

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN BUSINESS

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Every trade and profession has its separate vocabulary of words that mean little to those outside the group. The communications that help in business transactions share the general purpose of business, which is profit. Therefore, it is essential for everyone in business to have an appreciation of style so that the receiver of the message is on the side of the sender from the outset and that the finer points of presentation make the difference between success and failure in business.

Style is the crucial ingredient for everything. In writing, it is the way sentences are structured, the choice of words and the way they are used, plus punctuation. If the style is outmoded, the reader will soon lose interest and might not even get beyond the first lines. Style calls for clarity, brevity coupled with the use of simple language, and the avoidance of clichés and jargon. It means spelling correctly, but above all it means consistency.

Effective communication demands clear, consistent style. Everyone in business should put style at the top of their priority list. The style of business English as well as the substance is governed by the principle of taking the reader's point of view. This is the key to success in securing a favourable response. The first thing to note is that in every communication situation there are two parties, a sender and a receiver who interact within a common frame of reference, and a subject. Properly speaking, the message does not exist until it has been received and understood. An important factor in the communication process is the existence of cooperation between the sender and the receiver. Since the main purpose of a report is the presentation of facts, it should be able to command the attention of the reader and clearly convey the message to him. Therefore, the language of a report should be clear and readable. In order to achieve this, many report writers advocate the use of the passive voice and the third person. A report writer must approach his subject with detachment and objectivity, but for achieving these he need not completely avoid the use of the active voice and the first person. The coherence of a business report requires that the construction of the sentences should show the exact relation between the ideas. Punctuation often helps to secure coherence by showing the relation of different groups to another. The omission of a comma may cause misunderstanding.

A report is always written for a specific readership. Persuasive, polished reports are some of the most essential tools in business decision making today.

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