

Planning Business Messages:

A. Analyze the situation

- Determine whether the purpose of your message is to inform, persuade or collaborate.
- Identify what you want your audience to think or do after you receive the message.
- Make sure your purpose is worthwhile and realistic
- Make sure the time is right for your message.
- Make sure your purpose is acceptable to your organization.
- Identify the primary audience.
- Determine the size and composition of your audience.
- Estimate your audience's level of understanding and probable reaction to your message.

B. Gather Information

- Decide whether to use formal or informal techniques for gathering information.
- Find out what your audience needs to know.
- Provide all required information and make sure it's accurate, ethical, and pertinent.

C. Select the best Medium for your message:

- Understand the advantage and disadvantages of oral, written, visual and electronic media.
- Consider media richness, formality, media limitations, urgency, cost and audience preference

D. Organize your Information:

- Define your main idea
- Limit your scope
- Choose direct or Indirect Approach
- Outline content by starting with the main idea, adding major points, and illustrating with evidence

Audience Profiling:

- **Identify Your Primary Audience:** For some messages, certain audience members may be more important than others. Don't ignore the needs of less influential people but make sure you address the concerns of key Decision makers.
- **Determine Audience Size and geographic Distribution:** A message aimed at 10,000 people spread around the globe will probably require a different approach than one aimed at a dozen people down the hall.
- **Determine audience composition:** look for similarities and difference both in culture, language, age, education, organizational rank and status, attitudes, experience, motivation and other relevant factors that could affect the successful reception and decoding of your message.
- **Gauge audience members' level of understanding:** If the audience members share your background, they'll probably understand your material without difficulty. If not, your message will need an element of education, and deciding how much information to include can be a challenge. Include only enough information to accomplish the specific purpose of your message.
- **Understand audience expectations and preferences:** Will members of your audience expect complete details or just a summary of the main points? In general, for internal communication, the higher up the organization your message goes, the fewer details people want to see.
- **Forecast Probable Audience Reaction:** If you expect a favorable response, you can state conclusions and recommendations upfront, and offer minimal supporting evidence. If you expect skepticism, you can introduce conclusions gradually and with more proof.

Sample- Audience Analyses Notes:

Project: A report that we start with subsidized health care facility for employees

- **Primary Audience:** Mr. Ram Chandra, vice President Operations and his team
- **Size and Geographic Distribution:** Nine Managers in all, Mr. Chandra and five managers are on site, three managers are based in Singapore.
- **Composition:** All have experience in Operations Management, but five are new to the company.
- **Levels of Understanding:** All will no doubt understand the financial consideration, but the newer managers may not understand the importance of subsidized health care for employees.
- **Expectations and Preferences:** They're expecting a firm recommendation, backed up with well thought out financial rationale and suggestions for the employees. For a decision of this magnitude, a formal report is appropriate; email distribution is expected.
- **Probable Reaction:** The audience reactions may range from highly positive to highly negative. The report should focus on overcoming the highly negative reactions since they are the ones that need to be convinced.

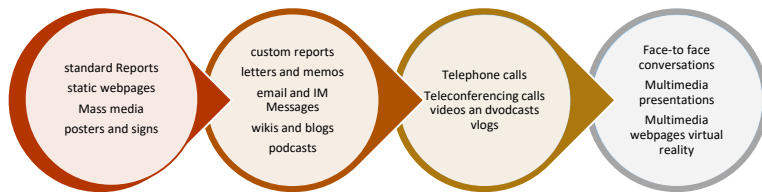
Choice of Media:

Available Media and their Advantages and Disadvantages:

