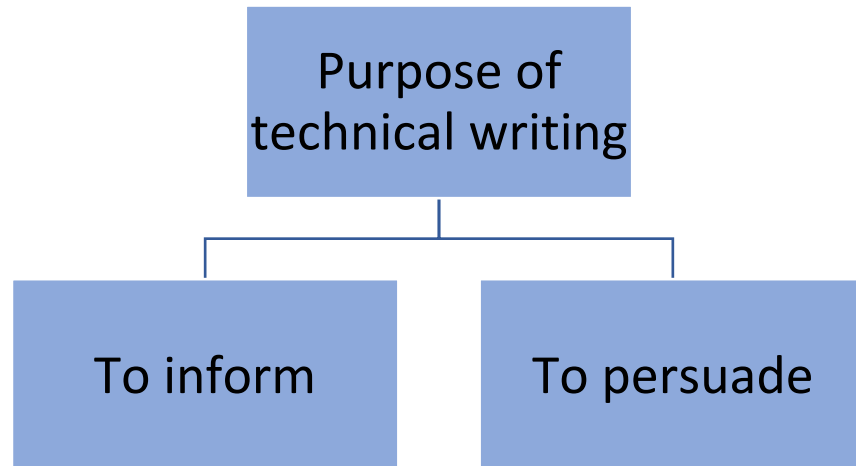


Lecture 07

Purpose of Technical Writing



In general, technical writing has two basic purposes, which are to inform and to persuade. As technical writing is carried out in the field of science, industry and business, its basic purpose is to inform by providing the audience with factual information in the form of reports, instructions and descriptions. Along with stating facts, it persuades the audience enough information to make inferences.

Example:

A brochure on the harmful effects of CFCs on Ozone layer persuades the audience to minimize the use of products that contain CFCs.

7.2 What do Technical Writers Create?

7.2.1 Instructions

Technical writers create a link between knowledge and its application, usually the machine. Their job is significant as they describe the knowledge and concepts that are at work in the machine.

Example:

Operation manual of an air compressor gives instructions regarding the standard operating procedure of the machine; it also instructs users about the probable faults the machine may develop, its reasons and remedies.

7.2.2 Directions

In business settings, memos and business letters are composed both when employees of an organization communicate with each other and when communication is carried out between two or more organizations. Directions are provided by composing business reports, letters and memos.

Example

A CEO calls a meeting to decide with which organization they should collaborate for a future project. A report is prepared after the meeting, describing in detail the proposal, the decision, the directions on how to go about it and its possible benefits.

7.2.3 Technical Reports

Progress reports are composed on weekly, monthly and/or yearly basis to record and communicate the progress of an organization in general and employees in particular. Likewise, **proposals and feasibility studies** are carried out to discuss probable solutions of a problem or to describe the best possible and feasible option. **Summaries of staff meetings** are also recorded on a regular basis to preserve the happenings of the meeting in black and white. **Advertisements like tender notices and job vacancies** are also created using technical writing. A sample advertisement may be found in Figure 1.

7.3 Recognizing Your Audience

Identifying your target audience holds great importance before you start composing your report. Their needs and wants have to be kept in consideration before choosing the content of your write-up. The manner of writing, information provided in the report and recommendations given will be different when the audience changes, for example, from your boss to your colleagues.

Audience Analysis

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Analyze | Who is/are the recipient(s)? |
| Understand | What is their knowledge of your message? |
| Demographics | What is their age, gender, education level and position? |
| Interest | What are their interests or investment to your message? |
| Environment | What is your relationship to the audience? What is their likely attitude to your message? Have you taken cultural differences into consideration? |
| Needs | What information does your audience need? |
| Customize | How do you adjust your message to your audience? |
| Expectations | What is your audience's expectation? |



VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

World Health Organization (WHO), Polio Eradication Initiative Pakistan invites applications for vacant position of **Area Coordinators** in the following duty stations: **Quetta, Killa Abdulla, Loralai, Larkana, Thatta, Karachi, Peshawar, Bannu and Rahim Yar Khan**

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Qualification and Experience:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University Degree in medicine from a recognized university 2. Post graduate degree in public health (preferably in epidemiology of child health) 3. At least 5 years experience in Public Health related activities 4. Preferable experience in UN Agencies, NGOs or Government Health Departments in immunization-related areas | <p>Requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No-Objection certificate from parent department for candidates in government service 2. Candidates will have to reside at the place of duty station incase he/she is selected 3. Excellent written communication skills in English, Urdu and preferably in local languages 4. Knowledge of computers including Microsoft Office's applications |
|--|--|

