**Presenting Yourself Effectively in Correspondence**

When you write business correspondence, follow these five suggestions for presenting yourself as a professional:

* Use the appropriate level of formality.
* Communicate correctly.
* Project the “you attitude.”
* Avoid correspondence clichés.
* Communicate honestly.

**USE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF FORMALITY**

People are sometimes tempted to use informal writing in informal digital applications such as email and microblogs. Don’t. Everything you write on the job is legally the property of the organization for which you work, and messages are almost always archived digitally, even after senders and recipients have deleted them. Your documents might be read by the company president, or they might appear in a newspaper or in a court of law. Therefore, use a moderately formal tone to avoid potential embarrassment.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOO INFORMAL** | Our meeting with United went south right away when they threw a hissy fit, saying that we blew off the deadline for the progress report. |
| **MODERATELY FORMAL** | In our meeting, the United representative expressed concern that we had missed the deadline for the progress report. |

However, you don’t want to sound like a dictionary.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TOO FORMAL** | It was indubitably the case that our team was successful in presenting a proposal that was characterized by quality of the highest order. My appreciation for your industriousness is herewith extended. |
| **MODERATELY FORMAL** | I think we put together an excellent proposal. Thank you very much for your hard work. |

**COMMUNICATE CORRECTLY**

One issue closely related to formality is correctness. As discussed in [Chapter 1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch01.xhtml), correct writing is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, style, usage, and spelling. Correctness problems occur most often in email and microblogs.

Some writers mistakenly think that they do not need to worry about correctness because these digital applications are meant for quick communication. They are wrong. You have to plan your digital correspondence just as you plan any other written communication, and you should revise, edit, and proofread it. Sending correspondence that contains language errors is unprofessional because it suggests a lack of respect for your reader –– and for yourself. It also causes your reader to think that you are careless about your job.

*For more about editing, see Ch. 3,* [*pp. 57*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch03_04.xhtml#page57)*–58; for more about proofreading, see Ch. 3,* [*p. 58*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch03_05.xhtml#page58)*.*

**PROJECT THE “YOU ATTITUDE”**

Correspondence should convey a courteous, positive tone. The key to accomplishing this task is using the “you attitude” *—* looking at the situation from the reader’s point of view and adjusting the content, structure, and tone to meet his or her needs. For example, if you are writing to a supplier who has failed to deliver some merchandise by the agreed-on date, the “you attitude” dictates that you not discuss problems you are having with other suppliers; those problems don’t concern your reader. Instead, concentrate on explaining clearly and politely that the reader has violated your agreement and that not having the merchandise is costing you money. Then propose ways to expedite the shipment.

Following are two examples of thoughtless sentences, each followed by an improved version that shows the “you attitude.”

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **ACCUSING** | You must have dropped the engine. The housing is badly cracked. |
| **BETTER** | The badly cracked housing suggests that the engine must have fallen onto a hard surface from some height. |
| **SARCASTIC** | You’ll need two months to deliver these parts? Who do you think you are, the post office? |
| **BETTER** | Surely you would find a two-month delay for the delivery of parts unacceptable in your business. That’s how I feel, too. |

A calm, respectful tone makes the best impression and increases the chances that you will achieve your goal.

**Avoid Correspondence Clichés**

Over the centuries, a group of words and phrases have come to be associated with business correspondence; one common example is *as per your request.* These phrases sound stilted and insincere. Don’t use them.

*For more about choosing the right words and phrases, see Ch. 10,* [*p. 228*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch10_02.xhtml#page228)*.*

[Table 14.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_04.xhtml?favre=brett#tab14_1) is a list of common clichés and their plain-language equivalents. [Figure 14.1](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_04.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_1) shows two versions of the same email: one written in clichés, the other in plain language.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TABLE** **14.1** Clichés and Plain-Language Equivalents | |
| **CLICHÉ** | **PLAIN-LANGUAGE EQUIVALENT** |
| attached please find | attached is |
| enclosed please find | enclosed is |
| pursuant to our agreement | as we agreed |
| referring to your (“Referring to your letter of March 19, the shipment of pianos …”) | “As you wrote in your letter of March 19, the …” (or subordinate the reference at the end of your sentence) |
| wish to advise (“We wish to advise that …”) | (The phrase doesn’t say anything. Just say what you want to say.) |
| the writer (“The writer believes that …”) | “I believe …” |

**FIGURE 14.1 Sample Emails with and Without Clichés**

**Communicate Honestly**

You should communicate honestly when you write any kind of document, and business correspondence is no exception. Communicating honestly shows respect for your reader and for yourself.

**ETHICS NOTE**

**WRITING HONEST BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE**

Why is dishonesty a big problem in correspondence? Perhaps because the topics discussed in business correspondence often relate to the writer’s professionalism and the quality of his or her work. For instance, when a salesperson working for a supplier writes to a customer explaining why a product did not arrive on time, he is tempted to make it seem as if his company — and he personally — were blameless. Similarly, when a manager has to announce a new policy that employees will dislike, she might be tempted to distance herself from the policy.

The professional approach is to tell the truth. If you mislead a reader in explaining why the shipment didn’t arrive on time, the reader will likely double-check the facts, conclude that you are trying to avoid responsibility, and end your business relationship. If you try to convince readers that you had nothing to do with a new, unpopular policy, some of them will know you are being misleading, and you will lose your most important credential: your credibility.

**Writing Letters**

Letters are still a basic means of communication between organizations, with millions written each day. To write effective letters, you need to understand the elements of a letter, its format, and the types of letters commonly sent in the business world.

**Elements of a Letter**

Most letters include a heading, inside address, salutation, body, complimentary close, and signature. Some letters also include one or more of the following: attention line, subject line, enclosure line, and copy line. [Figure 14.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_2) (on [page 368](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page368)) shows the elements of a letter.

