



# **Business Communication (HS-218)**

*Week 7 (Recorded Lecture Part 2 )*

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*ASMARA SHAFQAT*

Lecturer & PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)

Department of Humanities

NED University of Engg. & Tech. Karachi



# Negative Messages

- ❖ Messages delivering refusals and bad news.
  - ❖ You may have to write messages ending business relationships, declining proposals, announcing price increases, refusing requests for donations, terminating employees, turning down invitations, or responding to unhappy customers.
  - ❖ You might have to apologize for mistakes in orders, errors in pricing, the rudeness of employees, overlooked appointments, substandard service, pricing errors, faulty accounting, defective products, or jumbled instructions.
  - ❖ As a company employee, you may even have to respond to complaints voiced to the world on Twitter, Facebook, or complaint Web sites.
- ❖ As bad news disappoints, irritates, and sometimes angers the receiver, such messages must be written carefully.
- ❖ The bad feelings associated with disappointing news can generally be reduced if the receiver
  - (a) knows the reasons for the rejection,
  - (b) feels that the news was revealed sensitively, and
  - (c) believes the matter was treated seriously and fairly.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Establishing Goals in Communicating Negative News

- **Explaining clearly and completely.** Your message should be so clear that the receiver understands and, we hope, accepts the bad news. The receiver should not have to call or write to clarify the message.
- **Projecting a professional image.** You will strive to project a professional and positive image of you and your organization. Even when irate customers use a threatening tone or overstate their claims, you must use polite language, control your emotions, and respond with clear explanations of why a negative message was necessary.
- **Conveying empathy and sensitivity.** Bad news is better accepted if it is delivered sensitively. Use language that respects the receiver and attempts to reduce bad feelings. Accepting blame, when appropriate, and apologizing goes far in smoothing over negative messages. But avoid creating legal liability or responsibility for you or your organization.
- **Being fair.** Show that the situation or decision was fair, impartial, and rational. Receivers are far more likely to accept negative news if they feel they were treated fairly.
- **Maintaining friendly relations.** Make an effort to include statements that show your desire to continue pleasant relations with the receiver.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



