

# Intelligent Business

Style guide

Upper Intermediate  
Business English



PEARSON  
Longman

The  
Economist



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The  
Economist

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## Introduction

Learning to write well in a foreign language is one of the most difficult challenges facing the language learner. Finding the right words, using an appropriate style, respecting conventional formats, and correct spelling are just a few of the areas to consider.

Effective writing plays an increasingly important role in today's business world. A clear and concise style ensures that essential information is both understood and acted upon.

The *Intelligent Business Style Guide* is designed to help business students and practising professionals to become more familiar with the styles and techniques of business writing. It contains samples of the most common types of business document, such as letters, emails, memos, faxes, minutes and reports, all with full explanations of usage, language style and layout.

There is also advice on other areas, including abbreviations and text messages, punctuation and how to avoid common mistakes.

We hope that you find the *Style Guide* useful and that it helps you to become more proficient in your business writing.

## General rules

### Before you write

Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Who** am I writing to? This will help you to determine the tone and degree of formality. When writing to superiors or customers, the tone is more formal than with colleagues. However, business communication should never be too informal and should always be polite and courteous.
- **Why** am I writing? It is a good idea to note down your main message / messages before starting. This will help you to stay focused and also to determine which means of communication is most suitable for your purpose, e.g. fax, letter, email.
- **What** does my correspondent know? Never assume the other person has all the background information necessary to understand your message. Think about what details you need to put into your communication to help them understand and act upon it.

### When you write

Whether you are writing a full, formal report or a memo to your colleagues, it is generally agreed that the following points should be respected:

- Be brief, clear and concise. Use simple words and phrases and keep sentences short. In other words, use 'plain English'.  
Don't write:  
*If there are any points on which you require explanation or further particulars, we shall be glad to furnish such additional details as may be required by telephone.*  
Write:  
*If you have any questions, please ring.*

- Don't be over-technical or use slang or jargon. Your reader may not understand.

Don't write:

*I'm on a roll here.*

Write:

*The trip has been successful so far.*

- Don't overuse people's first names. It is better to use them only in the opening.

Don't write:

*Dear John, ... so you see, John, ... I'm sure you understand, John, ... etc.*

### Before you send

- Always read your business communication before you send it. It is a good idea to read it aloud to see if it is communicative and easy to read.
- Ask yourself: Could the person reading this understand and act upon it from a single reading?
- Check for spelling and grammar mistakes. Do not rely on spellcheck software, as it will not correct mistakes like *s* in *advise* or *practise* when used as nouns – which use *c*.

## Organising your writing

### From plan to paragraph

You should start by thinking about the message that you want to communicate. If you have a clear idea of this, it will help to make your writing coherent.

Make notes of all of your ideas and then organise these into topic areas. Each topic area should consist of one of your main ideas and may also include a number of secondary points that you can develop.

Draw up a plan for each topic area and start to think of the order in which you want to present them. The order will depend on how the topic areas relate to each other and on how you wish to develop your message.

Each topic area and any related secondary points will usually form a paragraph. Moving on to a new paragraph shows your readers that you are focusing on a new topic area.

The paragraphs themselves can be organised in different ways: you may want to present the information chronologically or you may prefer to present points in order of importance. Alternatively, you may wish to balance negative and positive points or compare and contrast different ideas.

### First draft

If you have prepared your plans well, the writing process should be relatively straightforward. You can now give your full attention to the language that you are going to use. Prepare a first draft of the complete document and then read through it to see which sections need to be improved or rewritten.

### Final draft

Before you present the final draft of your text, you should read it through several times, eliminating repetitions and changing

ambiguous phrasing. You can also make long sentences shorter or connect short sentences together. When you are happy with the wording of your final document, you should do a final check for any spelling and punctuation mistakes that you may have overlooked.

Compare the first and final drafts opposite. Notice how in the final draft, sentences and wordings have been changed and linking expressions and paragraphs have been used.

### Useful phrases and notations

#### Linking expressions

Using the right linking expressions will allow you to connect your sentences and your paragraphs together smoothly and will show your reader how your message fits together.

Use linking expressions to

- show contrast:  
*However ...                      On the other hand ...*  
*... whereas ...                      ... while ...*  
*... although ...*
- give additional information:  
*Moreover ...                      In addition ...*  
*Furthermore ...*
- summarise:  
*In conclusion ...                      To conclude ...*  
*To sum up ...*
- sequence:  
*First ...                      Next ...*  
*Lastly ... / Finally ...*
- show cause and effect:  
*Consequently ...                      As a result ...*  
*Therefore ...                      ... thus ...*  
*... because of ...                      ... due to ...*
- give examples:  
*... for example ...                      ... for instance ...*
- make references:  
*the former ...                      the latter ...*  
*... the one / the ones ...*

### Notes

Background: Intro to Environmental Action Plan – reasons for implementation (customers / investors need more info, pressure from regulators & governments)

Methods: Audit of products/processes – Recommendations – Implementation

Performance: Products complete, processes incomplete

### First draft

Our Environmental Action Plan was launched two years ago to respond to changes in our industry. More and more customers wanted information about our products' environmental impact. The investment community needed more information and tighter regulation and controls (eco labels) were being introduced in markets. The plan was in three phases: the evaluation of our products and processes, recommendations for changes and implementation. These are now complete for products, where we have improved sustainability by eliminating some production materials. For processes, our goal to introduce guidelines and procedures for the group's activities worldwide has not yet been achieved. But we have introduced standard supplier and logistics management processes and made substantial savings. We are proud of what we have achieved and hope to complete the plan next year. This will enhance our reputation as a business which can meet environmental challenges.

### Final draft

Only two years ago we took the important decision to launch our Environmental Action Plan in order to respond to important changes within our industry. Both our customers and the investment community were requesting more information about the environmental impact of our products. Furthermore, governments and regulators in our different markets were imposing 'eco labels' – new standards of environmental conformity.

The plan was in three distinct phases: first, an audit of our products and processes, then recommendations for change and finally implementation in our business operations. On the product side, this is now complete and we have reduced the number of production materials, thus making our products more sustainable. However, for business processes, we have not yet completed the introduction of group-wide policies although we have successfully implemented standard supplier and logistics management processes and made substantial savings.

We are extremely proud of what we have achieved in such a short time and we plan to continue implementation of our Environmental Action Plan, thereby enhancing our reputation as a business that is prepared to meet the environmental challenges of the future.

Using the correct punctuation is an essential part of making your writing clear to your readers. Very often when sentences or texts are difficult to read or do not seem to make sense, it is because they contain errors in punctuation. The following punctuation marks are used in English:

- **full stop** .

The full stop, or *period* (US Eng), marks the end of a sentence:

*The firms expect Brussels to approve the deal within three weeks.*

Full stops are also used after some abbreviations and can be used after numbers which appear in lists:

i.e. 1. 2.

- **comma** ,

Commas help the reader to pause at the right point in a sentence and to avoid confusing the meaning within a sentence:

*After two months of discussions, the fate of the company has been decided.*

Commas are also used when a clause is inserted in the middle of a sentence:

*Lagardère, the media-to-missiles group, will not become the biggest publisher.*

Commas are particularly important when part of a sentence or word group could be interpreted in different ways:

*Most important aid should be lavished on the countries that can use it.*

*Most important, aid should be lavished on the countries that can use it.*

*The investors said the fund managers were fools.*

*The investors, said the fund managers, were fools.*

- **question mark** ?

