CHAPTER 8

Writing to Clients and Customers

8.1 Neutral or Positive Messages
8.2 Negative Messages
8.3 Persuasive Messages
Rosita’s Reactions to Letters

Recently, Rosita Hernandez changed jobs. After completing her business technology degree, she left her position as a clerk at a local supermarket. Now she works as an administrative assistant at a financial services office in San Diego, California.

In her new job, Rosita keys letters for the members of her work team. The letters often contain specific formatting instructions, which vary from letter to letter. Some of the letters look quite different from the letter formats Rosita learned to use in her college classes. She has suggested to the team members that using only one or two letter formats would give the company’s letters a consistent look. This approach would also speed processing of the letters. However, the team members do not seem interested in changing letter styles.

Rosita keys letters written in English only. Most of the recipients of these letters are in the United States. However, some recipients live in Mexico. Some of the letters are very short, and they seem a little blunt and tactless to Rosita. Some letters are long and wordy, sometimes running to two and three pages. Rosita wonders whether the people writing the letters consider the receiver’s culture and try to adjust the message to fit the receiver.

Questions

1. Are Rosita’s concerns about the varying formats justified? Is there one correct format?
2. If there is more than one correct letter format, how do you determine which one to use?
3. Should a writer consider the reader’s culture or nationality when writing his or her letters? Why or why not?
Neutral or Positive Messages

Planning Neutral or Positive Messages

Business messages are written to achieve a purpose. To improve their chances for success, a sender should consider messages from the receiver’s point of view. As you have learned in earlier chapters, the four steps in planning a message are:

1. Identify the objective.
2. Identify the main idea.
3. Determine the supporting details.
4. Adjust the content to the receiver.

These steps apply to all types of messages, including those written to give positive or neutral news. The steps are applied in the example shown in Figure 8-1.

**Figure 8-1 Planning a Positive Message**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING A POSITIVE MESSAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Objective</td>
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<td>Identify the Main Idea</td>
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<td>Determine the Supporting Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adjust the Content to the Receiver</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Organizing Neutral or Positive Messages

After identifying the content for a message, the writer should select the correct order for the information. Messages with positive or neutral news should be organized in direct order. In direct order, the main idea is presented first, followed by the supporting details and the closing.

Main Idea

In effective messages with positive, neutral, or routine news, the main idea should appear in the first or second sentence. The main idea should be stated clearly and concisely. Emphasize the main idea by keeping the introductory paragraph short—one or two sentences (usually no longer than four lines).

Supporting Details

After giving the main idea in the first paragraph, the writer should provide details that can clarify the main idea and help the receiver. Supporting details should furnish necessary explanations, state conditions of the main idea, or answer the receiver’s questions.

This section may have one or more paragraphs. For clarity, make sure each paragraph has a central idea, repeats key words, and lists important points. To make your messages appealing, keep these middle paragraphs short—about eight lines or less for each one.

Goodwill Closing

The closing of a message provides an opportunity to build goodwill. The closing should be friendly and courteous. It should leave a favorable impression with the receiver. In addition, it should identify any action required. Remember, using the receiver’s name adds a personal touch. The following closing paragraph uses this technique.

Elizabeth, we eagerly await your reply and hope that you will accept our offer. If you have any questions, call me at 864-555-0185.

Closings in messages from a company that sells products or services may include a soft sell. A soft sell is an attempt to sell a product or service, but it is not strong or pushy. Instead, a subtle or low-pressure appeal is used. The following goodwill closing contains a soft sell message.

Thank you, Mr. Ming, for your order. You may want to visit our store during our Anniversary Sale during May 15 to 29. All personal computers will be reduced 25 percent.
Writing Neutral Messages

Some documents, such as routine requests or claims, contain neutral messages. In a message with neutral news, the main idea is neither positive nor negative. The senders of these neutral messages think the receivers will respond as requested. The receivers are not being persuaded to do something.

Routine Requests

In a routine request, the sender asks for an action that will be done willingly. This type of request is presented in a direct order. “Will you...” is the main idea of a routine request. To aid the receiver in the response, the writer must provide enough details for the receiver to understand the request and respond easily. Providing details means anticipating the receiver’s questions and responding to them. For example, if you ask someone to speak at an event, you need to provide the receiver with the following details:

- The topic
- The background, knowledge, and expected size of the audience
- The date, time, and location of the presentation
- The amount the speaker will be paid, if appropriate
- Details about travel arrangements

In a routine request, reveal the main idea early in the message. Provide the necessary supporting details concisely. Close in a polite, helpful manner. The following plan is used for routine requests.

| Main Idea | State the request politely and directly and provide the reason for the request if appropriate. |
| Details | Provide the information required to obtain a complete response, such as times, dates, benefits to the receiver, and terms of payment. |
| Closing | End pleasantly and indicate the action the receiver should take. |

Figure 8–2 on page 261 contains an example of an ineffectively written routine request. Figure 8–3 on page 262 contains a well-written routine request.

Key Point

The message containing a routine request should be presented in direct order.
Figure 8-2 Ineffective Routine Request.

CARLOS SORIA  
6308 Claremont Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45242-1841  

September 5, 20--

Ms. Abigail DePalma  
1002 Sutton Road  
Cincinnati, OH 45230-2640  

Dear Ms. DePalma  

Last night's Gazette included an article on your speech to a local investor's club. The article discussed the investment strategies you have employed in your highly successful career. It also contained some of your thoughts on mutual funds and state bonds. However, I would like some additional details—more than those printed in the newspaper.

Do you have any copies of your speech or handouts that were given to the club? I'm sure the information will be very interesting.

Sincerely  

Carlos Soria  
Carlos Soria

Does not state the main idea of the message
Does not provide details the receiver needs to respond
Figure 8-3 Effective Routine Request.

CARLOS SORIA
6308 Claremont Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45242-1841

September 5, 20--

Ms. Abigail DePalma
1002 Sutton Road
Cincinnati, OH 45230-2640

Dear Ms. DePalma

Please send me a copy of the handouts you provided at your recent presentation to the Queen City Investment Club. If you have handouts on your investment strategies and your insights on mutual funds, please send those also.

Unfortunately, I had to miss the meeting and your presentation. I read the article in last night’s Gazette. Although the article was very complimentary, it did not contain many details. Because several members have told me that I missed some very valuable information, I am making this request.

A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in sending the materials to me. Thank you for being willing to share your expertise with others.

Sincerely

Carlos Soria
Carlos Soria
Enclosure

States the request clearly
Explain why the request is made
Makes it easy for the receiver to respond
Claims

A claim is a message that requests a refund, an exchange, or a discount on merchandise or services. Customers and clients use a direct order in claims to communicate to the receiver that they expect an adjustment—a positive settlement to a claim.

Main Idea  Ask for an adjustment
Details    Explain the problem or the reason for the request and identify the damage (if damage occurred)
Closing   End with a positive statement and indicate how to correct the situation

A claim message should have a positive but firm tone. Claims may be submitted using e-mail or an online form as well as by letter. Figure 8-4 shows a well-written claim message sent by e-mail.

Ethics

Be fair and honest in dealing with claims. Request an adjustment only when the seller is at fault. For example, saying that you did not receive part of an order when you did receive all the items would be unethical.

Figure 8-4 Claim Message

1. What are two types of letters that contain neutral messages?
2. What is a claim?
Check your answers in Appendix C.
Writing Positive Messages

A receiver will react favorably to a message that contains positive news. Examples of documents that contain positive messages are orders, positive responses to requests, friendship messages, and acknowledgments. For those messages, use direct order.

- **Main Idea**: Say yes to the receiver
- **Details**: Provide information the receiver needs to carry out specific instructions
- **Closing**: End with a helpful, positive closing; if the sender sells goods or services, the closing may contain a soft sell

Orders

Companies usually place an order by using a form called a *purchase order*. Occasionally, a small company or an individual will use a letter or e-mail to place an order. “Please send me . . .” is the main idea of an order.

