional and relational process involving the meaningful exchange of information.

-**Communication Theory:** A system of ideas for explaining communication. Theoretical frameworks mentioned below.

-Rhetoric: The use of language to persuade an audience

-Semantics: The study of the words and symbols we choose.

-Semiotics: the study of how meaning is assigned and understood

-Cybernetics: the study of how information is processed and how communication systems function.

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## The Communication Process

-Communication can be understood in terms of being **situated** (embedded in a particular environment or subculture context), **relational** (involves the ability to interact effectively and ethically, according to what is needed in a given moment), and **transactional** (a cooperative activity in which people adapt to one another).

### Transactional Communication Model

-**Message:** Any type of oral, written, or non-verbal communication that is transmitted by a sender to an audience.

-**Sender:** The participant in the transaction who has an idea and communicates it by encoding it in a message.

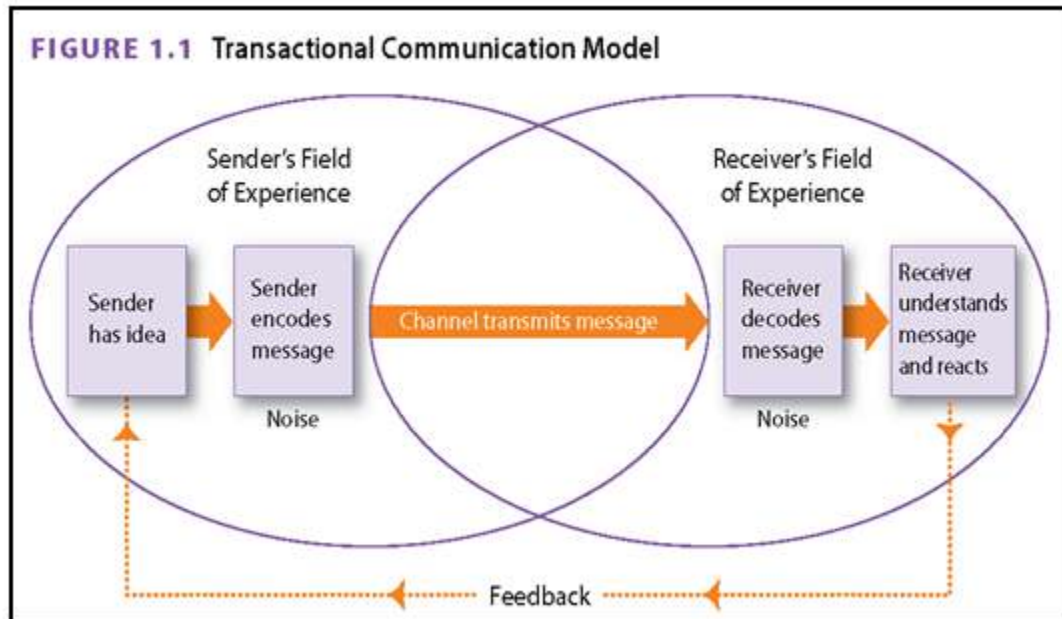
-**Encoding:** The act of converting ideas into code in order to convey a written, oral, or non-verbal message.

-**Channel:** A communication pathway or medium over which a message travels (email, face-to-face, etc.)

-**Receiver:** The person for whom a message is intended, who decodes the message by extracting meaning from it.

-**Decoding:** The act of extracting meaning from spoken, written and non-verbal communication.

-**Feedback:** The receiver's response to a message that confirms if the original message was received and understood



### Barriers to Effective Communication

-**Noise:** Anything that could distort the meaning of the message

-**Communication Barriers:** Problems that can affect the transaction leading to confusion/misunderstanding.

- Channel Overload:** The inability of a channel to carry all transmitted messages (inbox is full)
- Information Overload:** A condition where a receiver cannot process all transmitted messages
- Emotional Interference:** A psychological factors (joy, anger, hostility) that creates problems with the communication transaction
- Semantic Interference:** Interference caused by ambiguity, jargon, etc. One word may mean different things to different people (**bypassing**)
- Physical and Technical Interference:** Caused by something external to the sender or receiver (computer crashes, failed cellphone connection)
- Mixed Messages:** Conflicting perceptions of a message that may result in miscommunication
- Channel Barriers:** Inappropriate choices of channels that impede communication
- Environmental Interference:** Age and cultural gaps can create differences in perception that influence how a message is interpreted

*Overcoming These Barriers: Be timely and time-sensitive, purposeful, good listener, careful reader, context-sensitive and proactive*

### Communication Contexts

-Interpersonal communication (between two people aka dyadic, face-to-face), small group communication (between three or more, common goal), organized communication (happens in a hierarchical social system, memo, meetings, common goals), intercultural communication (people of different cultures), mass communication (small group sends a message usually in email form to a large audience).