Question marks are only used at the end of direct questions. They are not used in indirect questions:

*How long will Mr Marchionne be able to survive in his present position?*

*Many analysts are wondering how the new strategy will work.*

- **exclamation mark** !

Exclamation marks give extra impact to a sentence and show surprise or shock:

*Take it or leave it!*

*No one was expecting that!*

- **colon** :

Colons indicate that what follows is an illustration or example of what has been referred to before:

*The company is in a strong position financially: its shares are now trading at 4.5 times their original price.*

Colons can also be used to introduce lists:

*The issues that will be discussed are the following:*

- Education
- Trade
- Governance

- **semi-colon** ;

Semi-colons mark a pause that is longer than a comma and shorter than a full stop:

*Getting accurate results with this method is tricky; two different samples will not produce the same result.*

- **apostrophe** ’

An apostrophe shows that something either belongs to a particular person or is closely associated with either a person, group of people or with another thing or things:

*Messier's biggest mistake was to have underestimated shareholder discontent.*

The apostrophe comes before the possessive *s* with a singular noun, even when the noun itself ends with an *s*:

*London's traffic problems*  
*my boss's office*

The apostrophe comes after the final letter of a plural noun ending with an *s*:

*the employees' complaints*

But with irregular plural nouns it is followed by the *s*:

*women's preferences*

An apostrophe is also used to show that a letter (or letters) is missing:

*We'll agree to your offer if you don't make any further demands.*

- **inverted commas** ‘ ’ OR “ ”

Inverted commas, or *quotation marks*, are used when citing the exact words that somebody used:

*'Just 50m out of 750m Africans have a mobile phone. There is much more room for growth,' says Marten Pieters of Celtel.*

- **brackets** ( ) OR [ ]

Brackets, or *parentheses* (US Eng), are used to present additional information:

*Lagardère wants to stop making missiles (his firm owns 15% of the European Aerospace Defence and Space group) and instead concentrate on the company's media interests.*

- **dash** —

Dashes introduce explanations and comments that are connected to what precedes and can, like brackets, show interruptions to the flow of a sentence:

*The company shouldn't have agreed to the merger – it wasn't in its best interests. Last weekend in Sydney only half of the properties for auction – the most common method of sale in Australia – were actually sold.*

- **hyphen** -

Hyphens connect two words when they are used as compounds:

*state-owned*  
*Asia-Pacific region*  
*debt-equity ratio*

## Numbers

Numbers, figures and quantities are at the heart of all business operations, and much of the work and time of managers is devoted to calculating, measuring, analysing and presenting numerical data. Profit and performance may be the key indicators of how a business is performing but in the day-to-day running of a business figures have to be entered, references established and records and statistics kept. This continuous flow of numerical information is the lifeblood of the organisation. Knowing how to refer to numbers is therefore an essential skill for the manager. The principal ways of doing this are listed below.

### General

Figures are usually written as words when they refer to small quantities. However, for larger amounts they are presented in number form:

*Fiat has had five chief executives in two years.*

*Summer Redstone is the 81-year-old who controls the firm with 71% of its voting stock.*

0 is written as *nought* or *zero* (mathematics / temperatures) or as *nil* (scores).

Numbers are not generally used in the plural form except to mean *a lot of* and they are then followed by *of*:

*Product development cost four thousand euros.*

*Product development cost thousands of euros.*

When using expressions of quantity as adjectives, use hyphens and use the singular form:

*a three-million-dollar contract (a contract worth three million dollars)*

### Dealing with large numbers

Large numbers are generally presented in numerical form and not as words, unless the number is a 'round' one:

5,361 *five thousand*

If an exact figure is not required, a number is often rounded up or down, and a word like *roughly*, *approximately*, *almost*, *nearly*, *about*, *around* may be used with it:

2,464,981 = *(around) two and a half million*

Abbreviated forms are often used for millions but not generally for billions (except in charts, where the abbreviations *m* and *bn* are systematically used):

*The group lost □ 1.9 billion last year and around □ 400m the year before.*

### Fractions and percentages

These can be written in numerical form or as complete words.

Fractions	Percentages
$\frac{1}{2}$ (a) half, one half	50% fifty per cent
$\frac{1}{3}$ a third, one third	33% thirty-three per cent

### Decimals

Decimal points and denominators can vary depending on the country. In some countries, the decimal point is represented by a comma and in others by a point. 19.312 would be interpreted as 'nineteen point three one two' in some countries (e.g. the UK, the USA) but in others (e.g. France, Germany) as 'nineteen thousand three hundred and twelve'.

### Ratios

These are usually written out in full:

*The proposal was adopted by nine votes to two.*

## Spelling

Using correct spelling is a key consideration in all writing, and misspelling words reflects badly on the author of a document, especially if it is for formal business purposes. Although word processors have built-in spellcheckers which will help you to avoid most basic mistakes, there are also many mistakes that spellcheck software will not identify. Some of the principal difficulties of English spelling are outlined below.

### Double consonants

The final consonants of some verbs are doubled when *-ing* or *-ed* is added, but only if the verb has a single short vowel preceding the final consonant and, if it is more than one syllable, the stress is on the final syllable:

<i>stop</i>	<i>stopped</i>
<i>begin</i>	<i>beginning</i>
<i>but:</i>	
<i>develop</i>	<i>developing</i>

Not doubling a consonant when necessary is confusing when two different words have similar spellings. *Sitting* is the correct *-ing* form of *sit* but *siting* is the correct form of *site*. (If the consonant is not the last letter of the verb, it is not doubled. But notice that the final 'e' is dropped.)

### Double vowels

Some words have two different vowels one after the other. The most common examples are *i/e* and *e/i*. The rule is that *i* comes before *e* when the sound of the word is 'ee', but not when the two vowels come after the consonant *c*:

*believe*          *receive*

As is often the case with English spelling, there are exceptions to the rule:

*seize*

### Similar sounding words

Some words that have the same pronunciation have quite different spellings and meanings. If you include the wrong word, even if it sounds right, you may in fact be using the wrong spelling:

<i>air</i>	<i>heir</i>
<i>allowed</i>	<i>aloud</i>
<i>ate</i>	<i>eight</i>
<i>board</i>	<i>bored</i>
<i>cent</i>	<i>sent</i>
<i>fare</i>	<i>fair</i>
<i>feat</i>	<i>feet</i>
<i>genes</i>	<i>jeans</i>
<i>mail</i>	<i>male</i>
<i>one</i>	<i>won</i>
<i>pair</i>	<i>pear</i>
<i>there</i>	<i>their</i> <i>they're</i>
<i>wait</i>	<i>weight</i>

### Commonly confused words

It is also easy to confuse words that have only minor differences in spelling. Some of the most common are:

<i>advice</i>	<i>advise</i>
<i>ensure</i>	<i>insure</i>
<i>envelop</i>	<i>envelope</i>
<i>formally</i>	<i>formerly</i>
<i>later</i>	<i>latter</i>
<i>passed</i>	<i>past</i>
<i>perspective</i>	<i>prospective</i>
<i>precedence</i>	<i>precedents</i>
<i>prescribe</i>	<i>proscribe</i>
<i>principal</i>	<i>principle</i>
<i>stationary</i>	<i>stationery</i>
<i>practice</i>	<i>practise</i>

Although English is the national language of both the United Kingdom and the United States, there are significant differences in the way that the language is used in both countries. The differences concern not only pronunciation but also grammar, vocabulary and spelling. When writing, it is therefore important to know whether you are addressing an international audience or writing specifically for British or US readers. The sections below provide examples of the main differences between British and US English.