Provide complete supporting details to ensure that an order will be filled correctly and to avoid wasting time and money. For each item ordered, indicate:

- The stock number or catalog number
- A description (including the size and color if applicable)
- Quantity ordered, unit cost, and total cost
- Method of shipment
- Buyer’s name and shipping address
- Method of payment

In an order, formatting the middle paragraph as a table can be helpful. Use direct order in this type of message.

- **Main Idea**: Ask the receiver to fill the order
- **Details**: Supply specific information needed by the receiver
- **Closing**: End with a statement indicating the action the receiver should take

The letter shown in Figure 8-5 on page 265 is an ineffectively written order. The first paragraph does not state plainly that this is an order. The second paragraph does not state clearly what is being ordered and where the items should be sent. Figure 8-6 on page 266 illustrates a well-written order.

The first paragraph makes clear that the letter is an order. The items ordered are presented in a table. The sender provides complete details needed for shipping the items.
Figure 8-5 Ineffective Order Letter

July 9, 20–

Whitlock Catalog Sales
708 Apple Street
Ogden, UT 84244-0076

Ladies and Gentlemen

I was looking at your recent sales catalog and became very excited when I saw that you had Winthrop drill sets for $99. I could use three sets of these drills as gifts for my sons.

Also, I saw that you carry Osborne dishes. I love the Morning Glory pattern. I want two sets of eight place settings each for $125 each. These dishes will be used as gifts for my daughters.

I have enclosed a check for the total amount, which includes the $25 shipping fee. Thank you.

Sincerely

Tamara Hindelworth

Tamara Hindelworth

Enclosure

Does not state clearly that this is an order.

