Dr. Sudarsana Sarkar

Technical Report Writing

(1) Memo Reports   (2) Letter Reports   (3) Office Orders   (4) Manuscript Reports

MEMO REPORTS

A memo is also known as an inter-office memorandum. Memos can be written by anyone in an organization. The purpose of a memo is to keep the communication official and maintain a written record of what has been communicated. These are brief written communications circulated <u>within</u> an organization. They not only facilitate communication about various operations, but also play an important role in arriving at some quick decisions. For example, the production manager of a fabrics company can decide which type of fabric needs to be produced more on the basis of information provided in a memo from the marketing manager. Memos also help solve problems either by informing the reader about new information, such as policy changes, price increases, etc., or by persuading the reader to take an action, such as attend a meeting, use less paper, or change a current production procedure. Inter-office memos enable the flow of information in all the three types of organizational communication, namely vertical, horizontal, and diagonal. The President of an organization can send a memo to the Vice President (vertical), a Vice President of one division can send a memo to the Vice President of another division (horizontal), or the President can send a memo to an employee directly without going through the hierarchical set-up inside the organization (diagonal). In short, memos help in bridging the communication gap among the various sections of any organization and also serve as permanent record of information.

Depending on their purpose, memos can be classified into three major categories:

• Documentary • Congratulatory • Disciplinary

Documentary Memos - As the name suggests, these memos are mainly used for conveying information, such as memos written to a subordinate to remind, to announce, to give instructions, to explain a policy or procedure, to a peer or superior to make a request or routine recommendation, or to confirm an agreement. For instance, a memo explaining the new method of maintaining medical records of employees in an organization, requesting the head of another division to provide additional manpower for shifting some huge machines, providing some

suggestions for improving the existing billing system—all fall under this category. Short reports also can be submitted in the form of documentary memos. Such reports are called memo reports.

Congratulatory memos - Memos are also used to give credit to employees of an organization for the outstanding work they have accomplished

Disciplinary memos - When employees violate the rules or breach the code of conduct in an organization, they will be served either with a severe warning or any other punishment as decided by the management. The memo conveying this action is known as a disciplinary memo.

Uses of Memos:

1. To request for action or information. This allows one to have a written record of the request. As compared with an oral request, this type of written request is more difficult for the audience to forget or ignore.

2. To explain to the reader something that is not understood. The purpose in this case is to clarify something to the reader.

3. To announce or to give formal notice to readers, publicly informing them about new procedures, new

products, or anything that needs to be publicly known.

4. To confirm the details of a meeting, conversation, or telephone call. This would enable one to have a written record of decisions or agreements that were made.

5. To suggest solutions to business problems, to offer one᾿s services or those of the department, or to bring up new ideas or methods of doing things.

6. To report the details of a project at regular intervals as a way of helping the organization keep track of progress and problems.

EXHIBIT 15.22   Memo template

National Steel Industries Ltd
12, Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110002

Interoffice Memorandum

DATE:

TO:

FROM:

SUBJECT:

_____
_____ _____ (Opening)
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____ (Discussion)
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____ (Discussion)
_____
_____
_____ (Closing)

Signature

Attachments:

Distribution:

LETTER REPORTS

Letters unlike memos are longer. Also while memos are addressed to a group, letters are generally addressed to an individual. Formal letters should be clear, courteous, firm, and as friendly as the topic allows. The best letters have a conversational tone and read as if the reader is being spoken to. The following are the seven Cs of letter writing:

• Clarity • Cordiality   • Conciseness • Conviction • Correctness • Completeness • Courtesy

Formal letters therefore are written for varied purposes as mentioned below:

• To inform • To congratulate • To enquire • To order • To request • To collect dues

• To complain • To make an adjustment • To sell a product, service, or scheme • To apply for a job

Structure

Heading: Also known as the letterhead, the heading shows the organization's name, full address, and telephone numbers.