**FIGURE 14.2 Elements of a Letter**

The first callout reading “Heading. Most organizations use letterhead stationery with their heading printed at the top. This preprinted information and the date the letter is sent make up the heading. If you are using blank paper rather than letterhead, your address (without your name) and the date form the heading. Whether you use letterhead or blank paper for the first page, do not number it. Use blank paper for the second and all subsequent pages.” points toward the heading of the letter reading “(Logo) DAVIS TREE CARE, 1300 Lancaster Avenue, Berwyn, PA 19092,[www.davisfortrees.com](http://www.davisfortrees.com/).”

The second callout reading “Inside Address. If you are writing to an individual who has a professional title — such as Professor, Dr., or, for public officials, Honorable — use it. If not, use Mr. or Ms. (unless you know the recipient prefers Mrs. or Miss). If the reader’s position fits on the same line as the name, add it after a comma; otherwise, drop it to the line below. Spell the name of the organization the way the organization itself does: for example, International Business Machines calls itself IBM. Include the complete mailing address: street number and name, city, state, and zip code.” points toward the address in the letter reading “Fairlawn Industrial Park, 1910 Ridgeway Drive, Berwyn, PA 19092.”

The third callout reading “Attention Line. Sometimes you will be unable to address a letter to a particular person because you don’t know (and cannot easily find out) the name of the individual who holds that position in the company.” points toward the attention line in the letter reading “Attention: Director of Maintenance.”

The fourth callout reading – Subject Line. The subject line is an optional element in a letter. Use either a project number (for example, “Subject: Project 31402”) or a brief phrase defining the subject (for example, “Subject: Price quotation for the R13 submersible pump”). – points toward the subject line of the letter reading “Subject: Fall pruning.”

The fifth callout reading “Salutation. If you decide not to use an attention line or a subject line, put the salutation, or greeting, two lines below the inside address. The traditional salutation is Dear, followed by the reader’s courtesy title and last name and then a colon (not a comma): Dear Ms. Hawkins:” points toward the salutation reading “Dear Director of Maintenance:.”

The first callout reading “Header for second page.” points toward the header of the second page reading “”Letter to Fairlawn Industrial Park, Page 2, May 11, 2017.”

The second callout reading “Body. In most cases, the body contains at least three paragraphs: an introductory paragraph, a concluding paragraph, and one or more body paragraphs.” points toward a paragraph in the letter reading “May we stop by to give you an analysis of your trees — absolutely without cost or obligation? Spending a few minutes with one of our diagnosticians could prove to be one of the wisest moves you’ve ever made. Just give us a call at 610-555-9187, and we’ll be happy to arrange an appointment at your convenience.”

The third callout reading “Complimentary Close. The conventional phrases Sincerely, Sincerely yours, Yours sincerely, Yours very truly, and Very truly yours are interchangeable.” points toward the a text reading “Sincerely yours,.”

The fourth callout reading “Signature. Type your full name on the fourth line below the complimentary close. Sign the letter, in ink, above the printed name. Most organizations prefer that you include your position under your printed name.” points toward the signature “(Signature) Jasmine Brown, President.”

The fifth callout reading “Enclosure Line. If the envelope contains documents other than the letter, include an enclosure line that indicates the number of enclosures. For more than one enclosure, add the number: “Enclosures (2).” In determining the number of enclosures, count only separate items, not pages. A three-page memo and a 10-page report constitute only two enclosures. Some writers like to identify the enclosures: Enclosure: 2016 Placement Bulletin, Enclosures (2): “This Year at Ammex,” 2016 Annual Report.” points toward the enclosure line reading “Enclosure: Davis Tree Care brochure.”

The sixth callout reading “Copy Line. If you want the primary recipient to know that other people are receiving a copy of the letter, include a copy line. Use the symbol c (for “copy”) followed by the names of the other recipients (listed either alphabetically or according to organizational rank). If appropriate, use the symbol cc (for “courtesy copy”) followed by the names of recipients who are less directly affected by the letter.” points toward the copy line reading “c: Darrell Davis, Vice President.”

Letters follow one of two typical formats: modified block or full block. [Figure 14.3](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_3) illustrates these two formats. When sending a letter as an email attachment, you can save it as a PDF file to preserve the formatting for the recipient.

**FIGURE 14.3 Typical Letter Formats**

This shows block construction for a letter, and provides page measurements.

* From the top edge of the page, one and a half inches is left blank, then the company logo is inserted, centered.
* Five to 9 lines are left blank, and then the date is inserted, indented about halfway across the page.
* One to 3 lines are left blank, then the name, title, company, and address of the recipient are entered, flush left on a margin of an inch and a quarter from the left edge of the page.
* One line is left blank, then the opening is set: "Dear Mr. Smith."
* The body of the letter follows. All paragraphs are separated by a blank line, and all flush left at one and a quarter inches from the left edge of the page.
* One line is left blank above the closing. Three lines are left blank for the signature, then the name and title of the sender are typed. This section is indented to about halfway across the page.
* One line is left blank above EM/jm, and one blank line above the word "Enclosure." There is an inch and a half left at the bottom of the page.

*The dimensions and spacing shown for the modified block format also apply to the full block format.*

**Common Types of Letters**

Organizations send out many different kinds of letters. This section focuses on four types of letters written frequently in the workplace: inquiry, response to an inquiry, claim, and adjustment.

*Two other types of letters are discussed in this book: the transmittal letter in Ch. 18,* [*p. 481*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch18_04.xhtml#page481)*, and the job-application letter in Ch. 15,* [*p. 414*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch15_05.xhtml#page414)*.*

**Inquiry Letter** [Figure 14.4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_4) shows an inquiry letter, in which you ask questions.