Does not state clearly the items being ordered or where to send the items.
**Figure 8-6 Effective Order Letter**

```
July 9, 20--

Whitlock Catalog Sales
708 Apple Street
Ogden, UT 84244-0076

Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for sending me your recent catalog. The sale prices are remarkable. Please send me the items listed below, which are from that catalog.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>456-1</td>
<td>Winthrop Drill Set</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$99.00</td>
<td>$297.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9071</td>
<td>Osborne China Set (Morning Glory Pattern)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
<td>$250.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Amount $608.10

Merchandise Subtotal $547.00
Shipping 25.00
Sales Tax 36.10

Please send the items to the address shown on the letterhead. A check for the total amount is enclosed.

If you have any questions about my order, please call me at (870) 555-0122.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Tamara Hindelworth

Enclosure
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Positive Responses to a Request

A positive response tells the receiver the sender is saying yes to a request. Direct order is used for positive responses. If the sender is a business, the closing may include a soft sell.

Main Idea  Give a positive response to the request.
Details  Provide necessary information so the receiver knows what the sender is offering and expects; also make necessary requests
Closing  End with a courteous, positive statement and possibly a reminder of any action the sender wants the receiver to take

Figure 8–7 on page 268 contains an example of an ineffectively written positive response. The letter does not use direct order and takes too long to give the positive response. Figure 8–8 on page 269 contains an example of a well-written positive response. Note that the supporting information confirms details, such as the date, time, and place, and makes a request of the receiver.

The following example contains a positive response to a credit request. However, it is ineffectively written because it uses indirect order—the main idea follows the supporting information.

Thank you for your application for a charge account at Top-Notch Building Supplies. When we receive such applications, we always examine them very carefully.

All our accounts have credit terms of 2/10, net/30. After examining your credit background, we find that you have an excellent credit history. As a result, we are giving you a $15,000 limit on your account.

We hope to see you soon.

The following example is a well-written positive response to a credit request. The supporting information, which follows the main idea, includes a description of restrictions on the account and the payment terms. The closing includes an effectively written soft sell.

Your Top-Notch Building Supplies charge account has been activated and is ready for your use. Thank you for your interest in our products.

For new accounts, the terms are 2/10, net/30. Because your credit rating and references are excellent, the limit for your account is $15,000.

Our most recent catalog is enclosed. If you have questions about our products, call 1-800-555-0199. Our trained salespeople will be happy to help you.
Figure 8-7 Ineffective Positive Response

Computer Services
13450 Hillcrest Boulevard
Greenville, SC 29615-1345
864.555.0185  Fax 864.555.0186

October 18, 20--

Ms. Elizabeth Somers
4103 Walker Avenue
Greenville, SC 29605-4303

Dear Elizabeth:

We appreciate your coming to interview for the position of training director in the Office Services Department. There were many well-qualified individuals who applied for the position.

During your visit, we were impressed with your knowledge of the company and the management techniques we use. Your positive attitude is very apparent. Thus, we would like to offer the position to you. Your starting date will be December 12 if you accept the offer. Your annual salary will be $48,600, and you will be paid biweekly.

Please let us know your decision in writing by November 15, 20--. If you have any questions, call me at 864.555.0185.

Sincerely,

Ray Park
Ray Park

Does not use direct order

Takes too long to give the positive response
Computer Services
13450 Hillcrest Boulevard
Greenville, SC 29615-1345
864.555.0185  Fax 864.555.0186

October 18, 20--

Ms. Elizabeth Somers
4103 Walker Avenue
Greenville, SC 29605-4303

Dear Elizabeth:

Congratulations! You have been selected for the position of training director in the Office Services Department.

During your visit, we were impressed with your knowledge of the company and of the management techniques we use. If you accept our offer, your starting date will be December 12. Your annual salary will be $48,600, and you will be paid biweekly.

Please let us know your decision in writing by November 15, 20--. If you have any questions, call me at 864.555.0185.

Sincerely,

Ray Park
Ray Park
Goodwill Messages

A **goodwill message** can be an acknowledgment or a friendly message designed to build relationships. Effective goodwill messages help increase the receiver’s positive feelings toward the sender. Goodwill messages may express congratulations, sympathy, welcome, or appreciation. They may also extend invitations or acknowledge an order or receipt of something. The expression of goodwill is the main idea of this type of message.

Friendship Messages

A friendship message says nonverbally to your receiver, “I want a positive relationship with you.” This type of message may or may not need supporting details. For example, when expressing sympathy, details are not appropriate. Yet details in an invitation are important. The receiver needs to know who is invited, when and where the occasion will be held, and how to dress.

The following congratulatory message needs no supporting details.

**Main Idea**
Congratulations on your recent promotion to supervisor of Office Services.

**Closing**
You have served the company well in your previous jobs. I am confident you will be successful in your new position.

The following invitation includes the necessary supporting details.

**Main Idea**
You are invited to a small surprise party celebrating Arianne Hanson’s promotion.

**Details**
The party will be held in the cafeteria at 4:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24.

**Closing**
Come and help us congratulate Arianne. RSVP by Friday, March 20, ext. 4456.
Acknowledgments

An acknowledgment is a message that tells a sender that a message or item has been received. The objective of an acknowledgment is to maintain or build goodwill. An acknowledgment also may be used to inform the receiver that a request cannot be filled right away. These messages often are used to acknowledge orders and credit applications. The supporting information usually reveals the reasons for the delayed response. The goodwill closing may contain a soft sell, as shown below.

Main Idea  Thank you for your order. We are pleased to have you as one of our customers.

Details  The demand for the earthenware plant holders has far exceeded our supply. Your order will be sent on May 15, the day we expect our shipment.

Closing  In the meantime, look over the enclosed flyer announcing our Spring Fling Sale. Place your order now to enjoy 50 percent savings on several popular items.

The checklist shown on the following page will help you compose effective neutral or positive messages.

Key Point  An acknowledgment lets the sender know that a message or an item has been received.
### Checklist for Positive or Neutral Messages

**Plan**
- Have I identified the objective of the message?
- Have I determined the main idea?
- Have I selected supporting details?
- Have I adjusted the message for the reader?

**Write**
- Is the main idea presented in the first paragraph?
- Are the supporting details presented after the main idea?
- Is the closing courteous?
- Is a soft sell message in the closing appropriate?

**Edit and Proofread**
- Is the language clear and concise?
- Are the details correct?
- Are the format, grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?
- Is each paragraph an appropriate length?
- Does the message use the “you” approach?
- Have I proofread the document and corrected all errors?

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1. What are four types of letters that contain positive messages?
2. What is an acknowledgment? Check your answers in Appendix C.
Section 8.1 Applications

A. Identify Message Types
Indicate the type of message that might contain each of the following sentences.

1. I am returning the frying pan and asking for a refund.
2. Happy anniversary to you and your spouse.
3. Your application for a Sunshine credit card arrived today.
4. Please send me the following items from your catalog.
5. The refund you requested is enclosed.

B. Plan, Organize, and Write a Positive Message
You have been asked by Mr. Thomas Hawks to speak at a meeting of a local civic organization that promotes programs for youth. The meeting will be held on March 15, 20--, at 6:30 p.m. in your high school cafeteria. The audience will be the group members. The members include men and women of various ages and backgrounds. The purpose of your brief talk will be to give the group ideas for youth programs that might be conducted jointly with your school.

1. Plan a positive response message. Identify the objective and the main idea of the message. Write the supporting details you will need to include (making up any details that are needed).
2. Decide how the message should be organized—in direct order or indirect order.
3. Write the message.
   • Use block letter style and open punctuation.
   • Make up a name and address for the organization. Use this information in the letter address along with Mr. Hawks’ name.
   • Include an opening paragraph, one middle paragraph to provide details, and a goodwill closing paragraph.
4. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear.
5. Proofread the letter and correct all errors.
Planning Negative Messages

A negative message conveys news that will disappoint the receiver. Messages that deny requests, decline to supply information, refuse credit, or reject a proposal are examples of this type of message. Careful planning and organizing are required to give the bad news and yet maintain goodwill. Achieving this goal is challenging, especially when the receiver of the message has a different culture or customs than those of the writer. For example, people from some cultures may view a writer’s use of concise writing as somewhat short and abrupt.

The tone of a negative message should reflect a sincere concern for the receiver’s interests. The objective is to present the unfavorable news in a positive light; in a manner the receiver will view as fair; and, if possible, in the receiver’s best interests. The writer should give reasons for the negative news before stating the negative news. This strategy helps prepare the reader to accept the negative news. Details supporting the negative news also help the reader to see the negative decision as a fair one. The steps for planning a negative message are shown in Figure 8-9.

**Figure 8-9 Planning a Negative Message**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning a Negative Message</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Objective</td>
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<td>Identify the Main Idea</td>
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<td>Determine the Supporting Details</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust the Content to the Receiver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizing Negative Messages