Dateline: Includes the day, month and year

Inside Address: This part of the letter identifies the recipient of the letter and is separated from the date by at least one blank line

Example: Messers Lal Chand and Sons

       56, Nehru Marg

       Greater Kailash

       New Delhi-110002

     (P.N. – No commas at the end of each line)

Salutation: Always try to address the letter to a person by name rather than by title. If a specific name is not available, a salutation such as the following may be chosen: Dear Committee Member; Dear Students; To whom it may concern

Message: This is the main content of the letter and usually occupies the maximum amount of space. It should be single-spaced, with a blank line separating it from the preceding and the following parts of the letter. In addition, each paragraph of the message should also be separated by a blank line. The main text of the letter can be formatted to make it convenient for the reader to gather information quickly and easily. For example, bulleted lists, italics, and bold fonts can be used to organize the content and emphasize where required. However, while doing so one must adhere to the style of writing practiced within the organization.

Complimentary close: This element is a single word or phrase, separated from the message by a blank line. Here is a list of expressions that can be used for complimentary closing: Sincerely, Cordially, Truly, Faithfully, Faithfully yours, Cordially yours, Truly yours, Sincerely yours, Yours sincerely, Yours truly, Yours obediently, Yours faithfully

Signature block: The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature block, which includes the writers signature, name, and title. Every letter must end with a signature to give authenticity to the information contained in it. An unsigned letter is of no consequence. The signature block is placed four lines below the complimentary close. It includes the senders name and title. If your name might leave the reader in doubt about your gender, you may

include a title in the signature block as shown in the sample given below:

Cordially,

Ms Santosh Singh

Senior Executive

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS OF A LETTER

Addressee Notation – Eg. PERSONAL, CONFIDENTIAL, PLEASE FORWARD

Attention Line: An attention line is used when the inside address does not include the name of an individual. It can be used to draw the attention of a particular person or a particular department in an organization so as to ensure a quick and prompt action in response to the letter. The attention line may be placed two spaces below the inside address. It is generally given in bold as well as capital letters, and is included in the following manner:

ATTENTION: DR SATISH YADAV, PRODUCTION UNIT

ATTENTION: PERSONNEL MANAGER

Subject line This element lets the recipient know at a glance what the letter is about; it also indicates where to file the letter for future reference.

Enclosure notation This notation appears at the bottom of the letter, one or two lines below the reference initials. Some common forms are:

Enclosure: Draft of proposal

Encl.: Draft of proposal

Enclosures: 1. Report (10 pages)

Copy notation This is an optional component. It indicates who is receiving a courtesy copy (cc).Example: *Cc: Charles Mathew*

Mailing notation: Eg - BY REGISTERED POST, BY COURIER, BY SPEED POST

Postscript Letters may also bear postscripts, i.e., afterthoughts to the letter, to the messages that require emphasis, or personal notes.

Layouts:

Block layout

The block layout, also known as the complete block layout (Exhibit 15.2), is extremely popular as it makes the letter look attractive, elegant, and efficient. The main characteristic of this layout is that all elements except the letterhead heading are aligned to the left margin.

EXHIBIT 15.2   Block layout

Hi Tech Graphics — Heading
613, Circular Road, Bangalore-560001
Phone: (080) 2335618, Fax: (080) 2335710
Email: sales@ hitechgraphics.com

February 16, 2015 — Date
Ms Mary Fernandes
Customer Relations
Bharat Telephone Company — Inside Address
133 Balaji Street
Mumbai-400001

Dear Ms Fernandes: — Salutation

We received a collection notice from the Bharat Telephone Company on — Body
February 13, 2015. The letter states that we owe a past due balance from the
September 16 to October 16 billing period in 2014. The letter also states that
our service will be disconnected unless we act immediately; however, we are
now informing you for the second time that we have paid that bill on January
1st, 2015.

On January 15th, we received a call from one of your representatives about
this matter, and we immediately informed him that we had sent a cheque (no.
654321 dt 26.12.09) to your office approximately two weeks ago for the due
amount of Rs 26,450.00. Unfortunately, our employee failed to get this
representative's name. It is of concern to us that you have not taken care of
this matter as yet. Please find enclosed a copy of the cheque sent to you.

We hope that this letter will settle the matter once and for all.