Media Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Oral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides opportunity for immediate feedback• Promote Interaction• Involve rich nonverbal cues (both physical gesture and vocal inflection)• Allow expression of emotions behind the message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restrict participation to those physically present• Unless recorded, provides no permanent, verifiable record of information• In most cases, reduce communicator's control over the message.• Other than for messages that are prewritten and rehearsed, offer no opportunity to revise or edit spoken words
Written	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow you to plan and control your message• Reach geographically dispersed audiences• Offer a permanent, verifiable record• Minimize the distortion that can result with oral and some form of electronic messages• Can be used to avoid immediate interactions• Can help you control the emotional aspects of interchange by eliminating interpersonal communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Usually not so conducive to speedy feedback• Lack the rich nonverbal cues provided by oral media.• Often take more time and more resources to create and distribute.• For elaborate documents, can require special skills in preparation and production
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can convey complex ideas and relationships quickly• Often less intimidating than long blocks of text.• Can reduce the burden on the audience to figure out how the pieces fit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can require artistic skills to design• Require some technical skills to create• Can require more time to create than an equivalent amount of text• More difficult to transmit and store than simple textual messages.
Electronic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivers messages quickly• Reach geographically dispersed audience• Offer the persuasive power of multimedia formats• Can Increase accessibility and openness in an organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are easy to overuse (sending too many messages to too many recipients)• Present privacy risks and concerns (exposing confidential data; employer monitoring of email, IM, blogs; accidental forwarding)• Present security risks (Virus and spyware)• Create productivity concerns (frequent interruptions, lack of integration among multiple electronic media in use at the same time and time wasted on nonbusiness uses.

Factors to consider When choosing Media:

- Media Richness: cues; interactivity, personalized



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- Message formality
- Media limitations
- Urgency
- Cost
- Audience preferences

IMPROVING THE ORGANIZATION OF A MESSAGE:

- Good Organization helps the reader Understand the message. A well-organized message makes the main point clear at the outset, present additional points to support that main idea, and satisfy all the information needs of the audience.
- Secondly, good organization helps receivers accept the message. A confused and disorganized writing is considered indicative of a confused and disorganized thinking and work patterns.
- Effective messages require a bit more than simple clear logic. A diplomatic approach helps receivers accept the message more readily.

Ineffective Example:

General Nutrition corporation has been doing business with computer Time since I was hired six years ago. Your building was smaller then, and it was located on the corner of the corner of federal avenue. Jared Mallory, our accountant, was one of your first customers. I still remember the day. as it was the biggest cheque we have ever written. Of course over the years we have got used to much bigger purchases.

Our department now has fifteen employees. As accountants, we need to have our computers working so that we can keep working too. Our recent laptop purchase for my assistant Susanne, has been a disaster. We have taken it for repairs three times in a row, yet it still doesn't work right. Susanne has been very careful with the machine and hasn't abused it. Susanne is now tired of sending it to repairs.

This is the first time we have returned anything to your store, and I hope you will agree that we deserve better.

Effective Example:

Dear Customer Service Representative:

Can you please exchange the faulty HP laptop (HP Pavilion dv9000 CNF 123456789) that GNS purchased on November 15, 2021? The laptop began malfunctioning soon after my assistant started using it, and we have faced trouble with it ever since.

We took time to take the laptop to the authorized service center and were assured that the problem was merely a loose connection. The service representative fixed the problem, but in December we had to get it fixed again. For the next fifteen days, the laptop worked reasonably well, although the processor seemed to be really slow. Then last week it stopped working again.

Although all the repairs have been minor and have been covered by the one-year warranty, we are not satisfied with the laptop. We would like to exchange it for a similar model from another manufacturer.

GNC has done business with your store for six years now, and we look forward to purchasing from you in the future after this matter is resolved successfully. Please let us know your answer by 10 January.

Sincerely,

Commented [PN(1)]: Fails to explain the purpose of the letter and immediately loses focus to irrelevant details.

Commented [PN(2)]: Waits until the second paragraph to even introduce the main idea.

-Also, fails to provide specific information about the problem.

Commented [PN(3)]: Fails to specify what he/she wants the reader to do

Commented [PN(4)]: Opens with the request and directly follows it with relevant details

Commented [PN(5)]: Provides a detailed history of the problem so that the reader clearly understands her frustration.

Commented [PN(6)]: Emphasizes (in calm respectful way) that GNC won't be buying anything else until the problem is resolved.

Diplomatic Organization Plan:

Dear Ms. Saunders,

Thank you for letting us know about your experience with the HP laptop (HP Pavilion dv9000 CNF 123456789) that GNS purchased last November. We are sorry that the product didn't perform correctly.

As you may know, the merchandise returned to Computer Time within 30 days is covered by the unconditional refund policy that has been our tradition for 22 years. While your laptop is outside of that 30-day window, it is still covered by the manufacturer's warranty. To save you additional correspondence, we have contacted HP on your behalf and they have agreed to send you their latest laptop model, which they assure me, will give you optimal performance every time.