## Grammar

The main differences concern spoken rather than written English. In US English, it is more common to use the past simple form of a verb where the present perfect form would be used in British English. This is especially true with the adverbs *just*, *yet* and *already*:

*Ms Dewer has just informed me that ...* (British)

*Ms Dewer just informed me that ...* (US)

## Prepositions

In British English, prepositions are normally included in situations where in US English they are often dropped:

*Judith is returning on Wednesday.* (British)

*Judith is returning Wednesday.* (US)

A different preposition is used in some situations:

*The head office is in Wall Street.* (British)

*The head office is on Wall Street.* (US)

*I often play golf at the weekend.* (British)

*I often play golf on the weekend.* (US)

*Jody is at school today.* (British)

*Jody is in school today.* (US)

## Letters

The format for letters is generally the same for both the UK and US. However, there are some differences concerning the opening, where a comma or no punctuation is used in British English (*Dear Mr Harding,*) but a colon is used in US English (*Dear Mr Harding:*).

US closings include *Sincerely (yours), Respectfully, Cordially, Yours truly, Very truly yours*, which are not common in British letters (see **Letters**, page 16).

## Dates

Dates can be written with the number before or after the month; before (*14 May*) is more common in British English and after (*May 14*) is more common in the US. When dates are written using only figures, the order is always day/month/year in British English, but month/day/year in the US:

10/06/06      10 June 2006 (British)  
6 October 2006 (US)

## Numbers

In British English, *and* is used for numbers in the hundreds, but *and* is not usually included in US English:

669      *six hundred and sixty-nine* (British)  
*six hundred sixty-nine* (US)

## Quantities

British English tends to use metric units (e.g. *metres*) instead of or as well as imperial units (e.g. *yards*), but in the US it is more common to use imperial units only.

## Spelling

The major differences in spelling concern double consonants (less frequent in US English) and word endings. Verbs that end in *-ise* in British English are usually spelt with *-ize* in US English. Some nouns that end in *-re* in British English end in *-er* in US English. In US English, words often finish in *-or* whereas in British English they take *-our*.

<b>British</b>	<b>US</b>
catalogue	catalog
cheque	check
colour	color
dialled	dialed
labelled	labeled
manoeuvre	maneuver
metre	meter
programme	program
sizeable	sizable

## Vocabulary

The following list shows where British and US English have a different word for the same thing.

### General words

<b>British</b>	<b>US</b>
bill	check
car park	parking lot
clever	smart
diary (appointments)	calendar
flat	apartment
from ... to ...	through
full stop	period
ground floor	first floor
lawyer	attorney
lend	loan
lift	elevator
motorway	highway
neighbourhood	district
ordinary	regular

**British**  
pavement  
petrol  
post  
queue  
underground  
upmarket  
work out

**US**  
sidewalk  
gas / gasoline  
mail  
line  
subway  
upscale  
figure out

### Business terms

<b>British</b>	<b>US</b>
balance sheet	statement of financial position
banknote	bill
current account	checking account
creditors	payables
debtors	receivables
depreciation	amortization
estate agent	realtor
land and buildings	real estate
ordinary shares	common stock
profit and loss account	income statement
profit	net income
provisions	allowances
savings and loan association	building society
shareholder	stockholder
shares	stocks
stocks	inventories
turnover	revenue
unit trust	mutual fund

The past forms of some verbs are also different.

<b>British</b>	<b>US</b>
fitted	fit
got	gotten

## Abbreviations

Abbreviations are often used to refer to names and titles when their full forms are long or complicated. They are also used for technical terms that are often referred to in a particular profession or industry. They are pronounced giving the individual letters that make up the abbreviation and are sometimes preceded by an article: **The BBC** **The EU**

In formal written texts abbreviations are often printed out in full, but in informal communication by email and over the phone they are normally left in their short forms.

### Common abbreviations used in business

#### Job titles

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CIO	Chief Information Officer
COO	Chief Operating Officer
MP	Member of Parliament

#### Organisations

EMU	European Monetary Union
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRS	Inland Revenue Service
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UN	United Nations
WTO	World Trade Organisation

#### Countries

UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

#### Companies

BA	British Airways
BMW	Bayerische Motoren Werke
IBM	International Business Machines

#### Business terms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
CIF	Cost, Insurance, Freight
FOB	Freight on Board
FY	Fiscal Year
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resources
IPO	Initial Public Offering
M&A	Mergers and Acquisitions
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBO	Management Buy Out
P&L	Profit and Loss

PLC	Public Limited Company
R&D	Research and Development
ROI	Return on Investment
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TQM	Total Quality Management
USP	Unique Selling Proposition
VAT	Value Added Tax

#### Measurements

ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
GMT	Greenwich Mean Time
kg	kilogram
kph	kilometres per hour
lb	pound (weight)

#### Technology

CAD	Computer Assisted Design
CAM	Computer Assisted Manufacturing
FAQ	Frequently Asked Question
HTML	HyperText Markup Language
PDF	Portable Document Format
RAM	Random Access Memory
ROM	Read Only Memory
WWW	World Wide Web

#### General

AOB	Any Other Business
ASAP	As Soon As Possible
ID	Identity
i.e.	id est (= that is)
PIN	Personal Identification Number

Another term for abbreviation is acronym, generally used when the abbreviation forms a word:

Laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation)

or can be spoken, e.g. SWOT, FAQ, ROM and PIN from above.

## Text messages

The popularity of mobile phones and instant messaging via phone and computer has led to a new form of abbreviated writing, where words are shortened or even sometimes replaced by individual letters, symbols or numbers. This means that fewer keystrokes are required when composing the message, and it also makes it easier for a condensed message to fit on the limited screen space of a mobile phone. Telephone text messages are usually limited in length to 160 characters, but on computer messages they can be of unlimited length. Text messaging is a very informal way of communicating and is never used for official communication.

Here are some simple guidelines for writing text messages in English. There are also several websites where you can write a message that will be automatically transformed into a text message, e.g. [www.lingo2word.com](http://www.lingo2word.com).