After identifying the content for a message, the writer should select the correct order for the information. Messages with negative news should be organized in the indirect order. Indirect order presents the reasons or details that explain the negative news before stating the news. The reasons are presented first to prepare the receiver for the bad news.

When using indirect order for a message that gives unfavorable news, follow these steps:

1. Begin with a neutral opening.
2. Explain the reasons for the negative news.
3. State or imply the negative news.
4. Close on a positive note; if possible, offer an alternative.

Neutral Opening

The objectives of the opening are to establish trust and to focus the receiver’s attention on the topic of the message. To establish trust, begin with a neutral opening. Do not imply a positive or a negative response to the receiver. A neutral opening does not mislead the receiver into thinking the response is positive, nor does it discourage the receiver by revealing the negative news.

In the opening, maintain a positive tone by avoiding the use of negative words or phrases, such as unable, regret to tell you, a problem exists, or unfortunately. Instead, use positive, neutral words and phrases, such as appreciate, agree with you, and thank you.

Avoid opening a message containing negative news by referring to the date of the receiver’s previous message. The examples shown below on the left are not effective openings. They do not introduce the topic of the message. The examples on the right introduce the topic.

Ineffective Opening

Thank you for your letter of August 10.

We received your request dated May 5.

Your letter of June 12 has been received.

Effective Opening

Your application for a charge account received our immediate attention.

Your request for a refund has been reviewed by our Customer Service Department.

Your application for a loan has received our careful consideration.
Assume that the sender is writing to refuse a request to serve on a committee. Ineffective and effective neutral openings for that situation follow.

**Ineffective Openings**
- Serving on such an important committee would be a real pleasure.
- The Improvements Committee is an important committee on which to serve.
- I wish I could serve on the Improvements Committee.

**Effective Openings**
- Thank you for asking me to serve on the Improvements Committee.
- As you pointed out, the Improvements Committee is very important.
- Thank you for the opportunity to serve on the Improvements Committee.

**Reasons for the Negative News**

The supporting details in a negative-news message provide the reasons for the negative news. This section may have one or two paragraphs, depending on the complexity of the message. Present the receiver with a logical explanation of the reasons for the negative news. Keep the message unified by focusing on one or two main reasons.

If possible, tell how the reasons will benefit the receiver. Do not state company policy as the reason for denying a request. Although citing company policy may be appropriate in some cases, always explain the reasons for
the policy. If the message does not explain reasons for the company policy, the goodwill between a company and its customers may be damaged.

In the following examples, the reasons on the left are company-oriented rather than receiver-oriented. The reasons on the right are you-oriented.

**Ineffectively Written Reasons**

We would like to repair your cell phone, but company policy forbids it.

If we replaced your sprinkler or refunded your money, we would be doing the work of the shipping company. Write to the shipping company for a refund of your money. It has insurance to cover its costs.

**Well-Written Reasons**

Providing free repair of cell phones out of warranty would add greatly to the retail prices of our phones. For example . . .

We choose the company that ships our merchandise carefully. This shipper guarantees its service, yet keeps costs low. Because the product was damaged during shipping, you will need to contact the shipping company to request a replacement or refund.

**The Negative News Itself**

After learning the reasons for the negative news, the receiver should be mentally prepared to receive the actual refusal or other bad news. If the reasons are logical, the reader will expect the negative news. In some cases, it may be appropriate to soften the negative message by implying the negative news.

**Facts or Opinions**

People often read to gain information to help them solve problems or make decisions. In such cases, being able to tell facts from opinions in the material you read is very important. **Facts** are statements that can be proved to be true or correct. **Opinions** are views or conclusions reached by someone. Generally, facts are more valuable for solving problems or making decisions. However, opinions can be helpful when they come from a person who is trained or has experience on the subject.

When you read, be aware that the material may contain both facts and opinions. Consider the source of the information to help you judge its value. Open the Word file CH08 Reading from the student data files. Follow the directions given in the file to complete the exercise about facts and opinions.
rather than stating it directly. Convey the message quickly, using positive language if possible.

To imply the bad news and to avoid using words with a negative tone, use an *if* clause as shown in the example below. Use the passive voice or focus on “what you can do” rather than “what you cannot do.”

If you must use negative language, avoid using personal pronouns—*I, me, my, mine, we, our, ours, us, you, your, and yours*. Those personal pronouns combined with negative language can offend the receiver.

In the following examples, the responses on the left are ineffectively written. The responses on the right are well written.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ineffectively Written “No’s”</th>
<th>Well-Written “No’s”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I cannot send your order today.</td>
<td>If I could, I would send your order today. Your order will be sent as soon as we receive the shipment from our supplier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because your camera is no longer under warranty, I cannot grant your request for a replacement.</td>
<td>If your camera were still under warranty, it would be replaced. Only cameras under warranty are replaced free of charge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Closing**

The closing of a message containing negative news should be courteous and helpful. The purpose of the closing is to maintain or rebuild goodwill. After presenting or implying the negative news, change the emphasis and close on a positive note.

To maintain a positive tone, do not mention or remind the receiver of the negative news again. Do not apologize because you cannot accommodate the receiver. If a mistake has not been made, an apology is inappropriate. If you did make a mistake, you owe the receiver an apology. However, place the apology in the middle paragraphs—not in the closing.

The closing should have a sincere tone. Avoid overused closings such as *If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to call*. Use a similar statement but with a positive tone: *If you have any questions, please call*. Avoid using conditional words such as *hope, think, and maybe*.

Offer the receiver another option. Most problem situations have more than one solution. Presenting another option shifts the emphasis from the negative news to a positive solution. If another option is not available at the present, mention an option that may be available in the future. The following example provides such as option.

You may apply for the loan again at a later date when you have improved your credit score.
The following examples illustrate both ineffectively written and well-written closings.

**Ineffectively Written Closings**

- Even though we cannot fill your order, I have enclosed our newest catalog.
- I am sorry that I cannot fill your order, but I have enclosed our newest catalog.
- Even though I cannot fill your order, if there is anything else I can do, please let me know.

**Well-Written Closings**

- Because Part No. 1403 is no longer being manufactured, Part No. 1402 is being used as a substitute. The substitute part is only $15 and works just as well as Part No. 1403. If you would like to order Part No. 1402, call me at 1-800-555-0155.
- Your order will be shipped the day you place your order.

If the receiver is a customer, you may close the message with a soft sell by mentioning a related product, a discount, or some other relevant item that would interest the receiver. In this situation, your job is to get the customer to come into the store or to use your services again.

**Ineffectively Written Closings**

- Some of our materials are being offered at greatly reduced prices. Come in and see them soon.
- We appreciate your business. Come in and see us soon.
- Our lowest sale prices of the year will be in effect all next week.

**Well-Written Closings**

- Our latest sales brochure is enclosed. Note that some of our materials are reduced by as much as 50 percent. Come in and see them soon.
- Join us on November 12 when three local authors will be signing their new books. All books by these authors will be reduced 25 percent.
- Our Fall Fix It Sale will be from October 31 through November 6. All merchandise for home repair will be reduced 25 percent. All items for the lawn and garden will be reduced 20 percent. Customers will receive a free package of tulip bulbs for fall planting with a purchase of $20 or more.

### Key Point

An effective letter can deliver bad news and include a closing designed to get the customer to come into the store or to use your services again.

---

**check point**

1. Give three examples of negative messages.
2. What steps should you follow when using indirect order for a negative message?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
Writing Negative Messages

Many situations call for messages that contain negative news. Some messages containing negative news need special attention. They are messages that deny a request and messages that refuse credit.

Denying a Request

In a request denial, you are saying no to another person’s request. The reasons for declining a request are an important aspect of this type of message. The success of the message depends on whether the receiver judges the reasons to be valid. Figure 8-10 on page 281 illustrates an ineffectively written message that declines a request. Figure 8-11 on page 282 illustrates a well-written message that declines a request.

Refusing Credit

A credit refusal is a message that denies credit to an applicant. Credit may be refused for several reasons. The credit application may contain incomplete details or lack credit references. The applicant’s employment record may show a frequent change of jobs. The applicant may already be in debt, be behind on payments, or have insufficient income to warrant a loan.

If credit must be refused, the receiver has a right to know why. The sender should explain the reasons tactfully. The goal is to refuse credit but maintain the person as a customer. An example of the body of a well-written message that denies credit is shown below.

Thank you for your order for Stonecut Flooring. You have selected a quality product that is extremely durable.

