

Part One: the analysis result for this complaint letter

1 Problem Definition

In this assignment, a complaint letter was provided with well-written sentences and paragraphs, the task is to identify the issues and inappropriate content as a formal business letter. After reading this letter, according to the introduction in class, I summarize the problems in this letter and some suggestions have been provided as well.

This solution includes two parts according to the assignment requirements. The first part is an essay to how do I identify the issues step by step. The second part is a re-write letter. All of the two parts are organized in this document with the CRAP design principles.

According to the introduction in class, there are four principles of C.R.A.P: Contrast, Repetition, Alignment and Proximity.

Firstly, the essay has been spited into different elements. The issues have been classified into four types: formatting issues, style issues, structure issues and content issues. As a result, different elements has a look different from each other. For example, each element has a unique title and numbering.

Secondly, in order to implement the principle of Repetition, the same font has been selected throughout this document. The body font is Calibri Light with size 12, the heading font is Calibri Light with size 16. The re-write letter's font is Times New Roman with size 12.

Thirdly, all of elements is properly aligned to the margin and no element is positioned arbitrarily. For example, alignment in this document is created by left aligning all of the text and graphics. As a result, the element have some visual connection with another element in this document, and this creates a clean, sophisticated took and makes the relationships to be clear.

Finally, since the issues have been split into four types, the related elements are together in a group. Especially in the re-write letter, its structure follows the immediate writing structure introduced in class: summary, background, details and outcome. Another example is the graphic, the principle of proximity states that elements that are associated with each other should be placed closely, and vice versa. As a result, the source of a graphic is more close to the graphic rather than other paragraphs.

2 Identified Problems

2.1 Formatting

The first issue of this letter is about the formatting. From the content of this letter, we can find that it is a standard formal business letter, so it is important to write this type of business letter with a fairly formal document format which should have specific rules around the layout.

According to the introduction in class, generally, we have two main options for format: full block style and modified block style. I made a deep survey on the internet and I found generally, the British and American business letters have the same general format excluding indentation used in various formats. An acceptable business letter should be like as below:

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[SENDER'S COMPANY NAME]
[SENDER'S ADDRESS (optional if placed at bottom)]
[SENDER'S PHONE]
[SENDER'S E-MAIL (optional)]

[DATE]

[RECIPIENT W/O PREFIX]
[RECIPIENT'S COMPANY]
[RECIPIENT'S ADDRESS]

(Optional) Attention [DEPARTMENT/PERSON]

Dear [RECIPIENT W/ PREFIX]
[First Salutation then Subject in Business letters]

[CONTENT]

[CONTENT]

[COMPLIMENTARY CLOSING (Sincerely, Respectfully, Regards, etc.)]

[SENDER]
[SENDER'S TITLE](Optional)
[SENDER'S ADDRESS (optional if placed at top)]

Enclosures ([NUMBER OF ENCLOSURES])
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Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Business_letter

Base on the introduction in class, I made a compare between British and American business letters as below. Basically, the British business letter prefer the modified block style, but the American business letter select the full block style.

Compare British and American business letters

	American business letter	British business letter
Heading	According to the format but usually aligned to the left	Usually placed in the top right corner (sometimes centred)
Date	Month-Day-Year Usually aligned to the left two lines below the heading	Day-Month-Year Usually placed directly (or 1 blank line) below the heading
Salutation	Dear Mr./Ms. Smith: Dear Sir or Madam: After the salutation there is a colon (:)	Dear Mr./Ms. Smith: Dear Sir or Madam: After the salutation there is a comma (,)
Complimentary close	Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Yours truly,	Sincerely, Yours sincerely, Yours faithfully,

Source: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/british-american-business-letters-differences-types-academy-bea->

2.2 Style

The second issue of this letter is about style/tone because one business letter should consider the tone/style of the message and using the appropriate style in business writing is an important aspect of communicating the desired message and of achieving the desired results. In this case, as a complaint letter, it is more important to adjust the tone according to the circumstances because the writer could like to solve the problems rather than just complaint someone or something.

For example, the first paragraph is not a formal writing style and whoever read this first a few lines will feel uncomfortable, especially this letter is sent to the owner of the company. The solution is to eliminate the emotional and subjective expression in a business letter, alternatively, the writer should just descript the subject and the facts.

In the second paragraph, the writer could not remember the employee's name, this point reflects the writer's altitude because even the writer could not recall the name, the name can be found in contract, emails, business card and etc. so the problem is that this expression give the reader an impression that the writer does not care this matter at all or this matter is not very important for the writer. According to the introduction in class, the first step is to gather

sufficient information in the stage of planning. Checking the exact designer's name must be done before writing this letter, this is why this type of expression makes the letter less formal.

