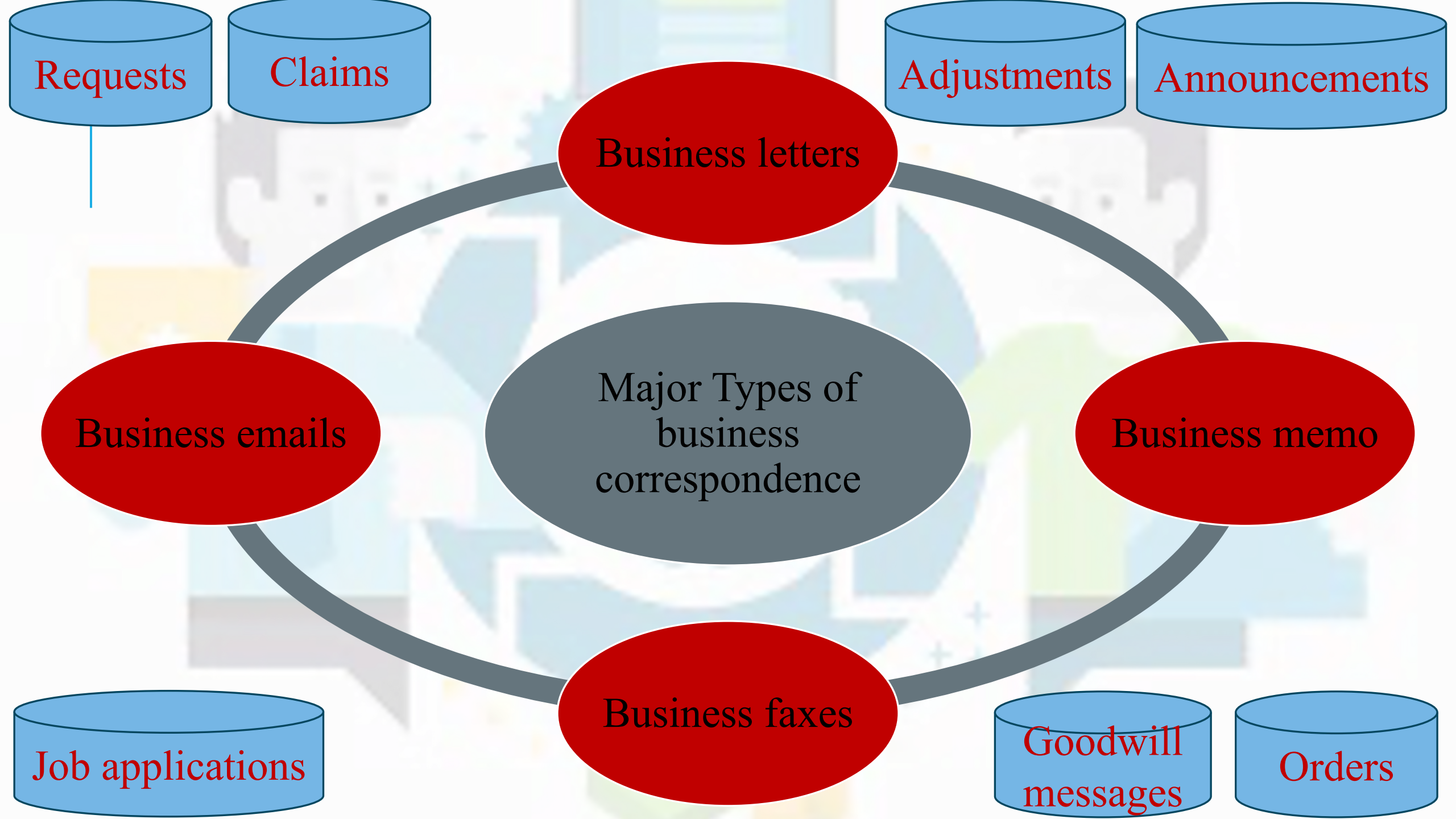
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Exchange of information in written format for business activities

Between organizations, within organizations, between customer and organization

Globally accepted formats for business communication


Requests
Claims
Adjustments
Announcements
Business letters
Business emails
Major Types of business correspondence
Business memo
Business faxes
Job applications
Goodwill messages
Orders

ESSENTIALS OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Developing effective tone

- A tone that conveys mutual respect, sincerity and courtesy

Natural language

- Use simple, clear and natural language
- Avoid old-fashioned phrases like: I beg to advise . . . ., as per your request . . . (sounds artificial)

Positive language

- Keep the emphasis on the positive rather than negative. Stress on the positive rather than negative aspect of a situation.
- When I received your complaint, I checked your record.
- When I received your letter, I checked your record.