Your credit application has been reviewed. Based on your income and existing debts, you do not qualify for a credit purchase with our company at this time. Please let us know if you would like to place a cash order instead.

In addition to flooring, we have many other quality products for your home at low discounted prices. As a cash customer, you will receive quality merchandise, courtesy, and low prices.

Notice that the message above has a neutral opening and uses positive language. It is written in indirect order, giving the reason for the negative news before the negative news is stated. The customer is offered an alternative—placing a cash order. The checklist on page 284 will help you compose effective messages that contain negative news.
Figure 8-10 Ineffective Negative Message

Lemmon’s Electronics
906 Comet Street
Billings, MT 59105-0906
406-555-0185 Fax 406-555-0186

April 26, 20–

Mr. Eugene Anderson
3692 Stoner Point
Billings, MT 59105-3692

Dear Mr. Anderson

I received your request for a refund of $59.58 for a DVD player you bought at our recent clearance sale. I am sorry, but your request cannot be granted.

When we hold a clearance sale, signs are posted all over the store that clearly state that all sales are final. If the DVD does not function properly, please bring it to the store for a replacement.

Mr. Anderson, I am sorry for the misunderstanding. Please come in and see us again. We are having a big sale next week.

Sincerely yours

Clayton Lemmon
Clayton Lemmon
Manager

Opening should not include a negative response
Closing should not include an apology
Figure 8-11 Effective Negative Message

Lemmon’s Electronics
906 Comet Street
Billings, MT 59105-0906
406-555-0185    Fax 406-555-0186

April 26, 20--

Mr. Eugene Anderson
3692 Stoner Point
Billings, MT 59105-3692

Dear Mr. Anderson

Your request for a refund of $59.58 for a DVD player was brought to my attention. You bought an excellent product when you purchased the M-100.

When items are sold at clearance prices, they may be returned only if they are defective. This allows us to offer products to our customers at greatly reduced prices. During clearance sales, signs are posted many places in the store, stating that all sales are final. However, if the DVD does not function properly, please bring it to the store for a replacement.

Mr. Anderson, a certificate for 25 percent off your next purchase at Lemmon’s is enclosed. Presently, we are having a sale on computers. Please come in and use your certificate to take advantage of great savings.

Sincerely yours

Clayton Lemmon
Clayton Lemmon
Manager
Writing Messages with Both Positive and Negative News

Once in a while, you may have to write a message that contains both positive and negative news. The steps for planning that type of message are the same as for other messages. However, in these situations, you will have two main ideas instead of just one—the positive news is the first idea, and the negative news is the second. When organizing these messages, use indirect order with the good news as the opening. In the following example, the positive news is used as the opening of a bad-news message. The positive news is followed by the reasons for the bad news and the bad news itself.

**Key Point**

In a letter that has both positive and negative news, present the positive news first.

| Good-News or Neutral Beginning | Thank you for your order of four Kiley Fisher CDs and three Viewmaster CDs. The four Kiley Fisher CDs are being shipped to you today. |
| Reasons for the Bad News       | The demand for the Viewmaster CDs has far exceeded our expectations. As a result, these CDs are presently out of stock. |
| The Bad News                   | However, a new shipment will arrive on Thursday of this week. Your Viewmaster CDs will be mailed to you the day they arrive. |
| Soft Sell                      | A catalog of our new arrivals is enclosed. Some CDs are as much as 50 percent below retail prices. Find those you would like and send us your order soon. |

1. What are two types of letters that contain negative news?
2. How should a message that contains both positive and negative news be organized?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
### CHECKLIST FOR NEGATIVE MESSAGES

#### PLAN
- Have I identified the objective of the message?
- Have I determined the main idea?
- Have I selected supporting details?
- Have I adjusted the message for the reader?

#### WRITE
- Is the opening neutral? Does it introduce the topic of the message?
- Does the supporting information focus on one or two receiver-oriented reasons for the negative message?
- Have I used positive language? Is the closing courteous?
- Have I used an if clause or passive voice if possible?
- Have I told the receiver what could be done rather than what could not be done?
- Have I avoided using personal pronouns and negative words?
- Is the closing helpful and courteous?
- Does the closing offer an alternative, contain no apology, and avoid reminders of the negative message?

#### EDIT AND PROOFREAD
- Is the language clear and concise?
- Are the details correct?
- Are the format, grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?
- Is each paragraph an appropriate length?
- Have I proofread the document and corrected all errors?
Section 8.2 Applications

A. Identify Message Types
Indicate the type of message that might contain each of the following sentences.

1. My schedule does not allow me to accept any speaking engagements for the next three months.
2. Our research shows that you have two outstanding loans, and payments on both loans are past due.
3. All our grant money for the current year has been designated for other projects.
4. Since you purchased the item more than 30 days ago, the time for requesting a refund has passed.

B. Plan, Organize, and Write a Negative Message
Mayfield Printing Service prepared and printed a resume for Mr. Luther Donaldson. The resume was printed exactly as Mr. Donaldson specified. He proofread the resume. However, he overlooked a mistake in the spelling of a previous employer’s name. The resume was printed with the mistake. After receiving the resumes, Mr. Donaldson has asked for a refund. As manager of Mayfield Printing Service, write a message to Mr. Donaldson denying his request.

1. Plan a negative response message. Identify the objective and the main idea of the message. Write the supporting details you will need to include (making up any details that are needed).
2. Decide how the message should be organized—in direct order or indirect order.
3. Write the message.
   - Create a letterhead for the company, making up an address and phone number.
   - Create a letterhead using your name and address in the document header.
   - Use block letter style and open punctuation.
   - Mr. Donaldson’s address is 1607 North Bernard Avenue, Bartlesville, OK 74006-0551.
4. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear.
5. Proofread the letter and correct all errors.
Planning Persuasive Messages

A persuasive message tries to convince the reader to take an action. In a work setting, people often try to persuade other people to do things. A team leader tries to persuade his or her team members to work overtime on a special project. One employee tries to persuade other employees to use a new form. A salesperson tries to persuade customers to place orders. The Collections Department tries to persuade customers to pay their bills. Much of this persuasion occurs in letters, memos, messages, and proposals.

To persuade people to do something, you must be able to identify a reason for them to do it. People will act to meet their own needs, so you must show your readers they have a need to do what you want them to do. That need must be theirs, not yours. For example, if you ask other employees to fill out a new form because it will make your job easier, they are unlikely to be persuaded. However, if you show them how using the form will make their jobs easier, they will be more willing to do as you ask. Needs vary among people; but those needs are often linked to achievement, recognition, comfort, convenience, physical well-being, or money. When planning a persuasive message, analyze the audience to determine their needs. Relate the action you want readers to take (or not take) to those needs.

The steps for planning a persuasive message are applied in the example shown in Figure 8-12.

Figure 8-12 Planning a Persuasive Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANNING A PERSUASIVE MESSAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the Main Idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine the Supporting Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjust the Content to the Receiver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Organizing Persuasive Messages

Like negative messages, most persuasive messages are organized in an indirect order. That means that you must describe the need convincingly before making your request. In that way, you prepare the reader for the main message before presenting it. After readers understand the need, they are more likely to agree to the solution—acting as you request. Some messages, such as urgent collection messages, are written in direct order.

To organize a persuasive message in indirect order, follow these steps:

1. Gain the reader’s attention.
2. Show the reader that he or she has a need or will benefit from fulfilling the request.
3. Explain your solution to that need—in other words, your request.
4. Present the supporting information.
5. Ask for a specific action.

Figure 8-13 on page 288 shows what can happen if these steps are ignored. Figure 8-14 on page 289 shows how much more persuasive a message can be when the writer follows the steps.

Gain the Reader’s Attention

Introduce the topic of your message in an interesting and relevant way. Remember that the goal is to capture your reader’s interest, not to make the request. Here are some possible approaches:

- Describe a problem related to your request that the reader has experienced or mentioned recently. For example, perhaps your supervisor has noted that your department is behind in processing orders.
- Remind the reader of a goal related to your request. For example, your department has set a goal of calling 80 potential customers a day.
- Present a “what if” situation related to your request. For example: What if there was a no-cost way to cut the number of customer complaints in half?
- Tell your coworkers that you know of an opportunity they will not want to miss.

Key Point

Most persuasive messages should be organized in indirect order.

Key Point

The first paragraph of a persuasive message should introduce the topic. It should not make a request.

check point

1. Give an example of a persuasive message.
2. What is the purpose of the supporting details in a persuasive message?

Check your answers in Appendix C.
Figure 8-13 Ineffective Persuasive Memo

TO: Belinda Lopez, Human Resources Director
FROM: Rita James, Customer Service Supervisor
DATE: November 13, 20--
SUBJECT: Additional Staff

In spite of the company’s hiring freeze, my department needs additional staff immediately. We are ten days behind with our correspondence, and we are getting further behind every day. Although I have tried everything I know to alleviate the situation, I am convinced there is no hope of solving this problem with our present staff. In view of these circumstances, please consider hiring more staff for this department.
Figure 8-14 Effective Persuasive Memo

TO: Belinda Lopez, Human Resources Director
FROM: Rita James, Customer Service Supervisor
DATE: November 13, 20-
SUBJECT: Additional Staff

