

## Checklist for Short Persuasive Messages

### Determine How to Start the Message

- ☑ **Direct Plan.** Use a direct organizational plan when writing to your manager and for most situations. Present the recommendation, along with the criteria or brief rationale, in the first paragraph.
- ☑ **Indirect Plan.** Use an indirect organizational plan when you expect a lot of resistance and when writing to people who prefer the indirect style. With an interesting, relevant, short statement, capture interest and motivate the reader to continue reading.

### Justify Your Idea or Request

- ☑ Devote the major part of your message to justifying your message. Give enough background and evidence to enable the reader to make an informed decision.
- ☑ Use facts and statistics, expert opinion, and examples to support your points.
- ☑ Use an objective, logical, reasonable, and sincere tone.

- ☑ Present the evidence in terms of either direct or indirect reader benefits.

### Deal with Obstacles

- ☑ Do not ignore obstacles or any negative aspects of your message. Instead, address them directly.
- ☑ In most cases, subordinate the discussion of obstacles by position and amount of space devoted to the topic.

### Ask Confidently for Action

- ☑ State (or restate) the specific idea or request late in the message—after most of the benefits have been discussed.
- ☑ Make the desired action clear and easy for the reader to take, use a confident tone, do not apologize, and do not provide excuses.
- ☑ End on a forward-looking note, continuing to stress reader benefits.

## Checklist for Sales Letters

**Select a central selling theme**—your product's most distinguishing feature—and refer to this throughout the letter.

### Gain the Reader's Attention

- ☑ Make your opening brief, interesting, and original. Avoid obvious, misleading, and irrelevant statements.
- ☑ Use any of these openings: rhetorical question, thought-provoking statement, unusual fact, current event, anecdote, direct challenge, or some similar attention-getting device.
- ☑ Introduce (or at least lead up to) the central selling theme in the opening.
- ☑ If the letter is in response to a customer inquiry, begin by expressing appreciation for the inquiry and then introduce the central selling theme.

### Create Interest and Build Desire

- ☑ Make the introduction of the product follow naturally from the attention-getter.
- ☑ *Interpret* the features of the product; instead of just describing the features, show how the reader

will benefit from each feature. Let the reader picture owning, using, and enjoying the product.

- ☑ Use action-packed, positive language and engaging graphics. Provide objective, convincing evidence to support your claims—specific facts and figures, independent product reviews, endorsements, and so on.
- ☑ Continue to stress the central selling theme throughout.
- ☑ Subordinate price (unless price is the central selling theme). State price in small terms, in a long sentence, or in a sentence that also talks about benefits.

### Motivate Action

- ☑ Make the desired action clear and easy to take.
- ☑ Ask confidently, avoiding the hesitant “If you'd like to . . .” or “I hope you agree that. . . .”
- ☑ Encourage prompt action (but avoid a hard-sell approach).
- ☑ End your letter with a reminder of a reader benefit.