

Writing Bad-News Messages



The Three-Step Process



- Planning 40%
- Writing 20%
- Completing 40%

Strategies for Bad-News Messages



- Convey the message
- Gain acceptance
- Maintain goodwill
- Promote a good corporate image
- Minimize future correspondence

Audience-Centered Tone



- The “You” attitude
- Positive wording
- Respectful language

The Direct Approach



- State the bad news
- Support the message
- Close on a positive note

The Indirect Approach



- Begin with a buffer
- Follow with reasons
- State the bad news
- Close in a positive way

Begin With a Buffer



• Things to do

- Show appreciation
- Pay attention
- Compliment reader
- Be empathetic
- Show sincerity
- Apologise

• Things to avoid

- Saying “no”
- A know-it-all tone
- Wordy phrases
- Don’t apologize if you are responsible (promotion /asking to leave)
- Lengthy buffers

Follow With Reasons



- Cover positive points
- Provide relevant details
- Try to offer an alternative solution
- Minimize company policy
- Determine whether to apologise

State the Bad News



- De-emphasize the bad news
- Use a conditional statement
- Focus on the positive
- Avoid blunt language

Close With Confidence



- Be sincere
- Stay positive
- Limit future correspondence
- Be confident and optimistic

Cultural Differences



- Understand various cultures
 - Low context
 - High context
- Use proper tone
- Message organization
- Cultural conventions

Types of Bad-News Messages



- Routine requests
- Organizational news
- Employment information

Refusing Routine Requests



Refusal to request :

- Strive to achieve two main goals
 - To refuse
 - To maintain good will
- Begin by thinking through the problem, looking for a logical explanation
- Write an opening that sets up this explanation
- Then present your explanation taking care to use convincing and positive language
- Refuse clearly yet positively
- Use a compromise when practical
- Close with appropriate ,friendly talk that does not recall the bad news

Claims and Adjustments



Things to employ:

- Use Indirect approach
- Identify the situation (invoice number, product information etc.) and lead into the problem
- Demonstrate courtesy and tact
- Present enough facts to be convincing
- Seek corrective action
- Avoid negative language
- End positively –friendly but firm
- Understanding and respect

Organizational NewsFocus on next step



- Bad news about products
- Bad news about company operations

Need to follow the following steps :

- Determine the strategy –Better use indirect
 - ✦ Think ,what kind of buffer opening to use
 - Perhaps ,begin by presenting justifying information
 - Start with a cordial and complimentary talk focusing on the good relationship that you and your readers have developed
 - ✦ What kind of explanation to give
 - ✦ How to word the news itself
 - ✦ How to leave your readers feeling that you have considered their interests
 - ✦ Use positives and avoid negatives
- Close on appositive or encouraging and good will note

Refusing Recommendation Letters



- If the recommendation is requested by businesses
 - Be direct
 - State facts
- If the recommendation requested by individuals
 - Practice diplomacy(don't refuse directly)
 - Consider feelings

Refusing Employment Applications



- Use the direct approach
- State reasons clearly
- Suggest alternatives

Performance Reviews-Negative



- Provide feedback
- Review the job description
- Set an action plan
- **Use the Burger Theory :**
 - Talk about positives
 - Illustrate the negatives
 - Suggest the areas of improvement

Negative Performance Reviews



- Confront the problem (Stop-Start-Continue)
- Plan the message
- Respect privacy
- Focus on the problem
- Obtain commitment

Termination Letters



- Express the decision
- Give specific justification
- Minimize negative feelings

Tune Up Your



Mechanics of Writing

Salutations



- With any salutation, Mr. is followed by the Last name. **Dear Rahul or Dear Mr. Sharma.**
- The standard way to open a **business** letter is with *Dear*, the person's name (with or without a title), and a comma, like this: **Dear Ms. Sharma,**
- Unless you are certain that a woman prefers Miss or Mrs., use the title Ms.
- If you are writing to two people, use both names in your salutation, like this:
Dear Mr. Nair and Ms. Singh, or Dear Raj and Shristhi,
- If you don't know a person's name or gender, avoid "To whom it may concern."
Instead, use the job title or a generic greeting:

Dear Claims Adjustor, Dear Sir or Madam,

Opening Lines



1. I am writing to you with regards to... "
2. "I am writing to you to follow up on... "
3. "I wanted to let you know that... "
4. "Your action is needed regarding... "
5. "Please see the following update"
6. "This is a quick note about... "
7. "Please acknowledge your receipt of this documentation by... "
8. "The following is to inform you of... "

Replying to an Email



1. Thank you for your email regarding... "
2. "Thank you for getting back to me so quickly"
3. "In response to your request for... "
4. "As per your request... "
5. "Thanks so much for your feedback on... "
6. "As requested, I am sending you... "
7. "I appreciate your email and... "

Friendly Greetings



1. I hope this email finds you well"
2. "I hope all is well"
3. "It was great to see you on... "
4. "It was a pleasure meeting you... "
5. "I hope you are enjoying this lovely day"
6. "I'm so glad we had a chance to catch up during... "



Apologetic Phrases

1. "My apologies for... "
2. "I apologize for the delay in my response"
3. "I am so sorry to hear about... "
4. "My apologies for any inconvenience this may pose"
5. "Please accept my apology for... "
6. "I was out of the office earlier; my apologies for any delay"

Unpleasant News

1. I'm afraid I'm unable to... "
2. "Due to unforeseen circumstances... "
3. "Unfortunately, it goes against policy to... "
4. "Despite my best efforts, I was unable to... "
5. "Unfortunately, I regret to inform you... "
6. "Regretfully, I was unable to... "



Asking Direct Questions

1. Please let me know what your thoughts are on this”
2. “Is this course of action okay with you?”
3. “Please let me know if I have the green light on this”
4. “Would you please clarify... ”
5. “Could you please send me further details regarding... ”
6. “Would you mind explaining that again?”

Sharing Information

1. Please note the following:"
2. "Quick heads up"
3. "I'm sending you a friendly reminder that... "
4. "It may serve you to know... "
5. "You may find this helpful:"
6. "When you... you'll need to... "



Attaching documents, forms or web addresses

1. Please see the following attachments”
2. “Review the attachments below”
3. “I've enclosed the [file name] below”
4. “Here are the documents we discussed earlier”
5. “Please find more information at the following website”
6. “I have attached a PDF file with all the information that you will need”

Schedule

1. Is it possible to postpone our meeting for the... ”
2. "Would you be available for a phone call on... ”
3. "Are you free on... ”
4. "I'd like to schedule a meeting for... on... ”
5. "The department will be meeting on... ”
6. "Please join me for a group meeting on..

Closing Note



Close an email on a positive note or future focus.

Examples:

1. I'm looking forward to your reply.
2. We look forward to a successful working relationship in the future.
3. I would appreciate your immediate attention to this matter.
4. Please feel free to contact me if you need any further information.
5. Please let me know if you have any questions.
6. I hope the above is useful to you.