You attitude

- Emphasis on reader's interest, see the situation from the viewpoint of the reader.
- We are shipping your order on Monday.
- You will receive your order by Friday.

COMPONENTS OF A LETTER

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Dateline: Spell out the names of the months

28 December 2023

Or

December 28, 2023

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Sender's Address (Above the date line)

(Your name)
Institute of Business Administration
Main Campus
Karachi University
University Road Karachi

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Inside Address
(Below date)

Your name
Designation
Dept of Sciences and Humanities
FAST National University of
Computer and Emerging Sciences
Karachi Campus

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Subject Line:
To identify the main topic

Requesting information on the upcoming courses
Re: Request for financial assistance
Sub: Suggesting major changes in design

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Salutation

Sir/Madam
Dear Sir/Madam, Dear Mr Manager,
Dear Prof.
Dear Ali

When writing to a particular person or position: Use descriptive title

Attention: Marketing Department

When writing to a company department, omit salution and use attention line

Begin the main letter body right after the subject line.

Omit salutation
When writing to a company without directing the letter to a particular person or position

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Body of a letter

- Comprises three to four paragraphs.
- Generally includes purpose of writing, explains all relevant points, summarizes and ends with polite expressions

LETTER WRITING: BODY PARAGRAPHS

1st paragraph

Briefly state your purpose of writing

2nd paragraph

Summarise your reason for writing

3rd paragraph

Explain your request/complaint in more detail.

4th paragraph

Conclude with thanks and a call to action

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Complimentary Close

Sincerely
Truly
Cordially
Regards
With best/kind/warm regards
With compliments

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Signature box/block

(Signature)
(Your name)
Lecturer (Designation)
FAST National University (Affiliation)

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Enclosure Notation

Enc: Cheque
Encl: Resume
Enc: 1. Price List
2. Discount vouchers

LETTER WRITING: ELEMENTS

Post Script

PS: The last date for submission is 10 January 2024

LETTER WRITING: FORMATS

These are the styles of placing various combinations of elements on paper for drafting letters

LETTER WRITING: FORMATS

Full Block

- All elements left aligned starting next to the margin excluding subject line

Block

- 4 elements (Sender's address, date line, complementary close and signature box) move to the right hand side starting in the centre of the page
- All other elements left aligned excluding subject lines

Semi Block

- All features of the block format
- In addition paragraph are indented (Beginning of each paragraph)

LETTER WRITING FORMAT: PUNCTUATION STYLES

Open	• Full Block and Block Format
Close	• Semi Block Format

TYPES OF MESSAGES

Messages can be categorized based on author's purpose or the initial response expected from the reader.

1. Positive/ Neutral/ Informative/ Good News/ Goodwill Messages

2. Bad News/ Negative Messages

3. Persuasive Message

POSITIVE/ROUTINE/NEUTRAL MESSAGES

- Enquiries and information about procedures, products/ services, options
- Announcements of policy/ policy changes
- Acceptances
- Positive answers to readers' requests
- Instructions to staff and employees regarding systems/ procedures

PURPOSE OF POSITIVE MESSAGES

A positive message primarily intends to:

Give information or good news to the reader or to reassure the reader

Have the reader read the message, understand it, and view the information positively

Deemphasize any negative element

FORMAT OF POSITIVE/ROUTINE/NEUTRAL MESSAGE

Positive Messages follow **direct approach**:

Opening: Subject and key idea

Background: General circumstances or context.

Detail: Further explanation to the key idea

Close: Courteous close (with action statement if necessary)

If the background information is so brief as it does not warrant a separate paragraph, you may include the background information in the opening paragraph.