**FIGURE 14.4 Inquiry Letter**

The annotation reads “You write an inquiry letter to acquire information. Explain who you are and why you are writing. Make your questions precise and clear, and therefore easy to answer. Explain what you plan to do with the information and how you can compensate the reader for answering your questions. This writer’s task is to motivate the reader to provide some information. That information is not likely to lead to a sale because the writer is a graduate student doing research, not a potential customer.”

The first callout reading “Notice the flattery in the first sentence.” points toward the first line of the first paragraph reading “I am writing to you because of Orion’s reputation as a leader in the manufacture of adjustable x-ray tables.”

The second callout reading “The writer presents specific questions in a list format, making the questions easy to read and understand.” points toward the a paragraph in a letter reading “1. Can the Microspot 311 be used with lead oxide cassettes, or does it accept only lead-free cassettes?

2. Are standard generators compatible with the Microspot 311?

3. What would you say is the greatest advantage, for the operator, of using the Microspot 311? For the patient?”

The third callout reading “In the final paragraph, the writer politely indicates his schedule and requests the reader’s response. Note that he offers to send the reader a copy of his report. If the reader provides information, the writer should send a thank-you letter.” points toward the final paragraph reading “Because my project is due on January 15, I would greatly appreciate your assistance in answering these questions by January 10. Of course, I would be happy to send you a copy of my report when it is completed.”

**Response to an Inquiry** [Figure 14.5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_5) (on [page 372](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page372)) shows a response to the inquiry letter in [Figure 14.4](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_4).

**FIGURE 14.5 Response to an Inquiry**

The annotation reads “In responding to an inquiry letter, answer the questions if you can.

If you cannot, either because you don’t know the answers or because you cannot divulge proprietary information, explain the reasons and offer to assist with other requests.”

The first callout reading “The writer responds graciously.” points toward a line in the letter reading “I would be pleased to answer your questions about the Microspot 311. We think it is the best unit of its type on the market today.”

The second callout reading “The writer answers the three questions posed in the inquiry letter.” points toward the second paragraph in the letter reading “1. T he 311 can handle lead oxide or lead-free cassettes. 2. At the moment, the 311 is fully compatible only with our Duramatic generator.

However, special wiring kits are available to make the 311 compatible with our earlier generator models — the Olympus and the Saturn. We are currently working on other wiring kits. 3. For the operator, the 311 increases the effectiveness of the radiological procedure while at the same time cutting down the amount of film used. For the patient, it reduces the number of repeat exposures and therefore reduces the total dose.”

The third callout reading “The writer encloses other information to give the reader a fuller understanding of the product.” points toward the last paragraph of the letter reading “I am enclosing a copy of our brochure on the Microspot 311. If you would like additional information, please visit our Web site at www.orioninstruments.com/ products/microspot311. I would be happy to receive a copy of your analysis when it is complete. Good luck!”

The fourth callout reading “The writer uses the enclosure notation to signal that she is attaching an item to the letter.” points toward the text reading “Enclosure.”

The fifth callout reading “The writer indicates that she is forwarding a copy to her supervisor.” points toward the text reading “c: Robert Anderson, Executive Vice President.”

**Claim Letter** [Figure 14.6](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_6) (on [page 373](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page373)) is an example of a claim letter that the writer scanned and attached to an email to the reader. The writer’s decision to present his message in a letter rather than an email suggests that he wishes to convey the more formal tone associated with letters — and yet he wants the letter to arrive quickly.

**FIGURE 14.6 Claim Letter**

The annotation reads “A claim letter is a polite, reasonable complaint. If you purchase a defective or falsely advertised product or receive inadequate service, you write a claim letter. If the letter is convincing, your chances of receiving a satisfactory settlement are good because most organizations realize that unhappy customers are bad for business. In addition, claim letters help companies identify weaknesses in their products or services.”

The first callout reading “The writer indicates clearly in the first paragraph that he is writing about an unsatisfactory product. Note that he identifies the product by model name.” points toward the first paragraph of the letter reading “As steady customers of yours for over 15 years, we came to you first when we needed a quiet pile driver for a job near a residential area. On your recommendation, we bought your Vista 500 Quiet Driver, at $14,900. We have since found, much to our embarrassment, that it is not substantially quieter than a regular pile driver.”

The second callout reading “The writer presents the background, filling in specific details about the problem. Notice how he supports his earlier claim that the problem embarrassed him professionally.” points toward the second paragraph reading “We received the contract to do the bridge repair here in Centerville after promising to keep the noise to under 90 dB during the day. The Vista 500 (see enclosed copy of bill of sale for particulars) is rated at 85 dB, maximum. We began our work and, although one of our workers said the driver didn’t seem sufficiently quiet to him, assured the people living near the job site that we were well within the agreed sound limit. One of them, an acoustical engineer, marched out the next day and demonstrated that we were putting out 104 dB. Obviously, something is wrong with the pile driver.”

The third and the fourth callout reading “The writer states that he thinks the reader will agree that there was a problem with the equipment.” and “Then the writer suggests that the reader’s colleague did not respond satisfactorily.” points toward the third paragraph reading “I think you will agree that we have a problem. We were able to secure other equipment, at considerable inconvenience, to finish the job on schedule. When I telephoned your company that humiliating day, however, a Mr. Meredith informed me that I should have done an acoustical reading on the driver before I accepted delivery.”

The fifth callout reading “The writer proposes a solution: that the reader take appropriate action.

The writer’s clear, specific account of the problem and his professional tone increase his chances of receiving the solution he proposes.” points toward the last paragraph of the letter reading “I would like you to send out a technician — as soon as possible — either to repair the driver so that it performs according to specifications or to take it back for a full refund.”

