



The Concise Memorandum

PREVIEW

- ▶ **Format**
- ▶ **Organization**
- ▶ **Style**
- ▶ **Tone**

The memorandum (memo) is an internal form of written communication used within an organization. It can take numerous forms, ranging from a one-paragraph announcement to a multi-page report. However, memos tend to be less formal than business letters in style and tone. Most organizations have pre-printed memorandum forms that include the organization's logo and the headings *To*, *From*, *Subject*, and *Date*. The best memorandums are written in a clear, concise, and readable style without excess words or long sentences. Today, many professionals use e-mail communication rather than sending a hard-copy memo for all but the most important internal documents. In fact, an e-mail message is actually a type of memo.

STRATEGIES

Format

Memorandums come in two basic formats: the pre-printed form with a logo of the organization or the simple *To*, *From*, *Subject*, *Date* form. Generally, a memo presents information in several paragraphs. If possible, memos should be one page in length, but sometimes they are longer. (It depends on the goal and topic of the memo.) The standard conventions of Times Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins, and single spacing apply to memos.

Organization

Most memos can be developed in three sections: an opening, a body, and a conclusion. As in the business letter, the first paragraph orients the reader to the purpose of the memo and the main idea of the writer. The paragraphs in the body add detailed supporting information to the main idea. The final paragraph presents a conclusion that often includes a restatement of the main idea, especially if the memo is lengthy or contains complicated information.

**TASK** Organization: Informative Memo

The sentences that follow are not in logical order. Organize the information so that the meaning is logically and effectively conveyed. You should combine sentences, add the necessary punctuation, and divide into paragraphs. There are several ways to organize the information.

TO: All Branch Chiefs
FROM: William Betts, Division Head
SUBJECT: Agency Smoking Guidelines
DATE: March 20, 2006

- Thank you for your support.
- There have been reports that these guidelines are not being followed by some of our branch chiefs.
- I ask that you take whatever steps are required to ensure that the new procedures are being followed.
- The Agency smoking guidelines were expanded in February 2005.
- The Agency smoking guidelines were communicated to all branch chiefs and employees.
- You are expected to take the lead in this important area.

**TASK Organization: Good News Memo**

Using the information that follows, write an effective memo telling an ACB employee that she has been promoted. The information is not in logical order. Choose the most effective organization, combine sentences, add sentence connectors and necessary punctuation, and divide into paragraphs. There are several ways to organize the information.

TO: Sara Reeves, Manager, North Central Marketing Division
FROM: Wallace Wright, Branch Manager, North Central Marketing Division
SUBJECT: Promotion to Marketing Manager
DATE: October 4, 2006

- You have been a dedicated ACB employee for the past eight years.
- You have been selected to fill the position of Marketing Manager in the Southwest Marketing Division.
- The position is open because the Marketing Manager left the company.
- Your qualifications are excellent, and you are a dependable and energetic worker.
- The position includes a 10 percent salary increase.
- The position has been vacant since August 1, 2006.
- I believe that you are the best person for this position.
- The new job begins on December 1, 2006.
- You will have to relocate to Boca Raton, Florida.
- Congratulations on your new position.

**TASK Organization: Bad News Memo**

Using the information that follows, write an effective memo telling employees that an ACB program has been abandoned. The information is not in logical order. Choose the most effective organization, combine sentences, add sentence connectors and necessary punctuation, and divide into paragraphs. There are several ways to organize the information.

TO: All North Central Marketing Division Employees
FROM: Walter Wong, President, North Central Marketing Division
SUBJECT: Abolishing the Individualized Work Schedule (IWS)
DATE: October 22, 2006

- I hope you will understand the necessity for this decision.
- The Individualized Work Schedule (IWS) was implemented in September 2003.
- The Division President and Vice-Presidents reached this decision after a thorough analysis of all factors involved.
- Management is abolishing this flex-time program as of December 31, 2006, for a number of reasons.
- Many employees abused or misused their flex-time.
- The rules about this flex-time program were distributed and explained to all employees.
- There has been a decrease in the productivity of our division since flex-time was implemented.
- In September, the President and Vice-Presidents met to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the IWS.
- The IWS is no longer a beneficial program to the Corporation.
- Our customers need to be served at certain hours.
- We can't keep this program and still meet the needs of the business.

Style

A memo is usually written in an informal style. This type of style includes contractions (*I'd, we'll, can't*) and words of one-syllable (*talk*) rather than multi-syllabic words (*interface*). The writer may choose first-person pronouns (*I* or *we*) and second-person pronouns (*you*) to create a personal style or may use third-person pronouns (*he, she, it, they*) to create an impersonal style. The overall purpose of the document and the goal of the author will determine what style is appropriate.

Tone

The tone of a memo can range from subjective and emotional to objective and balanced. However, in business and technical writing, it is common to write in an objective and low-key tone rather than a dramatic tone. The number of adjectives and adverbs will influence the tone, as will the choice of pronouns. The fewer the adjectives and adverbs, the more objective the tone. In addition, the tone is objective when *I* and *we* are avoided. Again, the author's tone is a result of word choice and is determined by the purpose and goal of the document.



