

Topic Nº 13. Business Writing for Impact and Influence

What is Business Writing?

Business writing is a type of writing that is used in a professional setting. It is a purposeful piece of writing that conveys relevant information to the reader in a clear, concise, and effective manner. It includes client proposals, reports, memos, emails, and notices. Proficiency in business writing is a critical aspect of effective communication in the workplace.

Principles of Good Business Writing:

1. Clarity of purpose

Before beginning a business document, memo, or email, one should ponder two primary questions:

- ✓ Who is the reader?
- ✓ What do I want to convey to the reader through my writing?

Clarity of purpose gives a direction to the writing and develops its tone, structure, and flow.

2. Clarity of thought

Thinking while, rather than before writing, makes the writing less structured, meandering, and repetitive. Business writing requires the skill to reduce long, rambling sentences into concise, clear ones. One needs to extract what is significant to write clearly.

3. Convey accurate and relevant information

The primary goal of business writing is to convey valuable information. Inaccurate or irrelevant content affects the purpose of the document. For effective business writing, information must be value-additive and complete.

4. Avoid jargon

A simple and uncluttered writing style goes a long way in communicating the message to the reader. Grandiose writing full of industry-specific buzzwords and acronyms should be avoided to the maximum possible extent. Otherwise, the reader may be unable to comprehend the document or lose interest in it.

5. Read and revise

Reading the passages out loud after completion can reveal flaws and gaps in the arguments. It is recommended to welcome constructive feedback from colleagues and revise the document for improvement.

6. Practice is the key

Proficiency in business writing can be attained through regular practice. Paying attention to the vocabulary, sentence structure, and style of writing while reading can help to develop the same instinct while penning one's thoughts down.

7. Be direct

Presenting the crux of the passage in the first 150 words is a good idea when it comes to business writing. It saves the reader time and sharpens the argument.

8. Avoid verbosity

If the meaning can be conveyed in three words, it should not be stretched to five. Verbosity works against making the writing engaging to the reader. For example, instead of writing "the article uses more words than are needed," write "the article is verbose."

9. Correct grammar and sentence structure

While a grammatical error may come across as unprofessional, good grammar portrays both attention to detail and skill – traits that are highly valued in business.

Business writing evolves with time, so does grammar and conventions. For example, emoticons, when used judiciously, are gaining acceptance in business writing. A good writer needs to stay updated with the conventions to hone their skill.

10. Easy to scan

Business executives value a document that can convey its message in a cursory glance. Business documents can be enhanced through the use of numbered or bulleted lists, clear headings, concise paragraphs, and judicious use of bold formatting to highlight the keywords.