The most important rules to remember when abbreviating for a text message are the following:

Words that have the same sound as a letter of the alphabet or a number are represented by that letter or number:

U	you	R	are
2	too/to	4	for
8	ate	Y	why

Words that correspond to a graphic symbol on a keyboard are represented by that symbol:

&	and	@	at
#	number	+	plus
-	minus		

The percent symbol (%) represents a double 'o':

l%k look

Vowels that normally appear in the middle or at the end of words and syllables are removed:

KNO know      CHK check

Upper case letters can represent both vowels and word endings:

LYK like      sndN sending

Standardised abbreviations are used for some words and phrases:

BCZ because      LOL Laugh out loud

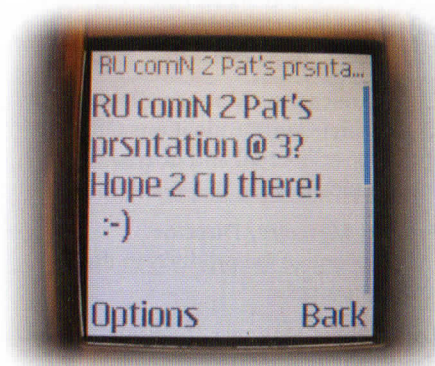
By using the colon and bracket keys, graphic representations or 'smileys' can be produced to show the emotions of the writer:

:-) ☺      :-( ☹

#### Sample text message

Are you coming to Pat's presentation at 3 o'clock?

Hope to see you there!



## Job titles

In business correspondence, it is important to put a job title after the name of the person you are writing to.

If you do not know the person's name, you can use their title to signal who you wish to contact, addressing them as *sir* or *madam* after that.

Mr Davidson, Personnel Manager

TO: Ms Jennifer Franks, Personal Assistant

The Human Resources Manager

100 Fairview Dock

Liverpool SYX III

### Common job titles

**Chairman (of the board) or President**  
the person at the top of the hierarchy

**Vice Chairman or Vice President**  
second in the hierarchy

**Managing Director or CEO (Chief Executive Officer)**  
in charge of the day-to-day running of the business

**Finance Director or CFO (Chief Financial Officer)**  
responsible for all matters concerning finance

**Accountant**  
oversees the book-keeping

**Marketing Manager / Director**  
coordinates all commercial activities

**Sales Manager / Director**  
in charge of the Sales Team

**Communications Manager / Director or CCO (Chief Communications Officer)**  
in charge of internal and external communications

**Product Manager / Director**  
manages one of the products in the product portfolio

**Legal Affairs Manager / Director**  
deals with legal matters

**IT (Information Technology) Manager / Director or CIO (Chief Information Officer)**  
responsible for all hardware and software in the company

**Production Manager / Director**  
responsible for output

**COO (Chief Operating Officer)**  
responsible for the management of a corporation's day-to-day activities

**Plant Manager / Director**  
in charge of one factory

**Supervisor**  
responsible for a group of workers

**Personnel Manager or Human Resources Manager / Director**  
in charge of all matters concerning staff

**Research and Development Manager / Director**  
heads the team that comes up with new ideas and products

**Purchasing Manager / Director**  
deals with suppliers

**Facility Manager / Director**  
in charge of managing and maintaining a company's site (buildings and property)

**PA (Personal Assistant)**  
deals with administrative duties

## Avoiding errors

The following is a list of typical mistakes of syntax and grammar that you should look out for when checking what you've written.

Common mistakes	Corrected version
<b>Nouns</b> They need more <i>seller</i> s. I am <i>the responsible</i> of Marketing. One of the best <i>product</i> was ...	They need more <i>salespeople</i> . I am <i>responsible</i> for Marketing. One of the best <i>products</i> was ...
<b>Pronouns and gender</b> Write to the manager and see if <i>he</i> can help.	Write to the manager and see if <i>he/she / he or she</i> can help.
<b>who / which / whose</b> The manager <i>which</i> looks after this ... It is the company <i>who</i> makes ... <i>Who's</i> fault was it?	The manager <i>who</i> looks after this ... It is the company <i>which</i> makes ... <i>Whose</i> fault was it?
<b>Linking words</b> Neither the invoice <i>or</i> the order arrived. There is no change <i>despite</i> of the new machine.	Neither the invoice <i>nor</i> the order arrived. There is no change <i>in spite of / despite</i> the new machine.
<b>i.e. and e.g.</b> Please cancel our last order, e.g. the one for 20 Cartier watches. We stock many brands, <i>i.e.</i> Gucci, Dior, etc.	Please cancel our last order, <i>i.e. (that is)</i> the one for 20 Cartier watches. We stock many brands, e.g. <i>(for example)</i> Gucci, Dior, etc.
<b>Prepositions</b> I am interested <i>by</i> the problem. I've been waiting <i>the</i> order <i>since</i> two weeks.	I am interested <i>in</i> the problem. I've been waiting <i>for</i> the order <i>for</i> two weeks.
<b>Articles</b> <i>The</i> children are most affected by <i>the</i> advertising. A document you requested has been sent. I am accountant.	Children are most affected by advertising. <i>The</i> document you requested has been sent. I am <i>an</i> accountant.
<b>Gerunds and infinitives</b> We succeeded <i>to decide</i> ... We approve <i>you to do</i> it. I would like to drive to the conference <i>instead of to fly</i> .	We succeeded <i>in deciding</i> ... We approve <i>of you doing</i> it. I would like to drive to the conference <i>instead of flying</i> .

## Letters

Formal business correspondence is usually done by letter as this leaves a written record which can be kept for reference. Business letters can be of different types with different purposes: to apply for a job, to inform people of developments, to request action, to make an enquiry, to complain, etc. To write a successful business letter you need to use the right tone and to communicate your message to the reader using straightforward language. The way a letter is written reveals a lot about the person who is writing it and it also sends a message about the organisation that he or she is working for. It is, therefore, very important to make sure that the information, layout, style and spelling are all correct before you send it.

### Layout

When writing a business letter, you should follow the standard format. The letter opposite shows where the following different components should appear on the page.

- a letterhead / address (but not name) of writer
- b name and address of recipient
- c references
- d date
- e opening
- f subject heading
- g body of the letter
- h closing
- i signature
- j name and job title
- k enclosures

### Language styles

Business letters are usually quite formal in style. A conversational style is therefore not appropriate and you should avoid contractions, for example. Try to use verbs in the active and not in the passive form as

this will make your letter more dynamic. You should also avoid writing sentences that are too long and that include complicated or unnecessary language. A straightforward letter will get your message across more effectively than a long wordy one. There are certain conventions concerning the correct way to address people and to close your letter.

**Opening** Letters always start with **Dear ...** followed by the correct form of address. If the letter is going to someone whose name you do not know, it starts with **Dear Sir**, or **Dear Madam**, or **Dear Sir or Madam, ...**. But if you do know the name, then you can begin with **Dear Mr / Ms Taylor**, or **Dear Greg Taylor, ...**.