Description of duties:
Under the direct supervision of the Emergency Coordinator (Polio), and overall supervision of the WHO Representative; the incumbent will be responsible to perform the following duties:

1. To support implementation and monitoring of the National Emergency Action Plan for Polio Eradication and immunization activities through:
 - preparations, implementation and monitoring of supplementary immunization activities including micro-planning, training and monitoring;
 - timely analysis of data and its use for corrective action;
 - contribute in strengthening of the development of health system infrastructure particularly through training and assist in building national capacity
2. To support surveillance activities (for AFP and VPI diseases) to ensure achievement/maintenance of certification standards by:
 - participating in the planning and in the implementation of active surveillance and routine reporting;
 - supporting the training activities and supervision of surveillance/support staff - participating in the organization of advocacy/orientation meetings for health care providers
 - ensuring proper case investigations, follow-up classification
 - regular analysis of surveillance data and monitor indicators
3. To support the development and strengthening of routine immunization through:
 - participating in the development of micro-plans for implementation of Reaching Every Districts (RED) approach and ensure their proper implementation and monitoring;
 - coordinating with partners on activities related to routine immunization and ensure community participation; and
 - timely analysis and interpretation of routine immunization data and its use for corrective action.
4. To liaise with different EPI / PEI partners and enlist continued commitment of national local authorities to stated goals.
5. To oversee activities of national support staff recruited by WHO working in the polio eradication activities.
6. To submit monthly reports to reflect progress achieved constraints and proposed actions

Application with recent CV clearly marked as "Application for the post of Area Coordinator – duty station" must reach Polio Eradication Initiative, P.O. Box 1013 Islamabad within 15 days of publication of this advertisement. No need to send the testimonials. Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview. No TA/DA will be paid for the interview.

Online application are encouraged at : <http://jobs.un.org.pk>

WHO is a smoke free and equal opportunity organization; and reserves the rights to Accept/reject any/all the application(s) without assigning any reason thereof.

Figure 1 A sample advertisement, as appeared in a local newspaper

7.4. Technical Writing Scenarios

Based on the general purpose of information and persuasion, following are some of the technical writing scenarios that you may come across. Apart from reports, documents you may create in technical writing include:

- E-mails
- Memos
- Letters
- Reports
- Proposals
- User manuals
- Websites
- Brochures

- Newsletters

7.4.1 Emails

Emails are one of the most commonly used forms of communication today. However, composing emails for your boss or supervisor is different from writing emails to your friends. Composing formal email messages demand the usage of a proper format, and appropriate language.

Example: As a chemist working in a university laboratory, you may receive an email that asks about the current status of the chemical supplies you have in stock, and the new supplies you need for future experiments. You need to reply to this email by citing authentic facts so that the authorities get a true picture of what is needed.

7.4.2 User Manuals

User manuals are a form of instructions that we discussed in the previous section. They are written for explaining the steps for building a piece of equipment, performing preventative maintenance, or for shipping and handling procedures. **For example**, for an automatic washing machine, its user manual comes with clear instructions regarding the handling of its parts, their functions and precautions.

7.4.3 Proposals

In an academic setting, proposal is composed to present the hypothesis and overall framework of your research study. Once it gets approved, you proceed with conducting the study.

In a business setting, proposals are sale offers from a seller to prospective buyers. **Example:** As a trust officer in a bank you may compose proposals for potential clients. To do so, you must write a 20- to 30-page proposal about your bank's services.

7.4.4 Letters

Letters composed in a business setting or in the field of science and industry are different from the ones you compose for a friend. You need to follow all the principles of technical writing when composing one.

Example: You are a customer who ordered an automotive part from a national manufacturer. Unfortunately, the part was shipped to you five days later than promised, it arrived broken, and you were charged more than the agreed-upon price. You need to write a letter of complaint.

7.4.5 Websites

A website is a collection of content and images related to a specific topic published with a common domain name. The expertise of technical writers is needed when the content for a website has to be written.

Example: Your job is to create a corporate website. The website gives information to clients about locations, pricing, products and services, mission statement, and job openings. The drop-down help screens provide easy-to-access answers for both customer and employee questions.

7.4.6 Brochures

Brochures are written to give information and to persuade the audience to make certain inferences based on that information.

Example: As a professor of genetics, you are asked to write and design a brochure for a community where cousin marriages are rampant. Your task is to spread awareness among them regarding its negative outcomes like Down's Syndrome.

7.4.7 Résumés

Resumes are the written description of your personality. They describe your background and skills in an appealing manner to your prospective employer.

Example: You have just graduated from your university/college and it's time to get a job. You need to write a résumé and a letter of application to show corporations what assets you will bring to their company.