-**Non-Verbal Communication:** Communication that does not use words but takes place through gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions. Communicates emotions, attitudes, greetings and cues of status...

-Non-Verbal communication cues can play 5 roles in relation to verbal communication:

1. Repetition (A computer technician says "I'm fixing this computer" as he points to it)
2. Contradiction (Job candidate says she's confident in CV but doesn't make eye contact in interview)
3. Regulation (tapping a person's shoulder to regulate a conversation)
4. Substitution (actions speak louder than words)
5. Accenting and Complementing (Pounding the table while exclaiming "we have to cut our budget now!")

-Non-Verbal skills and abilities fall into 3 general domains: Encoding, Decoding and Regulation

### Components of Non-Verbal Communication

-Use of space-> **proxemics** (study of use of space): how much space a person maintains in a conversation...

-Use of time-> **chronemics** (study of time in communication): How punctual someone is, how long they are willing to listen...

- Paralanguage (vocalics):** non-verbal qualities of communication (vocal qualities like pitch and volume, vocal characteristics like laughing, yelling, vocal segregates (pauses like “ummm”))
- Body Language (kinesics):** non-verbal communication conveyed by gestures, eye contact, posture, facial expressions and image

### Communicating in Organizations

- Internal Communication:** Communication through channels of the organization
- External Communication:** Communication with audiences who are part of an external environment
- Essential Skills for Workplace Communication- reading, active listening, **cognitive dissonance** (tendency to reject message based on personal values)
- Formal Communication Network:** A system of communication sanctioned by organizational management
- Informal Oral Network:** Unofficial internal communication pathways that carry gossip, and rumours, not always accurate
- Formal Communication Channels:** Facilitate the flow of information through an organization’s hierarchy
- Upward Communication Flow:** Channels information from subordinates to superiors
- Downward Communication Flow:** Channels information from superiors to subordinates

### Ethical Communication

- Business Ethics:** The socially accepted moral principles and rules of business conduct “do the right thing”
- Libel:** A false published statement that is damaging to a person’s reputation
- Tell the truth, avoid language that attempts to evade responsibility, don’t surpass or de-emphasize important information

### Cross-Cultural Communication

- Culture:** The shared customs and patterns of behaviour of a particular group or society including its language, rules, beliefs and structures
- Ethnocentrism:** The tendency to make false assumptions, based on limited experience that one’s own cultural or ethnic group is superior to another.

-Cultures tend to differ in attitudes to individualism or collectivity, time orientation, relative directness to communication styles, etc.

**-Low-Context Cultures:** Cultures that favour direct communication and depend on explicit verbal and written messages exclusive of context

**-High-Context Cultures:** Communication depends not only on the explicit wording of a message but on its surrounding context.

-Keys to Intercultural Communication: Be flexible, tolerate uncertainty, listen to other, bridge cultural gaps, encourage employer to commit to a discrimination-free workplace

## Chapter 2- Planning and Writing Business Messages

### The Writing Process

*-Prewriting (thinking), organizing and creating an outline, drafting, revising and editing*

-Message planning: make sure you have a purpose, has an audience, and concise

-Prewriting: Estimate the **scope** (the limitations of a document's coverage, don't mention what they already know, level of detail) of subject, determine audience's needs, select channel, collect info you want to exchange

-Organizing and Outlining: Once you have gathered your material, it needs to be structured in a coherent way so readers will understand it.

-Drafting: The preliminary writing of a document

-Editing: The process of checking a writing draft to ensure it conforms to standards of good English, style and accepted business-writing practice

**-Audience Analysis:** The process of assessing the needs and knowledge of readers and listeners and adapting messages accordingly

**-Primary Audience:** The intended receiver of a message- the persons who will use or act on a message's information

**-Secondary Audience:** Anyone else who will read the document and be affected by the actions or decision it calls for

**-Reader Benefits:** The advantages the reader gains by complying with what the writer proposes in buying products, following policies or endorsing ideas

**-Richness:** A quality of the types of cues by which meaning can be derived from a message

**-Brainstorming:** A method of generating content by listing ideas as they come to mind

**-Mapping/Clustering:** A method of generating content by visualizing the main topic and its subcategories

**-Journalistic Questions:** The essential questions (how, what, where) that frame journalists' inquiries as they focus and prepare their stories.

