

## Business Communication Principles

# Today's Learning Objectives

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- Identify the characteristics of good business writing
- Contrast the characteristics of academic writing and business writing
- Begin to apply the core business communication principles
- Produce a business writing sample

# Course Package Highlights

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# Taking Charge of Your Own Learning

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- Instructor/TA Office Hours
- Peers
- Writing Mentors
  - <http://beedie.sfu.ca/writing-mentors/>
- Student Learning Commons
  - <http://learningcommons.sfu.ca/>

# What are the Benefits of Good Business Writing?

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# Benefits of Good Business Writing

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- Improved efficiency
- Saved time
- Increased revenue
- Strong professional image (for you and your organization)
- Success (at personal and organizational levels)
- Increased good will

# Audience-focused writing

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Profile your audience by asking questions:

- Initial? Primary? Secondary?
  - Internal? External?
  - Receptive? Neutral? Unreceptive?
  - Decision-makers? Implementers? Observers?  
Gatekeepers? Watchdogs?
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- Relative Status?

# Flow of Information / Relative Status

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Four directions for information flow:

1. Upward flow
2. Downward flow
3. Horizontal flow
4. External flow

# Acknowledging Your Relative Status

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# Acknowledging Your Relative Status

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- Do you have to persuade the reader?
- Is the reader obliged to comply with your request?
- Are you required to inform the reader?
- Are you doing the reader a favour?
- Are you allowed to criticize the reader?
- Do you owe the reader an explanation?

# Purpose-driven writing

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There are generally three types of purposes in business writing:

1. to inform / explain
2. to persuade
3. to maintain or create goodwill

# Distinguishing between *purpose* and *objectives*

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**Purpose:** Your overall goal (**abstract**)

**Objectives:** Things you need to do in your message to achieve your overall goal (**concrete**)

# Purpose vs Objectives (cont' d)

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**Example:** An email announcing a changed meeting time.

Purpose: --informative

Objectives: --?

# Purpose vs Objectives (cont' d)

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**Example:** An email announcing a changed meeting time.

Purpose: --informative

Objectives:

- make readers aware of the change
- time the message to give clear notice
- explain reason for change
- specify channel for feedback

# Purpose vs Objectives (cont' d)

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**Example:** A memo to request additional funding for a project.

Purpose: --persuasive

Objectives: --?

# Purpose vs Objectives (cont' d)

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**Example:** A memo to request additional funding for a project.

Purpose: --persuasive

Objectives:

- establish your credibility
- state your case
- anticipate & address counter-arguments
- indicate what you want

# Academic Writing vs. Business Writing

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- Purpose?
- Audience?
- Context?
- Organization?
- Writing Style?

# Organized writing

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- Audience Resistance?
- Direct vs Indirect Approach?
- Business Conventions?

# General Rules for Organization

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## **Direct Approach:**

- informative messages
- goodwill messages
- good news messages
- persuasive messages  
(depending on audience and circumstances)
- negative news messages  
(depending on audience and circumstances)

# General Rules for Organization

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## **Indirect Approach:**

- most persuasive messages
- most negative news messages
- messages likely to encounter resistance

# Expressive writing

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- Positive Language?
- Courteous, Respectful Tone?
- “You” view?
- Connotative vs Denotative Language?
- Convey and Evoke Appropriate Emotion?
- Message is Constructive and Proactive?

# Efficient writing

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- Concise / Economical?
- Follows Business Conventions?
- Addresses Scope / Knowledge Deficits?
- Detail is Accurate?
- Anticipates and Addresses Problems and Concerns?

# Portfolio Exercise #1

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You have until the end of class to complete the exercise.

# Title page information

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- Course name and section number
- Title of exercise (Portfolio Exercise #1)
- Your name and student number
- Instructor's name and title
- TA's name and title
- Today's date

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- Questions?