**FIGURE 9.2** Comparing the Direct and Indirect Strategies for Negative Messages



**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi





**FIGURE 9.3** Delivering Bad News Sensitively

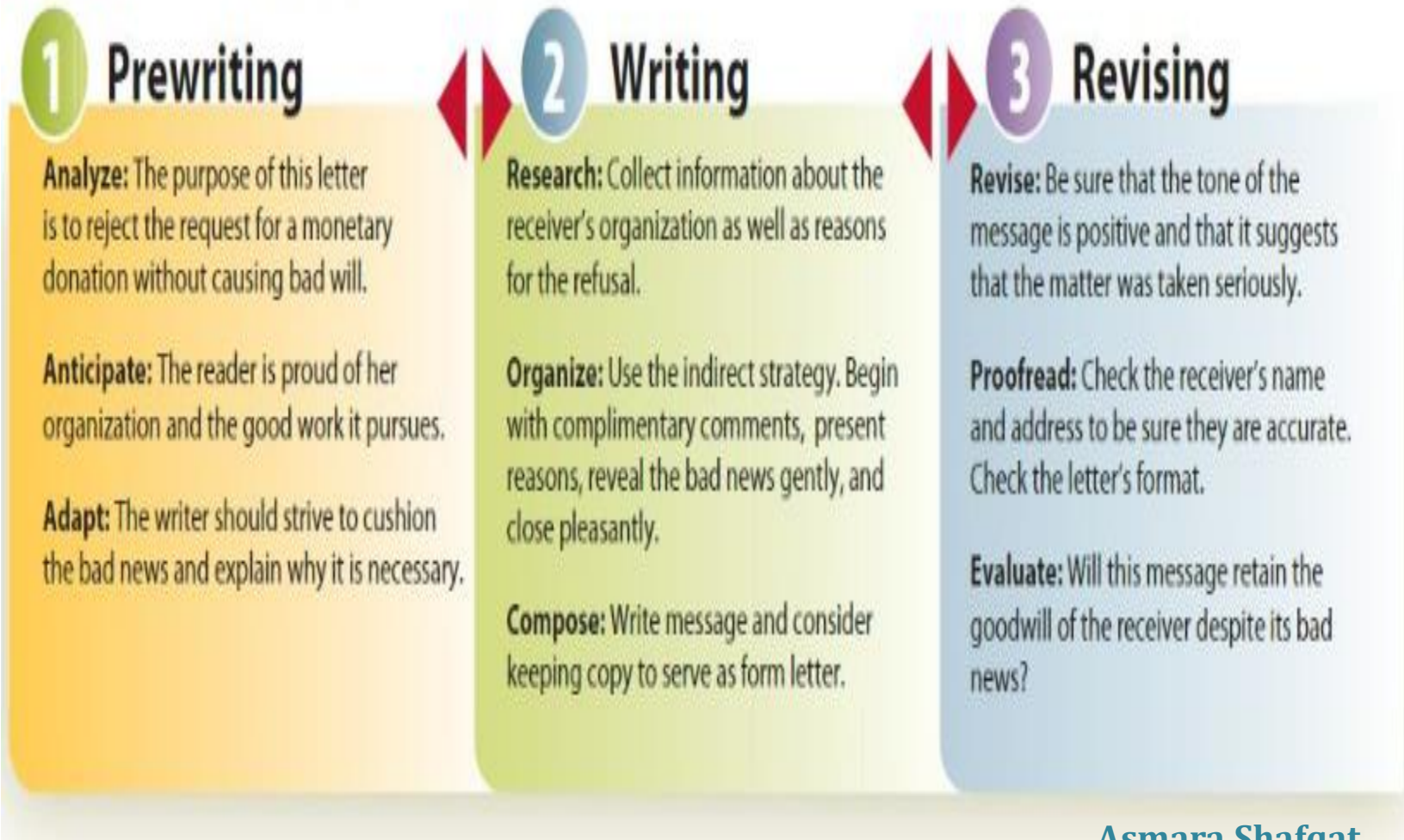


**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



**FIGURE 9.4** Refusing Donation Request



**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Checklist

## Conveying Negative News

### Prewrite

- Decide whether to use the direct or indirect strategy. If the bad news is minor and will not upset the receiver, open directly. If the message is personally damaging and will upset the receiver, consider techniques to reduce its pain.
- Think through the reasons for the bad news.
- Remember that your primary goal is to make the receiver understand and accept the bad news as well as maintain a positive image of you and your organization.

### Plan the Opening

- In the indirect strategy, start with a buffer. Pay a compliment to the reader, show appreciation for something done, or mention some mutual understanding. Avoid raising false hopes or thanking the reader for something you will refuse.
- In the direct strategy, begin with a straightforward statement of the bad news.

### Provide Reasons in the Body

- Except in credit and job refusals, explain the reasons for the negative message.
- In customer mishaps, clarify what went wrong, what you are doing to resolve the problem, and how you will prevent it from happening again.

- Use objective, nonjudgmental, and nondiscriminatory language.
- Avoid negativity (e.g., words such as *unfortunately*, *unwilling*, and *impossible*) and potentially damaging statements.
- Show how your decision is fair and perhaps benefits the reader or others, if possible.

### Soften the Bad News

- Reduce the impact of bad news by using (a) a subordinate clause, (b) the passive voice, (c) a long sentence, or (d) a long paragraph.
- Consider implying the refusal, but be certain it is clear.
- Suggest an alternative, such as a lower price, a different product, a longer payment period, or a substitute. Provide help in implementing an alternative.
- Offset disappointment by offering gifts, a reduced price, benefits, tokens of appreciation, or something appropriate.

### Close Pleasantly

- Supply more information about an alternative, look forward to future relations, or offer good wishes and compliments.
- Maintain a bright, personal tone. Avoid referring to the refusal.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi





# Persuasive Messages

- ❖ Messages including sales pitches, written to convince the audience.
- ❖ Convincing others that your point of view is the right one is a critical business communication skill.
- ❖ These messages messages that require deliberate and skilled persuasion.
- ❖ **Persuasion** is defined as the ability to use argument or discussion to influence an individual's beliefs or actions.
- ❖ When you write requests for favors and actions, make claims, and prepare sales messages, much of your success in business depends on how skilled you are at persuading people to believe, accept, and act on what you are saying.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi





