

Тема 4. Професійна комунікація в письмовій формі

Lead-in: Before reading Text 1, answer the following questions:

1. Do you often write e-mails?
2. Would you rather text your colleague or write an email?
3. What are the main written communication options used within an organization?
4. Have you ever written a memo?
5. Who usually makes the minutes of the meetings in your office?
6. What is the main purpose of a newsletter?
7. Do you often draw up reports?

 **Text 1.** Read the text and summarise the main points in 10-15 sentences.

INTERNAL WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

When an employee interacts with another employee in the organization, it becomes a part of internal communication. An effective internal communication is as important as an external communication. It is required for the smooth functioning of an organization. During an internal communication employees exchange their thought, ideas, views etc. with other employees of the organization. Internal communication happens irrespective of level of the hierarchy in the organization. It includes all the communication among employees at inter and intra departmental level. Internal communication is used to serve different purposes such as giving instructions and orders, offering suggestions, filing complaints, sharing information, and handling situations. A poor internal communication is having a direct impact on the organization's external communication.

There exists a wide range of options before employees for communicating internally. While communicating internally, employees use both oral and written communication methods. When compared, written methods of communication are more preferred over oral communication methods on the grounds of record keeping, legality, standardization, and specificity. Main written communication options used within an organization include memorandum, office orders, notice, circular, newsletters, minutes of meeting, and reports. Each option is having a specific purpose to serve. Depending upon their suitability to situation, a particular option is exercised over the other. Every employee is expected to get familiar with all the options to make their best use for the smooth communication flow in the organization.

Memorandum. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary a memorandum is “A brief written message or report from one person or department in a company or organization to another”. A memorandum is used for internal communication. A memorandum is also referred as ‘Memo’. Literally the purpose of a memo is to inform or to reveal. A memo is generally used to provide information to other employees of an organization about a specific issue. It is a written statement, a sender specifically prepares for receivers to appraise or inform them about a particular matter or specific issue. These receivers also belong to the same organization as of the sender's. The shape of memo can be of a short note. A note that is crisp in terms of its information content. A memo can be meant for a single person or a group or a committee. When

colleagues have to communicate within the organization, they can use telephone as mode of communication. But during a professional communication, a situation sometimes demands to keep a record of communication. In that case, memo can be used to communicate for purposes such as requests, instructions, action taken, and suggestion etc. A memo is not used for lengthy communication.

Office Orders. In many instances, an authority has to give certain directions or instructions to their subordinates. For such kind of downward communication, an officer order is passed. Generally, an office order carries certain actions to be performed by its receivers. Non-compliance of an office order may attract a disciplinary action against the receiver of the order. Such orders can be issued in a memo format. As memos can be used for communicating in any direction but office orders are strictly used for downward communication. Some of the reasons for issuing an office order are promotion, increment, demotion, transfer, changes in office timings, shifting of a place, termination etc. Following are the few tips that can be used while drafting an office order:

- An office order should be crisp and short.
- Properly mention name and designation of the person or persons for whom the order meant.
- It should be properly signed by the issuing authority.
- The purpose of the order must be clearly stated.
- Impact of non-compliance of order should also be mentioned.

Circulars. An office circular or a circular is related to wide circulation of information. It is used to provide information to all or larger number of employees of an organization. The information can be related to opening up of a new facility, inviting suggestions, seeking interest, visit of a specialist, a party, rules and regulations etc. The basic purpose of a circular is to make the receiver aware about a stated issue. A circular is also treated as an advertisement meant for wider distribution. It is like information for each and every one. Following are the few tips that can be used while drafting a circular:

- As a circular is meant for larger audience, a simple and jargon free language should be preferred.
- It should be short and to the point.
- It should be properly signed by an authority.
- It must bear a unique number indicating specific communication.

Notice, Agenda, Minutes of Meetings. Notice, Agenda, and Minutes of Meetings are the three components related to organizing and conducting a successful meeting. All the three components are the part of intra organization communication.

In general, the purpose of a **notice** is to pass on specific information meant for specific receivers. A notice is always issued by an authorized person. A notice needs to be drafted in a summarized way so that the receiver could understand the information by just having a glance. Notices can also be pinned on the notice board to convey the information to the intended receivers. A notice is also having a legal relevance. For example, in case of ending a contract of employment, a notice is issued. Another more popular purpose of drafting a notice is to notify about a meeting. Before calling a meeting, it is essential to notify all the members about it. This information must be sent to all the members who have a right to attend the meeting. The proper circulation of

the information has to be ensured by the secretary in consultation with the Chairperson of the meeting. Such a notice must mention information about the day, date, time, and venue of the meeting. If decided, agenda items may be mentioned in the notice or attached separately. It has to be ensured that notice reaches all the members within reasonable time before the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting are the official record of discussions and decisions at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting are generally written by the secretary in consultation with the Chairperson. It is always good for a company to keep a record of minutes of meeting. In certain cases, it is mandatory under the law to maintain minutes of meeting. The minutes mention the main points of discussion and decision taken thereof. The person drafting minutes of meeting should doubly check the facts and decisions before making it public. It is advisable to circulate a pre final draft of the minutes among the concerned members for their observations. Minutes become effective only when they have been read at the next meeting.