**Closing** Letters are usually closed in standard ways. At the end of your letter you should include a short sentence like **I look forward to hearing from you**, or **Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information**. Below that, you should put a closing phrase:

**Yours sincerely**, (formal, for letters beginning **Dear** + name)

**Yours faithfully**, (formal, for letters beginning **Dear Sir / Madam**)

**Yours truly**, / **Best regards**, / **Best wishes**, (less formal)

### Useful phrases and notations

*Following our recent telephone conversation ...*

*I am writing to you to confirm ...*

*Thank you for taking the time to ...*

*Regarding the question of ...*

*I think you will agree that ...*

*We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.*

*I am enclosing full contact details.*

*enc* (shows that something is enclosed)

*cc* (copy sent to another person)

*PS* (for additional sentence(s) included after the signature)

## Sample letter (of confirmation)

a

**HPSempra Systems Inc**  
Conway Industrial Estate  
Hartlepool  
HPL 7GN  
United Kingdom  
(+44) 00723 91847  
mark@sales/sempra.org

b

Jeanne Eckhart  
Optecol  
31 Rue Jules Welter  
Sanem  
L-4902  
Luxembourg

c

Our ref: TS50.001  
21 May 200\_

d

e

Dear Ms Eckhart,

f

**TS50 Delivery**

g

Following our recent telephone conversation, I am writing to you to confirm the arrangements for the delivery of the TS50 test simulator that you ordered through our Brussels office. As I mentioned, a team of engineers from our UK and German offices will be attending the engineering trade show in Hanover from 1–3 July. Our stand at the show will feature a number of new products and test stations, including the first production model of the TS50, which is being shipped over from the UK especially for the event.

The show closes its doors on the evening of the third, and we will arrange for the simulator to be dismantled and packed on to a flatbed truck for delivery to you directly. The transportation will be handled by the same freight company that is looking after the logistics for the show, TransMax, and I am enclosing full contact details with this letter. I have already spoken with their director, Mr Wolfgang Hartung, and he is awaiting confirmation from your side before proceeding with the delivery.

Jane Bradley, the sales engineer who will be in charge of our stand, will be available to travel to your plant on the Thursday after the show, and she will provide assistance with the final installation and configuration of the machine during the following two days.

I will not personally be present at the fair but Ms Bradley will be able to answer any queries you may have. I know that this is an unusual delivery procedure but I think it is an interesting opportunity for you to save the cost and time delay of normal delivery from the UK.

I look forward to doing business with you in the future and thank you again for placing one of the first orders for the TS50. I am sure it will give you complete satisfaction.

h

Yours sincerely,

i

*Mark Rathbone*

j

Mark Rathbone  
Sales Manager

k

enc

VAT Registration No. 49238756930-609

Registered offices: HPSempra House, Ludgate Drive, London W11 4ASP

## Sample letters (of enquiry and reply)

### Hoosley Brothers Ltd

42 The Quayside  
Dublin 11  
Tel 0035378992211  
Fax 0035378993311

Hoosleys@office.com

The Export Sales Manager  
WalesDepotPlus  
2 Docklands Row  
Cardiff  
RC 8 JK

September 20th 200\_

Dear Sir or Madam,

We have been given your name by the Chamber of Commerce, as you are an exporter of high quality office supplies. Hoosley Brothers Ltd is a relatively new company dedicated to supplying top of the range stationery and office equipment to businesses throughout Ireland. We have been trading for one year and, having successfully built up an impressive customer base, we are now ready to expand.

We are therefore looking for new, reliable sources of supplies. Any information you can send us on your products, e.g. photos, catalogues, etc., would be greatly appreciated. We would also be grateful if you could provide us with your prices in euros and send us details of your terms and conditions.

Yours faithfully

*John Hoosley*

John Hoosley  
Purchasing Manager

Dear Mr Hoosley,

Thank you for your enquiry of September 20<sup>th</sup> asking for information about our products. We are very happy to enclose our latest brochure. I would like to draw your attention to our special rates and easy terms of payments for all our new customers this year. I would also like to inform you that it is possible to make purchases online from [www.WalesDepotPlus.co.uk](http://www.WalesDepotPlus.co.uk).

On behalf of all my team, I'd like to say that we are really looking forward to doing business with Hoosley Brothers in what we hope will be the near future.

If you need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

*Sally Thornton*

Sally Thornton  
Export Sales Manager  
[s.thornton@WalesDepotPlus.co.uk](mailto:s.thornton@WalesDepotPlus.co.uk)  
enc

## Sample letters (of complaint and apology)

Dear Ms Lopez,

As someone who has worked with your company for over five years, I was very disappointed when I saw the fliers you produced for our latest campaign.

As our written contract stipulated, we expected full colour photos. Instead, we found that black and white photos had been included in the printed leaflets. I think you will agree that this is an unsatisfactory situation.

We would like you to produce the fliers according to our specifications or provide us with a full refund as quickly as possible.

I look forward to a satisfactory reply.

Yours sincerely

*Donna Keller*

Donna Keller  
Managing Director

Dear Ms Keller,

I was very sorry to read the letter sent yesterday dealing with the issue of unsatisfactory printed publicity material. As someone who values your business, I have already begun to rectify the problem.

We will produce full colour leaflets for the end of the week and hope that you will accept our apologies. We will also deduct 20% for any inconvenience caused.

Thank you for your patience.

Yours sincerely

*Rosetta Lopez*

Rosetta Lopez  
Director of Customer Relations

## Emails

Email is one of the most commonly-used forms of communication in the international business world. It is used extensively within companies to circulate information, requests, results, instructions, recommendations, minutes of meetings, etc. Email is an effective, rapid and relatively cheap means of communicating with customers and suppliers, both nationally and internationally. Because of the brevity, rapidity and relative informality of emails, it is important to check that all information has been given and that the tone is appropriate.

### Layout

The emails opposite show where the following different components appear (though a-g may be in a different order depending on the system being used).

- a name of the person sending the email
- b name of the person / people the email is addressed to
- c person / people who will also receive the mail though it is not addressed directly to them
- d person / people who will receive a copy without other people knowing
- e date (and time)
- f information about the content of the email
- g files, documents, etc. sent separately rather than included in the actual message or body of the email
- h opening
- i body of the email
- j closing
- k name and job title

### Language styles

Emails are usually shorter than other forms of communication and the language is simple and concise.

The tone for emails to superiors or people outside the company should be formal. But

'in-house' emails between colleagues can be semi-formal.

When replying to mails, it is important not to reply simply 'yes' or 'no' to questions without referring back to the question and not to use pronouns out of context. However, if returning the sender's email with your reply, by using 'Reply', the sender will have their original to refer to.

### Useful phrases and notations

#### Opening and closing

For semi-formal emails, *Hello* and *Hi* are common openings and *Best wishes* or *All the best* are often used to close.

When writing to several people, you can address the group, e.g. *Dear Project Managers* ....

Formal emails, like letters, start with *Dear Sir / Madam* or *Dear Mr / Ms X* and close with *Yours sincerely* or *Yours faithfully* as appropriate (see **Letters**, page 16).