**Adjustment Letter** [Figures 14.7](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_7) and [14.8](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_8) show “good news” and “bad news” adjustment letters. The first is a reply to the claim letter shown in [Figure 14.6](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_6) on page 373.

**FIGURE 14.7 “Good News” Adjustment Letter**

The annotation reads “An adjustment letter, a response to a claim letter, tells the customer how you plan to handle the situation. Your purpose is to show that your organization is fair and reasonable and that you value the customer’s business. If you can grant the request, the letter is easy to write. Express your regret, state the adjustment you are going to make, and end on a positive note by encouraging the customer to continue doing business with you.”

The first callout reading “The writer wisely expresses regret about the two problems cited in the claim letter.” points toward the first paragraph of the letter reading “I was very unhappy to read your letter of August 17 telling me about the failure of the Vista 500. I regretted most the treatment you received from one of my employees when you called us.”

The second callout reading “The writer describes the actions he has already taken and formally states that he will do whatever the reader wishes.” points toward the second paragraph of the letter reading “Harry Rivers, our best technician, has already been in touch with you to arrange a convenient time to come out to Centerville to talk with you about the driver. We will of course repair it, replace it, or refund the price. Just let us know your wish.”

The third callout reading “The writer expresses empathy in making the offer of adjustment. Doing so helps to create a bond: you and I are both professionals who rely on our good reputations.” points toward the third paragraph of the letter reading “I realize that I cannot undo the damage that was done on the day that a piece of our equipment failed. To make up for some of the extra trouble and expense you incurred, let me offer you a 10 percent discount on your next purchase or service order with us, up to a $1,000 total discount.”

The fourth callout reading “This polite conclusion appeals to the reader’s sense of fairness and good business practice.” points toward the fourth paragraph reading “You have indeed been a good customer for many years, and I would hate to have this unfortunate incident spoil that relationship. Won’t you give us another chance? Just bring in this letter when you visit us next, and we’ll give you that 10 percent discount.”

**FIGURE 14.8 “Bad News” Adjustment Letter**

**Writing Memos**

Like letters, memos have a characteristic format, which consists of the elements shown in [Figure 14.9](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_9).

**FIGURE 14.9 Identifying Information in a Memo**

*Some organizations prefer the full names of the writer and reader; others want only the first initials and last names. Some prefer job titles; others do not. If your organization does not object, include your job title and your reader’s. The memo will then be informative for anyone who refers to it after either of you has moved on to a new position, as well as for others in the organization who do not know you.*

Three examples of memo are shown and annotated:

1.

AMRO MEMO

To: B. Pabst

From: J. Alonso J. A.

Subject: MIXER RECOMMENDATION FOR PHILLIPS

Date: 12 June 2016 (Note: Write out the month instead of using the all-numeral format of 6 slash 12 slash 16; multicultural readers might use a different notation for dates and could be confused.)

2.

INTEROFFICE

To: C. Cleveland

Copied: B. Aaron, K. Lau, J. Manuputra, W. Williams (Note: List the names of persons receiving copies of the memo, either alphabetically or in descending order of organizational rank.)

From: H. Rainbow, H.R.

Subject: Shipment Date of Blueprints to Collier

Date: 2 October 2016

3.

NORTHERN PETROLEUM COMPANY

INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE

Date: January 3, 2016

To: William Weeks, Director of Operations

From: Helen Cho, Chemical Engineering Department, H. C. (Note: Most writers put their initials or signature next to the typed name or at the end of the memo to show that they have reviewed the memo and accept responsibility for it.

Subject: Trip Report, Conference on Improved Procedures for Chemical Analysis Laboratory

As with letters, you can attach memos to emails and deliver them electronically. To preserve the memo format for the email recipient, save the memo as a PDF before sending.

If you prefer to distribute hard copies, print the second and all subsequent pages of a memo on plain paper rather than on letterhead. Include three items in the upper right-hand or left-hand corner of each subsequent page: the name of the recipient, the date of the memo, and the page number. See the header in [Figure 14.2](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#fig14_2) on page 369.

[Figure 14.10](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_10), a sample memo, is a trip report, a record of a business trip written after the employee returned to the office. Readers are less interested in an hour-by-hour narrative of what happened than in a carefully structured discussion of what was important. Although writer and reader appear to be relatively equal in rank, the writer goes to the trouble of organizing the memo to make it easy to read and refer to later.

**FIGURE 14.10 Sample Memo**

The first callout reading “The subject line is specific: the reader can tell at a glance that the memo reports on a trip to Computer Dynamics, Inc. If the subject line read only “Computer Dynamics, Inc.,” the reader would not know what the writer was going to discuss about that company.” points toward the subject line reading “Subject: T rip Report — Computer Dynamics, Inc.”

The second callout reading “The memo begins with a clear statement of purpose, as discussed in Ch. 5, p. 000.” points toward the first line of the memo reading “The purpose of this memo is to present my impressions of the Computer Dynamics technical seminar of September 19. The goal of the seminar was to introduce their new PQ-500 line of high-capacity storage drives.”

The third callout reading “Note that the writer has provided a summary, even though the memo is less than a page. The summary gives the writer an opportunity to convey his main request: he would like to meet with the reader.” points toward the summary of the letter reading “Summary: In general, I was impressed with the technical capabilities and interface of the drives. Of the two models in the 500 series, I think we ought to consider the external drives, not the internal ones. I’d like to talk to you about this issue when you have a chance.”

