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April 14, 2017
WHY WILL YOU WRITE?

- To inform
- To document
- To solicit input/decisions
- To report results
- To recommend
- To request funding
- To evaluate programs, people
WHO WILL BE YOUR AUDIENCE?

Colleagues
Supervisors
Funding entities
The public
HOW WILL YOU WRITE?

- Professionally
- Concisely
- Accurately
- Accessibly
- Clearly
WRITING EFFECTIVELY

- Use the active voice
  - Identify the **actor** (who)
  - Identify the **action** the actor is taking (what is happening)
  - Identify **Who or What** is receiving that action
- Keep paragraphs and sentence short and clear
- Avoid nominalizations – verbs that can be powerful, but have been turned into nouns
- Avoid long strings of prepositional phrases
WHAT WILL YOU WRITE?

- Emails
- Memos
- Business Letters
- Evaluations
- Social Media
  - Blogs
  - Tweets
  - Facebook Posts
- Reports
- Proposals - Grant, other
- Presentations
EMAILS & MEMOS

- Share similar formats
- Subject line – identifies email/memo topic
- Recipients – identifies who receives the email/memo
- Address a specific issue
- Emails address a routine issue
- Memos may be lengthier
- Concise
BUSINESS LETTERS

- Directed to external audience
- Organization depends on purpose
  - Routine/Request
    - Start with main idea/request
    - Provide supporting information
    - Request specific action
    - End with courteous close
BUSINESS LETTERS

Sensitive/Negative Information

DIRECT APPROACH
- Open with bad news
- Provide rationale/additional information
- Close respectfully

INDIRECT APPROACH
- Open with buffer
- Provide rationale/information
- Provide bad news
- Close respectfully
EVALUATIONS

Purposes
- Document accomplishments
- Understand expectations
- Plan for future

Characteristics
- Objective
- Thorough
- Concise
- Balanced
SOCIAL MEDIA

Create audience-centered messages

- **Conversations** – IM for example; allows communication with a few people at a time
- **Comments and Critiques** – feedback and tips
- **Orientations** – identify where readers/visitors can find specific information
- **Summaries** – *abstract* of webpage or article highlighting main points
SOCIAL MEDIA

Create audience-centered messages

 família Reference materials

 família Narratives – storytelling – organizational history for example

 família Teasers – pull readers into another document (or subsequent tweet for example); withhold key pieces of information

 família Status updates and announcements

 família Tutorials – allow reader to complete tasks/troubleshoot:, provide expert advice
CREATING CONTENT FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

Remember it’s a conversation, not a sales pitch
Write informally but professionally
Create concise, specific and informative headlines
Create consistent involvement – especially when criticized
Promote indirectly – particularly in for-profit situations
Be transparent and honest
Think before you post

From Thill and Bovee
Excellence in Business Communication
11th edition
REPORTS

- Analyze complex situations
- Educate audience(s)
- Address opportunities in community/organization
- Communicate findings
WRITING REPORTS

Know purpose of report
- Are you documenting or communicating findings?
- Will you have to draw conclusions?
- Will you have to make recommendations?

Gather information
- Primary research
- Secondary research
WRITING REPORTS

- Organize your information
  - **Direct approach** if information is routine, and your credibility is established
  - **Indirect approach** if your main idea is not popular/ easily accepted or you are still establishing your credibility

- Support your message with reliable information

- If providing conclusions or recommendations
  - Provide **logical arguments**
  - Identify criteria you used to evaluate options
  - Apply criteria consistently
WRITING REPORTS

- Use graphics to help reader understand complex or large amounts of information
- Use consistent design
- Include an executive summary
- Use appendices to provide additional information
WRITING REPORTS - FORMAT

Introduction – provides context; may include

- Authorization
- Purpose
- Scope
- Background
- Sources and methods
- Definitions
- Limitations
- Report organization
WRITING REPORTS - FORMAT

**Body** – presents, analyzes and interprets the information; includes

- Explanations
- Supporting information – statistical evidence, trends
- Study results
- Discussion & analysis of potential solutions/courses of action
- Pros and cons, costs and benefits of proposed solutions
- Procedures or process and steps
- Methods and approaches
- Criteria for evaluating alternatives
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Support for recommendations
WRITING REPORTS - FORMAT

Close - has 3 important goals

- Emphasizes reports main points
- Summarizes benefits
- Consolidates action items and identifies who should do what, when, where, and how
PROPOSALS

✦ Specialized reports to address a specific need
✦ May be solicited or unsolicited
✦ May be internal or external
  ✦ **Internal** – request decisions from organization’s managers/policy-makers
  ✦ **External** – request decisions from parties outside the organization
WRITING PROPOSALS

Purpose – persuade audience to do something

Key strategies

♦ If solicited, **read the request for proposal** carefully so you understand the requester’s purposes and requirements

♦ **Demonstrate your expertise**, how it's relevant to the situation, and meaningful to readers

♦ **Provide key information and examples**

♦ **Research competition**

♦ **Demonstrate appropriateness and feasibility of your proposal**

♦ **Relate your proposed solution to readers’ needs**

♦ **Package proposal attractively**
WRITING PROPOSALS - FORMAT

Introduction
- Statement of problem
- Proposed solution
- Scope of proposed solution – scope of work
- Proposal organization

Body
- Proposed solution
- Work plan
- Statement of qualifications
- Costs

Close - Summary of key points
PRESENTATIONS

- Find your main idea
- Limit your scope
  - Time constraints
  - Audience attention
- Adapt to your audience
- Outline your main points
DEVELOPING PRESENTATIONS

- Introduce your topic
- Pique your audience’s interest
  - Tell a story that illustrates an important concept in your material
  - Ask questions
- Build your credibility – introduce yourself, your background, accomplishments – why should they listen to you?
- Preview your message
- Present your main points
- Close
DEVELOPING PRESENTATIONS

- Slides should highlight main points
- Slide design should be consistent
  - Legible font size and style
  - Headings
  - Colors
- Graphics should be clear and legible
- Graphics should carry the conversation forward
- Speak to the audience and make eye contact – YOU are the presenter
- Practice & Rehearse
RESOURCES

*Excellence in Business Communication, 11th edition*
John V. Thill and Courland L. Bovee

*Revising Prose, 5th edition*
Richard A. Lanham

*Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace, 12th edition*
by Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup

Purdue OWL – Workplace Writing
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/624/01/