# Persuasive Messages



**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Effective Persuasion Techniques

- ❖ **Establish credibility.** To be persuasive, you must engender trust. People must believe that you are telling the truth, are experienced, and know what you are talking about.
- ❖ **Make a reasonable, precise request.** Persuasion is most effective if your request is realistic, doable, and attainable. Don't ask for \$100,000 worth of equipment when your department's budget is \$5,000. Also, be clear about your objective.
- ❖ **Tie facts to benefits.** Line up solid information to support your view. Use statistics, printed resources, examples, and analogies to help people understand. More important is converting those facts into benefits for the audience.
- ❖ **Recognize the power of loss.** Describing the benefits of your proposal is a powerful motivator. Another powerful motivator is the thought of what the other person will lose if he or she doesn't agree.
- ❖ **Expect and overcome resistance.** When proposing ideas, be prepared for resistance. This may arise in the form of conflicting beliefs, negative attitudes, apathy, skepticism, and opposing loyalties. Recognize any weakness in your proposal and be prepared to counter with well-reasoned arguments and facts.
- ❖ **Share solutions and compromise.** Be flexible and working out a solution that is acceptable to all concerned.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Persuasive Messages

**FIGURE 10.2** Four-Part Plan for Persuasive Messages

Gaining Attention	Building Interest	Reducing Resistance	Motivating Action
Summary of problem	Facts, figures	Anticipate objections	Describe specific request
Unexpected statement	Expert opinion	Offer counterarguments	Sound confident
Reader benefit	Examples	Employ <i>What if?</i> scenarios	Make action easy to take
Compliment	Specific details	Establish credibility	Offer incentive
Related fact	Direct benefits	Demonstrate competence	Don't provide excuses
Stimulating question	Indirect benefits	Show value of proposal	Repeat main benefit

**Asmara Shafqat**

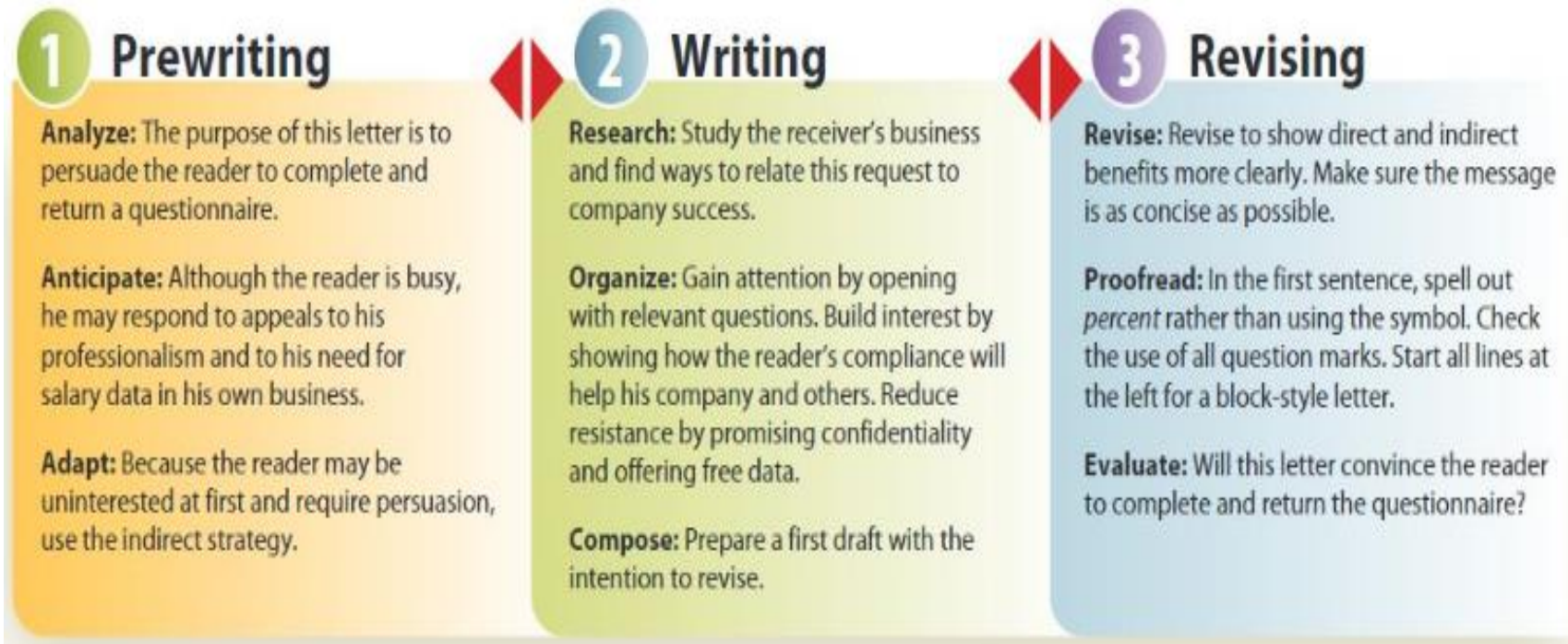
PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi





