

Writing in Organizations

Prepared by Dr. Magdy Alhaj

MGM 202

Lecture 3



Writing Routine Business Correspondence & Meeting

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Course Outline

Lecture 1: Getting Started: Writing and Your Career.

Lecture 2: The Writing Process and Collaboration at Work.

Lecture 3: Writing Routine Business Correspondence & Meeting

Lecture 4: Writing Letters: Some Basics for Communicating with Audiences Worldwide.

Lecture 5: E-Communications at Work Email, Blogs, Messaging, and Social Media

Lecture 6: Making Successful Presentations at Work

Lecture 7: Writing Instructions and Procedures.

Lecture 8: Writing Effective Short Reports.

Lecture 9: Writing Careful Long Reports

Lecture 10: Designing Clear Visuals

LECTURE OUTLINE

- 1- What Memos, Faxes, E-Mails, IMs, and Blog Posts Have in Common**
- 2- Memos.**
- 3- Sending Memos: E-mail or Hard Copy?**
- 4- Sending Faxes: Some Guidelines.**
- 5- Meeting**
- 6- Planning a Meeting**
- 7- Creating an Agenda**
- 8-Writing the Minutes**
- 9-Virtual Meetings**

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

1- What Memos, Faxes, E-Mails, IMs, and Blog Posts Have in Common:

Although memos, faxes, e-mails, IMs, and blog posts are very different types of correspondence, **they share the following characteristics:**

1. Each of these types of correspondence is streamlined for the busy world of work. Unlike letters, proposals, or reports, which can be long and detailed and contain formal parts and sections, these routine types of correspondence give writers and readers a particularly fast way to communicate.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

2. They give busy readers information quickly. While the messages they contain can be about any topic in the world of work, most often they focus on day-to-day activities and operations at your company—sales and product information, policy and schedule changes, progress reports, orders, troubleshooting problems.

3. They are informal. Compared to letters, proposals, and reports, these kinds of routine correspondence are not as formal. They emphasize a conversational, yet professional, style of writing.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

4. Even though they are routine, they still demand a great deal of thought and time. Although memos, e-mails, blogs, and IMs are less formal than, for instance, a letter to a client, they all must be written clearly and with correct grammar and punctuation, even when the correspondence is between two employees in the same department of a company. Always plan and review what you are going to write.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

2- Memos:

Memorandum, usually shortened to memo, is a Latin word for “something to be remembered.” The Latin meaning points to the memo’s chief function: to record information of immediate importance and interest in the busy world of work, as in Figure 3.1. **Memos are brief and informal but can contain official announcements that serve a variety of functions, including:**

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

- making an announcement
- providing instructions
- clarifying a policy, procedure, or issue
- changing a policy or procedure
- alerting employees to a problem or issue
- delegating responsibilities
- making a request
- offering suggestions or recommendations
- providing a record of an important matter
- confirming an outcome

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

Standard memo format.

Figure 3.1

MEMO

HSI

Health Systems Inc
4008 Washington
Reno, NY 89501
www.hsincorp.com

TO: Lucy
FROM: Roger
DATE: November 11, 2011
SUBJECT: Review of Successful Website Seminar

As you know, I attended the "How to Build a Successful Website" seminar on November 7 and learned the "rules and tools" we will need to redesign our own site.

Here is a review of the major topics covered by the presenter, Jackie Chen:

1. Keep your website content-based—identify your target audience.
2. Visualize and "map out" your site ahead of time.
3. Design your website to look the way you envision it—make it aesthetically pleasing.
4. Be sure your site easy to navigate, especially for global readers.
5. Be sure the site easy to find by search engines such as Google for maximum exposure.
6. Create hot links and image maps to move users from page to page.
7. Encourage visitor interaction by soliciting feedback.
8. Complete your site with appropriate sound and animation.
9. Keep your site updated.

Could we meet in the next day or two to discuss recreating our website in light of these guidelines? I would really appreciate your suggestions about this project as well.

Thanks.

Header

Memo parts

*Introduction
gives
background
and tells reader
what memo
will do*

Preview

*Body:
Numbered
list helps
readers follow
information
quickly*

*Conclusion:
Asks for
comments*

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

- Memo Format

Memos vary in format and the way they are sent. Some companies use standard, printed forms (Figure 3.1), while others have their names (letterhead) printed on their memos (as in Figures 3.2 and 3.3). You can also create a memo by including the necessary parts in an e-mail.