7.5 Examples

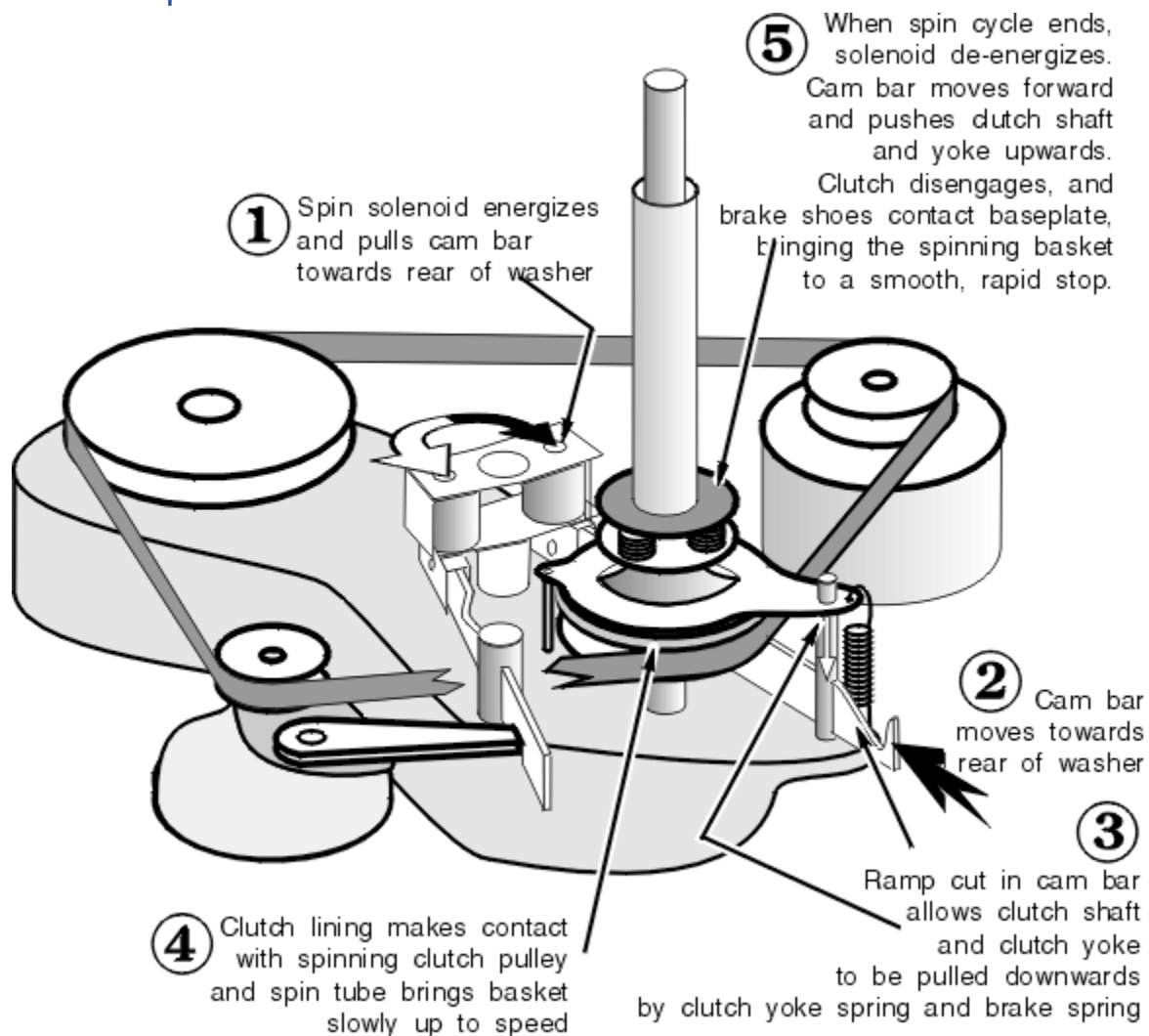


Figure 2 An instructional manual for repairing machinery

Memo

To: Regional Managers/Property Managers
From: Laura Brehart
Date: June 8, 2014
Re: Accident Reporting and Investigation

HallKeen Management values their employees and wants to maintain the highest level of safety at each property.

It is imperative that when an incident occurs that it be immediately documented and reported.

All documentation should be fully completed and should be submitted to the proper contacts as soon as the incident has occurred or a manager has been notified and within 24 hours whenever possible. Below you will find some guidelines for submitting incident reports, as well as the correct forms for filing an incident report. Please review and circulate this information to all staff.

Should you have any questions pertaining to this material please contact Laura Brehart at 781-915-3012.

Figure 3 A memo on reporting incidents