# Persuasive Messages

**FIGURE 10.3** Persuasive Favor Request



**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# ITHACA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

430 Seneca Street, Ithaca, NY 14850 www.ithacaresearch.com  
PH 570.888.2300  
FAX 570.888.4359



May 17, 2012

Mr. Trevor M. Mansker  
All-Star Financial Advisors  
240 Lomb Memorial Drive  
Rochester, NY 14623

Dear Mr. Mansker:

Have you ever added a unique job title but had no idea what compensation the position demanded? Has your company ever lost a valued employee to another organization that offered 20 percent more in salary for the same position?

To remain competitive in hiring and to retain qualified workers, companies rely on survey data showing current salaries. Ithaca Research Institute has been collecting business data for a quarter century and has been honored by the American Management Association for its accurate data. We need your help in collecting salary data for today's workers. Information from the enclosed questionnaire will supply companies like yours with such data.

Your information, of course, will be treated confidentially. The questionnaire takes but a few moments to complete, and it can provide substantial dividends for professional organizations that need comparative salary data.

To show our gratitude for your participation, we will send you comprehensive salary surveys for your industry and your metropolitan area. Not only will you find basic salaries, but you will also learn about bonus and incentive plans, special pay differentials, expense reimbursements, and perquisites such as a company car and credit card.

Comparative salary data are impossible to provide without the support of professionals like you. Please complete the questionnaire and return it in the prepaid envelope before June 1, our spring deadline. Participating in this survey means that you will no longer be in the dark about how much your employees earn compared with others in your industry.

Sincerely yours,

ITHACA RESEARCH INSTITUTE

*Michelle Moreno*

Michelle Moreno  
Director, Survey Research

Enclosures

Poses two short questions related to the reader

Presents reader benefit tied to request explanation; establishes credibility

Anticipates and counters resistance to confidentiality and time/effort objections

Offers free salary data as a direct benefit

Provides deadline and a final benefit to prompt action

Gains attention

Builds interest

Reduces resistance

Appeals to professionalism, an indirect benefit

Motivates action

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi





## Requesting Favors and Actions, Making Claims, Delivering Complaints

### Prewrite

- Determine your purpose. Know exactly what you are requesting.
- Anticipate the reaction of your audience. Remember that the receiver is thinking *Why should I? What's in it for me? What's in it for you? Who cares?*

### Gain Attention

- Use the indirect strategy rather than blurting out the request immediately.
- Begin with a problem description, unexpected statement, compliment, praise, related facts, stimulating question, or reader benefit to grab attention.

### Build Interest

- Develop interest by using facts, statistics, examples, testimonials, and specific details.
- Establish your credibility, if necessary, by explaining your background and expertise. Use testimonials, expert opinion, or research if necessary.

- Support your request by tying facts to direct benefits (increased profits, more efficient operations, better customer relations, saving money, a returned favor) or indirect benefits (improving the community, giving back to the profession, helping the environment).
- In claims and complaints, be objective but prove the validity of your request.

### Reduce Resistance

- Anticipate objections to your request and provide counterarguments.
- Suggest what might be lost if the request is not granted, but don't make it sound like a threat.
- In claims and complaints, use a moderate, unemotional tone.

### Motivate Action

- Make a precise request that spells out exactly what you want done. Add a deadline date if necessary.
- Repeat a benefit, provide additional details, or offer an incentive. Express appreciation.

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Any Questions?



**If you have any questions regarding this Part of Recorded Lecture, you can ask in the live session at your scheduled live session timings.**

**Asmara Shafqat**

PhD Scholar (Applied Linguistics)  
Lecturer, Department of Humanities,  
NED University Of Engineering &  
Technology, Karachi



# Thank you