**-Organizing and Outlining:** The process of arranging information for clarity and impact

**-Sequential Development:** A method of organization describing the arrangement of steps in a process

**-Chronological Development:** A method of organization that describes events in the order in which they occurred

**-Cause-and-Effect Development:** A method of organization that links events with the reasons for them

**-Outline:** A framework for documents, showing its divisions and elements

**-Writer's Block:** A psychological state of being unable to begin the process of composition out of fear or anxiety over the communication task (free writing can help)

**-Free Writing:** A method of generating content based on unstructured writing and the recording of ideas as they come to mind

**-Collaborative Writing:** The process of writers working together to create finished reports, proposals and other documents

## Chapter 3- Word Choice, Conciseness and Tone

### Word Choice

-Use language that is fresh and current (edit for clichés, outdated expressions, slang, and txt language)

-Keep language specific, precise and functional

-Practice factual and ethical communication

-Plain styles use the following conventions: Everyday language, common words, reasonable sentence lengths, active voice, personal pronouns (I, we) and unambiguous words

- Instead of using "Ize" words like utilize, say USE instead
- Instead of saying commence, say START
- Instead of saying raison d'être, say REASON FOR BEING

**-Jargon:** A term that describes the specialized terminology of a technical field AND outdated words used in a business context

-**Buzzwords:** Fashionable, technical or computer jargon. Right now we use words like GLOBALIZE and SYNERGY. But we have to be careful, because they won't be trendy words forever

-**Concrete Nouns:** Things knowable through the senses

-**Abstract Nouns:** Things not knowable through the senses

Abstract: Our Company demands loyalty (something intangible and that we cannot see)

Abstract/Concrete: Our Company demands loyalty to corporate policy

-**Idiom:** A word or phrase that has a meaning different from its literal meaning (hand in-> submit, look up-> research for info)

-**Analogy:** An explanation of the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar (think of brain drain)

-Be timely and accurate, avoid untrue and misleading statements, use proper channels (know if they are going to be private or not), Acknowledge sources you use

### Achieving Conciseness

-Conciseness is desirable, but too much can make writing uneven, choppy, blunt or rude. Aim for conciseness, completeness and politeness.

Wordy: Please note that you are requested to read and offer your comments on the attached file.

Concise and Polite: Please review the attached file.

-Ways to achieve conciseness: eliminate long lead ins, eliminate redundancies, revise for empty words or phrases, use strong verbs

-**Non Conversions or Nominalizations:** Verbs that have been converted into nouns with the addition of -ment or -tion endings

-**Redundancies:** Unplanned repetitions

-Active Voice: A writing style in which the grammatical subject of a sentence performs the action

-**Passive Voice:** A writing style in which the grammatical subject of a sentence is acted upon

-**Prepositional Phrase:** Phrase beginning with a preposition and functioning as a modifier

-**Expletive Construction:** A phrase such as *there is* or *it was* at the beginning of a clause, delaying introduction of the subject

-**Denotation:** A word's dictionary definition



-**Connotation:** A word's implied or associative meaning, often coloured by a positive or negative emotion - Pre-owned (+) v.s. Used (-), Less expensive (+) v.s Cheap (-), Slender (+) v.s. Skinny(-)

-Tone is reflected in the level of formality (level of writing) through word choice, sentence length and sentence structure

-**Personal Style:** A styles of writing that seems warm and friendly based on its use of first and second person pronouns

-**Impersonal Style:** A style of writing that seams objective and detached based on its use of third person pronouns

-Inclusive language avoids gender-specific job-titles and salutations (salesperson NOT salesman)

-**You-attitude:** A writing style that focuses on the reader as opposed to the writer

-**We-attitude:** A writing style that focuses on the shared goals and values of both the writer and readers.

-**Salutation:** a greeting (Dear Professor Aylen)

## Chapter 4- Business Style

### Effective Sentences

-The building blocks of complete sentences are phrases and clauses. A phrase is a group of words containing a subject or a verb, but not both. A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a verb (when it delivers full meaning it is called an independent clause and when it doesn't it is called a dependent clause).

-Simple sentence (one independent clause): We love to learn about grammar

-Compound sentence (two independent clauses): English is our favorite course, and we love to learn about grammar.

-Complex Sentence (one dependent and one independent clause): When we come to class, we love to learn about grammar.

-Compound-Complex Sentence (one dependent, two independent): When we come to class, we love to learn about writing, and we love to learn about grammar.

