

Professor Mokoko
ENGL3040: Business Writing
Summer 2021—May 11th-June 18th

Project Three: “A Week of Routine Office Communication - Week B.”

Week Three—May 25th-June 1st, 2021

This project sustains engagement with the fundamentals of Business Communication, including audience analysis, document tailoring, communication design, and context assessment. Through the drafting and production of three important commonplace documents from a typical week of Business Communication—the “Adjustment Letter,” the “Change-Needed Interpersonal Email,” and the “Meeting-Plan Memo”—we continue our semester-long commitment to strategic, informed business communication through practice, application, and composition of these important business communication documents.

First, you will read the week’s assigned reading and read the weeks’ secondary reading (attached at the bottom of this document). **Be sure to pay particular attention to the sensibilities, practices, skills, and considerations you’ll need to mobilize for this project: sensibilities concerning audience, genre, context, tone, diction (word choice), document design, and clarity.** Once you have done all this, you are ready to go on the three documents that make up this week’s assignment.

All documents will be submitted in Canvas, and will be polished, revised, and finalized. These three documents are typical and commonplace in modern workplace environments, and while they are mundane, banal, and ordinary, they are absolutely imperative for successful business communicators to get right the first time-- if you messed up on any of them, unforeseen consequences could ensue.

Similarly to last week’s project, this week’s documents all occur within a fictionalized Business Communication scenario. **You are the Director of Marketing and Brand Communication for Betty’s Burritos**, a chain of burrito restaurants throughout the Southeastern United States (think Chipotle, Moes, or other similar fast-casual restaurants). You are the head of a department at Betty’s Burritos corporate location, ie. you don’t work at an actual burrito restaurant itself, but rather you work in an office at the corporate headquarters located in Clemson, S.C. **You lead the Marketing and Brand Communication Department, a department that employs about 50 people in various roles, including doing advertising, marketing, social media, product design, public relations, and corporate communication.** You are an expert Business Communicator, but many of your department’s employees or team members are not. **So, as Director of Marketing and Brand Communication, you must step in and use your expert Business Communication skills to gently encourage different team leaders to make changes in their everyday behaviors and practices.** Feel free to make up any details you would like, or to change/embellish/alter/tweak the situation in any way you would like. **Your creativity or storytelling is not being assessed here, but rather your tone, your adherence to genre conventions, your communicative ability, your understanding of audience needs, and finally your execution of outstanding Business Communication practices.**

First, you will compose a high quality “Adjustment Letter.” This genre of document attempts to convey to employees and team members that an adjustment in their behaviors, practices, and actions is necessary, but to do so without offending them and without being overtly critical or demeaning. The idea is to be forethinking, to be productive, constructive, and future-oriented. **In this scenario, you as the Director of Marketing and Brand Communication have noticed your social media team being a bit too “fast and loose” with details, ie. promising things on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook that your actual Betty’s Burritos locations can’t necessarily provide.** Just this week, the Betty’s Burritos Instagram account promised a customer that they would be able to receive a gluten-free burrito tortilla wrap upon their next visit to the store. However, this gluten-free burrito tortilla wrap is only available at *some* Betty’s Burritos locations, and not at all of them. The social media account (Instagram) has also gotten store hours wrong when interacting with a customer lately, and has promised a “peanut free eating environment” to a customer with a peanut allergy, which your actual locations cannot provide. The head of your social media team, who directly reports to you, is named Jane Doe. Jane is an expert business communicator, and has a master’s degree in Business Communication. **You need to write an “Adjustment Letter” to Jane that (1) shows you fully respect her, admire her expertise, and appreciate the hard work she puts in each day, but also (2) communicates to her that her social media team needs to be a bit more careful with details, and needs to check in with other departments/stores to be sure they can deliver on the promises made on social media.** You want the tone of this document to be kind, generous, and friendly, but also direct, and to communicate the gravity of the situation to Jane Doe. Feel free to make up any details you would like in this situation, or to change details, etc. if you need to. **This letter should be concise, no more than a page, but should adequately communicate the above goals to Jane, and should demonstrate the problem to the social media team and cause them to improve this aspect of their otherwise outstanding operations.** You should be kind, but also persuade a change to take place. You may find *p. 109*, *p. 261*, and *p. 580* helpful when preparing this document.

Second, you will compose a high quality “Change-Needed Interpersonal Email.” It has come to the attention that one of Betty’s Burritos employees, Cole Smith, has been bashing the company online on his personal social media feeds (his personal Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram accounts). Cole is opinionated, and opposes some of your company’s moves as of late, including a new guacamole recipe as well as a later closing time for his restaurant (Cole doesn’t want to work past 8PM, and his location is now open until 11PM). Cole has publicly called management “stupid,” “dumb,” and “misguided” on his social media accounts. Cole’s derogatory words on social media are in direct violation of the employee agreement that every employee at Betty’s Burritos signs, which states “no employee is to speak poorly of Betty’s Burritos in any public forum.” **You need to compose an email to Cole explaining that his behavior on social media is inappropriate, and that if it continues, he will be let go.** Cole is a good, valued, high-integrity employee, but you need for him to not bash the company online. **The tone of this “Change-Needed Interpersonal-Email” should be direct, firm, and clear, but should also be forgiving, and should convey to Cole that it is his future behavior online that matters here, not his past behavior.** It should be concise, no more than a page, but should adequately convey to Cole the gravity of the situation, and inspire change in his online behavior.

Lastly, you will compose a high quality “Meeting Plan Memo.” You are writing to the members of Betty’s Burritos corporate Department of Marketing and Brand Communication team, asking them to attend a quarterly meeting. These meetings occur only four times per year, and are integral to the everyday functioning of the department. These meetings last 3 hours, and oftentimes

go over because people spend time going on and on and on about unimportant interpersonal issues. **Your goal with this document** is to (1) **tell everyone when/where the meeting is happening**, in room 405 at 9:00AM June 9th, (2) to assure them **the meeting will not go past 12PM**, as you will be FIRM about sticking to the set agenda, and that (3) **they are to each prepare a “quarterly report” detailing what their teams have been doing over the past quarter** (the teams include a social media team, a marketing team, a public relations team, and an advertising team). **With this document, you are trying to convey to your audience (1) the importance of the meeting, including what specifically is important that will be discussed (make this up), (2) how exactly the meeting will be spent-- how much time will be spent talking about topics X, Y, and Z?** (make this up—details are not what you’re being graded on), and (3) what the goals are for the meeting- what decisions need to be made? This document should be concise-no more than five short paragraphs that are direct, clear, firm, and unambiguous. Try to anticipate questions these teams or departments would have and “answer” them in the memo. See your textbook for memo examples.

These documents will be assessed based upon their tailoring, their design, and their attention to detail, especially regarding considerations of audience, genre, context, tone, diction (word choice), document design, and clarity. Of particular note in this project is that you consider who will be reading each document, what questions or concerns they might have, and how they will respond to the language/tone/design/format/words that you decide to use.

Working within these fictional scenarios, and in such disparate genres, is not easy! Contact me to help you. I am here to assist.

Primary Reading: Chapters 4 & 5 of *Business Communication for Success*

Secondary Reading: Alley, Michael. “Writing as an Engineer or Scientist.”

<https://www.craftofscientificwriting.com/> (Skim entire website, but closely read & watch videos on the “Reports,” “Language: Being Precise, Clear, and Concise,” and “Emails” sections).

Due: Tuesday June 1st at 9PM

15% of Final Grade

Questions/Concerns/Problems? Email me @ SMokoko@Clemson.Edu and we can schedule a Zoom appointment if necessary.