

Professional Client Communication

The fact that a large volume of business communication, nowadays, is performed electronically, has been to the detriment of the language, and grammar, employed in such communications. It is important to realise, however, that every opportunity – formal or informal – to communicate with a client, or customer, in writing, is an opportunity to present a professional image of an individual, or company, and should be approached accordingly.

Effective Communication

The most important aspect of any business communication is the main point, idea, or message that it conveys, and it should be conveyed as quickly, and concisely as possible, in language that is appropriate to the target audience. Avoid technical terms, jargon and acronyms, wherever possible, and do not bury your main idea in a heap of additional, or subsidiary, information, which will dilute its importance, and distract the reader. Short, simple sentences, arranged in short paragraphs – not more than three, or four, sentences – can help you to present your idea(s) in punchy, easily digestible segments.

Try to write with the client, or customer, in mind. Be sensitive to his, or her, needs and wants, and, above all, avoid writing anything ambiguous, in other words, anything that can be misconstrued, or misunderstood. Professional businesspeople rarely have time to dwell on correspondence, and if your meaning is not instantly clear then the chances are that you will miss an opportunity.

Take similar care with any factual information, of figures, that you include in your correspondence. Use only information that you fully understand – and can therefore make correct inferences from – and verify it, for accuracy. If you present incorrect information, and/or incorrect analysis, your credibility with a prospective client, or customer, may be damaged beyond repair.

Incorrect spelling, punctuation or grammar may also serve as a source of distraction, or irritation, to a reader, diverting attention away from the main thrust of your correspondence, however worthy it may be. Use a spell checker, and have a competent colleague proof read your work for errors – including factual errors, or flawed logic – before producing your final draft.

You can help your reader to navigate, read, and understand your document by including appropriate headings and subheadings, bullet points, and enough white space to clearly separate the text. A single, clear font – preferably an open, “sans serif” typeface, such as “Arial”, or “Verdana” – used throughout is generally easier on the eye than multiple font types, styles and sizes.

Conclusion

Unsatisfactory business writing can result in a loss of credibility, respect, and, ultimately, business. Learning to write effectively in a business environment can take a little time, and effort, on the part of a writer, but the opportunities to impress prospective clients with those newfound skills is plain for all to see, particularly in a business world driven, nowadays, by electronic mail.

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