Figure 3.2 Memo on letterhead with a clear introduction, discussion, and conclusion.

*Introduction
gives
purpose and
importance of
memo*

*Discussion
states why
problem exists
and how to
solve it*

*Safety message
is boldfaced for
emphasis*

*Conclusion
builds goodwill
and asks for
questions*



To: Machine Shop Employees
From: Janet Hempstead, Shop Supervisor *JH*
Date: September 27, 2011
Subject: Cleaning Brake Machines

During the past two weeks I have received several reports that the brake machines are not being cleaned properly after each use. Through this memo I want to emphasize and explain the importance of keeping these machines clean for the safety of all employees.

When the brake machines are used, the cutter chops off small particles of metal from brake drums. These particles settle on the machines and create a potentially hazardous situation for anyone working on or near the machines. If the machines are not cleaned routinely before being used again, these metal particles could easily fly into an individual's face when the brake drum is spinning.

To prevent accidents like this from happening, please make sure you vacuum the brake machines after each use.

You will find two vacuum cleaners for this purpose in the shop—one of them is located in work area 1-A and the other, a reserve model, is in the storage area. Vacuuming brake machines is quick and easy: It should take no more than a few seconds. This is a small amount of time to make the shop safer for all of us.

Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please call me at Extension 324, e-mail me, or come by my office.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

A memo that uses headings to highlight organization.

Figure 3.3

RAMCO TECHNOLOGIES
Where Technology Shapes Tomorrow
ramco@gem.com http://www.Ramcogem.com

TO: Rachel Mohler, Vice President
FROM: Harrison Fontenot, Public Relations
SUBJECT: Mike Gonzalez
DATE: Ways to Increase Ramco's Community Involvement
March 2, 2012

At our planning session in early February, our division managers stressed the need to generate favorable publicity for our new Ramco facility in Mayfield. Knowing that such publicity will highlight Ramco's visibility in Mayfield, I think the company's image might be enhanced in the following ways.

CREATE A SCHOLARSHIP FUND
Ramco would receive favorable publicity by creating a scholarship at Mayfield Community College for any student interested in a career in technology. A one-year scholarship would cost \$6,800. The scholarship could be awarded by a committee composed of Ramco executives and staff. Such a scholarship would emphasize Ramco's support for technical education at a local college.

OFFER SITE TOURS
Guided tours of the Mayfield facility would introduce the community to Ramco's innovative technology. The tours might be organized for academic, community, and civic groups. Individuals would see the care we take in protecting the environment in our production and equipment choices and the speed with which we ship our products. Of special interest to visitors would be Ramco's use of industrial robots alongside its employees. Since these tours would be scheduled in advance, they should not conflict with our production schedules.

PROVIDE GUEST SPEAKERS
Many of our employees would be excellent guest speakers at civic and educational meetings in the Mayfield area. Possible topics include the technological advances Ramco has made in designing and engineering and how these advances have helped consumers and the local economy.

Thanks for giving me your comments as soon as possible. If we are going to put one or more of these suggestions into practice before the facility opens in mid-April, we'll need to act before the end of the month.

Company logo

Introduction
supplies
background
and rationale

Body offers
concrete
evidence (costs,
personnel,
location) that
plan can work

Headings
reflect
organization

Closing
requests
feedback and
authorization

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

- Strategies for Organizing a Memo

Organize your memos so that readers can find information quickly and act on it promptly. For longer, more complex communications, such as the memos in Figures 3.2 and 3.3, **your message might be divided into three parts:** (1) introduction, (2) body or discussion, and (3) conclusion. Regardless of how short or long your memo is, recall the three P's for success—plan what you are going to say; polish what you wrote before you send it; and proofread everything.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

Introduction

The introduction of your memo should do the following:

- Tell readers clearly about the issue, policy, or problem that prompted you to write.
- Explain briefly any background information the reader needs to know.
- Be specific about what you are going to solve a problem.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

Body (Discussion)

In the body, or discussion section, of your memo, help readers in these ways:

- State why a problem, procedure, or decision is important; who will be affected by it; and what the consequences are.
- Indicate why and what changes are necessary.
- Give precise dates, times, locations, and costs.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

Conclusion

In your conclusion, state specifically how you want the reader to respond to your memo. To get readers to act appropriately, you can do one or more of the following:

- Ask readers to call you if they have any questions, as in Figure 3.2.
- Request a reply—in writing, over the telephone, via e-mail, or in person—by a specific date, as in Figures 3.1 and 3.3.
- Provide a list of recommendations that readers are to accept, revise, or reject, as in Figure 3.3.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

3- Sending Memos: E-mail or Hard Copy?:

A memo can be sent as a printed hard copy, as an e-mail, or in an e-mail attachment. Find out your company's policy. Increasingly, e-mail is replacing printed memos, but there are times when a hard-copy memo is preferred as essential.

