

B.A.(Prog) II sem

AECC- English

Effective Writing Skills

While writing to a friend, colleague, client, or a business partner, the content must be clear, concise, persuasive, accurate, and confident. Read on to know some tips for making the letter / memo / presentation worthwhile.

Avoid being verbose: Choose shorter words and sentences. For e.g. "I wanted to bring to your notice that the meeting has been cancelled". [10 words] This sentence could be rephrased as "Please note the meeting has been cancelled". [7 words]

Use objective subject lines: The subject of the memo / letter / e-mail should be objective and should reflect the content of the message. For e.g. "Tips on Effective Writing for Business" conveys to the reader that the message content will be related to information on effective writing.

Decide your audience: It is advisable to write to one set of audience as writing to different professionals would require choosing correct verbiage which is understood by different professionals in the same way. Also, do not use words which are very technical and can be understood only by a specific audience.

Request for action: Never leave the reader guessing "what next ?" He or she should know what is expected out of him / her. Close your mail / letter with the action you are expecting the reader to take.

Share companywide messages with a strategy: Do not overload employees with a lot of text heavy mails. Divide the message. For e.g. If a company has set up a videoconference room, the Corporate communication Team should sent out the first message announcing the launch, the second message on how to

use the equipment, and the third message on how to block the conference room for client meetings and calls.

Logically format a document: Ensure that the content in the message is linked to the subject and to the content below and above it. There should be a logical connection in various paragraphs included in the document.

Be Persuasive: Address one reader rather than many as it increases the focus and also creates accountability of the reader.

Engage the audience: Talk to the audience. For e.g. Rather than saying, "There will be two ways for calculating the cost." The sender of the message could say, "Financial Analysts can choose one of two procedures to calculate the cost."

Check before you send: Always proofread the mail / memo / document that is to be sent. Remember the first draft is not always the final draft. Do not only check for content, but also, check for formatting, subject lines, audience, and attachments.

Execute with confidence: Do not be fearful while sending the communication. If a reminder needs to be sent, it should be sent. Do not try to send it to a group, rather send it to those who haven't sent the reports so far. For e.g. In case you are following up on a report you asked for, address the audience as "Thank You X, Y, Z for sending the reports. We are still awaiting reports from A, B, and C. Request you to send them latest by 4:00 PM today."

In today's competitive world, a good writing must engage a reader. Whether it is a proposal or a resume, the reader must feel involved in the write-up.

Read on to get tips on how to write better while applying for a job or for a business....

Start with something interesting: In today's market scenario where several resumes are lying at the desk, why does a particular resume gets picked than the others in the lot? Thinking... It is because the resume has a cover letter /

introductory note that makes it saleable. A summary of a candidate's profile is always better than a simply stated one line objective which merely talks about a candidate's aspiration and does not tell about his / her profile summary.

Add a personal touch: While writing to potential clients for business, ensure that the content is customized as per the client's profile and requirement. This helps creating a special bond with the reader.

Give examples and not just adjectives: A candidate must mention a relevant example to demonstrate or justify the adjectives included in the resume. For instance, if he / she talks about his strength in area of team management, he / she should mention an example on how well a team was handled. Avoid giving micro level details, however, mention about achievements / recognitions.

Leverage numbers: A candidate must back-up achievements / adjectives stated with numbers. Same goes for the corporate looking for business. Numbers form a strong base for generating commitment. A percentage movement showing improvement in performance or scores always catches attention of the readers.

Avoid jargons: If a candidate is applying in a completely different industry than the one he has worked before in, he should avoid / not use jargons which are not relevant to the new industry. Jargons tend to confuse people and there is a possibility of the message being lost. In case a jargon is to be used, the expanded form should also be mentioned. For instance, a jargon EMS should be written in a statement as "Employee Measurement System [EMS]".

Do not misrepresent data: Write with integrity. Whether it is numbers or years of experience or sales volume - all facts stated should be true.

Communication Skills: Ensure that the document is error free - no spelling or grammatical mistake. Always proof read the document / proposal or get it read by a friend / colleague.

Follow-up: Most of the times a candidate submits a resume or a proposal to a prospective client and does not follow-up. Remember, there are several other resumes and proposals which are lying at the desk. A candidate needs to ensure that a prompt follow-up [read "not too much"] should be done.