Sincerely yours — Complimentary Close

Arindam Bose — Signature Block
Encl: Copy of cheque — Enclosures
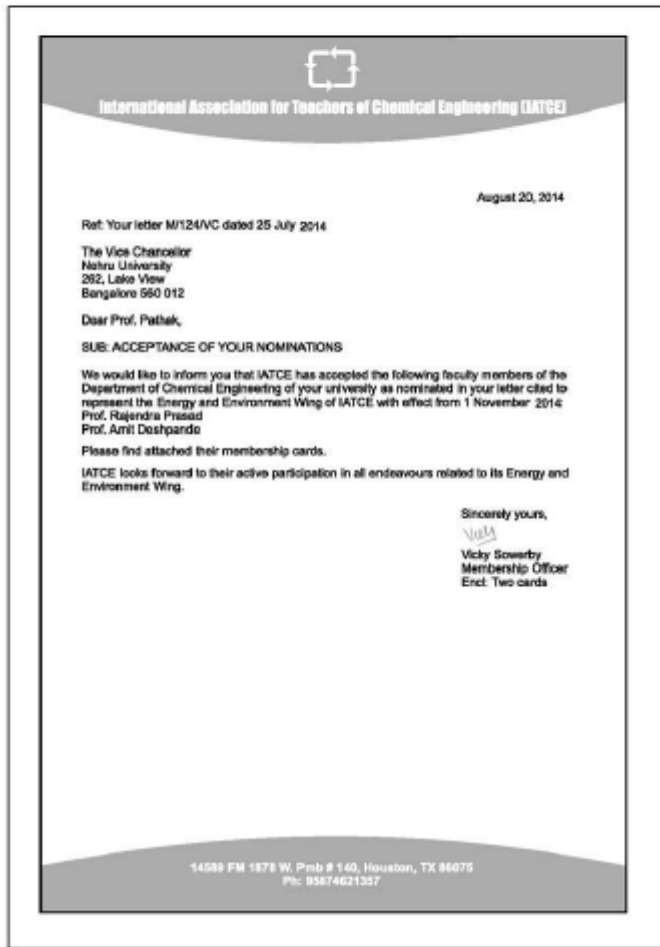
Modified block layout

The modified block format (Exhibit 15.3) differs from the block format in the positioning of certain elements: the heading is centre aligned whereas the dateline, complimentary close, and signature block are right-aligned.

Although organizations seem to prefer the full block format, the modified block is also acceptable. The modified block's appearance is often considered to be more balanced and traditional.

EXHIBIT 15.3   Modified block layout

International Association for Teachers of Chemical Engineering (IATCE)

August 20, 2014

Ref: Your letter M/124/VC dated 25 July 2014

The Vice Chancellor
Nehru University
262, Lake View
Bangalore 560 012

Dear Prof. Pathak,

SUB: ACCEPTANCE OF YOUR NOMINATIONS

We would like to inform you that IATCE has accepted the following faculty members of the Department of Chemical Engineering of your university as nominated in your letter cited to represent the Energy and Environment Wing of IATCE with effect from 1 November 2014:
Prof. Rajendra Prasad
Prof. Amit Deshpande

Please find attached their membership cards.

IATCE looks forward to their active participation in all endeavours related to its Energy and Environment Wing.

Sincerely yours,

Vicky Sowerby
Membership Officer
Encl: Two cards

14589 FM 1878 W. Pmb # 140, Houston, TX 86075
Ph: 95874621357

OFFICE ORDERS

Office orders are a means of downward communication from a senior to a junior employee. They are brief, specific, inoffensive, simple, direct means of communicating with the junior. They may be used for purposes such as – termination of an employee, granting or not granting leave, disciplinary proceedings etc.

MANUSCRIPT REPORTS

STRUCTURE OF REPORTS (MANUSCRIPT FORMAT)

Prefatory parts	Main text	Supplementary parts	Optional elements
Cover page	Introduction	Appendix/appendices	Frontispiece
Title page	Discussion	References/bibliography	Letter of transmittal
Certificate	Conclusions	Glossary	Copyright notice
Acknowledgements	Recommendations		Preface
Table of contents			Summary
List of illustrations			Index
Abstract			

(1) Cover Page and Title page: A well formatted header page (in colour or black and white) that gives the title of the report, organization or institutional affiliation, author(s), date etc.