If this is not a satisfactory solution or you have any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Linda Davis
Customer service
Mb.*****

CHOOSING BETWEEN
DIRECT AND INDIRECT
APPROACHES

- **The direct approach:** when you know your audience will be receptive to your message, use the direct approach.
- **The indirect Approach:** When your audience will be skeptical about or even resistant to your message, use the Indirect approach. Start with evidence first and build the case before presenting the main idea.

Commented [PN(7): Acknowledges the receipt of complaint and request letter and sympathizes with the sender

Commented [PN(8): Subtly lets the receiver know that they could have returned the item immediately, but doesn't criticize them for not doing so.

Commented [PN(9): Invites further communication if necessary

Choosing between the direct and Indirect approaches:

	Direct Approach	Indirect Approach	
Audience Reaction	Eager/ interested/ Pleased/Neutral	Displeased	Uninterested/Unwilling
Message Opening	Start with the main idea, the request or the good news	Start with a neutral statement that acts as a transition to the reasons for the bad news.	Start with a statement or question that captures attention.
Message Body	Provide necessary details	Give reasons to Justify a negative answer. State or imply the bad news, and make appositive suggestion.	Arouse the audience's interest in the subject. Build the audience's desire to comply.
Message Close	Close with a cordial comment, a reference to the good news, or a statement about the specific action desired.	Close cordially	Request Action

Using the YOU vs. WE Attitude:

Instead of This	Write This
Tuesday is the only day that we can promise quick response to purchase order requests; we are swamped the rest of the week.	If you need a quick response, Please submit your purchase order requests on Tuesday.
We offer mp3 Players with 50, 75, or 100 gigabytes of capacity.	You can choose an MP3 player with 50, 75, or 100 gigabyte capacity
You failed to deliver the customer's order on time.	The customer didn't receive the order on time. OR Let's figure out a system that ensures on-time deliveries.
You must correct all five copies by noon.	All five copies must be corrected by noon.

Illustrating with evidence

Type of detail	Example	Comment
Facts and Figures	Sales are strong this month. We have two new contracts worth 5 Million INR and a good chance of reaching 10 Million by the end of month.	Adds credibility. Can be boring if excessively used. Most commonly used in business messages
Example or Illustration	We've spent four months trying to hire recent accounting graduates, but so far, only one person has joined our firm. One candidate has told us , she would love to work with us , but she can get upto 2 lakhs more a year elsewhere.	Adds life to message, but one idea alone can't sustain the message. Need to add more evidence.
Description	Upscale burger restaurants target burger lovers who want more than the convenience and low prices offered by outlets like MacDonald's. These places feature wine and beer, along with generous side dishes. Atmosphere is the key here.	Helps audience visualize by creating a sensory impression
Narration	Under former Management, executives worked in jeans, meetings rarely started on time, and lunches ran long. When Jim Welson became the CEO, he completely overhauled the operation. A Harvard MBA, Wilson has cut the product line in half and chopped two million dollars in expenses.	Works well for attracting attention, but lacks statistical validity
Reference to Authority	I discussed this idea with Ms. Harrow, our CEO, and she was very supportive. She is confident that we can speed up number 2 line by 150 units if we add another worker.	Bolsters a case while adding variety and credibility. Works If the authority is recognized and respected by the audience.
Visual Aids	Graphs, Charts and Tables	Helps audience grasp specific data. Used more in memos and reports than in letters.