Consider the level of official importance and confidentiality of your memo. If your memo is an official document, such as the policy outlined in Figure 3.2, you may not want to send it via e-mail, because it could easily be deleted or altered. Moreover, if your memo is confidential (e.g., an evaluation of a co-worker or vendor, a message containing sensitive financial or medical information), you may not want to send it via e-mail, because it could easily be forwarded or fall victim to hackers.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

4- Sending Faxes: Some Guidelines:

Even though you will use e-mail attachments and scan and send documents via e-mail, faxes are still used in the world of work. A fax is an original document copied and transmitted over telephone or computer lines. Faxes are particularly helpful either when you have only hard copy to send or when you want to send an original signed letter, contract, blueprint, artwork, or other document that you could not send via an e-mail transmission. Faxes demonstrate exactly what original documents look like and allow recipients to obtain a hard copy quickly.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

- Cover Page

When you send a fax, make sure your cover page includes the following information:

1. The name of the sender and his or her fax and phone numbers. The phone number is important because it enables the recipient to report an incomplete transmittal.
2. The name of the recipient and his or her fax and phone number. The recipient's correct fax and phone numbers should be included to ensure delivery of the message.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

3. The total number of pages being faxed. Note that the total number of pages includes the cover page itself.
4. A brief explanatory note that lets the recipient know what the fax is, what its purpose is, and how and when to respond to it.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

- Sending a Document

Follow these four guidelines to fax a clear and complete document:

- 1. Make sure the original documents you send are clear.** An unclear faxed document will be difficult for the recipient to read. For example, penciled comments may be too faint to fax clearly.
- 2. Avoid writing on the top, bottom, or edges of the documents to be faxed.** Any comments written on the outer edges may be cut off or blurred during transmittal.

Writing Routine Business Correspondence

3. Do not send overly long faxes. Be careful about sending anything longer than three or four pages because you will tie up both your own and the recipient's fax machines.

4. Respect the recipient's confidentiality. Because faxes may be picked up by other employees in your office, don't assume your message will be confidential, unless, of course, the recipient has a private fax machine.

Meetings

☐ Meetings

One of the most frequent ways to collaborate is through meetings, which can be small group discussions or large, formal conferences. Whether regularly scheduled (a weekly staff meeting) or a special, unscheduled one, a meeting requires teamwork. Collective energy and goodwill will bear much fruit. To succeed in the workplace, you need to know how to plan a meeting, create an agenda, and write minutes for your group

Planning a Meeting

- As with a collaboratively written document, meetings have to be carefully planned. They need to be organized, specifying when and how the meeting will take place (in-person, face-to-face via Skype, a virtual meeting, etc.), a focus provided for the meeting, and guidelines set for how it will be conducted. **If you have the responsibility of planning a meeting, be sure you can answer the following questions:**

Meetings

1. **What is the purpose of the meeting?** Determine why the meeting is necessary, what essential topics need to be discussed, and what results or outcomes the meeting hopes to accomplish.
2. **Who should attend the meeting?** Identify key people who need to be involved, e.g., managers, co-workers, colleagues from other departments, clients, vendors, etc.
3. **What specific responsibilities do individuals in your group have?** Determine who will take minutes (see “Writing the Minutes,” pages 105–109), introduce the meeting, or deliver a PowerPoint or Prezi presentation, for example

4. When should the meeting take place? There are good times and bad times to hold a business meeting, as the following schedule shows:

Good times

1. Mid-morning or mid-afternoon
2. Any time during the week except Monday morning or Friday afternoon, or immediately before or after a major holiday
3. After a major company celebration when morale is high

Meetings

Bad times

1. Early in the morning or late in the afternoon
2. Monday morning or Friday afternoon
3. Immediately before or after a major holiday
4. Same day as a long training session or long meeting

5. Where should the meeting take place? Select an appropriate space, one equipped with all the technology your group plans to use (e.g., speakerphones, SMART Boards, web-based conferencing systems)

Meetings

Creating an Agenda

Out of your planning will come your agenda, a list of the topics to be covered at the meeting. An agenda is a one- or sometimes two-page outline of the main points to be covered at the meeting. The agenda should list only those items that your group, based on its work and interaction, regards as most crucial. Prioritize your action items so that the most important ones come first.

