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Memos are still an important form of business communication!

-For the most part, **email has taken the place of memos**. However, there are still professions where writing an effective, detailed, convincing memo is essential.

-Not every worker sits in front of a computer waiting for an email to inform them about a meeting, a policy change, a company picnic, or an open position within the company.

-Law enforcement, medical professionals, construction workers, factory workers, usually work away from computer screens. They might rely on a posted memo to inform them of important company news. Therefore, many companies still value a well written company communication = a MEMO!

To write a good looking memo, you must use the correct MEMO format! - Yes, a business memo has a specific LOOK. There are lots of variations, but some specific aspects must always be used.

Creating a Professional MEMO

Letters, emails, reports, and other written business communications are *often* created for others **outside your organization.**

Memos are “intra-office” communications.

Memos are written to those within your organization - for the employees and management. (This is why there is **no address used, or phone number, or even signature.**)

Some memos can contain sensitive, secretive, or important information designed to be read by **ONLY** individuals within the organization!

Be certain you understand the importance some memos will have on the business.

Going UP? Going Down?

- You will write memos for those above you: your boss, supervisor, Board Members, executives. These memos should be written with these people in mind. Be sure to be respectful, clear, specific, and concise with your writing. **These people are busy: get to the point, don't use unnecessary words, use plenty of specific details and examples.**
- You will also create memos for those beneath you: employees, contractors, subordinates. Your approach should similarly be respectful - the tone can be a little more informal- but the writing style should still be extremely professional.

Memo Length

Long enough to be detail and clear - short enough to be interesting and easy to read!

I watched a fascinating new program, which discussed the changing business world. One of the primary ideas was this: *small is now big.*

For example, smaller offices and workspaces are more effective for creativity and production. Smaller groups and work-forces are more focused. Smaller benefit packages (which give employees only what they really want) are more popular.

The examples given were very convincing and made me think about the writing process.

So, I have FINALLY given in and seen the light.

MEMOS CAN BE ONE PAGE in length!!! (Smaller is better, right?)

Memo Length

Memos CAN BE one page if...

- **In the business world, most memos are a page.** As we have already established, business people are busy, and they do not have time to read LONG business documents. If the reader (your boss or employees) wants to know more about the ideas you mention in the memo, he or she will ask you to explain further in a face-to-face meeting. Or, he might ask you to write another memo with added detail. (More examples!)
- **HOWEVER, there are exceptions.** When the subject of the memo is complex or extensive, you owe it to your audience (boss or employees) to fully explain the idea. This means **occasionally** you will need to create a memo that is 2-3 pages.
- In a business writing class (**Management 306, for example**) you will be expected to write with sufficient depth and detail. Be sure your ideas are fully explained, detailed, and clear. If you can do this **using ONLY one page, go ahead and create a one page masterpiece.** Most writers will have to use more than one page.

Memo Format

Memo at the top of the page &
To: From: Subject: Date: - That's ALL

MEMO

To:

From:

Subject:

Date:

The order of these can be altered somewhat, but “TO” and “FROM” should be listed first. “Date” and “Subject” can be reversed. To save space on your page, single space these parts of the memo. Be sure to add a COLON (:) after each part of the memo. The “MEMO” on the top is now considered standard.

MEMO FORMAT IS VERY EASY TO CREATE!!!

Memorandum / Memo

- You need to place the word “Memo” or “Memorandum” at the top of a business memo.
- Add this heading (**Memo/Memorandum**) at the top of the page - it should be a slightly larger font and centered.

Memos are NOT Letters

- Memos **do NOT** use greetings: **Dear John,**
 - The “To:” will indicate who the memo is written for.
- Memos **do NOT** use signature blocks or a complimentary close:

Sincerely,

Mary Smith

- The “From:” will indicate the memo was written by you.

- If you use these “letter” elements on your memo, the reader will know you do not know how to write a proper business memo. You will be seen as “unprofessional.” And, your grade will be reduced.

Format Continued

- Any memo can benefit from the tools we have discussed. Be sure to use **headings, bullets, lists, white space and other tools to create a memo that is professional looking.** Using these writing tools will help create a memo that is easy to read, organized, clear, and inviting.
- As is the case with **all of the documents** we create this quarter, memos will be written using **STANDARD BUSINESS structure.** This means using **block paragraphs, singles space inside the paragraphs, double space between paragraphs,** and any of the tools we have discussed, which make a document LOOK good!