Channel	Strengths	Weaknesses	Expectations	When to Choose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">IM or Text Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Very fastGood for rapid exchanges of small amounts of informationInexpensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">InformalNot suitable for large amounts of informationAbbreviations lead to misunderstandings	Quick response	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Informal use among peers at similar levels within an organizationYou need a fast, inexpensive connection with a colleague over a small issue and limited amount of information
Channel	Strengths	Weaknesses	Expectations	When to Choose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">E-mail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">FastGood for relatively fast exchanges of information“Subject” line allows compilation of many messages on one subject or projectEasy to distribute to multiple recipients	<ul style="list-style-type: none">May hit “send” prematurelyMay be overlooked or deleted without being read“Reply to all” error“Forward” errorLarge attachments may cause the e-mail to be caught in recipient’s spam filter	Normally a response is expected within 24 hours, although norms vary by situation and organizational culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You need to communicate but time is not the most important considerationYou need to send attachments (provided their file size is not too big)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast • Provides documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving issues (e.g., the receiving machine may be out of paper or toner) • Long distance telephone charges apply • Transitional telephone-based technology losing popularity to online information exchange 	Normally, a long (multiple page) fax is not expected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You want to send a document whose format must remain intact as presented, such as a medical prescription or a signed work order • Allows use of letterhead to represent your company
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official but less formal than a letter • Clearly shows who sent it, when, and to whom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memos sent through e-mails can get deleted without review • Attachments can get removed by spam filters 	Normally used internally in an organization to communicate directives from management on policy and procedure, or documentation	You need to communicate a general message within an organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal • Letterhead represents your company and adds credibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May get filed or thrown away unread • Cost and time involved in printing, stuffing, sealing, affixing postage, and travel 	Specific formats associated with specific purposes	You need to inform, persuade, deliver bad news or negative message, and document the communication

		through the postal system		
Report	Significant time for preparation and production	Requires extensive research and documentation	Specific formats for specific purposes; generally reports are to inform	You need to document the relationship(s) between large amounts of data to inform an internal or external audience
Proposal	Significant time for preparation and production	Requires extensive research and documentation	Specific formats for specific purposes; generally proposals are to persuade	You need to persuade an audience with complex arguments and data

Business Proposal Format:

Cover Page	Title page with name, title, date, and specific reference to request for proposal if applicable.
Executive Summary	Like an abstract in a report, this is a one- or two-paragraph summary of the product or service and how it meets the requirements and exceeds expectations.
Background	Discuss the history of your product, service, and/or company and consider focusing on the relationship between you and the potential buyer and/or similar companies.
Proposal	The idea. <i>Who, what, where, when, why, and how.</i> Make it clear and concise. Don't waste words, and don't exaggerate. Use clear, well-supported reasoning to demonstrate your product or service.
Market Analysis	What currently exists in the marketplace, including competing products or services, and how does your solution compare?
Benefits	How will the potential buyer benefit from the product or service? Be clear, concise, specific, and provide a comprehensive list of immediate, short, and long-term benefits to the company.
Timeline	A clear presentation, often with visual aids, of the process, from start to finish, with specific, dated benchmarks noted.
Marketing Plan	Delivery is often the greatest challenge for Web-based services—how will people learn about you? If you are bidding on a gross lot of food service supplies, this may not apply to you, but if an audience is required for success, you will need a marketing plan.
Finance	What are the initial costs, when can revenue be anticipated, when will there be a return on investment (if applicable)? Again, the proposal may involve a one-time fixed cost, but if the product or service is to be delivered more than once, and extended financial plan noting costs across time is required.
Conclusion	Like a speech or essay, restate your main points clearly. Tie them together with a common theme and make your proposal memorable.

Solicited

If you have been asked to submit a proposal it is considered solicited. The solicitation may come in the form of a direct verbal or written request, but normally solicitations are indirect, open-bid to the public, and formally published for everyone to see. A request for proposal (RFP), request for quotation (RFQ), and invitation for bid (IFB) are common ways to solicit business proposals for business, industry, and the government.

RFPs typically specify the product or service, guidelines for submission, and evaluation criteria. RFQs emphasize cost, though service and maintenance may be part of the solicitation. IRBs are often job-specific in that they encompass a project that requires a timeline, labor, and materials. For example, if a local school district announces the construction of a new elementary school, they normally have the architect and engineering plans on file, but need a licensed contractor to build it.

Unsolicited

Unsolicited proposals are the “cold calls” of business writing. They require a thorough understanding of the market, product and/or service, and their presentation is typically general rather than customer-specific. They can, however, be tailored to specific businesses with time and effort, and the demonstrated knowledge of specific needs or requirement can transform an otherwise generic, brochure-like proposal into an effective sales message. Getting your tailored message to your target audience, however, is often a significant challenge if it has not been directly or indirectly solicited. Unsolicited proposals are often regarded as marketing materials, intended more to stimulate interest for a follow-up contact than make direct sales.