

Lecture 1: Technical Report Writing

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Lecture 2

Administrative Information

Business Communication

Audience: The most important factor shaping communication

- Tone
- Type of Information
- Amount of detail
- Design/format criteria
- Business considerations

Professional Peers: Most frequent audience for communication

- Purpose:
 - Work coordination
 - Status updates
 - Issues identification
 - Issue Decision/resolution
 - Professional advice (two-way)
- Characteristics
 - Clarity
 - Comprehensive, well-substantiated, credible evidence level of detail tailored to audience needs

Executives: Broad range of Positions of authority

- Supervisors, managers, CEOs, VPs, etc (with diverse range of responsibilities)
- Purpose:
 - Report findings (technical, administrative, investigative findings)
 - Identify issues, and remedial action
 - Provide status updates
 - Request resources
 - Seek approval for new ideas, projects
- Characteristics
 - Avoid exhaustive details (Data dump) 0 don't overwhelm with data
 - Identify the bottom line
 - State major conclusions up front - near beginning of correspondence/reports (Hence: "Executive Summary")
 - Beware of, and recognize hierarchy - Treat individuals with appropriate deference
 - Exercise appropriate level of formality (eg first name basis or not; use appropriate titles - when in doubt, opt for greater level of formality)

Clients

- Individuals, Firms, Institutions, Governments
- Characteristics of Communication

- Focus on clients' needs
- Be faithful to your firm, as well as the client - take care when firm's interests do not perfectly coincide with client's needs/ interest
- Keep proprietary info within the firm
- Communicate with client only from your area of expertise - do not comment on other (possibly) conflicting area of expertise

Public sector, General Public: Consideration of others affected by your firm's, your own work

- Ethical Obligations, Safety, health and welfare, Requires communication with
 - Individuals
 - Groups (special interest, geographical communities, advocacy groups, foundations, NGOs, business groups)
 - Representative of various levels of Government Services (local, national, international)
- Objectives
 - Provide information (planning, progress, failures, concerns)
 - Shape opinion - garner support
 - Whistleblower
- Characteristics
 - Make technical matters clear (avoid jargon)
 - Recognize (do not belittle) concerns of the public
 - Listen, understand, address public concerns empathetically
 - Express opinions only from your area of competence
 - If you don't know something - admit it - don't guess
 - Making incorrect public statements is unethical and corrodes public trust

Technicians, Technical staff, Administrative support staff: Usually people in positions lower than your own, but whose services are critical to your own effectiveness. (assistants to executives, IT personnel, Human Resources staff, Financial officers, your own support staff)

- Purpose:
 - To obtain services - office/ administrative services, computer services, staffing and pay services and issues, office equipment and supplies
 - To obtain access to executives, other authorities
- Characteristics
 - Show respect for knowledge, skills and expertise
 - Provide written requests, maintain records

Audiences - in Academic Setting

- Fellow students
- Professors
- Facility authorities
- Departmental authorities: supervisors, Directors, chair
- Departmental administrative personnel
- Registrar
- Financial Services

- Support Services
- (What are equivalents in business world)

Types of Business Communication

Which to Use?

The type of Business Communication that will be most effective - timeliness, result, protocol

- Phone conversation, Text message, Voice Message
- Email
- Instant Messages (Social Media)
- Letter/memo - paper

Need to have a *Permanent record*: email, letter or memo

Availability of the recipient:

If readily *available* - text message, Instant message

If *not readily available* - email, voice message

Importance of *making a good impression* on recipients:

Formal written communication (memo, letter, email) - not text or voice message

Purpose (*volatile, sensitive,*) length (*long, detailed*), and *complex*: telephone conversation, face to face meeting

Need for *reply or forwarding*: written communication (letter email)

Security issues: email only across secure channel; otherwise - paper/ security envelope according to procedures

Considerations

- Need a permanent record
- Availability of the recipient
- Impression on recipients
- Purpose, length and complexity of the topic
- Need for reply or forwarding
- Security issues

Requirements - business Communication

Business Letters

- The common business letter (printed on real paper!) is not dead.
 - Communications sent outside organization
 - Cover for reports, resumes
- Business Memorandums
 - Communications internal to an organization
- Email
 - Primary form of business communication