-Try to turn a clause into a **propositional phrase** (a phrase beginning with a proposition that sets out a relationship in time or space)

-Use **appositives** (A word/group of words that renames a preceding noun) to convert sentences into phrases: Jennifer, the acquisitions editor, has just returned from a trade show in London)

-**Declarative Sentence:** A sentence that makes a statement

- Closed Question:** Limited number of possible responses
- Open Question:** Unlimited number of possible responses
- Hypothetical Question:** Poses a supposition
- Be consistent with number (singular, plural), persons, verb tense and voice.
- Shouting:** The largely unacceptable practice of typing a message in block letter

### Effective Paragraphs

-A paragraph is a group of sentences that develop into one main idea. You should always have a topic sentence (except when delivering bad news)

-**Coherence:** The logical and semantic links between sentences

## Chapter 5- Memorandums, E-mail, and Routine Message

-**Memos:** A specially formatted document that is generally internal or sent within an organization. They can include reminders, instructions, and records of actions, decisions, data-gathering tools, and aids to problem solving. The advantage of a memo is simplicity. They are fast, efficient, and distinctive in structure, less formal than a letter, usually one page long and focus on one topic.

-**E-mail:** A channel for both internal and external messages

-Longer memos require additional formatting techniques such as headings, subheadings, boldfaced font, and bullet listed, numbered listed

### Memo Format

-It has a two-part structure: Heading (date, person addresses, subject...) and the message

-Memo Headings: "TO" (receiver's name, job title, list names in alphabetical order or order of importance), "FROM" (Sender's name), "SUBJECT" (one line long- Cost Reduction Estimate for Review), "CC" (Carbon Copy- lists of others receiving the memo)

-Italics are used for emphasis or to distinguish foreign words

-A list is used to give order and emphasis to important information. It also improves readability  
Our company has three key business segments;

- Investing
- Mortgage operation, and
- Leasing operations

-**Chunking:** The grouping of items of information together to be remembered as a unit

-The closing of a memo should detail the call for action, the reason for request and the deadline, always say thank you to be polite

-A hard-copy memo is preferable, when legality, confidentiality, or document integrity (preserving layout/format of memo) are primary concerns

### E-mail

-An e-mail is paperless, follows the memo format, and is usually one screen length. Its versatile capabilities and wide availability make it an ideal productivity tool- a cheap and convenient way to access, exchange and process information. Benefits of E-mail include speed and ease of collaboration

-The disadvantages: Emails could be a source of corporate embarrassment; it shows can offer proof of a company's wrongdoing. They could have clogged inboxes, undeliverable messages...

-**Netiquette:** The informal code of conduct governing polite, efficient and effective use of the internet

-**Spam:** An advertising message (electronic junk mail) sent widely

-**Flaming:** The act of sending out an angry e-mail message in haste without considering the implications of airing such emotions

-**Informative Memo:** A message to which the reader will react neutrally

-**Routine (Request Memo):** Message that asks the reader to perform a routine action. Informative memos and e-mails are used for announcements, policies, guidelines, instructions and procedures

-**Response:** A message that answers a request or query

-**Goodwill Message:** A message that enhances the value of a business beyond its tangible assets by creating a bond of friendship and establishing trust and mutual understanding between the writer the recipient.

-**Follow-Up Messages:** Provides a record of a meeting (its time, place and any agreements that may have been made)

-**Instant Messaging (IM):** The exchange of messages over the Internet between two or more users who are online

## Chapter 6- Routine and Goodwill Messages

### Direct Writing Planning

-Take the **direct approach** and make your point right away. It is used for good news, and for neutral informative messages. You will get your letter off to a good start and you readers may thank you for your directness. In high-context cultures like China, Japan and Arab nations, directness may be considered rude. People in western cultures consider a lack of directness to be a waste of time.

-Give the main idea in the first sentence or paragraph. The opening addresses a request or answer's you reader's most important question. The middle explains details, clarifications, background information and maybe lists. The closing provides contact information; ask for action, input, deadline or response. End it off with appreciation (thank you for your time).

### Requests

-**Request memo:** A messages that asks the reader to perform a routine action. Direct approach should be used for a request.

-The opening should give the main idea or the command (Can you please answer a few questions we have about you onsite technical support services?). The middle provides the reason for the request and should use the right tone. The closing is courteous and efficient. It focuses on the actions the reader must take.

-**Order Request:** A request for merchandise that includes a purchase authorization and shipping instructions. You may decide to write an order request for merchandise when it isn't possible to order from the catalogue, by telephone, website and fax OR when you need a record of having placed an order. The closing of this message should include a number of details, special instructions, payment method, delivery date expected and expression of appreciation.

-**Claim Letter:** A demand or request for something-often a replacement or a refund-that is considered one's due. When a customer is seeking a correction of a problem or a compensation for losses, they would write a claim. You must avoid expressing anger in a claim letter. In the opening, you should explain to the reader what they should do, explain the situation, include relevant documents and offer an alternate solution. For the closing, you have to end positively, restate action, include an end date and thank the reader.

-**Adjustment:** A written response to a complaint that tells the customer what will be done about the complaint in terms of solving the problem, correcting an error, granting a refund, or adjusting the amount due.