At our last staff meeting, you mentioned that the Customer Service Department is getting behind in answering inquiries and complaints. I share your concern because we are now ten days behind. Our goal is to answer customer messages within four days; we are not meeting that goal.

During the past three months, customer messages have increased 115 percent. In large part, this increase is due to questions about our latest software release. In the same period, a worker from our department left the company. We have only five full-time employees in the department. Although all of us have been working overtime, we are getting further behind.

If we hired another full-time staff member, I estimate that we would be only six days behind by the end of the first month. By the end of the second month, we would be meeting our goal and no longer be behind on answering messages. If we also hired a temporary worker for at least one month, we could get back on schedule even sooner.

I realize that the company has a freeze on hiring. However, I think we could hire both a full-time worker and a temporary worker for the same salary that was being paid to our former staff member. The money spent would be well worth the goodwill we would create by answering customer messages promptly. A prompt response to inquiries encourages customers to order from us again.

Will you meet with me on November 18 to discuss my request? The sooner we hire additional staff, the sooner we can deliver the prompt service our customers expect.
**Show a Need**

Explain the need from the reader’s point of view. For example, if you are writing a memo to your supervisor, you might point out an increase in customer complaints, a backlog in the Service Department, the errors that result from the current method of entering orders, or the high cost of repairing the copier during the past three months. Because the supervisor is responsible for the efficient operation of your department, he or she has an interest in solving those problems.

**Explain Your Solution**

Now that your reader understands the need, explain how he or she can meet that need—by doing as you request. For example, you might suggest a small product change to reduce customer complaints. Perhaps you could recommend a simpler procedure to allow staff to catch up with a backlog.

Do your homework before writing this part of your persuasive message. The more details you include, the easier it is for readers to visualize your solution and the more likely they are to agree to it. For example, you would describe the product change in as much detail as your readers need. You would outline the new procedure step-by-step.

If you are requesting a purchase, such as a new copier, suggest specific models and provide approximate rental or purchase costs. You might even attach brochures for the two copier models that best meet your department’s needs. Make it easy for the reader to grant your request.

**Present Supporting Details**

To encourage readers to agree to your request, you must do two things: address any obvious obstacles and emphasize your primary appeal—the benefit that will appeal most to the reader.

**Address Obstacles**

An **obstacle** is something that hinders or prevents progress or achieving a goal. The most common obstacles or objections involve a resistance to change and a lack of time, energy, and/or money. Assume that you are asking other staff members to fill out new forms. You must overcome their resistance to change and their concern about the time required to complete the forms. You might point out that the new forms will greatly reduce the current errors that consume so much of the employees’ time. If you are suggesting that your department needs a new copier, point out how the purchase will eliminate the high repair costs for the old copier. If you are suggesting a new procedure, explain how the procedure will save time or money or decrease costs.
Emphasize the Primary Appeal

In a persuasive message, the writer must overcome resistance to change.

You must identify the benefits that match the values and concerns of your readers. Think of benefits to the readers personally, not just to the company. Suppose your request is to make a small product change. The benefits might include increased sales and fewer customer complaints. What if you are asking for a new copier? The benefits, in addition to saving money on repairs, might include having reliable equipment and improving staff morale.

From all of the possible benefits, determine the primary appeal. The primary appeal is the most convincing point in a persuasive message. That is the appeal that is most likely to attract readers’ attention and motivate them to act. Perhaps you are trying to convince a coworker to serve on a committee. The primary appeal for one person might be the opportunity to influence office policies in general. The primary appeal for another coworker might be the opportunity to work toward a certain goal, such as having flexible working hours.

Do not assume that readers will automatically recognize the benefits of doing as you request. Point out the benefits and help your readers visualize them in their own lives. Depending on the values and needs of your readers, you might provide research findings that support your request. You might also mention other departments or other companies that have made the same change and benefited from it. Try to anticipate any objections the readers will have. Point out benefits that will counter the objections. Understanding benefits will make readers more likely to grant your request.

Key Point
The primary appeal is the one that is most likely to attract readers’ attention and motivate them to act.
Ask for a Specific Action

Writers sometimes end their persuasive messages and memos with vaguely hopeful sentences such as these:

I hope you will give my request serious consideration.
Please let me know if you have any questions about my request.

Those writers are not asking for a specific response. They are likely to get no response at all. The closing of a persuasive message should clearly indicate the action the reader must take to approve or grant the request. The action suggested should be easy to do, such as initialing the memo and returning it to you.

If your request is major or expensive, you might end by asking for an appointment to talk about it. You might ask for your request to be discussed at the department’s weekly meeting. You could also tell the reader that you will call in two days to discuss your request.

If possible, encourage the reader to act promptly by including a deadline of some kind. Explain how quickly approving your request will save time and/or money. For example, you might mention that the copier you recommend is on sale. Purchasing it by the end of the month will reduce the cost by 10 percent. You could also point out that as soon as the new forms are created and distributed, the number of errors will begin to drop.

Writing Persuasive Messages

Persuasive requests are common in the business environment. They might be sent from one employee to another or from an employee to a customer or supplier. Sales messages and collection messages are two special kinds of persuasive messages.

Sales Messages

A sales message tries to persuade a potential customer to purchase a product or service. Like other persuasive messages, it involves gaining the reader’s attention. The message should establish a need and show how a product or
service will meet that need. Supporting details and an easy way for the reader to respond should also be included. A sales message might appeal to readers’ senses by describing how something looks, sounds, feels, smells, or tastes. This appeal can range from the warm, cinnamon smell of apple pie to the silky feel of a new blouse. Figure 8–15 on page 294 shows an effective sales message.

Collection Messages

The purpose of a collection message is to persuade a customer to pay a past-due bill. Collection messages have four stages as listed below.

1. The reminder stage
2. The strong reminder stage
3. The discussion stage
4. The urgency stage

The reminder message assumes that the customer has simply forgotten to make a payment. It is written in indirect order, as shown in the following message.

Dear Customer
Thank you for your prompt payments during all of 2006. A copy of your January 2007 statement is enclosed.

Did you overlook this payment, which was due February 10? An addressed, postage-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience in sending this payment.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

A strong reminder is sent when the customer has not responded to the first reminder. This collection message is serious and firm, as shown in the following example.

Dear Customer
Thank you for your prompt payments during all of 2006. A copy of your January 2007 statement is enclosed.

As you can see, your February 10 payment is overdue. By sending a check for $700, you will bring your account up to date and preserve your credit rating. A postage-paid return envelope is enclosed.

Please send your payment today to clear your account.

Key Point
Collection messages proceed through four stages from a routine reminder to a strong demand for payment.
May 3, 20--

Ms. Lu Wang
12 Merryweather Lane
Eureka, KS 67045-7112

Dear Ms. Wang,

On your feet for eight hours or more a day, but not foot-weary? Is that how you would like to feel at the end of your workday?

Through extensive research and testing, a new kind of shoe has been developed with you in mind. These comfortable, attractive shoes have shock-absorbing features that cushion and protect your feet all day. More than 80 percent of doctors and nurses who tried our shoes wanted to keep them! Many people wanted to order a pair for a friend or relative.

As an introductory offer, these quality leather shoes are available for only $79.95 a pair. As you can see from the enclosed brochure, they come in styles and colors to please everyone.

To place your order, call 1-800-555-0100 or return the enclosed, postage-paid order form by mail. You will be slipping into your new shoes within a week and enjoying new freedom from tired feet!

Sincerely

Todd Roseman
Todd Roseman, Vice President

Enclosures
The purpose of the discussion-stage collection message is to obtain full payment or partial payment as a temporary measure. An explanation of why the customer has not made the appropriate payment is also sought. This message is organized in an indirect way as a last attempt to persuade the customer to discuss the problem.

Dear Customer

Your home loan with First Western Bank has been beneficial to both of us. In the past, your payments have been prompt and consistent. In fact, you have been one of our best customers.

Two months have passed, however, since your last payment. Although we have sent you two reminders, we have not received a reply. Is there some reason why you cannot make a payment?

You can preserve your credit rating in one of these ways:

• Make your past-due payments totaling $1,400 within ten days.
• Send one payment of $700 immediately and send the other payment by March 30.
• Call within one week to let us know why you have missed your last two payments and to explain your plans for correcting the situation.

Please respond so that this matter can be resolved.

The purpose of the urgency-stage collection message is to obtain payment. The message also tells the customer what will happen if payment is not made immediately. In this message, use direct order and a firm tone. Earlier reminder messages may have been signed by someone in the Accounting Department. The urgency-stage collection letter may be signed by a manager or owner of a business to stress the importance of the letter.

