Email Writing & Chat Conversations

ELITE/WRITTEN COMMUNICATION/TRAINEE MANUAL/V 1.0

1. Tips for Business Writing

Knowing you are writing well, increases your self-confidence and gives you the edge.

1. **Remember that every communication you write is recorded in someone's file.** It represents not only your company, but who you are. Make sure you're not letting either down.

2. **Always put your letters and emails aside** for a short time, then re-read them as if you were the recipient. If your instinct tells you any part is not quite right, re-write it. If you have any doubts about it, your recipient certainly will.

3. **To:** Includes the email address of the addressee. The addressee is the person for whom the message is intended either for providing information, or to action on it. If, the email is addressed to more than one party, then, the email address will be entered in terms of hierarchy, designation or seniority.

4. **CC:** Includes the email address of people who need to be aware about the information or activity. If there is more than one email address in cc, then, it too will be entered in terms of hierarchy, designation or seniority.

5. **BCC:** Should be avoided in a professional environment.

6. **Subject Line:** It is a very important part of an email message**,** make sure to use it well. It is important that recipients of your messages have a good indication as to which messages to be read first, and which ones can be read at a later date. Busy people will only open messages with appealing subject lines. Don't make unnecessary use of the words such as URGENT or IMPORTANT in the subject line. If your message really is extremely urgent or important email is not the correct communication method.
   1. The subject line should never be left blank.
   2. It should contain not more than four to five words.
   3. It should not be a sentence.

4. It should not be followed by a full stop.

5. In case the subject matter of the trail email changes during the course of communication, the subject line needs to be changed.

7. **Salutation:**

Dear Sir or Madam: (use Sir/Madam if you don't know who you are writing to). **At Tech Mahindra we refrain from the use of Sir or Madam.**

Dear Dr., Mr., Mrs., Miss or Ms. Smith: (use if you know who you are writing to, and have a formal relationship with - VERY IMPORTANT use Ms. for woman unless asked to use Mrs. or Miss)

Dear Frank: (use if the person is a close business contact or friend)

With regard to the usage of "Dear" and "Hi", are more culture and situation centric. 'Dear' is mostly used in UK and countries which were earlier ruled by the British. 'Hi' is used in the US, where the culture is less formal compared to UK. 'Dear' as a form of address, has no connection to dear (someone you are fond of). It is quite formal and a standard greeting. It would be a different story to write 'Dearest Renu' or 'Dearest Shyam', which does carry those connotations.

When writing we normally use 'Dear', but while speaking we use 'Hi'. 'Dear' is also a form of respect, given to people in authority and the positions/designations they hold. The client or the customer can use "Hi", however as we are interacting with BT, we would need to go by 'Dear".

'Hi' is to be used only in informal communication. If I knew Renu or Shyam on a friendly basis, I would write 'Hi Renu' or 'Hi Shyam'." 'Hi' could be used for someone who is junior to the writer of the mail. It is also used if you have been interacting/corresponding with the person for a very long time.

When we prefix the title Mr./Mrs./Ms./Dr./or any other title conferred by educational institutions; Government or the Forces (Army, Navy and Airforce) then we use the first and last name or only the last name.

Ex: The customer's name is "Dr. Karl Harlos". He can be addressed as "Dr. Karl Harlos" or "Dr. Harlos". The suffix is never ever used with the first name.

When a title is conferred, be it from an educational institution, medical, or the command services, it is mandatory to use the conferred title and not "Mr." Abbreviations are usually followed by a period. E.g.: Mr.; Ms.; Dr.; Wg. Cmdr.;

8. **Body of the email:**

Reference
With reference to your advertisement in the Times,
With reference to your phone call today,
Thank you for your letter of March 5th.

The Reason for Writing
We require an approval
We apologize for
We confirm

Requesting
Could you possibly?
We request

Agreeing to Requests
We would be delighted to
We are glad to

Giving Bad News
Unfortunately
I am afraid that

Attaching Documents; Files or Presentations
The file is attached…

Closing Remarks
Thank you for your help
In case of any queries, please feel free to contact….

Reference to Future Contact
We look forward to ...
hear from you soon.
meet you next Tuesday.
see you next Thursday.

The Finish
Thank you.
Thanks and regards.
Regards
Warm regards
Best wishes

9. **Punctuation**

   Period: To end a sentence. It is also used in abbreviations.

   Colon:
   1) To introduce a list which explains, or provides the information promised in, the previous clause.

   A manager needs two planning tools: prescience and a prayer.

   2) To separate main clauses where the second is a step forward from the first: statement to example, statement to explanation, cause to effect, introduction to main point.

   To err is human: we use computers.

   Semicolon:
   1) To unite sentences that are closely associated, complementary or parallel:

   Writing is a skill; one must practise to improve a skill. Engineers engineer; accountants account for the cost.

   2) To act as a stronger comma, either for emphasis or to establish a hierarchy:

   The report was a masterpiece; of deception and false promises. The teams were Tom, Dick and Harry; and Mandy, Martha and Mary.

10. **Avoid clichés such as "If you have any further questions please don't hesitate to ask."** We use clichés to save time and because it's easier than thinking, so the subtext your client hears is: "I'm too busy to spend time on you."

Instead, write what you would say to them if they were sitting opposite you - something like, "If anything needs clarifying, just call me. I'm happy to help."

11. **Never use texting** or other unconventional abbreviations in your official documents. As with cliches, the subtext your recipient hears is, "I haven't enough time to spend on you."

12. **Keep your language simple #1.** Avoid technical terms or work jargon unless your recipient also understands them.

13. **Keep your language simple #2.** Using long words when shorter ones say the same thing will irritate rather than impress the reader, because it makes your document harder to understand.