### Response

-**Response:** A message that answers a request or query. It is most effective when response is prompt, informative and gets to the point.

-For an information response, include a subject line that identifies previous correspondence,, open directly with information, answer each inquiry and close with goodwill.

-**Inquiry:** A message that asks for or seeks information (information response is a message that supplies information).

-**Personalized Form Letter:** A letter in which the identical message is sent to more than one person; it is adapted to the individual reader with the inclusion of the reader's name, address, and other info, all of which can be stored in a database and merged with the form letter.

-**Order Acknowledgement:** An informative letter that confirms details of a merchandise purchase and shipment.

-**Claim Adjustment:** A response to a claim letter telling the customer what your company intends to do to correct the problem. The purpose is to inform customer of adjustment, resolve the complaint and restore goodwill. The opening of letter should announce the adjustment right away also offer an apology.

-**Goodwill Messages:** Enhances the value of a business beyond its tangible assets by creating a bond of friendship and establishing trust between both parties. The saying "it's the thought that counts" is true of goodwill messages. They have a social function unlike other business messages. It puts the reader in a positive light, enhances your visibility and makes people more willing to help you in the future. The message should be personal, short and sincere.

-**Thank You Letter (Letter of Appreciation):** A message thanking someone for helping you, extending hospitality to you or doing business with your company.

-**Letter of Congratulations:** Conveys pleasure to someone's happiness or good wishes on someone's accomplishments.

-**Letter or Sympathy or Condolence:** Expresses sadness at someone's lose and offers words of comfort

### Informative Letters

-They provide important information and to which the reader will react neutrally

-**Announcement:** Makes something known about a company policy, event, or personnel change. Use direct approach and place important news first.

-**Cover or Transmittal Letter:** Informative letter that accompanies materials sent from one person to another explaining why those materials are being sent.

### Letter Formats

-Centred on the page, one-inch margins and jagged right margins (Three styles: Full block letter styles-everything aligned at left margin, modified block letter style-center page and simplified letter style-writer's name and signature is omitted)

-Letter Elements: Letterhead/return address, dateline, delivery, inside address (receiver's address), receiver's full name and their title, company name with address and postal code, attention line, reference line, salutation, subject line, message body, complimentary close, signature block...

## Chapter 7- Delivering Unfavourable News

-The following are some important goals to keep in mind when communicating bad news; give bad news in a clear and respectful way, show logic of decision, offer explanation, eliminate negative language, build goodwill with reader despite the news, get your purpose across right away and avoid beating around the bush. Some other things to keep in mind are to put yourself in the position of the person receiving the news, deliver it at the right time and protect yourself and organization from legal liability.

-Three categories of bad news: Refusals (turn down invitations or proposals), Announcements (policy change, product recalls), Assessments (negative performance of employee)

-**Negative Message:** A message that communicates negative information that may upset or disappoint the reader.

### Tone in Bad News Messages

-Don't name-call, plead, avoid mixed messages, and assume the reader will agree, use facts, avoid opinion, do not use overly apologetic language (I'm sorry, I regret...)

### Direct Writing Plan for Bad News Messages

-You should use the direct approach if you know the reader well enough. Provide a simple statement of bad news, be brief and provide a clear explanation, offer an alternative, close with a statement of goodwill.

-The disadvantage of the direct approach is that brief messages may come off cold and brusque

### Indirect Writing Plan for Bad News Messages

-Use this approach if you do not know the reader well and if you expect a strong and negative reaction. Indirect writing is a method of organizing a document so that the main message is delayed and presented toward the end.

-Begin with a **buffer** (A meaning, neutral statement that cushions the shock of the bad news) to grab attention, provide a solid and reasonable explanation to establish the background, state the bad news, and then close with a goodwill statement.

-To reveal bad news, put the bad news in a dependent clause (because they de-emphasize), suggest an alternative (Although we cannot disclose individual salaries, we can provide you with a fact sheet listing the salary range of our senior managers), use the passive voice, use longer sentences to de-emphasize and do not spotlight the bad news.

-**Goodwill Closing:** Draws attention away from the message to a positive and continuing relationship with the reader.

### Types of Bad News

-Refusing requests for information, actions and favours (usually to people outside the organization)

-Refusing Claims

-Refusing Credit

-Turning down job applicants

-Announcing bad news to employees (reduced benefits, cutbacks...)

-Declining Invitations

## Chapter 8- Persuasive Messages

### Writing Persuasively

-Writing persuasively can encourage people you work and conduct business with to agree with you or do what you ask especially when you want to ask for a favour or even present a new idea. You need to convince the reader to adopt your point of view.

-**Persuasion:** The process of gradually influencing attitudes and behaviours and motivating the audience to act. It is the attempt to influence opinion.