#### Exchanging information

*Could you mail me the sales figures for last month by 4pm?*

*Here is the brochure on the new product you asked for (see attachment).*

*I'm sending you the board's recommendations with this mail.*

*Please note that today's appraisal meetings have been cancelled. They will be rescheduled for the same times next Monday.*

*Just to let you know, I sent the attached minutes of Tuesday's Production meeting to all the participants.*

#### Replying to emails

*Thank you for your mail.*

*I got your mail, thanks.*

*Sorry I didn't get back to you yesterday but ...*

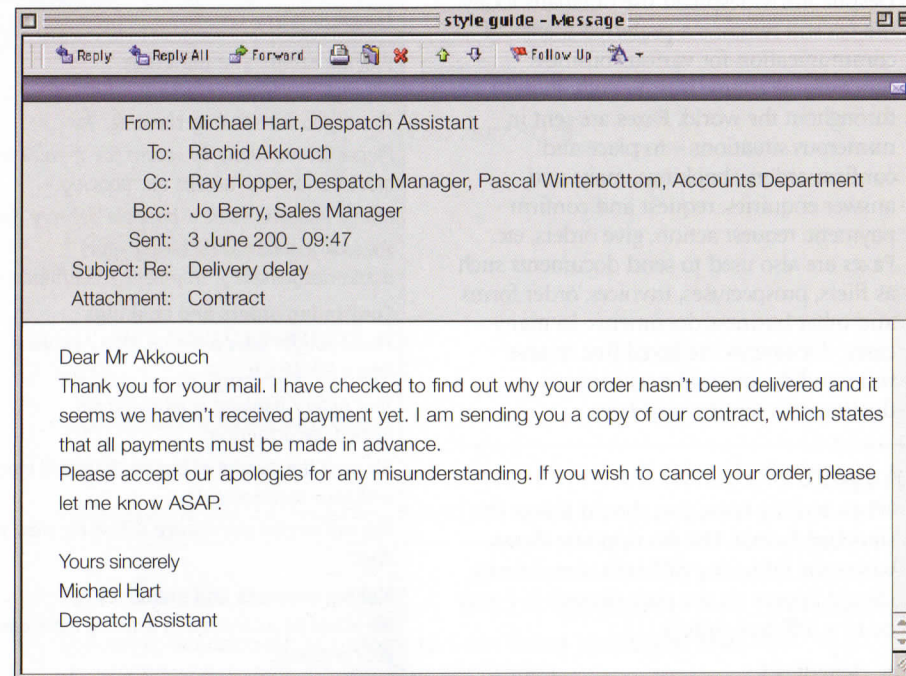
*Re your request for last month's sales figures ...*

*I couldn't open the attachment you sent - please resend it as soon as you can ...*

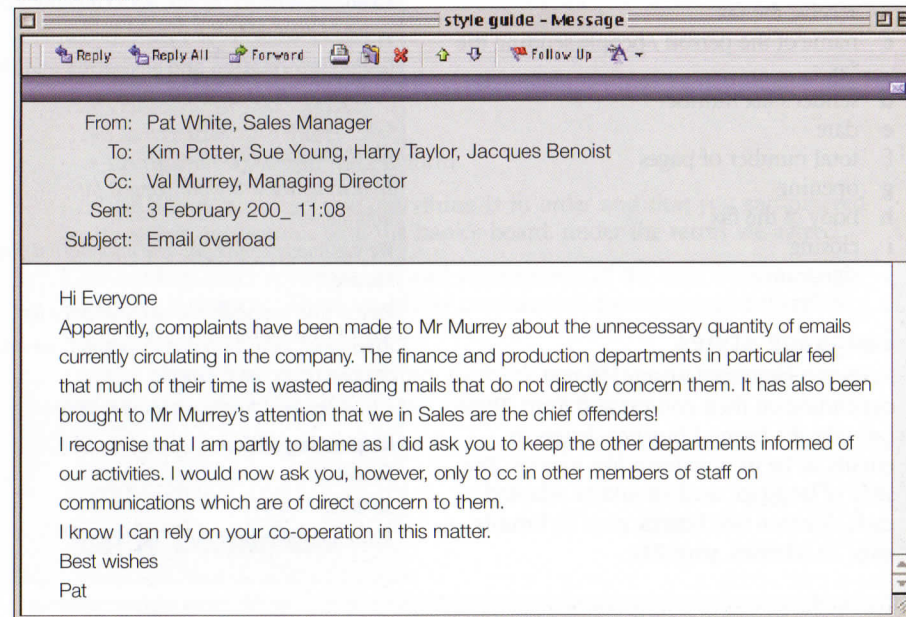
*Thanks for the information about the appraisal meetings. I'll make a note of it.*

## Sample emails

### Formal



### Semi-formal



Despite the widespread use of emails today, the fax still remains a preferred means of communication for various business functions in a large number of cultures throughout the world. Faxes are sent in numerous situations – to place and confirm orders / bookings, make and answer enquiries, request and confirm payment, request action, give orders, etc. Faxes are also used to send documents such as fliers, prospectuses, invoices, order forms and other business documents. In many cases, documents are faxed first to save time, and the original and / or legal document is sent by post later.

## Layout

When writing faxes, you should follow the standard format. The fax opposite shows where the following different components should appear on the page (though b–f may be in a different order).

- a letterhead
- b name of the person / people who will receive the fax
- c name of the person / people sending the fax
- d sender's fax number
- e date
- f total number of pages
- g opening
- h body of the fax
- i closing
- j signature

## Language styles

Faxes can be formal or semi-formal depending on their context and form. They can take the form of business letters or emails, or be in note form like memos. The style of language used should be adapted to each situation (see **Letters**, page 16, **Emails**, page 20, **Memos**, page 24).

## Useful phrases

### Placing orders and bookings

*We wish to place an order for / to book ...*

*Thank you for sending the order for ...*

*Please let me know by return fax if you can meet our order / accept our booking.*

*Kindly indicate earliest possible delivery date.*

*We look forward to receiving your acknowledgement / shipment / confirmation.*

### Confirming orders and bookings

*Thank you for your order no. 000 / booking dated 5th March ...*

*Your order / booking is receiving our immediate attention.*

*We trust the quality of our products will meet with your requirements ...*

*You will receive our invoice within the next few days.*

### Making requests and enquiries

*We would be interested in learning more about your products.*

*Would you mind faxing us your latest price list?*

*Could you send us, by fax, your conditions and terms of payment.*

### Giving information and answering enquires

*Following / Further to our telephone conversation / meeting ...*

*We thank you for your enquiry.*

*In accordance with your request for information ...*

*We are happy to fax you the information you require.*

*Please find herewith the required price list.*

*After much reflection and discussion, we have decided to do the following ...*

*I trust you will find everything in order.*

### Requesting action

*Cancel ...*

*Send ...*

*Make arrangements for ...*

## Sample fax

### First Date

Teenage Fashion Designers

Savile Row  
London W1 PT 4AZ

Tel: 0020 766776776

a

## Fax Transmission

- b TO: Ms L Atlan (330144556600)
- c FROM: Sandy Bradshaw
- d FAX NUMBER: 0020 766776767
- e DATE: Tuesday 18 March
- f NUMBER OF PAGES: (including this) 12

g

Dear Ms Atlan,

h

Following our meeting this morning, I am faxing you copies of all the documents you require for our loan application.

- Project feasibility study
- Risk evaluation study
- Costs forecast
- Sales forecast
- Complete project budget
- Current balance sheet
- Completed loan application form

I trust that you will find that everything is in order and that you can proceed by filing our application with the bank's board, under the terms we agreed.

I am sending exact specifications and photographs of the new designs separately by courier. These are highly confidential documents and therefore we rely on your utmost discretion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and valuable advice on strategy and capital management.