Dear Customer

Although we have sent you three reminders, your account with us is still past due. You have not communicated with us to tell us why you are unable to make the payments.

The enclosed statement shows the amount now due, $2,100. Unless we receive full payment by April 30, your account will be turned over to the Emerson Credit Agency, a collection company.

To prevent this negative situation, send us your full payment immediately.
Chain Letters

One type of persuasive message is the chain letter. Like other persuasive messages, a chain letter tries to convince the receiver to take some action. The request typically involves sending the letter or e-mail message to several other people. It may also ask the receiver to send the writer money. The idea is that other people (to whom the receiver writes) will send money and pass the letter on to others. The money the sender hopes to receive is the incentive for giving money to the original writer and forwarding the letter to others.

Chain letters that are sent by U.S. Mail are illegal if they request money or other items of value.1 Chain letters that are sent over the Internet may also be illegal if they require that money be sent by U.S. Mail. Do not create, send, or forward chain letters that request money or items of value. To do so is unethical and, depending on the circumstances, is likely to be illegal. If you receive a chain letter that asks for money or items of value, give the letter to your local postmaster. To learn more about chain letters, visit the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Web site.

Planning Proposals

Proposals are another type of persuasive writing. A proposal is a formal document that describes a problem or need and recommends a solution. The writer establishes a need and tries to convince the reader to meet that need.

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need by taking a specific action. Proposals may be internal, such as from an employee to a supervisor. Proposals may also be external, such as from a consulting firm to a company.

Sometimes a company asks for proposals to meet a need. Those proposals are solicited. The company sends out a request for proposal (RFP) that outlines what it needs. For example, a company might ask suppliers to provide proposals giving the price, delivery time, quality, and other details for goods or services. The company then uses the proposals to select a company from which to buy the goods or services.

Other proposals are unsolicited. The receiver has not requested the proposal. The writer of an unsolicited proposal must work hard to establish a need for the proposed action. For example, a researcher might write a proposal to request money from a company. The money will be used to investigate a specific problem related to the company’s products.

An effective proposal clearly states the benefits for the receiver. If the proposal is solicited, the receiver already sees the need. However, you must present your solution to that need. For example, you may be able to provide lower costs or higher quality than another company can provide.

Organizing and Writing Proposals

The organization and content of a proposal will vary depending on what you are proposing. Most, but not all, proposals contain the following elements.

1. **Introduction.** Briefly summarize what you are proposing, what your proposal will accomplish, and what types of information are included in your proposal. Immediately begin to stress the benefits to the receiver.

2. **Background.** In this optional section, you might describe the events that led to the current situation, such as changes in the company structure or in a product line.

3. **Need.** From the receiver’s point of view, describe the problem that your proposal will solve or the need it will meet.

4. **Scope of project.** Outline your plan or solution to meet the need.

5. **Action plan.** List the steps that must be taken to carry out your proposal.

6. **Schedule.** Discuss the amount of time needed to complete the project and the deadline for each step in the action plan.

7. **Cost.** Explain the proposal’s total cost and link the cost to the benefits the reader will receive.

8. **Qualifications.** Describe your own qualifications (if you will carry out the proposal personally) or those of your company.

**Key Point**

An unsolicited proposal must clearly establish a need for the proposed action.

**Key Point**

The introduction of a proposal should briefly describe the need or problem and summarize the proposed solution.
9. **Call for action.** Just as in a persuasive message, end with a specific request for the receiver to do something, such as scheduling a meeting to discuss your proposal.

10. **Supporting information.** Include any necessary supporting information, such as the names of references, in an appendix.

   An RFP usually lists the information that must be included in a solicited proposal. Follow the RFP closely. If you do not, the proposal may be eliminated because of the way you presented the information. If your proposal is unsolicited, use subheadings to make the document inviting to read and easy to skim, as shown in Figure 8-16 on pages 299 and 300.

   Use the checklist shown on page 301 to help you write convincing persuasive letters, memos, reports, e-mails, and proposals.
Figure 8-16 Solicited Proposal in Letter Form

INFO FIND
100 Broadmoore Way
Omaha, NE 68112-1844
402-555-0150 Fax 402-555-0157

July 12, 20--

Ms. Leslie Carroll
Director of Consumer Affairs
The Foodworks Market
600 Dunstable Highway
Omaha, NE 68111-6409

Dear Ms. Carroll

As you requested, here is our proposal for conducting an Internet survey. The survey is to determine consumer interest in the posting of nutritional information in your store’s produce area. The objective of the project is to provide the research you need to decide whether to post this information. This proposal describes the need for and the scope of the project. It also outlines the action plan we would carry out to obtain the customer feedback that will help you make your decision.

Background
Consumers are concerned about their health. Many people want to use more fresh fruits and vegetables in the meals they prepare at home. However, because produce is not packaged in containers, consumers cannot check the labels for nutritional value. Thus, they have no source of nutritional information at the point of sale.

Need
Your store has positioned itself as the market leader in customer service. To maintain that position, you want to investigate whether posting detailed nutritional information in the produce area would be of value to customers.

Scope of Project
To learn what adult consumers think about the posting of nutritional information, we propose to plan and conduct a comprehensive survey. It would include the following:

- Identifying people to interview
- Preparing a form for an Internet survey
- Processing completed surveys and preparing a final report for Foodworks’ management

To get a balanced sampling, we recommend surveying at least 300 adults. We will need the names and addresses of 900 adults so we can be assured of 300 responses.
Ms. Leslie Carroll  
July 12, 20--  
Page 2

**Action Plan**
After you approve the project, Info Find will require about three working days to prepare, test, and revise the form for the survey. After testing the survey on 25 contacts and making any necessary changes, we will obtain 300 or more completed surveys. One week after obtaining the completed surveys, we will provide an analysis of the results and a written summary of our findings and recommendations.

**Schedule**
We can begin this project within a week of receiving your approval. You will receive our analysis and summary about three weeks after we begin.

**Cost**
Our price for planning, completing, and analyzing the survey is $10,000.

Info Find has been privileged to conduct more than a dozen surveys for Foodworks during the past three years. As always, we welcome the opportunity to help you identify and meet the needs of your customers. Thank you for asking us to submit this bid.

Will you meet with us sometime during the next two weeks to discuss any questions you may have? Please call Beth at 402-555-0150 to set up a time that is convenient for you.

Sincerely

*Lawrence Sweeney*  
Lawrence Sweeney  
Vice President of Research  
dm
## Checklist for Persuasive Messages

### Plan
- Have I identified the objective of the message?
- Have I determined the main idea?
- Have I selected supporting details?
- Have I considered my receiver’s needs and determined the primary appeal of the message?

### Write
- Does the opening gain the receiver’s attention and introduce the topic?
- Is my solution to the need clear, logical, and practical?
- Did I focus on the identified primary appeal?
- For a proposal, have I included all of the appropriate components?

### Edit and Proofread
- Is the language clear and concise?
- Are the details correct?
- Are the format, grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?
- Have I proofread the document and corrected all errors?
Section 8.3 Applications

A. Identify Message Order
Indicate whether these sentences from persuasive messages should be in an opening paragraph, a middle paragraph (supporting information), or a closing paragraph.

1. At the last manager’s meeting, you mentioned that your department was overstaffed.
3. Your account is overdue in the amount of $2,359.86.
4. This manufacturing process will allow you to make the product in half the time and at a reasonable cost.
5. Use the enclosed coupon to save 25 percent on your next purchase.

B. Write a Persuasive E-mail
1. Assume that you work for a large shoe manufacturer. Write an e-mail to your coworkers, persuading them to join a new sports team or club that is being organized. (You choose the sport or club.)
2. Use an e-mail address provided by your instructor (or save the message as a draft and do not send it.)
3. Make sure you mention benefits that will appeal to the wide range of people who work at your company.
4. Tell the readers what you want them to do. Request that they send you a reply within five days stating whether or not they want to play on the sports team or join the club.
5. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear.
6. Proofread the message and correct all errors.
Chapter Summary

8.1 Neutral or Positive Messages

• To plan a neutral or positive message, identify the objective, identify the main idea, determine the supporting details, and adjust the content to the receiver.

• Messages with positive or neutral news should be organized in direct order. The main idea is presented first, followed by the supporting details and the closing.

• Examples of documents that contain positive messages are orders, positive responses to requests, friendship messages, and acknowledgments.

8.2 Negative Messages

• A negative message conveys news that will disappoint the receiver.

• Messages with negative news should be organized in an indirect order. Indirect order presents the reasons or details that explain the negative news before stating the news.

• Messages that deny requests, decline to supply information, refuse credit, or reject a proposal are examples of a negative message.

• In a letter that has both positive and negative news, the positive news should be presented first.

8.3 Persuasive Messages

• A persuasive message tries to convince the reader to take an action.

• Most persuasive messages should be organized in an indirect order.