-**Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs:** A specific order of needs identified by Maslow- physical needs, the need for safety, social needs, the need for self-esteem, and the need for self-actualization- all of which motivate humans

-Five Steps to Write Persuasively:

1) Know your purpose and what you want the reader to do (make your request seem beneficial)

2) Understand what will motivate your employee, think of the reader's goals and needs (keep in mind Maslow's theory). Will your goal save time, money, solve a problem?

3) Consider the layout of the message, make it look attractive

4) Be positive and accurate (do not give orders)

5) Anticipate objections and know how to deal with them (frame your request as win-win)

**-Appeal:** The attempt to persuade

**-Logic Fallacy:** An error in logic that weakens a persuasive argument- for example, a personal attack, a mistaken assumption that one event causes another, or reliance on testimony of someone who is not an expert.

-Persuasive messages appeal to the reader's sense of reason, emotions and sense of what is right (ethics)

-An indirect writing plan breaks down resistance and prepares readers for your message, it illustrates a gradual attempt to earn trust and show reason and it allows the reader to easily see benefits. You should have an opening that obtains interest, cites the reader's benefits, the middle should prove these benefits to the reader, give further detail and the closing should link the action to incentives that will appeal to your reader and to a deadline.

### Types of Persuasive Messages

-In a *favour and action request* you should be able to gain favourable attention, persuade the reader to accept request (do not make them feel obligated), and ask for an action

-A *persuasive memo* describes a problem to management or colleagues then presents a solution that ends in a related proposal or request. First summarize the problem, explain how the problem can be solved, minimize resistance and ask for a specific action

-For *claim requests*, use a direct plan if the claim is justified. Use an indirect plan for situations that are open to interpretation (warranty expired? Contract violated?). Use a good tone without threats. Firstly, establish a common ground with reader and gain positive attention, prove your claim is valid and then ask for a specific action.

-*Collection letters* are a series of increasingly persuasive appeals to a customer asking for payment for goods and services already received. Consider the type of customer (occasional and reliable OR frequent and unreliable). There are three components to the series: Reminder, inquiry, and demand (definitions below).

**-Reminder Letter:** Informs a customer in a friendly way that a payment has not been received and emphasizes the customer's good credit rating until now.



**-Inquiry Letter:** Attempts to determine the circumstances that are preventing a payment and asks for payment.

**-Demand Letter:** Makes a firm request for immediate payment and attempts to convince the debtor to pay the bill within a started time by raising the possibility of a legal action.

### Sales Messages

**-Sales Letter:** A letter that promotes a product, service or business and seeks prospective customers or additional sales. An effective sales message should analyze the product and audience, study the product or service, and address a specific target audience (sex, education, income...). They include ethical sales pitch.

-You must gain attention, introduce the product, make the product sound desirable, ask for a simple action and add any relevant postscripts.

-A strong sales follow-up letter must confirm the purchase, express goodwill and future business and confirm details of the sale.

**-Fundraiser Messages:** Encourages donations to a worthy cause.

## Chapter 9: Communicating for Employment

### Analyzing your Career Goals and Qualifications

-Assessing your skills and values: Who are you? Will your skills allow you to capitalize on employment trends? What are you good at?

-Assessing your work preferences and personality: Are you introvert or extrovert? Do you like making decisions? Do you appreciate feedback? What type of work do you find most stimulating?

-Assessing your work history: What are your accomplishments? How well do you communicate on the job? What work experiences have you found to be satisfying?

### Job Hunting

-Get to know the job market, sources of employment and places you would like to work. Master job-search techniques and learn to network. Visit employment agencies and sharpen your skills.

**-Job-Prospecting Letter:** An unsolicited letter in which a job-seeker introduces her and asks about job openings.

**-Cold Call:** An unsolicited telephone call in which a job-seeker introduces himself and asks about job openings.

**-Employment Agency:** An organization that matches job candidates with jobs. Sometimes there is a fee.

### Writing Persuasive Resumes

**-Resume:** A one or two page persuasive written document in which a job applicant summarizes her qualifications and relates her education, work experience and accomplishments to the needs of a prospective employer.

- Your CV should be in point form, error-free, have sections.

-The Human Rights Act forbids employers from asking about age, race, religion, marital status, sexual orientation and health.

**-Chronological Resume:** A document in which a job applicants work, experience and education with the most recent experience first in each category.

**-Functional Resume:** A document where qualifications are presented in terms of notable achievements and abilities rather than work experience.

**-Combination Resume:** A document that combines chronological and functional.

**-Scannable Resume:** A paper or electronic resume that is prepared for scanning through uncluttered formatting and inclusions of keyword selections.