Please let me know by return fax if you need any other papers.

i

Yours sincerely,

j

**Sandy Bradshaw**

The word *memorandum*, or *memo* for short, originally meant a reminder or confirmation. Now it has become a very common form of business communication used for a wide variety of messages exchanged between people working in the same organisation. A memo usually focuses on only one specific topic, as in the following examples:

**Conveying information** Reporting back the minutes of meetings or summaries of brainstorming sessions

**Requesting information** Asking employees to send in requests for the use of office parking spaces

**Giving instructions** Telling employees to display identity badges when entering the building

**Recommending options** Informing people in the company of decisions reached on the best way to solve a company dilemma and recommending that these options be implemented

## Layout

When writing memos, you should follow the standard format. The memo opposite shows where the following components should appear on the page.

- a date
- b name of the person / people the memo is addressed to
- c name of the person / people sending the memo
- d information about the content of the memo
- e introduction to the subject matter
- f main points
- g conclusion, often recommending the action to be taken
- h closing, which can be the name or initials of the person sending the memo

## Language styles

Although styles vary across cultures and organisations, there are basic rules for memo writing.

The opening is more direct and less formal than in a letter or email, with no greeting such as *Dear ...* and memos usually start with the introduction to the main points. The closing is generally just the initials of the sender.

Memos are less formal than business letters so the tone is neutral and the language simple.

Sentences are usually short and clear, but not brisk and bossy.

Memos often conclude with a request for action.

## Useful phrases

### Giving information

*You will be happy to hear ...*  
*I am / We are delighted to inform you ...*  
*I am delighted to be able to announce ...*  
*I would like to remind you that ...*  
*I have recently been informed ...*

### Requesting information

*I would like to have ...*  
*Could you provide me with ...?*  
*If you have any questions, please ...*

### Giving instructions

*Please read ...*  
*We / I kindly request ...*  
*Make sure that ...*  
*... is permitted only ...*

### Recommending options

*It is recommended that ...*  
*It is in the best interests of ...*  
*Having considered all the alternatives, I / we suggest ...*

# MEMO

a DATE 8th June  
 b TO All staff  
 c FROM Alison Stanford, CIO  
 d SUBJECT Use of information resources

e I have recently been informed by the HR Department of various irregularities in the use of information resources by members of staff in some departments. I have therefore prepared the following memorandum in order to outline company policy regarding the proper use of information resources by all personnel. Please read these guidelines carefully and make sure that you apply them at all times when using information resources.

f 'Information resources' refers to all computers, peripherals and software and electronic mail services that are used as operational components for conducting the company's business.

### Permissible use

Although information resources are designed to be used for *official purposes*, it is in the interests of all members of staff to have access to these resources for limited *personal* use. However, all *inappropriate* use will lead to disciplinary proceedings.

### Official use

This includes the use of equipment for all activities relating to company business and covers all work-related activities that have been authorised by head office.

### Non-official use

Personal use of IT equipment is permitted only on condition that it does not interfere either with a staff member's productivity or affect the productivity of any other member of staff. Short email messages may be sent to colleagues, and internet services may be consulted for limited periods of time in order to obtain news and information.

### Inappropriate use

All staff are reminded that they are not permitted to:

- download software to their computers
- use company IT equipment to conduct business for personal gain
- disable virus protection software
- post company information to persons outside the organisation
- make copies of any software installed on computers

g I would also like to remind all staff that their use of information resources may be monitored. It is therefore recommended that you do not use the company's information resources to communicate information that you wish to keep private.

If you have any questions relating to these policy guidelines, you can consult the newly updated FAQ section on our intranet or contact Heidi Wassermann in Human Resources.

h Alison Stanford

# Minutes

At every business meeting someone is assigned to 'take the minutes'. This person notes down all the important points made at the meeting and later writes up a clear summary of what was said and decided. It is generally agreed that the minutes should be sent within 24 hours to all the participants and anyone else affected by the content. This ensures that people stay focused on the issues raised and keep future action points clear in their minds. Minutes are sent to make sure that things discussed at meetings actually get done.

## Layout

When writing minutes, you should follow the standard format. The minutes opposite show where the following different components should appear on the page.

- a subject and date of the meeting
- b list of participants
- c summary of the chairperson's introduction
- d summary of opinions and suggestions exchanged
- e action points decided upon, people assigned to each action and deadlines given
- f date and time of next meeting

## Language styles

The style of language is quite formal. Sentences should be short, clear, concise and easy to read. It is important to summarise only the most important points, not include everything that was said.

Long speeches made at meetings should be summed up, using bullet points for clarity. The minutes of even a long meeting shouldn't be longer than one page.

## Useful phrases

### Giving the list of participants

Use *Present:* followed by the list.

### Summarising the chairperson's introduction

*Mr / Ms X opened the meeting with the following points: (+ bullet points)*

### Summarising a discussion

*Mr X was the first to speak / react / contribute and put forward the following ideas: ...*

*Mr Y agreed / expressed approval and added:*

*...*

*Ms Z disagreed and argued: ...*

*Mr X expressed disapproval / concern and insisted: ...*

*Ms Z accepted that ... but defended her position on ... However, she conceded that ...*

*Mr X agreed / offered / promised / refused / wanted ... (followed by to + infinitive)*

*Mr Y denied / admitted / suggested / recommended ... (followed by the gerund)*

*Ms Z advised / asked / instructed / reminded ... (followed by object + to + infinitive)*

*Everyone agreed on ...*

### Action points and deadlines

*The following action points were decided upon: ...*

*Mr X will look into / research / draw up a list of / calculate / study ... by the end of next week.*

*Mr Y will speak to ... before the 15th.*

*Ms Z will come to the next meeting with ...*

*Mr X will get back to / send a report to the Finance Committee within the next few days.*

## Sample minutes

### Minutes of the Training Budget Meeting 17 November

- a
- b **Present:** Ms Graham, Managing Director (chairperson); Mr Bhupathi, IT Manager; Ms McKenzie, Human Resources Manager; Mr Wenzel, Finance Director
- c Ms Graham opened the meeting by welcoming all the members and congratulating Ms McKenzie on her first month's performance and on how quickly she'd adapted to our corporate culture. She expressed regret that Ms Amritraj (Export Manager) couldn't attend as she had been called away unexpectedly to deal with a problem with our agent in India.
- She then announced that:
- a the training budget would be cut by 20% this year
  - b the HR Department is developing a new cost-cutting strategy and explained that:
    - a the company would no longer be using the services of Target Training Consultants
    - b employee development would be more closely linked to business-growth strategies
    - c all future training would be based on a detailed in-house needs analysis assessment
    - d training would be strictly limited to staff whose performances are crucial to the company's success.
- d Mr Wenzel was the first to speak and suggested hiring a small independent consultant, whose fees would be considerably lower than those of large firms like Target Training.
- Ms McKenzie said that while independent consultants could be cheaper, they would almost certainly fail to ensure that resources were used as effectively as possible. She argued that she would prefer to process all requests and proposals for training personally. She added that any request agreed upon by her predecessor was also currently under review.
- Mr Bhupathi expressed concern about his application for training in Java and Java script for his staff. He requested that his application be given priority status. He said that he had already contacted the training centre recommended by Target Training on the advice of our former HR manager.
- Ms McKenzie conceded that this training was essential but advised him to resubmit his request asking for cheaper online training.
- Mr Bhupathi expressed disapproval of this idea and continued to make a case for using the training centre but he finally agreed to look at what is available online.
- e The following action points were decided upon:
- a Mr Bhupathi will draw up a list of e-learning courses currently available and submit a new proposal to the HR Department as soon as possible.
  - b Ms Graham will develop a detailed needs analysis assessment questionnaire to be distributed to all departments.
  - c Mr Wenzel will prepare a cost breakdown of the previous year's spending on training and arrange a meeting with Ms McKenzie's department next week to discuss the new cost-cutting measures in more detail.
- f **Date of next meeting – 12 December, in the main boardroom**