EVALUATION

Working with a partner, read the memos printed on pages 71 and 72 and evaluate them in terms of their format, organization, content, understanding, and style. Before you evaluate them, complete these tasks:

- Put a box around the main idea.
- Underline the major points.
- Circle the supporting details.
- Underline the conclusion.
- Circle the pronouns.
- Highlight the adjectives and adverbs.

Now circle the words that best describe the tone of each memo.

Randolph Gray Corporation

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| subjective | informative | positive | argumentative |
| objective | emotional | negative | balanced |

CDC Information Systems

| | | | |
|------------|-------------|----------|---------------|
| subjective | informative | positive | argumentative |
| objective | emotional | negative | balanced |

| MEMORANDUM EVALUATION | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Excellent + | Satisfactory ✓ | Unsatisfactory – |
| Format | Appropriate and consistent presentation on the page | _____ |
| Organization | Logical and coherent development of ideas | _____ |
| Content | Substantive, relevant discussion of topic | _____ |
| Understanding | Extensive knowledge of the topic | _____ |
| Style | Authentic writer’s voice and effective style | _____ |

RGC
Randolph Gray Corporation
Interoffice Communication

TO: All Executives
FROM: Randolph Gray *RG*
Chief Executive Officer
SUBJECT: Business Conferences via Global Television to Begin in November
DATE: October 29, 2006

For your information, Intercontinental Hotels Corporation (IHC) and Comsat General Corporation have announced an equally owned joint venture to provide international televised conference service available to the public. The service, to begin in November, initially will link IHC's hotels in New York and London. The link will enable small groups, such as business executives, to conference with two-way audio, video, and print-out facilities.

Paul Sheeline, Chief Executive Officer of IHC, said the system would be expanded later to include Houston, Paris, Frankfurt, Riyadh, and Tokyo. He added that the system could be adapted to handle large groups.

Richard Bodman, President of Comsat General, said that prices for use of the system would vary, depending on which facilities a customer wanted to use. But he added that a typical meeting would cost between \$1,500 and \$2,000 an hour. The system will depend on satellites to beam signals.

As travel costs have increased, the use of televised conferences has grown. "It makes more sense to get a half-dozen executives into our hotel in New York for a two-hour teleconference with London, rather than taking the time and going to the expense of flying them all there," Mr. Sheeline said. Because of time differences, officials of Comsat General and IHC said their system would be available around the clock.

Please consider using this system in communicating with your subsidiaries around the world when more than three individuals are involved. The company can save time and travel expenses by having conferences in this mode, as well as exceed current productivity levels.

CDC

CDC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

TO: CDC Information Systems
FROM: Charles Fredericks *CF*
Director, Human Resources
SUBJECT: Assigned Work Schedule
DATE: September 23, 2006

Lately, I have noticed that some employees have not been conforming to their assigned work schedules. Although this is not yet a widespread practice, I have decided to take a proactive approach in order to prevent this from becoming a major problem. This is a serious matter to the company, not only because of the cost it represents to CDC, but also because of the impact it has on employee morale. Thus, I am sending this memorandum to all employees to ask that you follow your work schedule.

The most common violation has been late arrival to work. It has come to my attention that several employees are consistently late. Also, certain employees leave early without asking permission to do so. The company will no longer accept this kind of unprofessional behavior. This misconduct has resulted in deadlines not being met and projects not being completed. Therefore, I remind all employees that everyone is responsible for complying with the company rules on work schedules.

Following these rules is mandatory, and lack of compliance will lead to disciplinary actions. Anyone who arrives late or leaves the office early without permission will receive a letter of warning. If this happens again within the month, he or she will be suspended for three days without pay. If there is a third violation within 30 days, the employee will be subject to dismissal.

I hope that after this reminder no further measures will be necessary. Following your assigned work schedule will be to everyone's advantage. Thank you for your cooperation on this important issue.

cc: Elizabeth Perez

**ASSIGNMENT Proofreading a Memorandum**

Find the 20 errors in grammar and mechanics in this memo, and make the necessary corrections. When you have completed your proofreading task, you can compare your corrected version with the versions of your classmates. Discuss the style and tone of this memo in its revised form.

TO: All Division Employees
FROM: Chief, Administrative and Services Division
SUBJECT: Reducing Copier Costs
DATE: January 7, 2006

This memo's purpose is to remind everyone in our division to reduce their copier use. Which will reduce copier costs. The price of copier paper has raised this year; making the cost for each copy higher. Remember, that each of the copiers have reduction capabilities, and the 2 IBM machines offer double sided copying. Double sided copies take up less space in you're files, please use this features when ever possible.

We have a new Canon NP 500 copier who had replaced the Canon NP-400 on the second floor. The new Canon copys faster while maintaining the reduction and enlargement features. Please use this copier, when convenient, and give us comments on it's features and copy quality.

We appreciate your compliance with this request, and know that your cooperation will have a positive affect on the financial health of our company.