The fourth callout reading “The main section of the memo is the discussion, which conveys the detailed version of the writer’s message. Often the discussion begins with the background: the facts that readers will need to know to understand the memo. In this case, the background consists of a two-paragraph discussion of the two models in the company’s 500 series. Presumably, the reader already knows why the writer went on the trip.” points toward the discussion paragraph reading “Discussion of Product Options: Computer Dynamics offers two models in its 500 series: an internal drive and an external drive. Both models have the same capacity (1T of storage), and they both work the same way: they extend the storage capacity of a server by integrating an optical disk library into the file system. The concept is that they move files between the server’s faster, but limited-capacity, storage devices (hard disks) and its slower, high-capacity storage devices (magnetooptical disks). This process, which they call data migration and demigration, is transparent to the user. For the system administrator, integrating either of the models would require no more than one hour. The external model would be truly portable; the user would not need to install any drivers, as long as his or her device is docked on our network. The system administrator would push the necessary drivers onto all the networked devices without the user having to do anything.”

The fifth callout reading “Note that the writer ends this discussion with a conclusion, or statement of the meaning of the facts. In this case, the writer’s conclusion is that the company should consider only the external drive.” points toward the conclusion paragraph reading “Although the internal drive is convenient — it is already configured for the computer — I think we should consider only the external drive. Because so many of our employees do teleconferencing, the advantage of portability outweighs the disadvantage of inconvenience. The tech rep from Computer Dynamics walked me through the process of configuring both models. A second advantage of the external drive is that it can be salvaged easily when we take a computer out of service.”

The sixth callout reading “A recommendation is the writer’s statement of what he would like the reader to do next. In this case, the writer would like to sit down with the reader to discuss how to proceed.” points toward the recommendation paragraph reading “Recommendation: I’d like to talk to you, when you get a chance, about negotiating with Computer Dynamics for a quantity discount. I think we should ask McKinley and Rossiter to participate in the discussion. Give me a call (x3442) and we’ll talk.”

**GUIDELINES: Organizing a Memo**

When you write a memo, organize it so that it is easy to follow. Consider these five organizational elements.

* **A specific subject line.** “Breast Cancer Walk” is too general. “Breast Cancer Walk Rescheduled to May 14” is better.
* **A clear statement of purpose.** As discussed in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch05_09.xhtml#page109) ([p. 109](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch05_09.xhtml#page109)), the purpose statement is built around a verb that clearly states what you want the readers to know, believe, or do.
* **A brief summary.** Even if a memo fits on one page, consider including a summary. For readers who want to read the whole memo, the summary is an advance organizer; for readers in a hurry, reading the summary substitutes for reading the whole memo.
* **Informative headings.** Headings make the memo easier to read by enabling readers to skip sections they don’t need and by helping them understand what each section is about. In addition, headings make the memo easier to write because they prompt the writer to provide the kind of information readers need.
* **A prominent recommendation.** Many memos end with one or more recommendations. Sometimes these recommendations take the form of action steps: bulleted or numbered lists of what the writer will do or what the writer would like others to do. Here is an example:

**Action Items:**

I would appreciate it if you would work on the following tasks and have your results ready for the meeting on Monday, June 9.

* Henderson: recalculate the flow rate.
* Smith: set up meeting with the regional EPA representative for some time during the week of May 13.
* Falvey: ask Armitra in Houston for his advice.

**Writing Emails**

Before you write an email in the workplace, find out your organization’s email policies. Most companies have written policies that discuss circumstances under which you may and may not use email, principles you should use in writing emails, and the monitoring of employee email.

**TECH TIP**

Title reads, ***Why*** To Use Email for Business Correspondence

Paragraph reads, Email allows for quick, direct correspondence with one or more recipients. It also provides a time- and date-stamped record of your communication, and users can create a “thread” or “string” to keep track of questions, comments, and responses. Although email itself is somewhat informal, it is a convenient time- and cost-saving option, especially for correspondence being sent internationally, and formal documents can easily be attached.

Mail Window. Title bar, Action buttons, and standard menu at top. Two tabs are shown: currently is on the Mail tab. An email window is visible.

From: Melissa Cartright

To: DocTeam (Note: You can create a “group” for people whom you email frequently.)

CC: Bob Halloran (Note: “CC” stands for courtesy copy. All of your recipients will know that you are sending a copy to this person or group.)

BC: Cindy Belloc (Note: “BC” or “Bcc” stands for blind copy or blind courtesy copy. None of your readers will know that you are sending a copy to this person or group.

Subject: Input re Policy on Including Print Doc (Note: Like a memo, an email should have a specific subject line.)

Julie, Bob, and Rajiv hyphen (Note: By naming her readers at the start, the writer is showing respect for them.)

(Note: The first paragraph of the email clarifies the writer’s purpose.) As I mentioned at our meeting last week, I want to get your response to an idea about changing the way we distribute print docs with our systems. I’ll be meeting with Ann in Marketing next week and I want to be sure I can represent our views effectively.

(Note: The second paragraph describes the idea. You want to be sure your readers understand the context.) The idea is to stop including the Getting Started brochure and the User’s Guide in the box. Instead we’ll include a post card that customers can use to request these two docs, at no cost. Of course, the two docs will remain up on the site as PDFs. And we’ll still include the setup instructions on the poster. (Notice that paragraphs are relatively brief. The writer skips a line between paragraphs.)

A recent thread on TECHWR-L on this technique suggests that it can reduce the number of docs that we need to print by 70 to 85%. That’s good, of course, in terms of print runs, as well as shipping costs. Before I run the numbers on cost savings, however, I want to get a sense of what you think about the idea from the perspective of the customer. Do you think that not including the docs will make a bad impression? Will it increase problems when they set up the printers?

We won’t have final say on whether to adopt this idea, I’m afraid, but I want to make sure our voices are heard. After all, we know more about the customer experience than anyone else at the company.