14. **To Whom It May Concern** is used as a heading for references/testimonials, not for letters.

15. **Make sure your default language is British English, not American. Always spell-check**, especially if you know your spelling can sometimes let you down.

16. **Better still, learn to use correct grammar and punctuation**… because it's the body language of writing. It also makes you a more efficient employee.

17. **Always check the spelling of your recipient's name, even if it is a relatively common one**. Getting this right is an important part of customer service.

18. **Use mainly short sentences 10-18 words**…because you are more likely to avoid errors.

19. **Use active verbs rather than passive**…because your sentences will be shorter, easier to read, and have more impact.

e. g. The report was prepared by the manager. (passive)

The manager prepared the report. (active)

21. **Remove redundant (repetitive) words**, e.g. We need to know the true facts. Facts should be provable: the word true is therefore unnecessary.

22. **Keep your audience in mind #1**. People are interested in themselves, so connect the purpose of your correspondence with benefits for them.

23. **When replying to emails or letters, use the recipient's preferred title**…because there may be significant reasons for their preference. Be careful in using Reply-To-All: Does everyone on your project team need to see the details of setting up a conference room for next Thursday?

24. **Give positive messages.** Emphasize what you can do, not what you can't.

25. **Expand your vocabulary #1**…because the grammar-check won't tell you whether to use there or their, its or it's, and your or you're.

26. **Expand your vocabulary #2**...because the spell-check won't tell you the difference between affect and effect, cite, site and sight, or principle and principal.

27. **Be careful with humor**…because what is funny is often a matter of personal taste.

1. New Messages

The below guidelines can be used while writing new email message.

1. Think before writing. Also, try to analyze the readers and make sure that the message is clear and useful.

2. While sending a message to someone that requires an action, make it very clear within the first few lines of the e-mail what is expected. For example, let your recipient know what you need in order to complete a task. If possible, provide a

due date.

3. Avoid the use of capital letters. Capital letters should be carefully used only to emphasize a wor**d** or a phrase.

   1. Ensure to email to the correct email address. Always **avoid guessing email addresses**.

   2. Use proper spellings, grammar and punctuation help to convey the message clearly.

   3. Write briefly and **keep the messages short** and to the point.

   4. Busy people will only open messages with appealing subject lines. Don't make unnecessary use of the words such as URGENT or IMPORTANT in the subject line. If your message really is extremely urgent or important email is not the correct communication method.

   5. Signatures should not have any tag lines or smileys.

   6. **Take another look before sending** the message. Do not send anything that you should not be sending. Sometimes email communication can be sensitive.

   7. Communicate dissatisfaction directly to the individual. Avoid stating grievance about an individual to everybody. This works well in promoting two-way communication.

   8. Highly complex information should be communicated through other means such as a telephone call, or face-to-face conversation. This avoids

confusion.

9. **Avoid requesting a read-receipt**, it annoys recipient before they have even read your message.

10. Avoid sending big attachments. Think carefully about the size of the attachments.

2. **Replying**

Below guidelines can be used while replying to an email message.

1. While replying to an e-mail message which has been sent to a number of recipients, use the reply-all option cautiously. Please check whether all of the people on the recipient list really need to see your reply.

2. Reading through your reply a couple of times helps. Sending an un-thoughtful quick response rarely helps and might lead to an unwanted exchange of messages.

3. When you receive a message from a group email list, be very careful to direct your reply to the appropriate address and not to the whole group.

4. Based on importance of an email message, immediately reply. Briefly to an e-mail message to let the sender know you received it. You can send a detailed reply later.

3. **Forwarding**

Below guidelines can be used while forwarding an email message.

1. While forwarding an email, consider including a summary at the beginning of the email. The new recipient should be able to determine what has already been discussed.

2. Always adhere to Tech Mahindra security and email policy.

4. **Common Courtesy**

   We should always try practice the basic courtesies listed below.

   1. Use "please" if you are asking for something. Similarly, if someone does something for you, write "thank you". Please and thank you carries the same value in verbal and written communication.

   2. Not getting an immediate answer should not be related to Ignoring.

   3. Make sure you include enough information to make the response possible.

5. **Conclusion**

   Email is an effective communication tool. When we compose an email message, we should read it over before sending. Time spent on making email clearer is time saved in future correspondence.

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Chat Etiquette

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Chat Etiquette is about unwritten pointers that make an online conversation between two or more people effective, professional and impactful. The status modes in Chats such as Available, Busy, Do Not Disturb should be mindfully used appropriate to the situation. Available mode is used when you want to let others comfortably reach out to you. Busy mode is used to announce that others should not disturb yet you are okay with receiving pings. Do Not Disturb mode is used when you do a task which requires your full attention.

Few pointers to remember:

- Do not always keep yourself in Busy mode to avoid disturbance.
- Pay attention to the message, read the complete sentence.

- Keep your response short and simple

- Read your response once before you hit enter

- Respond to only what is asked

- Don't type in CAPITAL LETTERS. It is equivalent to yelling or shouting at someone.

- Be patient when you did not get an instant reply. Wait for at least 15-20 seconds before responding.

- Do not show impatience by questions like 'are you there', 'helllloooo', 'did you get my ping' or typing the same message again and again.

- Be friendly, polite and considerate. If someone pings you while you are busy, it is good to respond to the ping and inform that you would connect later instead of shouting at the person or ignoring the ping altogether.

- Stick to a single color and font style

- Avoid emoticons on official chats

- Avoid casual language like gr8, ciao, 5n, tanq etc.

- 'Dear' should not be used as a greeting in chat conversation

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