## Short reports

Short reports are used to summarise information that has to be communicated to people inside or outside an organisation. They are designed to provide an overview which can be read and assimilated quickly. Many different subjects can be presented in a short report and some of the most common types of short reports are project / progress reports, business proposals and summaries of research or results. Although the length of a short report will vary depending on the amount of information and commentary that it contains, most short reports will be between one and six pages long. They should be clearly structured so that the reader can find the relevant information quickly. Short reports may also include graphic material and are often used as the basis for an oral presentation.

### Layout

Title page – indicates the subject that is being dealt with, in large font, with the name and position of the author of the report clearly indicated at the bottom of the page, together with the date of its publication.

Summary – gives a concise presentation of the report, the reasons for writing it, the most important information it contains and a general idea of its main findings. For a short report this can be simply one or two sentences.

Introduction – presents the overview, showing why the report was written and how it has been constructed.

Development section – includes the main body of information which may be divided into several subsections.

Conclusion – presents the results of the report. This might take the form of a recommendation for future action or draw the reader's attention to problems that need to be addressed.

### Language styles

Short reports are documents that use a formal writing style. They should not contain contracted verb forms like *it'll* or *don't* but use the full forms of verbs.

The language of the report should be as clear as possible. It is not necessary to use long and complicated sentences or obscure vocabulary. Using simple language in short sentences will make it easier for the reader to assimilate your message.

Try to avoid using the personal pronoun *I* too much. Although it is true that 'you' wrote the report, it will only put your readers off if you refer too often to your own role. Use neutral phrasing instead.

### Useful phrases

#### Connect sentences by

- showing contrast:

**However**, this does not necessarily mean that ...

**On the other hand**, it is true that ...

**While** these results may appear to ...

**Although** it is not completely clear from our research ...

- showing cause and effect:

This has been mainly **due to** ...

**Consequently**, additional data was obtained which showed that ...

**As a result of this**, it has not been possible to ...

- following on to the next point that you wish to make:

**Moreover**, in this particular case ...

**In addition to this**, the survey included ...

**Furthermore**, we would advise that this would provide an opportunity to ...

## Sample report

### Acquisition evaluation of PromoVista S.A.

#### Summary

Michael Paterson Associates has requested an evaluation of the French company PromoVista S.A. with a view to analysing its value as a potential takeover target in order to enhance the international marketing reach of the company's current European operations. The following short report situates the target company in its competitive environment and gives a brief analysis of PromoVista's current position within its industry sector, its strategic positioning and its recent performance, and provides a forecast for the company's future in the short term.

#### Introduction

Adwise Incorporated looked at the following:

- History
- Competitive environment
- Operational specifics

#### History

PromoVista was created in the 1930s as a regional point of sale and outdoor advertising provider and has undergone a series of transformations during its eighty-year history. From a small regional operator it has developed into an operation of national and international scope, with subsidiaries in Belgium, Luxembourg and Switzerland. The company currently employs ...

#### Competitive environment

PromoVista was a monopoly provider of outdoor advertising space until 1985 when BXG Advertising created Proximos, a new outdoor advertising operation in France, to support its strategy of developing national weekly and monthly publications. Proximos is now PromoVista's principal competitor. During the last five years, PromoVista's revenue has continued to increase despite greater competitive pressure, in particular from urban transit space providers and also urban furniture advertisers. However, during this period ...

#### Operational specifics

PromoVista, unlike its main competitor in its home market, does not rely on outsourcing poster installation and display maintenance work but has its own national teams of specialists who are directly responsible for changing posters and maintaining display sites. In terms of its implantation, the company currently has 120,000 advertising sites positioned essentially in pedestrian shopping zones and town centres. Its research department ...

#### Conclusion

Analysis of the recent performance of PromoVista shows that the company has performed well over the last five-year period, with profit margins at 20%. We would advise that PromoVista would provide a very interesting growth opportunity. Its position in the market would enable Michael Paterson Associates to enlarge its market share, allowing it to offer enhanced and targeted marketing to advertisers in the markets mentioned above.

Jeremy Hickson  
Senior Consultant  
Adwise Incorporated

29<sup>th</sup> August 200\_

Press releases or news releases are documents that are prepared by the Public Relations departments of corporations and other organisations in order to communicate information to the media. They are designed to arouse media interest by presenting interesting and original information that can be used in an article or a radio or television report. Ideally, the press release can be included in a publication or report with only a minimum of editing. Most press releases are of two basic types: those that inform people about changes (new products, company results, forthcoming events, etc.) and those that try to influence people to adopt a particular point of view (reports, speeches, negotiations, etc.). Press releases are rarely longer than two pages and they follow a standard format.

### Format



The basic format for a press release is similar to that of a short article. Start the release with the most important information, which should provide the answers to the questions *who? what? when? where? how?*

In the following paragraphs you can add in more information about the story and include quotations from some of the people involved.

### Layout

- a letterhead of the organisation that is sending the release
- b headline or title (in the present tense)
- c an indication of when the information in the release can be published: 'For immediate release' if the news can be published now or 'Embargoed until ...' if it can only be published after a certain date
- d date when the release was sent
- e main text of the release, divided into paragraphs with paragraph headings where necessary
- f ### to show the end of the text
- g contact details of the person who wrote the release and information about who to contact for further information

### Sample press release

a  

**Press Release**

b **EsSprinter and FasterTracks Communications announce merger**

c Embargoed until Dec 10

EsSprinter and FasterTracks announced their agreement to merge with a commitment to create a global communications company, offering a comprehensive range of services to consumer business and government customers.

d New York City Dec 5 200\_

e EsSprinter and FasterTracks will merge January 15 200\_. "The companies are in the enviable position of possessing two incredibly valuable brands," said Daniel Schweitzer, designated Chief Marketing Officer for the new company and FasterTracks' current Vice President, Marketing.

The new strategy and logo will integrate the most valuable assets of each company's identity. Given its broad appeal on the market and its history of innovation, the EsSprinter name has been chosen as the lead name for the new company. The combined company will employ FasterTracks as a product brand within the EsSprinter service portfolio.

The new logo will blend elements of EsSprinter's bold red and yellow colours with the strong visual from FasterTracks' famous trademark, creating a powerful symbol for the new dynamic brand.

The inauguration ceremony, which takes place at the EsSprinter headquarters in New York on Jan 20 200\_ will be attended by over 3,000 guests from all over the world.

f ###

g For more information about the inauguration and to obtain high resolution photos of the new logo, please contact:

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