(2) Certificate: Certain reports, such as project reports and research reports require a certificate vouching the original contribution of the report writer. Generally, the certificate contains the statement testifying the original work, place, date, and signature of the project supervisor or guide.

(3) Acknowledgements: Authors are supposed to acknowledge everyone who helped during the research/project, as well as acknowledge all reprinting permissions.

(4) Table of contents: All section headings must be listed here with page numbers. It is better to use the MS word table of contents feature – so that the pages are updated automatically and accurately.

(5) Abstract: This is a brief paragraph (2-5% of report length) that describes the entire report including objectives, scope, method and results.

(6) Summary – A summary is an optional element of a report and is meant for a more general audience.

(7) Preface – A preface is another optional element where the authors speak directly with the reader about the project. It seeks to help the reader understand and appreciate the report.

(8) Copyright Notice: Copyright is a form of protection that covers published and unpublished literary, scientific, and artistic works, whatever the form of expression, provided such work is executed in a tangible or material form.

MAIN TEXT OF MANUSCRIPT REPORTS

Introduction
The function of an introduction is to put the whole report in perspective and to provide a smooth, sound opening for it. It presents the subject or problem to the readers and gets their attention. A good introduction must furnish the readers with sufficient material concerning the investigation and problem, to lead them to an easy comprehension of the rest of the report. It should also give the readers a general view of the report before they plunge into the details. In other words, the introduction is a section where a broad, general view of the report, rather than a specific and analytical one, can be presented.

An introduction includes the following information:

Background of the report Conditions/events giving rise to the project or survey need to be discussed here. Details of previous investigations and studies can also be included if there is significant time gap.

Purpose and scope The background will logically lead to the purpose of the report. If the investigator has received the Terms of Reference, they can be presented verbatim. Otherwise the objectives have to be clearly specified. The purpose statement describes the objective as well as boundaries of the work. Stating which issues will be covered and which issues will not be covered is especially important in the case of complex, lengthy investigations.

Authorization The authority who has assigned to do the project/conduct the survey should be mentioned. In other words, the recipient's name and designation should be mentioned.

Basic principles or theories involved The important theories and principles used for analysing the data should be outlined.

Methods of gathering data The methods used or the sources consulted for collecting the data should be mentioned.

General plan in developing the solution (brief outline of methodology) The methodology adopted in the analysis should be outlined.

General structure of the report (organization of various sections) The Introduction may

contain subheadings such as objectives and procedures, which serve as significant guideposts for the readers.

Ending the Introduction with an explanation of the general plan of the report will provide a logical transition to the next section of the report. It can also be ended with the discussion of the procedures used to gather data; and then the next section would present the results. A brief outline of the results or main conclusions may also provide a logical transition to the first part of the Discussion section of the report.

Discussion

The discussion section contains the information that supports the conclusion and recommendations, as well as the analysis, logic, and interpretation of the information. Here, information and data are presented, analysed, and interpreted. The solution of a problem may be given with an explanation of its advantages and disadvantages. Tables, charts, and other media for presenting figures and data are used.

Conclusion

The conclusion is that section of the report where all the essential points developed in the discussion are brought together.

Recommendations

Recommendations pertain to the action that is to be taken as a result of the report. They are supported by the conclusions, and they are aimed towards accomplishing the purpose of the report. If the purpose of a report, for instance, is to alleviate employee grievances over wage incentive plans, the recommendations will suggest ways in which this can be done. Conclusions and results of investigating the problem will support the recommendations. Like conclusions, recommendations may take the form of a formal, long report. Recommendations generally follow the conclusions. They do not, however, always appear at the end of the report. They may be given first, especially in recommendation reports.

Bibliography / References

This list is used to

• Acknowledge and give credit to the sources of words, ideas, diagrams, illustrations, quotations borrowed, or any materials summarized or paraphrased

• Give the readers information to identify and consult the sources

• Give the readers an opportunity to check the sources for accuracy.