See the sample messages on page 12-15 of the hand out

The direct approach is created by placing the key idea in the opening paragraph, thus revealing to the reader almost immediately the purpose of the communication

PRACTICE: POSITIVE MESSAGES

Task: It is your first day as an intern in Befiler (Pvt) limited. Your supervisor has asked you to compose an informational email to your colleagues. You see this as an opportunity to self-introduce yourself and establish a professional relationship with the colleagues of your department. Write a positive email to your IT department colleagues with a purpose of self-introduction, good will and building professional relationship with them. Follow the direct approach and full block format to draft your email.

Opening: Introduction yourself briefly

Background:

Provide a context on why you joined this company (mention positive reputation it is known for)

Mention your interest in the current projects of the team

Offer your willingness for the contribution you can make as an intern.

Closing: Goodwill positive note on future meeting and where they can find you (mention the office/desk number)

NEGATIVE/BAD NEWS MESSAGES

- Rejection, and refusal to requests
- Regrets
  - Announcements of policies/ policy changes which have disadvantage to the reader
  - Negative performance appraisals
  - Disciplinary notices, notices of defect

PURPOSE OF NEGATIVE MESSAGES

A negative message serves the following primary functions:

convey the bad news

gain acceptance for it

maintain as much goodwill as possible with the audience

INDIRECT APPROACH

The indirect approach is created by placing the key idea in the close instead of in the opening.

When to use indirect appraoch:

- When the bad news is personally upsetting
- When the bad news will provoke a hostile reaction
- When the bad news threatens the customer relationship
- When the bad news is unexpected

TYPES OF BUFFERS

Agreement: find a point on which you and the reader share similar views

Appreciation: express sincere thanks for receiving something

Cooperation: convey your willingness to help in any way you realistically can

Fairness: assure the reader that you have closely examined and carefully considered the problem, or mention an appropriate action that has already been taken

Good news: start with the part of your message that is favorable

Praise: find an attribute or an achievement to compliment

Resale: favorably discuss the product or company related to the subject of the letter

Understanding: demonstrate that you understand the reader's goals and need

FORMAT OF NEGATIVE MESSAGE

Buffer statement

- Positive or neutral statement that establishes goodwill.

Explanation

- Explain the situation: Why there is an issue.
- Rationale for negative news: Help reader understands the ‘why’
- Add concrete details

Break the bad news

- State the negative news

Redirect

- Focus on possible alternatives, solutions, or upcoming actions

Closing

- Goodwill close: End on a positive note

Two ways to state the negative news

Implied negative news	Explicit negative news
We appreciate your interest in attending the Online Business Communication Conference from March 12-14; however, these dates coincide our department's deadline for the Dunbar Associates marketing plan. We need you on our team as we finalize the submission.	**Your request to pursue research into the accounting practices of Dunbar Associates has been denied due to tight departmental time constraints.**

Task: Identify The Components Of Negative Message

Redirect	• However, you are welcome to take vacation before and/or after the project rolls out. As compensation, HR is providing IT staff with three extra days of paid vacation.
Explanation + Break the bad news	• Summer is traditionally a time when many employees are out of the office and demands on the servers are reduced. In order to minimize the disruption to staff throughout the company, the IT department will be rolling out a server replacement project during July and August. Because this project will need to be completed in a more compressed time frame, no vacation requests in July and August are possible for staff in the IT department. As a result, your request for vacation during August has not been approved.
Closing	• We look forward to receiving your revised vacation request soon.
Buffer	• Thank you for submitting your request for 10 days of vacation (your maximum entitlement) in August.

PRACTICE: NEGATIVE MESSAGES

Task: Imagine that you work in the hospitality industry. You work in the IT department. Your boss has arranged a training session on the topic "Using Social Media in the Hospitality Industry". You are required to attend this training session, but due to certain unexpected reasons, you cannot attend the session. Write a negative news business letter to your boss informing that you cannot attend the training session. Follow the Indirect approach and write all the formal components of the letter using the block format only.

Paragraph 1: Create a buffer statement

Paragraph 2:

State the rationale for your refusal based on the genuine and acceptable circumstances (At least two to three statements). Add concrete details

Break the negative news: Either implied or explicit

Paragraph 3: Provide any possible alternative or solution that can compensate your refusal.

Paragraph 4: End on a positive note that emphasis on maintaining positive relationship