BUSINESS WRITING SKILLS

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About the Tutorial

Business Writing Skills addresses the need to convey concise and clear communication in professional life — while dealing with colleagues, seniors, and representatives of other organizations. Clear and concise professional writing is vital in many fields – for example, Law, Engineering, Medicine, etc. – where a small misunderstanding could lead to serious consequences.

Audience

This tutorial is designed primarily for young professionals who need assistance in writing emails, designing presentations, and putting their thoughts in words.

Prerequisites

Before proceeding with this tutorial, you are expected to be open to asking questions and resolving any further queries on the topic by contacting us.

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1. Introduction

Business Writing addresses the need to convey clear and concise communication in professional life – while dealing with colleagues, seniors, and representatives of other organizations. Business writing plays a vital role in big organizations where clear and transparent communication is absolutely essential to their functioning. The messages sent, hence, need to be clear, precise, facts-based and unambiguous.

Clear and concise professional writing is vital in many fields, such as in law, engineering, technical manuals and product labels, where misunderstanding could have serious consequences.

Why Effective Writing?

Many professionals today, especially at the beginning of their career, seek guidance on the skills needed for formal business writing, as they struggle with basic grammar, spelling, and punctuation. This is a serious limitation that lowers their confidence and makes them hold back when asked to document and present information.

With Effective Writing Skills, they can improve their written communication and manage to present points and ideas that they always used to have but never managed to present. This will increase their confidence and future prospects in the company too.

How Your Messages Portray You

Readers always generate an impression of you and your company depending on how they interpret your emails. The purpose of Business Writing is to provide concise communication keeping the reader(s), your company's image, and your image in mind. The words we use and the sentences we write are all crucial in building our perception in the reader's mind.

Common Errors in Business Writing

When it comes to business writing, the mandate is – "less is enough". Many people either use too much content in their writing or supply too less and incomplete information. It is quite a challenge to strike a balance between the two. Let's discuss the most commonly found errors that writers make:

- Many use big, difficult words like "**loggerheads**, **cumbersome**" for describing things that can easily be explained using much simpler words like "**quarrel**, **clumsy**". Not only do these words confuse, they are also vague, in that they don't explain anything clearly.
- Excessively formal style — Sentences like "We would desire it to the best of my intentions that you make your presence felt" have come and gone with the colonial rulers. "**We will be pleased if you come.**" does the same job with half the words and none of the confusion.

- Now, let’s come down to the main culprit – typing and spelling errors, like “**sprite, meat, usher**” instead of “**spirit, meet, user**” not only changes the entire meaning of the sentence but also causes embarrassment. Imagine someone writing – “I will saw you soon”?
- Some professionals go to the other extreme and write very short sentences, and at times, phrases which neither explain complete meaning nor give clear instructions. Examples of such writing are – “**See u today@5**, **Meeting tomorrow at 10.**”

The AIA Formula of Persuasive Writing

If you ever observe the advertisements closely enough, you would notice an interesting pattern – something very eye-catching or interesting happens that immediately grabs your attention. The background description adds to the features and benefits of the product that start to build your interest. Before you know it, the attractive presentation and persuasive style would have created a desire inside you of giving the product at least one try which then leads you towards the action of obtaining the product.

If you have had a similar experience, or know someone who did, you would realize the power of AIDA. In that case, it won’t come as a big surprise that it was invented by the marketing industry to attract the customers.

Today, AIDA techniques are used in Business Writing for the same purpose – to draw and impress the reader with your presentation and persuasion. The four steps of AIDA are:

1. **Attention** – Hook the reader with an attention-grabbing sentence.
2. **Interest** – Create interest by mentioning benefits of what the reader likes.
3. **Desire** – Use middle paragraphs to prompt the reader towards action.
4. **Action** – Actions the reader is needed to take to get what he desires.

Purposeful Writing

Many people shudder at the mention of writing a manuscript or document that can be circulated in the office. The reasons are obvious. There are simply too many parameters to think of while writing anything for business use. Correct choice of words, sentence structure, grammatical accuracy, correct spelling and usage, and of course, the image that the reader will form about you are all very important points to remember while writing for your co-workers.

Now, how to handle this task? There is an old saying that “**Well begun is half done.**” We need to implement this philosophy in our writing too. We need to find out the purpose behind our writing, which will clear our thoughts on these following questions:

1. Who are your readers?

This will help you understand the vocabulary and sentence formation that will be suitable according to the readership.

2. What is the purpose of your document?

You need to understand the reason you are writing something.

3. **Why should the readers read your document?**

   In other words, you have to think of the message for the readers inside your document.

4. **What outcomes you expect?**

   Each action has an equal and opposite reaction, hence for every word you write, there must be an equal reaction created (even if not necessarily opposite). This means that if you want to get the reaction or outcome you desire, your words should be such that they can portray what you want to express clearly.

Get Started

Experts claim that the real purpose of business correspondence is to evoke an immediate or late action from your reader(s). Remember the AIDA technique? It ended with Action, and that is the achievement that every piece of writing should target.

An email sent from the Manager is read by the ones in his team, and depending on the clarity of instructions combined with the individual interpretation of each reader, either the desired action is completed or a few areas are left. So, let us now focus on the most important things that one needs to keep in mind while designing any text. While writing a business document, you must:

1. Know what you want to write.
2. Write what you want to achieve.

Knowing these two things will go a long way in giving you the right direction in approaching any content, and one of the most effective ways of finding the right approach is – **brainstorming**.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is the technique of writing any ideas that come to your mind without worrying too much about any logical order, sequence, punctuation and spellings. While brainstorming, one does not need to bother about the order of thoughts and the correct usage of words. Instead, one should focus on collecting as many ideas and data available on that particular subject.

Take your time to think of a topic. Collect your thoughts and start writing them down in random. Let one idea freely lead you to another related idea and so on. This collecting of information will slowly give you an approach to the content. After some more time, a few alternative approaches will be formed. The more you keep looking at the streams of thoughts that you have put on paper, more ideas will form.

Now try to arrange these ideas in a logical flow. Do not start checking for grammar yet. Just try to get a uniform flow. Now all your ideas will be streamlined. Thereafter, do the necessary editing like replacing certain words with more appropriate ones, checking grammar, usage of words, spelling and punctuation.

2. Effective Writing – Get Going

With the way the world has evolved around us, every person has to write nowadays, irrespective of his age, job, and designation. Be it for school assignments or filing reports, or signing invoices – everyone writes.

While many of those who "have" to write actually enjoy writing, there are many for whom writing is nothing more than a chore.

The problem with these people is that they don’t give themselves a moment to think how to write. As a result of which their writing style is time-consuming, inaccurate, and unsatisfactory.

Just as there are steps to solving a question on Algebra, there are several steps that can be followed for a better written output. Here in this chapter, we will discuss how you should actually initiate the process of writing an effective business document.

How to Begin

Of all the steps, the trickiest (and the most frustrating one) is to figure out the beginning. Here are a few tips to start your work quickly:

1. Research to find facts.
2. Brainstorm to jot down all random ideas.
3. Discuss the rough draft with a colleague.
4. Keep an amiable, relaxed tone of writing.
5. Empathize with the reader.
6. Check it and sleep on it.

End of ebook preview

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