Please respond by email to all of us by Friday at noon. Thanks very much. (Note: The writer explains what she would like her readers to do, and she states a deadline.)

Regards, (Note: The writer ends politely.)

Melissa

Melissa Cartright, Senior Documentation Specialist

Print Pro Systems

voice: 216.555.3407

fax: 216.555.3400

(Note: The writer has created a signature, which includes her contact information. This signature is attached automatically to her emails.)

**GUIDELINES: Following Netiquette**

When you write email in the workplace, adhere to the following netiquette guidelines. *Netiquette* refers to etiquette on a network.

* **Stick to business.** Don’t send jokes or other nonbusiness messages.
* **Use the appropriate level of formality.** As discussed on [page 364](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_03.xhtml#page364), avoid informal writing.
* **Write correctly.** As discussed on [page 365](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_04.xhtml#page365), remember to revise, edit, and proofread your emails before sending them.
* **Don’t flame.** To *flame* is to scorch a reader with scathing criticism, usually in response to something that person wrote in a previous message. When you are angry, keep your hands away from the keyboard.
* **Make your message easy on the eyes.** Use uppercase and lowercase letters, and skip lines between paragraphs. Use uppercase letters or boldface (sparingly) for emphasis.
* **Don’t forward a message to an online discussion forum without the writer’s permission.** Doing so is unethical and illegal; the email is the intellectual property of the writer or (if it was written as part of the writer’s work responsibilities) the writer’s company.
* **Don’t send a message unless you have something to say.** If you can add something new, do so, but don’t send a message just to be part of the conversation.

[Figure 14.11a](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_11a) shows an email that violates netiquette guidelines. The writer is a technical professional working for a microchip manufacturer. [Figure 14.11b](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_11a) shows a revised version of this email message.

**FIGURE 14.11 Netiquette**

The first callout reading “The writer does not clearly state his purpose in the subject line and the first paragraph.” points toward the first two lines of the email reading “To: Supers and Leads Subject:”

The second callout reading “Using all uppercase letters gives the impression that the writer is yelling at his readers.” points toward the first paragraph of the email reading “LATELY, WE HAVE BEEN MISSING LASER REPAIR FILES FOR OUR 16MEG WAFERS. AFTER BRIEF INVESTIGATION, I HAVE FOUND THE MAIN REASON FOR THE MISSING DATA.”

The third callout reading “The writer has not proofread.” points toward the second and fourth paragraph of the email reading “OCCASIONALLY, SOME OF YOU HAVE WRONGLY PROBED THE WAFERS UNDER THE CORRELATE STEP AND THE DATA IS THEN COPIED INTO THE NONPROD STEP USING THE QTR PROGRAM. THIS IS REALLY STUPID. WHEN DATE IS COPIED THIS WAY THE REPAIR DATA IS NOT COPIED. IT REMAINS UNDER THE CORRELATE STEP” and “EDITING THE WAFER DATA FILE SHOULD BE USED ONLY AS A LAST RESORT, IF THIS BECOMES A COMMON PROBLEM, WE COULD HAVE MORE PROBLEMS WITH INVALID DATA THAT THERE ARE NOW.”

The fourth callout reading “The writer's tone is hostile.” points toward the word “Stupid” in the second paragraph of the email.

The fifth callout reading “With long lines and no spaces between paragraphs, this email is difficult to read.” points toward the last line of the email reading “SUPERS AND LEADS: PLEASE PASS THIS INFORMATION ALONG TO THOSE WHO NEED TO KNOW.”

The annotation reads “The writer has edited and proofread the email.”

The first callout reading “The subject line and first paragraph clearly state the writer’s purpose.” points toward the first two lines of the email reading “To: Supers and Leads Subject: Fix for Missing Laser Repair Files for 16MB Wafers. Supers and Leads: Lately, we have been missing laser repair files for our 16MB wafers. In this email I want to briefly describe the problem and recommend a method for solving it.”

The second callout reading “Double-spacing between paragraphs and using short lines make the email easier to read.” points toward the double space between the first and second paragraph of the email.

The third callout reading “The writer concludes politely.” points toward the last line of the email reading “Thanks. Please get in touch with me if you have any questions.”

**DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ACTIVITY**

**Following Netiquette in an Email Message**

This message was written in response to a question emailed to several colleagues by a technical communicator seeking advice on how to write meeting minutes effectively. A response to an email message should adhere to the principles of effective emails and proper netiquette. The questions below ask you to think about these principles (explained on [pp. 378](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page378)–81).

1. How effectively has the writer stated her purpose?
2. How effectively has the writer projected a “you attitude” (explained on [p. 365](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_04.xhtml#page365))?
3. How effectively has the writer made her message easy to read?

**Writing Microblogs**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, microblog posts are different from letters, memos, and email in that they are often extremely brief and quite informal in tone. However, the fact that microblog posts are fast and informal does not mean that anything goes. When you write microblog posts, you are creating communication that will be archived and that will reflect on you and your organization. In addition, anything you write is subject to the same laws and regulations that pertain to all other kinds of documents. Many of the guidelines for following netiquette (see [p. 380](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)) apply to microblog posts as well as email. Take care, especially, not to flame. Become familiar with your microblog’s privacy settings, and be aware of which groups of readers may view and share your posts.

The best way to understand your responsibilities when you write a microblog post at work is to study your organization’s guidelines. Sometimes, these guidelines are part of the organization’s guidelines for all business practices or all digital communication. Sometimes, they are treated separately. [Figure 14.12](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_08.xhtml?favre=brett#fig14_12) shows one organization’s microblogging guidelines.

**FIGURE 14.12 Guidelines for Microblogging**

The flowchart is divided into four sections: Discover, Evaluate, Respond, and Response Considerations.