Observing Courtesy at a Group Meeting

To show your team members the courtesy they deserve during a meeting (whether face-to-face or virtually), observe the following guidelines:

- 1. Be on time.** Coming in late can disrupt a meeting and cause further delays if you have to be brought up-to-date.
- 2. Silence your cell phone.** Set your phone on vibrate if you are expecting an important business call.
- 3. Do not send text messages.** Sending text messages during a meeting is as rude as playing a video game on a smartphone.
- 4. Avoid side conversations.** Talking to others around you while the meeting is in progress shows poor manners and can distract from the business and progress of the meeting.

Meetings

- 5. Avoid interrupting.** If you need to interject a comment, raise your hand or wait for the meeting planner to ask for comments from the group.
- 6. Be an active listener.** Pay attention to what is being said at the meeting and also try to discern the message behind those words.
- 7. Participate; don't dominate.** Give everyone a chance to speak. Contribute to the discussion, but don't monopolize it.
- 8. Be a focused speaker.** If you are called on or choose to speak to the group, get to the point quickly, be clear, and avoid straying from your topic.
- 9. Do not record the meeting or take photographs.** Unless you have permission, do not bring an audio recorder or video camera to a meeting, and do not take photographs

Writing the Minutes

The minutes are a summary of what happened at the meeting . Copies of minutes are kept on file—they are the official, permanent record of the group’s deliberations and are regarded as legal documents. Minutes need to be clear, accurate, and impartial. If you are asked to take minutes, don’t inject your own opinions of how well or poorly the meeting went; for example, “Once more Hicks got off the topic” is not appropriate. Plan on transmitting minutes 24 to 48 hours after the meeting has adjourned.

What to Include in Your Minutes

Minutes of a meeting should include the following information:

- date, time, and place of the meeting, name of the group holding the meeting, and why
- name of the person chairing the meeting
- names of those present and those absent
- the approval or amendment of the minutes of the previous meeting

Meetings

- for each major point—the action items—indicate what was done:
 - ✓ what was discussed, suggested, or proposed
 - ✓ what was decided and the vote, including abstentions
 - ✓ what was continued (tabled) for a subsequent study, report, or meeting
 - ✓ the time the meeting officially concluded

Guidelines on Writing Minutes

To be effective, minutes must be concise and to the point. Here are a few guidelines to help you:

- Make sure of your facts; spell all names, products, and tests correctly.
- Concentrate on the major facts surrounding action items. Condense lengthy discussions, debates, and reports given at the meeting.
- Do not report verbatim what everyone said; readers will be more interested in outcomes—what the group did.
- List each motion (or item voted on) exactly as it is worded and in its final form.
- Avoid words that interpret (negatively or positively) what the group or anyone in the group did or did not do.

Meetings

Virtual Meetings

While face-to-face meetings are still very frequent in the workplace, technology has made virtual meetings a useful alternative. They allow a group to meet online, no matter where team members are located. Virtual meetings in the world of work facilitate communication and save money on travel costs

Here are three ways technology can help you conduct a virtual meeting:

Meetings

1. Teleconferencing

allows for conference calls in which multiple participants at one's office, across the country, or around the globe can communicate with one another. But note that participants have to be notified of the call and given a password to participate in the conversation.

2. Web conferencing

(such as Cisco's WebEx) combines the audio component of teleconferencing with the face-to-face interaction of a traditional meeting. The greatest advantage of web conferencing over teleconferencing is that individuals attending a web conference can view presentations and share documents electronically during a meeting

3. Dedicated videoconferencing

Systems are primarily used for group-to-group conferences or one-way seminars in large rooms and auditoriums, bringing large groups of people together to share information without the expense and time of traveling

Videoconferencing with Skype

Skype allows individuals in the world of work to conduct videoconferences over the Internet without purchasing expensive videoconferencing systems. Skype can be used for one-on-one meetings or for video conferences with a small group (up to ten participants). Skype functions like a telephone call, but it uses a webcam to send video to your partner(s). You can download the free software from www.skype.com

Meetings

Like other business meetings, you have to prepare for a Skype conference. You need to do your homework—planning, sharing information, and taking notes.

