LESSON 12

PROCESS OF PREPARING EFFECTIVE BUSINESS MESSAGES

Organizational Plan

o Indirect or Inductive Organizational Plan/ Approach Beginnings & Endings

o Close Paragraph   
  Make Action

 End on a Positive, Courteous Thought

 Keep Last Paragraph Concise and Correct

2. Indirect or Inductive Organizational Plan

Indirect (Inductive) Approach:

If you think that your message might upset your reader or listener, you use the indirect plan to ease your audience into the part of your message that shows you are fair-minded and eager to do business with him on some other terms. This approach consists of four parts:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Organizational Plan  Bad-News Plan |
| 1 | Buffer (using positive, pleasant rather than negative statement. |
| 2 | Explanation (reader’s benefit, reasons supporting the negative  decision) |

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3 Decision (expressed or implied in clear but tactful manner)

4 Helpful, friendly and positive stressing on goodwill.

Dear Mr. Hassan,

You are right to expect high-quality merchandise from The Automatic Door Company; we try to give you the best for your money and to stand behind our products when they fail as a result of defects in material and workmanship, as our warranty states.

We appreciate your sending the door opener to us for analysis. It appears that the opener has got wet. Excess moisture over a period of time causes this defect.

Our service manager estimates that cleaning and repairing your door opener would cost Rs. 250.

Since your door opener is several years old, you may want to consider buying a new one. We   
have made many improvements to our door openers since yours was manufactured, including a   
sealed circuit board that would prevent the possibility of damage from moisture. A new door   
opener, which costs Rs. 3500.00 postpaid, should give you even longer service than your old one   
did.

Please let us know whether you want us to repair or replace your opener. Yours sincerely,

Persuasive Request Plan

As good-news plan is similar to direct-request plan, so is persuasive plan to bad-news plan. Persuasion is the attempt to change a reader’s attitude, beliefs or action in your favour. This plan is used to influence the readers who may resist otherwise. One way to organize persuasive messages is the AIDA plan, which is of four stages:

1. Attention

2. Interest

3. Desire

4. Action

In the attention stage, you convince the reader that you have something interesting or useful for   
him. In interest stage, you explain how your message is related to your reader. In the desire stage,   
you provide relevant evidence to prove your claim drawing attention to any enclosures. In the   
action stage, you close the message with an action ending that suggests a specific action the   
reader may take.

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Write today for your copy of the book. You’ll be awfully glad.

Sincerely yours,

Beginnings & Endings

The way you begin your message makes it clear whether your reader will respond favorably or unfavorably to the message. When you are sure that your message has something favorable or neutral for the reader, you must begin your message with the main idea or good-news in the beginning. The opening must be impressive in a way that it captures the attention of the reader. So, always choose appropriate openings that suit the purpose of your message. The following openings are desirable in direct-request, good-news and neutral messages.

Main Idea: The goods which you ordered on March 5 have been sent to you by passenger train.   
Request: So that your order can be filled promptly, please send another copy of the requisition.

Announcement: Now you can take an air - conditioned coach from Lahore to Islamabad any   
hour.

Whenever required, employ 5Ws and one H to give clarity to your messages.

Buffer: If you have bad news, begin your message with a buffer. A buffer is a statement, that helps you bring your reader in a positive frame of mind, and the message becomes readable for the reader. But “buffer” should be neutral in tone. You should also avoid misleading the reader into thinking that the message is good.

Poor: It is impossible to open your account unless you send us the following information.

With Buffer: The moment you send us the following information your account will be opened.

Poor: We never exchange damaged goods.

With Buffer: We are happy to exchange the merchandise that is returned to us in good condition.

In persuasive request (sales letter), begin the message with an attention-getting statement. An experienced writer uses some common technique to attract the reader. Consider some of attention-getting statements:

A challenge: Don’t waste another day wondering how you’re going to become the success you’ve always wanted to be!

The writer should avoid using trite and stereotyped expressions. Make your openings considerate, courteous concise, and clear. Keep your first paragraph short and use simple conversational language. Never open your letter with an incomplete sentence like:

Reference to your letter of March 6 regarding opening of a current account

Make opening specific

Poor: Thank you for your order.

Specific: Thank you for you order for 200 writing pads.

Close Paragraph

An effective ending will motivate the reader to act as requested. If no direct request is required, leave the reader with some expression of regard, assurance, appreciation or willingness to help. Always remember that closings should be strong, clear and polite. They should leave a sense of closure and goodwill with the receiver.

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1. Make your request clear and complete with Five Ws and the H.

2. Include your phone number and extension if you want the reader to phone you.

3. Enclose a form (card, order, blank, or questionnaire) and an addressed reply envelope (perhaps with postage paid) if you want the reader to furnish something.

4. Give complete instructions regarding how and where if you do not include a form and an   
envelope.

5. State your office hours and location if you want the reader to come to you in person. Do you have a free parking lot? Where?

1. Make Action Clear

Vague: I look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter.

Better: So that we can make appropriate arrangements for your visit, please call me at 541000, before Friday, November 16, anytime between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M.

2. End on a Positive, Courteous Thought

Include apologies and negatives (if any) before the last paragraph. Study these examples:

Negative: I’m sorry we can’t be more encouraging at this time.

Positive: We wish you success in your search for a position.

Be Friendly: Offer to help the reader further, if that is appropriate. Words like please or will you help soften commands.

Good: If there is any further way we can assist you please call 555-4567 Monday through Friday between 9 A.M. and 5 P.M.

Avoid: Thank you in advance for distributing these questionnaires to your employees.

Say: I will appreciate your distributing these questionnaires to your employees.

Give my regards to your lovely family. I enjoyed meeting them during the October conference.

3. Keep Last Paragraph Concise and Correct

Trim your last paragraph to five or fewer lines of complete sentences. Avoid unnecessary   
repetition. In short letters, the writer often gives his message and stops without any special   
formality: Make your opening and closing paragraph shorter than average because the most   
important location in a letter is the opening. The second most important is the closing. (Continued   
on the next page….)

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