The flowchart begins with the section “Discover” with text reading “Web Posting – Has someone discovered a post about the organization? Is it positive or balanced?” Another text beside reads "Produced by Air Force Public Affairs Agency. This product is public domain and may be used freely.”

If no to Web Posting, it moves to the next section “Evaluate” – “Trolls” and “Rager” with text reading “Trolls – Is this a site dedicated to bashing and degrading others?” and “Rager – Is the posting a rant, rage, joke or satirical in nature?” If yes, the text reads “Monitor Only – Avoid responding to specific posts, monitor site for relevant information and comments. Notify HQ.” If no to Rager, the text reads “Misguided – Are there erroneous facts in the posting?” If yes, the text reads “Fix the Facts – Do you wish to respond with factual information directly on the comment board?” If no to “Misguided, the text reads “Unhappy Customer -Is the posting a result of a negative experience?” If yes, the text reads “Restoration – Do you wish to rectify the situation and act upon a reasonable solution?”

If yes to Web Posting, the flow moves to the second section “Evaluate” with text reading “Concurrence – A factual and well-cited response, which may agree or disagree with the post, yet is not factually erroneous, a rant or rage, bashing or negative in nature. You can concur with the post, let stand or provide a positive review. Do you want to respond?” If no to Concurrence, it moves to “Let Stand -Let the post stand— no response.” If yes to Concurrence, it moves to the next section “Response” with text reading “Share Success – Do you wish to proactively share your story and your mission?” If no to “Unhappy Customer,” it moves to the next section “Response” with text reading “Final Evaluation – Write response for current circumstances only. Will you respond?” If yes to “Share Success, Final Evaluation, and Restoration,” it moves to the next section “Response Consideration” with text reading “Transparency – Disclose your Air Force connection.” “Sourcing – Cite your sources by including hyperlinks, images, video or other references.” “Timeliness – Take time to create good responses. Don’t rush.” “Tone – Respond in a tone that reflects highly on the rich heritage of the Air Force.” “Influence – Focus on the most used sites related to the Air Force.”

**GUIDELINES: Representing Your Organization on a Microblog**

If you use a microblog at work to communicate with people outside your own organization, such as vendors and customers, you want to use it in such a way that people are encouraged to like, respect, and trust you. These ten suggestions can help.

* **Decide on your audience and your purpose.** Are you connecting with clients, providing customer service, helping people understand your company’s goals and vision? You might want to have different accounts if you have several different audiences and purposes.
* **Learn the technology.** Know how to use hashtags, how to mention other users in your tweets, how to reply publicly and privately, how to integrate images and videos, and how to cross-post to your other social media accounts should you need to.
* **Learn the culture of the community.** Listen and learn before you post. Most communities have a distinct culture, which influences how and when people post, link, and reply. For instance, in some communities, people stick close to the technical topic; in others, they roam more freely and include personal comments.
* **Share, don’t sell.** Post about incidents and developments that reinforce your organization’s core principles, such as environmental awareness or making technology available around the world. Talk about leadership, teamwork, and cooperation. Don’t try to sell products.
* **Help educate readers and solve their problems.** Regardless of whether you’re responding to individual questions and complaints or helping people understand your company’s culture or goals, focus on helping people learn and solve problems.
* **Sound like a person.** Use an informal tone. Readers are especially pleased when high-ranking employees show their human side, such as when the Zappos CEO posted, “Dropped my laptop on floor this morning. I usually drop my phone, so good to know I’m moving on to bigger and better things” ([Hall, 2009](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_refs.xhtml#biblio78)).
* **Apologize when you make a mistake.** At the start of a basketball game against their rivals the Dallas Mavericks, the Houston Rockets sent out a tweet with a gun emoji pointed at a horse. Within two hours, after receiving heavy criticism, the Rockets apologized and removed the tweet ([Meyer, 2016](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_refs.xhtml#biblio79)).
* **Link generously.** When you want to talk about something you’ve learned online, don’t paraphrase. Rather, link back to the original source. Use a URL shortener such as Bitly or TinyURL so that the link won’t take up too many of your 140 characters.
* **Get your facts right.** Like anything online, your post is permanent. Double-check your facts before you post. Otherwise, you could embarrass yourself and erode people’s trust in your professionalism.
* **Edit and proofread before you post.** You should be informal, but you shouldn’t be sloppy. It sends the wrong message.

**Writing Correspondence to Multicultural Readers**

*For more about cultural variables, see Ch. 5,* [*p. 97*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch05_06.xhtml#page97)*.*

The four types of business correspondence discussed in this chapter are used in countries around the world. The ways they are used, however, can differ significantly from the ways they are used in the United States. These differences fall into three categories:

* **Cultural practices.** As discussed in [Chapter 5](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch05.xhtml), cultures differ in a number of ways, such as whether they focus on individuals or groups, the distance between power ranks, and attitudes toward uncertainty. Typically, a culture’s attitudes are reflected in its business communication. For example, in Japan, which has a high power distance — that is, people in top positions are treated with great respect by their subordinates — a reader might be addressed as “Most Esteemed Mr. Director.” Some cultural practices, however, are not intuitively obvious even if you understand the culture. For example, in Japanese business culture, it is considered rude to reply to an email by using the reply function in the email software; it is polite to begin a new email ([Sasaki, 2010](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_refs.xhtml#biblio80)).
* **Language use and tone.** In the United States, writers tend to use contractions, the first names of their readers, and other instances of informal language. In many other countries, this informality is potentially offensive. Also potentially offensive is U.S. directness. A writer from the United States might write, for example, that “14 percent of the products we received from you failed to meet the specifications.” A Korean would more likely write, “We were pleased to note that 86 percent of the products we received met the specifications.” The writer either would not refer to the other 14 percent (assuming that the reader would get the point and replace the defective products quickly) or would write, “We would appreciate replacement of the remaining products.” Many other aspects of business correspondence differ from culture to culture, such as preferred length, specificity, and the use of seasonal references in the correspondence.
* **Application choice and use.** In cultures in which documents tend to be formal, letters might be preferred to memos, or face-to-face meetings to phone calls or email. In Asia, for instance, a person is more likely to walk down the hall to deliver a brief message in person because doing so shows more respect. In addition, the formal characteristics of letters, memos, and emails are different in different cultures. The French, for instance, use indented paragraphs in their letters, whereas in the United States, paragraphs are typically left-justified. The ordering of the information in the inside address and complimentary close of letters varies widely. In many countries, emails are structured like memos, with the “to,” “from,” “subject,” and “date” information added at the top, even though this information is already present in the routing information.