Agenda of a meeting states the activities that will take place during the meeting. An agenda provides a guideline for the members to think and prepare about issues to be discussed. It steers the meeting towards completion. An agenda also ensures that no issue is left unattended during the meeting. Generally, similar format for writing agenda is adopted by organizations. For example, first agenda item for most of the meetings is 'confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting'. Similarly, the last agenda item is 'any other matter with the permission of the Chairperson'. Rest of the agenda items are put on the basis of their priority. A little modification can be made in the standard format as per the requirement.

Suggestions and Complaints. In the normal course of an organization, every staff member at one point or the other has to give suggestion or file a complaint for a grievance. Both suggestions and complaints help the organization in its smooth functioning. Many companies even encourage such kind of activities to identify the flaws in their system. Broadly, suggestions are invited from staff members for solving a problem and grievances are encouraged to improve the employee-employer relationship. As such there is no standard format for writing a suggestion or a complaint. Still the writer must keep in mind the basics of letter writing. Although less formal in nature, suggestions and complaints should be written with utmost care. The words should be carefully selected and the matter should be conveyed in the fewest possible words. Also, an employee should keep in mind the formality of employee-employer relationship while suggesting or complaining.


Newsletters. Another important intra-organizational communication tool is an employee newsletter. A newsletter is just like a newspaper but for the employees only. All the news mentioned in the newsletter has a direct relevance for the employees. Employee newsletters are used to provide specific information for different purposes such as guiding, educating, increasing morale, establishing a sense of belongingness, and updating the workforce. An employee newsletter provides news from all sections of the organization irrespective of department, designation, or unit. While creating a newsletter, it is important to ensure that the information included in the letter is worthy and of interests of the readers. For drafting a newsletter following points need to be kept in mind:

- Develop all the matter of the newsletter by keeping employees in mind.

- A newsletter should not be too long. A tabloid with four pages is generally sufficient for a fortnightly newsletter.
- Keep the language as simple as possible. Matter should be informative not directive.
- Design the newsletter on the basis of certain themes.
- Decide the regular sections to be included.
- Fix the place of each section and maintain consistency for all editions.
- The sections can mention about safety and human resource, corporate social responsibility, career advancement, retirements, company policies, relevant world news etc.

Reports. As a part of intra-organizational communication tool, a report is generally prepared by middle management employees to appraise the senior management about the state of affairs. The purpose of such kinds of reports is to provide the information supported by facts and figures to the senior management, so that a timely strategy can be formulated. Major purpose of creating internal reports is to support decision making. A report can be a letter writing report or a schematic report. The difference is of way of presenting information.

Depending upon their suitability to situation, a particular communication option is exercised over the other. Every employee is expected to get familiar with all the options to make their best use for the smooth communication flow in the organization.

 **Text 2.** Read the text, summarise the main points in 10-15 sentences, and discuss the questions that follow.

EXTERNAL WRITTEN COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

On a daily basis every organization interacts with its external environment. This interaction is in the form of exchange of information. The information is exchanged with various stakeholders present outside the business entity. Examples of such stakeholders include customers, intermediaries, suppliers, shareholders, media, government, and society in general. A poor external communication largely impacts on the image of a business and hampers its future prospects. When employees of an organization interact with people and entities present external to their organization, they can choose both oral and written communication methods. For the purpose of record keeping, legality, standardization, and specificity, written communication is preferred over oral communication. In external written communication people and organizations operating outside of the business are contacted using written communication tools. Opposite to an internal communication, external communication is used to extend information to external stakeholders and persuade them to act in a desired manner. Most common ways of communicating with external stakeholders using written method are business letters, press releases, and tenders etc. Each option is having a specific purpose to serve.

Business Letters. Business letter is the most common and popular form of external written communication. Nicely printed business letters put in attractive envelopes is also used as a persuasive strategy by the organizations. Earlier postal letters have now changed its shape. With the advent of newer technology business letters are now sent via email. Business letters can be of several types depending upon the purpose for which it is written. In case of writing a business letter two broad things need to be kept in mind. First, structure and layout of the letter and second, the context for which letter is written. Context also decides the type of a business letter such as enquiry letter, sales letter, good news letter, and bad news letter.

Types of business letter. Once you gain clarity about structure and layout of the letter, the next aspect of business letter writing is to understand the purpose of writing. Depending upon the purpose of the letter, business letters can be classified into different categories. Please note, the address part of each letter sample is deliberately omitted to avoid redundancy of information. While writing a business letter you are suggested to include the address of sender, date, address of receiver, and subject.

Sales Letter: A sales letter is one of the most commonly used business letter. Purpose of sales letter is to persuade customers or other stakeholders to act in a desired manner. Sales letters is like an advertisement in a letter form. Through sales letters potential customers can be tapped individually and these are used as a part of direct marketing campaign. A sales letter must discuss about the product and benefits offered to the prospective customers. It also mentions the advantages for making a quick decision about the purchase. These advantages could be availing discounts, free gifts, entry to a contest, and a limited offer price deal. A sales letter must possess an attractive opening to generate the interest of the reader followed by introduction of the product.