Email - Important Considerations

- Use a greeting - (salutation)
- Use a signature
- Identify a relevant, clear subject in the subject line
- Organize sent and received email (for subsequent retrieval)

- Save emails into relevantly named files or folders

Apply the principles of effective documents

- Put important information first
- Keep paragraphs short
- Have a space between paragraphs
- Highlighting and emphasis

Email - Not recommended in following situations:

- To communicate bad news, complaints, or criticism
- Seek info that is not simple and straightforward
- Communications that will require lots of back and forth exchange
- Seek approval on something that is complicated or controversial
- To send complicated instructions
- To explore or brainstorm a subject or idea

Recommendation in these situation: telephone call, face to face meeting, audio/video conference

Email - In academic Setting

- Precursor to professional communication
- Preparation for professional communication
 - Must show respect
 - Must be coherent and concise
 - Must be sufficiently informative
 - Must facilitate ease of response

Apply the principle of formal communication (letter, memorandum)

Emails to professors

- Use proper and polite language
 - More effective communication
 - Gives better impression of manners and abilities
 - Develop skills for future clients and employers
 - Profs are often asked for references in early career stages

Points to Note - Communications with teachers

- Avoid electronic communication abbreviations
 - (“b4, giv 2 u, how r u)
- Begin with proper salutation
 - Communication with a professor
 - Don’t use Mr, Ms, Mrs, Miss
 - Use Dr. or Use Dear *Professor*
 - Do not use first name (especially in initial communication)
 - *You may use first name if prof has indicated it is appropriate or signed off with first name - but not recommended.*

Email - In Business/ Formal Setting

- General business/ formal communication (and academic)
 - Don’t use:
 - Hi, Hey, Dear sir (if you know name and title), Mrs, miss

- Use: Ms
- If don't know the addressee - use " Dear Sir or Madam"

Provide relevant subject in subject line

- Not ENG1112 or quick question or urgent reply required ASAP
- Good example: Final Report Topic
- Begin email with explanation of why you are writing.
- Indicate course number, section (profs can have many)
- Be polite with request - do not give orders.... (I would like to - is it possible - May I)

Email - In Academic Setting

- Never say " Please reply" or " reply required ASAP"
- If teacher does not respond within a day or so, you then have the right to email again
- When teacher responds - acknowledge receipt and say " thank you"
- Close email properly "regards"/"Best wishes"/"Sincerely"
- Always sign off with your full name
- Always re-read for spelling and grammar errors

Beyond academia - all of the above are expectations of respectable companies and employers.

Resumes

- Applying for a job
- Applying for Graduate School
- Applying for scholarship, funding
- Must be Easy to Read: Highlights what distinguishes you from other applications
- Target the Audience: Know about and appeal to institutions values, priorities. Highlight credentials of particular interest to audience.
- A bullet list highlighting experience and qualifications
- Outline of your professional experience. Education and other background relevant to the employment, opportunity you are seeking
- Avoid obsolete or irrelevant credentials
- Highlights on who you are professionally
- Summary of your career to dat
- Key to writing an effect resume
 - Highlights your best qualifications
 - Can be scanned in about 20-30 sec

Early career Resumes

- What to do if you have very little experience?
 - Cite relevant project (both in academia and community)
 - Describe your relevant college courses and programs
 - Describe team projects, individual projects, or reports
 - Include volunteer work that has had any relation to professional field
 - List any organizations you have been a member of and describe any of their activities that have any trace of relation to professional field
 - Do some volunteering - join organizations

Bibliography Assignment

- 10% of your final mark
- DUE: OCT 15
- 1 page → 5-10 resources
 - Paper based and electronic publications or peer reviewed resources*
 - At least 1 book (print based) resource - (print or web) - paper or e- book
 - Other resources: Newspapers, Academic and Trade Journals, Government Reports and Legal Documents, Product Literature, Multimedia (radio and television broadcasts, interactive talks, and public meetings)
 - No WIKIPEDIA
- Sources must be related to one of the final report topics
- You do not need to identify the topic
- Formatted according to MLA, APA or IEEE*
- At the end of the list, please identify the style you have used. "I have used (name of style)"

Final Report

- Involves Research, investigation and analysis
 - POse a question
 - Conduct investigation and comparative research and analysis to answer that question
 - Provide an answer to the research question (with substantiating evidence and justification)