In the third paragraph, the writer uses the informal expression to describe the background about this matter. The writer uses a word: 'ugly' to describe the current colour solution. This expression is not appropriate because generally there are a couple colour in one website, for example, the LOGO, the footer, the colour of texts or themes. Maybe the writer does not like the LOGO's colour but the writer did not provide the detailed information, as a result, the exact problem the writer faces become not very clear. In a business letter, it's very important to convey the accurate idea, problems. This can be done during the brainstorm stage.

In the fourth paragraph, it reflects that the writer do not have a careful revising for this letter because generally, the employee being in other project is normal for a company. Hung up is not acceptable in a business conversation, as a result, the writer wrote this letter immediately after phone call. But being busy in other projects and hung up a phone call is different, the writer should focus on the impolite matter rather than complaint the web designer himself. So, there was not enough time for revising.

In the fifth paragraph, the demand will give an expression that the writer do not really want to resolve this matter itself because changing a colour is not a so big issue, apparently a public apology is a serious matter.

Overall, the style and tone of this letter needs to be improved. In my re-write letter, I change the tone to descript the same matter, as a result, the reader will have a better feeling.

2.3 Style

The third issue of this letter is about the structure. Like discussion in the class, this letter is a typical immediate writing rather than a climactic writing, so the start paragraph should be the critical information and the rest of document should support it. As a result, the structure of this letter should be: summary, background, details and outcome. Unfortunately, this letter does not follow this structure so makes this letter less professional.

The writer should organize the expression and sort the ideas into topic in the planning stage. Lack of good style and organization is due to less revising after writing. For example, if the writer read this letter in other day, the write himself maybe find the most issues.

Another possibility is that the writer revised this letter but in the drafting stage. Generally, many people seem to find it hard to draft and revise simultaneously.

2.4 Content

The fourth issue of this letter is its content. On the one hand, changing a colour is not a very big job for web designer. This means that the web designer maybe do not have time to perform it at that time. Or, the writer did not point out the exact elements, for example, the LOGO colour or the colour of texts in the home page? Generally, if the end user just want to change the colour of texts, it will be a relative small job because we can modify the configuration in WordPress system. But if the end user wants to change the LOGO's colour, the web designer needs to contact with UI designer to give a new LOGO, the process time will be longer. So, the writer should express the requirement as more accurately as possible.

On the other hand, asking the employer to fire one employee exceeds the scope of this matter. Most of company has an internal policy about customer service, the end user can compliant for the service itself but it is not recommended to fire someone because it's the company's internal matter.

Finally, asking a refund is typical request in purchasing something. For example, if you buy a product but it does not work well, you can request a refund or exchange. But for the service, it will be more complicated. In this case, the writer bought the service for web site creation. Why the writer ask a half of money? How to estimate the loss for this refund? At least, the writer should the general reasons.

3 Conclusion

Overall, this complaint letter is not a professional and an efficient letter. According to the introduction in class, I will give a re-write sample in the part two. The modification will focus on:

- Using a formal business letter with full block style.
- Using an immediate letter structure.
- Using more appropriate and professional tones.
- Removing inappropriate content and adjust the orders of paragraphs.

Part Two: a re-write complaint letter

Fly-by-Night Airlines
9889 Pleasant Street
Dartmouth, NS, B4L 2E1

October 11, 2017

Customer Service Manager, Websties-R-Us-4-U
8998 Robie Street
Halifax, NS, B0k 8D2

Dear Customer Service Manager:

Could I request your assistance concerning how to change the colour of my home page in WordPress? I contacted with Mike West over the phone but he refused my reasonable request and hang up on me. The requirement of change is urgent, I will appreciate if you assign other web designer for me.

I made a contract with your company in order to create our new web site for Fly-By-Night Airlines on 10th June, 2017. Mike West is the web designer from your company. The web site was ready a month early and I received training from Mike in how to use it.

After a month of using it, our requirements about the home page's colour changed, I could not find how to change the home page colour in the training documents. So, I had to contact Mike over the phone on September 12, 2017 and asked him to change the configuration for me because I had another important things to do at that time. But Mike said he was working on another project so he could not perform this change. As a result, he not only refused my reasonable requests but hung up on me.

I am most annoyed that I wasted a morning discussing with Mike about this matter. My impression of Websites-R-Us-4-U has been tarnished, and I am now concerned about how your

customer service is being managed by your company. I trust this is not the way Websties-R-Us-4-U wishes to conduct business with valued customers.

I am waiting a solution to my problem and I would like to request a half refund of the bill I paid as well because the delay causes me financial loss, I will wait until 30th November, 2017 before seeking help from the Better Business Bureau, the Department of Consumer Affairs and the fraud unit of the local police.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

John Smith

Fly-By-Night Airline