• Sales letters and collection letters are examples of persuasive messages.

• A proposal is a formal document that describes a problem or need and recommends a solution.
Vocabulary

Open the Word file CH08 Vocabulary from the student data files. Complete the exercise to review the vocabulary terms from this chapter.

acknowledgment        order
claim                  persuasive message
collection message    primary appeal
credit refusal        proposal
fact                   request denial
goodwill message      request for proposal (RFP)
neutral opening       routine request
obstacle              sales message
opinion                soft sell

Critical Thinking Questions

1. Why should positive or neutral messages be organized in direct order?
2. Why is a goodwill closing important for all types of messages?
3. Why is it important to present negative news using positive language?
4. Should a persuasive message be more receiver-oriented than a negative message? Explain.
5. Why are most persuasive messages organized in an indirect order?
Chapter Applications

A. Routine Request
You are visiting your cousin in another city during summer vacation. You planned to stay with your cousin for ten days. You brought three good books along to read during your stay. The books were checked out at your local public library. Now your plans have changed. You have decided to stay with your cousin for another ten days.

1. Write an e-mail to your local public library. (Save the message as a draft. Do not actually send it.)
2. Provide information about yourself, such as your name and library account number, and the books you have checked out. (You select books for the message.)
3. Explain that you would like the librarian to extend the due date of the books to a certain date (two weeks beyond the original due date).
4. You expect the librarian to grant this request willingly, so use direct order for the message. Remember to include a goodwill closing.

B. Credit Refusal Letter
Assume that you are a loan officer for Lumberton First National Bank. You have received a request for a $50,000 home improvement loan from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Banuelos. After reviewing their application, their income, and their credit score, the bank has determined that they do not qualify for a $50,000 loan. The bank is willing to loan them $20,000.

1. Write a letter to Mr. and Mrs. Banuelos. Thank them for being long-time customers of the bank. Let them know the bank’s decision regarding the loan.
2. Use the appropriate order for the letter.
3. Use block letter style and open punctuation.
4. Make up an address for the bank and create a letterhead in the document header.
5. The letter address is:
   Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Banuelos
   973 East Ashbrooke Drive
   Lumberton, MS 39455-3735
6. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear.
7. Proofread the letter and correct all errors.
C. Customer Response Letter

1. The message shown below was written to a customer who has requested the replacement of two sets of sheets.

2. Write a list that describes the problems with the letter.

3. Edit and revise the message so it is well written. Use modified block format with mixed punctuation. Proofread the letter and correct all errors.

January 12, 20--

Mrs. J. T. Tokuda
444 North Summit Street
Bowling Green, OH 43402-0601

Dear Mrs. Tokuda,

We received the two sets of midnight blue no-wrinkle sheets that you returned to us. You requested that we exchange them for new ones.

We can imagine how disappointed you must have been, but we can explain the difficulty. You have been sending the sheets to a laundry that evidently washes them using a standard wash cycle.

The washing instructions, clearly visible on the label, say “WASH IN GENTLE CYCLES ONLY.” Some laundries use gentle cycles only when specifically asked to do so. Using a standard cycle keeps other cotton fabrics clean; but on these sheets, the standard cycle causes wrinkling.

In view of your past record with us, however, we are sending you two new sets of midnight blue no-wrinkle sheets free of charge. If you follow the instructions on the label, the sheets will last a long time.

Cordially

Paco Carrasquillo
Complaint Department Manager

D. Goodwill Message

1. Compose an e-mail congratulating a friend on a recent promotion, an anniversary, a birthday, or another event. Supply all necessary information.

2. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear. Proofread the message and correct all errors.
E. **Good News Message**

1. Write a letter to Ms. Reanna Coyle, telling her that her credit application with Katina's Fashions has been approved. Her account will have a $1,500 limit. The interest on the unpaid balance at the end of each 30-day billing period is 18 percent a year. More details are provided on the enclosed credit agreement.

2. Select an appropriate order for the message.

3. Select a letter style and punctuation style to use for the letter.

4. Create a letterhead in the document header for the company:

   Katina's Fashions  
   391 East Kamala Lane  
   Los Gatos, CA 95030-7432

5. Ms. Reanna Coyle's address is:  
   4391 North Plum Tree Avenue  
   Hollister, CA 95024-0413

6. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear. Proofread the message and correct all errors.

F. **Persuasive Message**

1. Work with a classmate to complete this activity.

2. Search the Internet to find the Web site of a travel agency or a car dealership. Study the information provided for one or more tours or cars.

3. Write a one-page sales letter to potential customers, urging them to take a certain tour (trip, cruise, or vacation package) or to buy a certain car. Remember to establish a need and then describe how the product can fill that need.

4. Use indirect order for this persuasive message.

5. Select a letter format and punctuation style.

6. Make up a company name and address for the letterhead. Use your name and address as the letter address.

7. Edit the message to be sure it is courteous, correct, complete, concise, and clear. Proofread the message and correct all errors.

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**Editing Activities**

Open and edit the Word file `CH08 Editing` from the student data files. Correct all spelling, punctuation, number expression, and grammar errors.
Case Study

Up Close and Personal

Erika Tasmajian recently took over management of her grandfather’s produce business, Fresh Everyday. Erika was eager to apply what she had learned in her college marketing classes.

Fresh Everyday had a number of long-time customers. However, it had been slowly losing business to national chains. Erika’s strategies were designed to expand the Fresh Everyday client list. She created a Web page listing specials and bulk prices for restaurants. She automated the telephone system to answer calls more quickly. She also added a fax machine and equipment for video conferencing. Fresh Everyday did attract new customers, but Erika noticed fewer orders from long-time customers.

Over dinner, Erika discussed the problem with her grandfather. She learned that he had always kept in touch with his customers through letters. Courtesy letters accompanied each invoice. Informational letters advised customers of special sales. Thank-you letters sent after major holidays thanked customers for their business.

1. Do you think there is a connection between fewer orders from long-term customers and fewer letters being sent to customers? Why or why not?

2. Fresh Everyday has embraced several new technologies to further its business. Do you think these technologies can take the place of sending letters to communicate with its customers? Why or why not?
Communication for Finance

Joan has worked at Logan Savings and Loan for three years. A week ago, she was promoted to the position of loan officer. When someone comes into the office and wants a loan, she has the customer fill out the proper papers. She verifies the information given by the applicant and enters data into a computer that will analyze the customer’s financial situation. Using this information, Joan makes a recommendation about whether to make or reject the loan. When the loan is approved or rejected, Joan writes a letter to the customer informing her or him of the decision. Because Joan is very busy, her letters are usually short.

Last week, Mr. Park, one of the company’s customers, came in and filled out an application for a loan. Today, Joan must write to tell him that the company cannot loan him the money he requested. The body of the letter she wrote is shown below.

Dear Mr. Park

Thank you for using Logan Savings and Loan when applying for your loan. I wish we could grant you your loan, but we cannot. When your credit score improves, please contact us again.

2. Is the letter written in the correct order?
3. How do you think Mr. Parker feels about Joan? About Logan Savings and Loan?
4. Why does he feel that way?
Chapter 8 Answers

Checkpoint 1

1. The steps in planning a message are:
   a. Identify the objective.
   b. Identify the main idea.
   c. Determine the supporting details.
   d. Adjust the content to the receiver.

2. Messages with neutral or positive news should be organized in direct order.
Checkpoint 2
1. Two types of letters that contain neutral messages are routine requests and claims.
2. A claim is a message that requests a refund, an exchange, or a discount on merchandise or services.

Checkpoint 3
1. Examples of documents that contain positive messages are orders, positive responses to requests, friendship messages, and acknowledgments.
2. An acknowledgment is a message that tells a sender that a message or item has been received.

Checkpoint 4
1. Messages that deny requests, decline to supply information, refuse credit, or reject a proposal are examples of a negative message.
2. When using indirect order for a negative message, follow these steps:
   a. Begin with a neutral opening.
   b. Explain the reasons for the negative news.
   c. State or imply the negative news.
   d. Close on a positive note; if possible, offer an alternative.

Checkpoint 5
1. Two types of letters that contain negative news are messages that deny a request and messages that refuse credit.
2. A message that contains both positive and negative news should be organized with the positive news in the opening. The positive news is followed by the reasons for the bad news and then the bad news itself.

Checkpoint 6
1. Answers will vary. A letter that tries to convince a customer to buy a product is an example of a persuasive message.
2. The purpose of the supporting details in a persuasive message is to give information that will convince the receiver to do as you request.

Checkpoint 7
1. Most persuasive messages are organized in indirect order.
2. To organize a persuasive message in indirect order, follow these steps:
   a. Gain the reader’s attention.
   b. Show the reader that he or she has a need or will benefit from fulfilling the request.
   c. Explain your solution to that need—in other words, your request.
   d. Present the supporting information.
   e. Ask for a specific action.

Checkpoint 8
1. A sales message tries to persuade a potential customer to purchase a product or service.

Checkpoint 9
1. A proposal is a formal document that describes a problem and recommends a solution.
2. Most, but not all, proposals contain the following elements:
   a. Introduction
   b. Background
   c. Need
   d. Scope of project
   e. Action plan
   f. Schedule
   g. Cost
   h. Qualifications
   i. Call for action
   j. Supporting information

This page contains answers for this chapter only.