Try to study business correspondence written by people from the culture you will be addressing. When possible, have important documents reviewed by a person from that culture before you send them.

**WRITER’S CHECKLIST**

**Letter Format**

* Is the first page printed on letterhead stationery? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* Is the date included? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* Is the inside address complete and correct? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* Is the appropriate courtesy title used? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* If appropriate, is an attention line included? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* If appropriate, is a subject line included? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* Is the salutation appropriate? *(*[*p. 368*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#ch14_ldl_13)*)*
* Is the complimentary close typed with only the first word capitalized? *(*[*p. 369*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page369)*)*
* Is the signature legible, and is the writer’s name typed beneath the signature? ([*p. 369*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page369)*)*
* If appropriate, is an enclosure line included? *(*[*p. 369*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page369)*)*
* If appropriate, is a copy and/or courtesy-copy line included? *(*[*p. 369*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page369)*)*
* Is the letter typed in one of the standard formats? *(*[*p. 370*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page370)*)*
* If the letter is to be sent by email, did you consider saving it as a PDF? ([*p. 370*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page370))

**Types of Letters**

Does the inquiry letter

* explain why you chose the reader to receive the inquiry? *(*[*p. 371*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page371)*)*
* explain why you are requesting the information and how you will use it? *(*[*p. 371*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page371)*)*
* specify the date when you need the information? *(*[*p. 371*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page371)*)*
* list the questions clearly? *(*[*p. 371*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page371)*)*
* offer, if appropriate, the product of your research? *(*[*p. 371*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page371)*)*

Does the response to an inquiry letter

* answer the reader’s questions? *(*[*p. 372*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F05)*)*
* explain why, if any of the reader’s questions cannot be answered? *(*[*p. 372*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F05)*)*

Does the claim letter

* identify specifically the unsatisfactory product or service? *(*[*p. 373*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F07)*)*
* explain the problem(s) clearly? *(*[*p. 373*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F07)*)*
* propose an adjustment? *(*[*p. 373*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F07)*)*
* conclude courteously? *(*[*p. 373*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F07)*)*

Does the “good news” adjustment letter

* express your regret? *(*[*p. 374*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page374)*)*
* explain the adjustment you will make? *(*[*p. 374*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page374)*)*
* conclude on a positive note? *(*[*p. 374*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page374)*)*

Does the “bad news” adjustment letter

* meet the reader on neutral ground, expressing regret but not apologizing? *(*[*p. 375*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page375)*)*
* explain why the company is not at fault? *(*[*p. 375*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page375)*)*
* clearly imply that the reader’s request is denied? *(*[*p. 375*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page375)*)*
* attempt to create goodwill? *(*[*p. 375*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_05.xhtml#page375)*)*

**Memos**

* Does the identifying information adhere to your organization’s standards? *(*[*p. 376*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page376)*)*
* If the memo is to be sent by email, did you consider saving it as a PDF? *(*[*p. 376*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page376)*)*
* Did you include a specific subject line? *(*[*p. 377*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page377)*)*
* Did you clearly state your purpose at the start of the memo? *(*[*p. 377*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F10)*)*
* If appropriate, did you summarize your message? *(*[*p. 377*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F10)*)*
* Did you provide appropriate background for the discussion? *(*[*p. 377*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#MAR_31905_14_F10)*)*
* Did you organize the discussion clearly? *(*[*p. 378*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page378)*)*
* Did you include informative headings to help your readers? *(*[*p. 378*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page378)*)*
* Did you highlight items requiring action? *(*[*p. 378*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_06.xhtml#page378)*)*

**Email**

* Did you refrain from sending jokes or other nonbusiness messages? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* If most of your communication is included in an attachment, did you keep your email very brief? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* Did you use the appropriate level of formality? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* Did you write correctly? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* Did you avoid flaming? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* Did you write a specific, accurate subject line? *(*[*p. 381*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_08.xhtml#page381)*)*
* Did you use uppercase and lowercase letters? *(*[*p. 381*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_08.xhtml#page381)*)*
* Did you skip lines between paragraphs? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*
* Did you check with the writer before forwarding his or her message? *(*[*p. 380*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_07.xhtml#page380)*)*

**Microblogs**

* Did you study your organization’s policy on which microblog sites you may use and how you should use them? *(*[*p. 382*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_08.xhtml#page382)*)*
* Did you exercise care in representing your organization on a microblog? *(*[*p. 384*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_08.xhtml#page384)*)*

**Multicultural Readers**

* Did you consider varying cultural practices? ([*p. 385*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_09.xhtml#page385))
* Were you careful with language use and tone? ([*p. 385*](https://jigsaw.vitalsource.com/books/9781319107888/epub/OEBPS/xhtml/mar_9781319058616_ch14_09.xhtml#page385))
* Did you take into account your readers’ preferences in application choice and use? (