Here are five guidelines to help make your Skype videoconference productive:

- Collaboration works best in Skype videoconferences when everyone has a compatible, fast Internet connection.
- Always test your webcam to make sure it is working (and is in focus) before making a Skype call, and ask the other participants to check theirs, too. In your Skype contact list, click on “Echo/Sound Test Service” to test your audio settings

Meetings

- Look directly into your computer's webcam (and not at the keyboard) so that the participants can see you clearly.
- Be sure that any files you share during the meeting through Skype are relevant.
- Do not try to carry on another conversation on your cell phone, tweet, or text during your Skype conversation

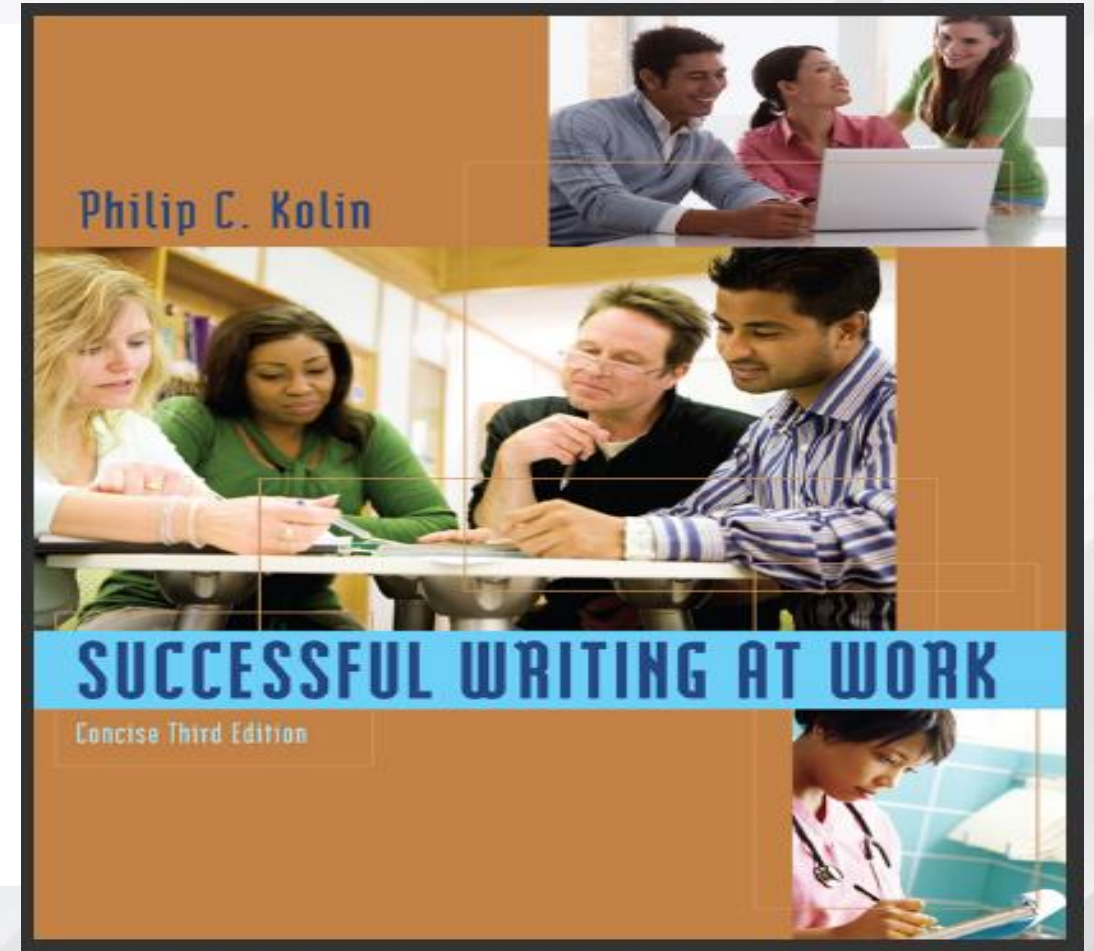
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University of Southern Mississippi

Chapter 3



Thank You



Thank You