-For resumes by E-mail, put the job titles and reference number in the subject line and attach the cover letter and include a covering E-mail message.

**-Cover Letter:** A letter that accompanies a CV to summarize job applicant's qualifications and value to a prospective employer. The opening should get attention and say the position you are applying for. The middle states your qualifications and strengths. The closing will request an interview and provide contact information. Do not use I or Me.

**-Unsolicited Application Letter:** An employment letter written when the applicant does not know a company is hiring.

**-Job Interview:** A structured, face-to-face conversation with recruiters and a job candidate, in which the job candidate's qualifications and potential performance are assessed.

-Tips for Interview: Arrive a bit early, go alone, bring an extra copy of CV, be courteous to people you encounter before, make a confident first impression, do not interrupt recruiter, listen, use proper English, concentrate, avoid being negative, show that you researched the company, do not obsess over salary and benefits and do not expect an immediate response.

-After the interview: Follow up with a thank you letter within 24 hours and consider your options carefully

-Follow-Up Letter: An informative letter that summarizes the key points of a job interview.

Types of follow up letters: Thank you letter, job-offer acknowledgement, job-acceptance letter, job-refusal letter (if you want to decline your position) and a reference requested letter

## Chapter 11

**Proposals:** a business document that suggests a method for solving a problem or seeks approval for a plan.

- ☐ Done in order to implement a plan
- ☐ Its ultimate goal is to persuade readers to follow or approve those plans or agree to their development
- ☐ Proposals are sent to potential clients or customers outside the organization (external proposal)
- ☐ Most proposals are written in response to a request for proposals (RFP)
- ☐ Proposals may be informal

### Elements of Informal Proposals

#### Introduction:

- ☐ Should offer an overview of the proposal and its scope and highlight your qualifications to do the job
- ☐ Start-up and completion dates, cost of the project
- ☐ For external sales-driven proposals, mention previous positive associations your company has had with the client

#### Background

- ☐ Defines in some detail the problem you aim to solve or the opportunity you wish to address
- ☐ Identify the purpose and goals of the project
- ☐ Conveys your understanding of the clients needs and how the client stands to benefit from the implementation of the plan you propose

#### Proposal, Method, Schedule

- ☐ The proposal section details your solution to the problem:
  1. Explain the products or services you are offering
  2. How the proposed method for solving the problem is feasible
  3. How your company intends to proceed with it and perform the work in available time
  4. What special materials and resources you will use
  5. When each phase of the project will be completed (create a timeline)

#### Costs, Budget

- ☐ This is key!
- ☐ Give a carefully prepared breakdown of the costs for the entire project and each stage of the project process
- ☐ The budget you submit is actually a legal contract that does not allow for later alterations (even if expenses increase; be realistic!)

#### Staffing, Qualifications

- ☐ Staffing section shows that you, your team and your company are credible and have what it takes to do the job well
- ☐ Instill confidence

#### Benefits

- ☐ The benefits section summarizes the reasons for accepting the proposal so that the client will be motivated to action
- ☐ It helps resell the proposed plan by highlighting the benefits of your solution, service, or product and the advantages of your plan over and above competing solutions

#### Request for Authorization

- ☐ This is the closing request
- ☐ Can sometimes be negotiated after the client has received the proposal

#### Elements of Formal proposals

- ☐ Formal proposals differ from informal proposals in format and length
- ☐ The number of pages can vary from as few as five to as many as several hundreds

#### Cover Letter, Letter of Transmittal

- ☐ The cover or transmittal letter are bounded inside the proposal as its first page
- ☐ It explains the proposals purpose, major features and tangible benefits
- ☐ It expresses confidence that those benefits will satisfy the needs of the client
- ☐ The letter should be addressed to the person responsible for making the final decision
- ☐ Letter should end courteously by expressing appreciation for the opportunity to submit the proposal, for any assistance provided, or for previous positive associations with the client

#### Executive Summary or Abstract

**Executive summary:** a synopsis of the body of a proposal or report specifying its highlights and recommendations

#### Title Page

- ☐ Should include:
  - The proposal title and subtitle bold faced
  - The name of the client or organization/or the decision-maker to whom the proposal is directed
  - The RFP reference number
  - The name and title of the proposal writer and her company
  - Date of submission

#### Writing Styles for Proposals

- ☐ Good proposals are persuasive and use words that communicate strength, confidence, know-how, and credibility

### Researching and Collecting Data

- ☐ Reports are based on evidence
  1. Look for information online
  2. Do a computer-based search
  3. Find information in print
  4. Investigate primary, in-house sources
  5. Conduct interviews
  6. Quantify observations

### Formal Reports

- ☐ Accounts of major projects
- ☐ Formal

### Preparing to write formal reports

- ☐ Purpose: What is the report for?
- ☐ Content: What is it about?
- ☐ Audience: Who is it for?
- ☐ Status: Will other reports on the same subject follow?
- ☐ Length: How long should it be?
- ☐ Formality: How should it look and sound?

