

Effective Business Writing

Frontline Leader Snapshot

Though businesses increasingly rely on technology, technological skills alone do not guarantee success in the workplace. It is important to develop your ideas, express them clearly, and persuade others of their viability. Information overload makes it necessary to communicate clearly and concisely.

Effective business writing begins with an understanding of how to organize your content and analyze your audience. To write content that will effectively and professionally communicate your intended message, it is important to understand who will be reading it, and how to organize and format it in a way that will have the greatest impact.

Regardless of how you organize your content and analyze your audience, to effectively communicate your message you will need to write clear sentences. To write clear, strong sentences, follow these guidelines:

- *Write in the active voice, unless special circumstances call for the use of the passive voice*
- *Eliminate redundancy and the use of jargon*
- *Use simple words*
- *Avoid wordiness and wordy phrases*
- *Accept that your rough, first draft may include some weak sentences, which you will rewrite when you revise the first draft.*

In addition to organization, business writing requires that you think strategically about the audience. Learn to analyze your audience, anticipate their reactions, and plan your writing according to their specific needs.

Analyzing your audience starts with determining who will be receiving your communication. A few factors will help determine the primary audience:

- **Recipient(s)** – *identify who will receive your message directly.*
- **Decision-making power** – *know who has the most decision-making power in the audience. Address their concerns first.*
- **Your role** – *understand your role in a business hierarchy. Your status determines both how your message will be received and the tone of your correspondence. An email to the CEO will have a different emphasis and tone than an email to your colleague in the next cubicle.*
- **Transmission** – *recognize how your message can spread beyond your primary audience, as it can be copied, transmitted, and is distorted through word of mouth, or wind up in the newspaper or in court documents.*

When analyzing your audience, it is important to also consider differences in the population who will be consuming the content you are creating – culture, class, and ethnicity.

Please refer to your Frontline Leader Workshop Manual titled ***“Effective Business Writing”*** for more information and tips to help with your leadership skills during this challenging time.