Always Have a CONCLUSION

- Do you end a phone call by just hanging up? No. You tell the other person you are done speaking by saying goodbye some how, right?
 - *OK, well I have to get to class now, so I will talk to you when I get home tonight.*
 - *Sounds good. I will meet you at the movies at 7:00. Thanks. See you there.*
- MOST BUSINESS DOCUMENTS REQUIRE A SMALL CONCLUSION OR CONCLUDING IDEA. YOU HAVE TO ADD A 2 - 3 SENTENCE THAT ALERTS THE READER THAT YOUR DOCUMENT IS DONE:
 - *If we implement these ideas, the next quarter will certainly see an increase in sales. If you have any questions, please contact me.*
 - *Our employees deserve these new benefits. They work hard, and I am delighted to be able to give them a few small luxuries that will help improve morale.*

ONE Page - Sample Memo

- Look at the following memo closely; it is excellent. The layout is effective and inviting. The reader can easily see how many ideas are used because of the headings and the bullets that are used.
- The most impressive aspect of the memo is the detailed EXAMPLES!!! The ideas are all clearly written as PRIMARY EXAMPLES. Each of these examples is then detailed and explained using very effective, interesting, unique SECONDARY EXAMPLES.
 - *This is the kind of memo you should strive to create!!!*
 - IT LOOKS GOOD, HAS SOMETHING TO SAY, AND IS WELL WRITTEN! (These are the THREE KEYS to Writing Well we have already discussed.)
 - It has “economy” of words! **Every word counts.** There are no “filler” words... “in my opinion, I think, first and foremost, blah, blah.”

To: SC Employees
From: Joe Brown
Subject: Tips to Lessen Stress
Date: April 18, 2015

Stress can affect employees in different ways. Common effects of stress are not being able to concentrate, forgetfulness, becoming short-tempered, feeling overloaded, experiencing aches and pains, changes in eating behaviors and irregular sleeping habits. Here are a few ideas on ways to help manage stress at work.

Time management approach

When you have tight deadlines or multiple projects that make you feel strapped for time, use one of these tips or all of them:

- ☞ *Make a list.* Prioritize your work load. Make a list of all your tasks and projects and then rank them. Take care of the important things first.
- ☞ *Make reasonable goals.* Become aware of your limits and set realistic deadlines and goals for yourself. Do not stretch yourself too thin, you will only add pressure on yourself.
- ☞ *Schedule your time.* When working on multiple projects or a project with many parts, schedule your time. Set aside certain hours in your day so you can work on the task.

Quick stress relief methods

Stress relief methods can slow your heart rate, lessen your frustration, and improve your concentration. There are many relaxation methods.

- ☞ *Having a notebook on hand to use as an outlet.* Write down your thoughts and feelings. This method helps you get your emotions out so they do not frustrate you further.
- ☞ *Massaging your fingers and palms while drinking hot tea or coffee.* This method focuses on tactile and taste sensations, helping to relieve physical tension.
- ☞ *Bringing a portable music player with headphones.* Listen to your favorite soundtrack or a mix of relaxing nature sounds. This method helps create a peaceful environment and works well for soothing stress for music lovers.

Relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques can help relieve muscle tension, increase blood flow to your muscles, and lower blood pressure. Relaxation can not only lessen the stress you feel now, but also can improve your general well-being.

- ☞ *Tai chi.* Tai chi uses graceful, controlled movements to help relax both your body and your mind. Tai chi focuses on creating a sense of inner calm by using rhythmic movements and controlled breathing patterns.
- ☞ *Yoga.* Yoga uses a series of poses, controlled breathing, and meditation to encourage relaxation. Yoga tries to create harmony and peace between your body and mind, which is helpful when trying to manage your stress.
- ☞ *Muscle tension relaxation.* This technique can be done anywhere and is fairly simple. All you do is tense your muscles in an area for five to ten seconds and then relax for 30 to 40 seconds, and repeat it two to three times. Start at your toes and work your way up to your neck.

Recharge yourself

Getting away for short periods of time can help relieve the stress you feel. Spending time away from what causes you stress, and doing things you enjoy instead, can rejuvenate your body and mind. Some ways you can recharge are:

- ☞ *Taking time off.* Use your vacation time to get in some quality personal time and recharge yourself.
- ☞ *Sleeping it off.* Stress can often times make you lose sleep. Sleep is an important aspect of health and stress management, because it helps renew both your body and mind. Get some more SLEEP!
- ☞ *Meeting up with friends or family.* Although you may want to isolate yourself during stressful times, being social can relieve stress. Your friends and family can help get your mind off your troubles or give you the support you need to get through them.

We live in a stressful time; it's not unusual to feel some pressure from time to time. The best way to deal with stress varies from person to person. Our goal is to make our workplace as stress-free as possible and deal with any stress that might be impacting our organization. I am happy to speak with anyone who has any questions regarding the ideas mentioned. See me in my office, or send me a quick email.

Go to the “Sample Papers” section on Blackboard and you will find “Examples” of well-written, professional looking



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