Enquiry Letter. An enquiry letter is written when we are interested in gaining information from other organizations. These kind of enquires are generally sought for

trading purpose. Letter of enquiries are also send at the time of entering into a new business, looking for new suppliers, interesting in becoming an agent, making an instant purchase etc. Such kind of letters must clearly specify about the information required, the duration within which information is required, and the format in which it is required. The broad areas of enquiries are related to asking for a catalogue, pricelist, demonstration, personal visit, terms and conditions, scope for product modification, warranties and mode of payment.

Reply Letter. Reply letters are written in response to a letter of enquiry. A reply letter has much of its relevance as it can result into a sale. From the business point of view an effective reply letter can convert an enquiry into order. Also, it shows the professionalism on the part of receiver of enquiry letter to provide prompt and desired information. Generally a reply letter is followed by a clarification and eventually an order. While writing a reply letter it is important to provide exact and accurate information about the queries mentioned in the enquiry letter. Try to provide detailed information to avoid any kind of ambiguity.

Order Letter. When both the parties i.e. buyer and seller are interested in entering into a contract, an order letter is written. From the buyer's point of view, it is called as purchase order and from the seller's side it becomes a sales order. When both purchase order and sales order are matching with each other a contract is created. As these letters are having a legal binding once contract is created detail description of product, price, quantity, mode of payment, time of delivery and specification has to be mentioned.

Complaint Letter. A complaint letter is written when there exist any error in the total process of buying and selling. It happens when expectations of buyer and sellers are not met after the transaction. A complaint can be written by a buyer as well as seller. Reason for buyer writing a complaint letter could be delayed delivery of order, order not in proper shape, wrong order delivery, and difference in terms and conditions as per prior discussion. On the other hand, a seller can write a complaint letter regarding non-payment, less payment, payment made under different mode, disagreement over claims made by buyer. Letter of complaint must clearly mention the point of discord. It should also mention the expected action to be taken by the other party. A letter of complaint should use a polite language in order to prevent any kind of damage to the future dealings.

Positive News Letter. Under the category of positive news letters, all messages which are conveying pleasant information to the receivers are covered. These messages are also known as good news letters. While writing such letters a direct approach is adopted. Positive news could be in the form of acknowledging orders, approval of credit requested, granting of favours, letter of appointment, and letter of appreciation. While creating such messages the best news has to be conveyed in the very first paragraph along with an expression of pleasure. The second paragraph should answer all the queries with complete details and the final paragraph could mention the personal opinion of the sender.

Negative News Letter. Just opposite to the positive news letters, all messages carrying unpleasant information are conveyed through negative news letters. These messages are also known as bad news letters. The purpose of a negative news letter is to convey the bad news without hurting the relationship. The receiver of the information must consider you fair and reasonable. The reasons for writing a negative

message could be refusing the desired information, rejection of a proposal, inability to fulfil order, refusing adjustment or a claim, and declining requests for favours. It is suggested to use an indirect approach for conveying such messages. At the beginning of the message a pleasant or neutral thing to be conveyed that gives a cushion to the reader to handle the negative part. Then explain the reason regarding your inability to fulfil the desired information or request. You can also suggest few alternative ways to get the desired information. In the end always remember to close the message on a positive note. This will keep the doors open for future dealings.

Press Releases and Public Notices. On many occasions an organization has to communicate with the external stakeholders to provide information or clarification related to a particular matter. This kind of written correspondence is done to project the company image. A person possessing the authority to do so prepares a press release. A press release has to be drafted in an understandable format. While preparing a press release must possess few characteristics such as newsworthiness, clarity, brevity, appropriate heading, carries the company image. Once the press release is ready, it is sent to the newspaper. It is at the discretion of the Editor of newspaper to publish the matter as it is or with some alterations.

A public notice is regarding an important announcement related to an issue. The purpose of a public notice is to inform all the people concerned with a given issue. A public notice must get an instant attention of a reader. Just like a press release it must possess characteristics like brevity, mentioning important information, and a suitable heading. A sample public notice is as follows:

Inviting Tenders. Many especially large companies also use a special written communication i.e. invitation to tender and bid. It is a special kind of notice. Tenders actually seek submission of estimates from interested parties for completion of advertised work. As per the guidelines, any party fulfilling the norms can respond to such communication for further processing. While drafting a tender invitation utmost care has to be taken. It must follow the format and guidelines prescribed for such kind of communication.

In external written communication people and organizations operating outside of the business are contacted using written communication tools. Most common ways of communicating with external stakeholders using written method are business letters, press releases, and tenders etc. Each option is having a specific purpose to serve. Depending upon their suitability to situation, a particular option is exercised over the other. Business letters can be of several types depending upon the purpose for which it is written. In case of writing a business letter two broad things need to be kept in mind. First, structure and layout of the letter and second, the context for which letter is written.