

DSC SPEED READS

COMMUNICATIONS

Writing for Work

Moi Ali



DSC

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DIRECTORY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

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Introduction

Who will this book help?

Some people love writing. If you're not one of them, don't worry. You might never take pleasure from having to write at work, but you can at least take away some of the pain. If you lack confidence about how to write at work, and find writing a daunting prospect, this book is for you.

What will it give you?

Writing for work is very straightforward when you know how to approach it. This book will show you how to deal with the key workplace documents – from short and possibly ephemeral letters and memos to weighty reports. It includes quick tips on how to tackle the most common writing assignments, signposts for further information and exercises to help you put the theory into practice.

Chapter 1

Before you start

Writing for work need not be daunting. This chapter looks at why effective writing is essential for business success and what you need to consider before you begin.

At school you learned how to write essays. If you went on to higher education, you will probably be familiar with dissertations. However, few people are taught business writing skills and instead tend to rely on emulating colleagues (who were themselves probably never taught how to do it).

Business writing is characterised by a briefer, more concise style. Successful workplace writing rapidly gets to the point because busy individuals need to quickly understand your purpose in writing, and what you expect from them by way of action. Unlike a novel, which is bought for pleasure and eagerly devoured, a reader may regard reading a business letter or report as another chore.

Why effective writing is essential

Good writing:

- is more likely to be read (which is the whole point)
- is more likely to persuade, influence and inform
- helps avoid misunderstanding

Top tip



Find a piece of business writing that impresses you. Analyse why you like it. Is it the brevity? The logical order? Work out what makes it a piece of effective business writing and employ the techniques the author uses to help improve your work.

Jacki Reason,
Freelance Editor

Where next



For training courses related to writing go to the writing skills section of the DSC website at www.dsc.org.uk/Training/Personal-development

- will boost your professional credibility and give you a reputation for clear thinking
- saves colleagues time when reading your work. (Managers in large organisations receive many reports and other documents. They are more likely to read and remember something that is well written.)

Conversely, poor writing makes you appear amateurish, lightweight and unprofessional. You will not be able to get your points across or achieve the outcome you hoped for. Resultant misunderstanding may lead to problems with relationships with your colleagues or customers.

What to consider before starting

Before you set pen to paper or mouse to mat, consider the following points.

- *Message*: What do you need to communicate?
- *Medium*: What is the best way to communicate your message? (By memo? Email? Letter?)
- *Audience*: Who are you writing for? (One named individual? A group of unknown people?)
- *Purpose*: What do you hope to achieve by writing? (Do you need to convey information or persuade someone to take a particular action? Respond to points raised in previous correspondence?)
- *Tone*: How do you wish to come across? (Friendly and approachable? Authoritative?)

Message

What are the main points you need to convey? Are there any secondary points? If you are writing about something controversial, you may also need to identify what you are unwilling or unable to cover.

DSC Speed Reads

Aimed at people who are short on time and need to absorb information quickly, these indispensable guides are:

- **Accessible** – practical guidance on a wide range of subjects
- **Condensed** – distilling experience and expertise in just 32 pages
- **Clearly signposted** – Top Tips, Case Studies and Where Next ideas

Covering a wide range of topics and building into an invaluable library, Speed Reads are an essential addition to any bookshelf.

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Some people love writing, but if you're not one of them, don't worry – help is at hand. You might never take pleasure from having to write at work, but you can at least take away some of the pain. If you lack confidence about how to write at work, this book is for you.

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