### Writing Style for Formal Reports

- ☐ Impersonal tone
- ☐ Write using third-person pronouns
- ☐ Avoid the word “you”
- ☐ So not use contractions
- ☐ Aim for a mix of sentence lengths and keep paragraphs to less than seven lines
- ☐ Use verb tenses consistently
- ☐ Put URL's in angle brackets <>
- ☐ Check organizational style guidelines before you begin to write to find out what style elements are permissible

### Creating a Work Plan

**Work Plan:** a document that defines the approach, personnel responsibilities, resource needs, and scheduling for a major project

- ☐ A work plan includes:
  - A statement of problem and purpose
  - A strategy for conducting research
  - A preliminary outline
  - Work schedules for writing and submission

## Chapter 12

**Oral presentation:** an informative or persuasive speech delivered using only notes and visual aids to guise the speaker's performance

### Types of Oral Presentations

- ☐ Conducting workshops
- ☐ Addressing staff meetings
- ☐ Giving talks to clubs, societies and organizations
- ☐ Making sales presentations
- ☐ Making a speech to a conference or gathering
- ☐ Giving an oral report or briefing

### Analyzing the Situation and Audience

- ☐ Who is your audience?
- ☐ What is your speaking situation?

### Structuring presentations

Presentations must be:

- ☐ Logical → easy to follow
- ☐ Narrative → accurate and credible
- ☐ Formal → skilful handling of repetition

### Developing a Three Part Presentation

- ☐ Introduction:
  - Arouse interest
  - Identify yourself and establish credibility
  - Make your purpose clear
  - Preview your main points
  - Hook audience in first 90 seconds
- ☐ Body:
  - Chronological order
  - Topical/logical order
  - Spatial order
  - Journalistic order
  - Problem-solution-demonstrate
  - Exclusion of alternatives
  - Causal order-cause and effects
  - Comparison/contrast
  - Pro-con- review arguments
  - Process
- ☐ Conclusion
  - Restate the main issues you want the audience to remember

- Restate the point you started with in order to frame your presentation
- Issue a challenge or call to action
- Ask a question for the audience to think about

#### Using Visual Aids

- ☐ Never allow visual aids to dominate so much that they prevent you from connecting to the audience
- ☐ Use aids sparingly for a maximum impact
- ☐ Make them of consistent size
- ☐ Limit the amount of information for each slide
- ☐ Give each visual a title
- ☐ Do not read from slides

#### Designing a Powerpoint Presentation

- ☐ Use templates
- ☐ Choose a color scheme: use dark backgrounds with light text in darkened rooms
- ☐ Keep slides simple
- ☐ Put titles on slides
- ☐ Don't use too many slides
- ☐ Create an agenda slide
- ☐ Use transitions and animation
- ☐ Proofread slides
- ☐ Use the Outline View and Slide Sorter
- ☐ Produce speaker notes
- ☐ Back up your work
- ☐ Rehearse the slide show
- ☐ Never read from a slide

#### Methods of delivery

1. Manuscript Method: if your data is complex, prepare a script to avoid misinterpretation.
2. Memorization: This method enlivens the connection with the audience.
3. Impromptu Speaking: Made on the spur of the moment without the aid of visual notes
4. Extemporaneous Method: Combination of thoughtful and spontaneous, natural delivery style that engages the audience and holds interest. This method relies mostly on notes.

#### Delivering a Presentation

1. Dress appropriately
2. Arrive ahead of time
3. Maintain good posture and move in a relaxed, controlled, natural way
4. Pause to collect yourself before beginning
5. Maintain eye contact
6. Avoid long sentences and polysyllabic words
7. Speak in a clear, audible voice, but don't shout
8. Pace yourself accordingly
9. Shape your phrasing and use inflection to give the meaning and add interest
10. Never use slang or bad grammar
11. Pause briefly to collect your thoughts
12. Remember that you are a living, breathing human being
13. Bring your presentation to a close

#### Handling Questions

1. Listen carefully to the entire question
2. Separate strands of complex or two part questions
3. Ensure your answers are long enough, but not too long
4. Don't feel you have to answer every question
5. Never put down a questioner
6. Be firm with the overzealous questioners
7. Stay on topic
8. Don't start by assuming a question is hostile
9. End by thanking the audience for their questions and feedback

#### Preparing for a Meeting

1. Purpose
2. Alternatives
3. Participants
4. Location