Neutral and Positive Messages

Organizing Routine or Positive Messages

- Start with good news or the most important information
- Clarify with details, background
- Present any negative points positively
- Explain any benefits
- Use a goodwill ending
  - Positive
  - Personal
  - Forward-looking

Routine Requests

- Present the major idea first
  - Phrase: Direct question, statement, or polite request.
  - Clearly define what you want and phrase to get that response.
  - Ask as few questions as possible, you are imposing on the goodwill of the reader.
  - Arrange questions in logical order, word clearly, and limit the content to one topic per question. In other words, no multi-parts.

Routine Request

Dear Mr. Peterson:

Subject: Request for Information About Banquet Facilities

Would you please provide information regarding your banquet facilities.

We are considering holding our annual awards luncheon for 265 of our personnel at your hotel on March 25. Our decision will be based on answers to the following questions:
Routine Request

1. Is your facility available from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. on that date? We will need the additional time for setup and takedown.
2. Do you offer free use of audiovisual equipment? We would need a color projector and screen. We would supply the portable computer.
3. Do you have a variety of hot lunches that can be served tableside for between $15 and $18, including tax and gratuities? Thank you for providing this information in time for us to make our site selection by January 15.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Organizing a Neutral Message (Request)

1. Present the request directly in a question, statement, or polite request.
2. Explain the initial request, include background information, and identify benefits.
3. Express appreciation, state deadlines, and be specific.

Hi Ken,

I'm planning a new event for clients, and I could use your advice on holding an event like this. You did a great job for the Hilltop Conference, a much bigger event. The event will be for our top 150 clients, and of course, you're included. We haven't decided on a venue yet. Were you happy with the Stonewalk Center, or do you have other recommendations? Also, what do you think about our hiring a professional event planner? I know you do all of the work yourself, but I'm concerned about my abilities! Do you have someone you could recommend?

I would appreciate any guidance you're willing to offer before July 15, when I have to meet with Carl. If you would rather talk on the phone than reply by email, you can reach me at 569-6314, or let me know a good time to call you.

Thank you,

Siobhan

Routine replies

- Provide the information requested in the original message.
- Put the “good news or best news” first, where it will receive the most attention.
  - Not: “We have received your letter dated…”
- Answer promptly.
- Answer all the questions in the order received, UNLESS a different order makes more sense.

Routine replies cont.

- Include other information if appropriate.
  - Be subtle, avoid exaggeration, and do not devote too much space.
- Form letters are often used for this purpose.
  - Body: Refer to any enclosures specifically to make sure they are read.
- Close on a positive, friendly note.
  - Use original wording. Avoid clichés.

Routine reply

Dear Mr. Olson:

Subject: Hosting Your Awards Luncheon

We would enjoy hosting your awards luncheon on March 25. Our L’Enfant Room, which has a lovely view of the Cleveland skyline, is available until 4 p.m. that day.

To offer round-the-clock service, we have contracted with an outside firm to provide all audiovisual services for a reasonable fee. You may make arrangements directly with GuestServ by calling the company at 555-1086.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Routine reply

For the health-conscious guest, we offer soup-and-salad lunches for between $12 and $18. We also offer a hot buffet line with your choice of two main dishes for between $16 and $20. Hot meals served tableside begin at $21.75 for our popular braised chicken breast.

No matter what your choice, you will find that our facilities, food, and service live up to the “Cleveland’s finest” label recently awarded to us by Cleveland Monthly magazine. Please call me at 555-3288 to let me know how we might serve your organization.

Sincerely,
How Can You Improve This Response?

Email question from a customer to a car dealership:
“What colors do you have available now for the Honda Civic? If I want a different color, how long would I have to wait?”

Email response:
“Atomic Blue, Taffeta White, and Tango Red. For other colors, it depends.”

Did You Include...

- Wait times for specific colors?
- Interior color choices?
- By when the current colors may still be available?
- By when other colors should be ordered?
- Contact information?
- Encouragement to purchase (promotion)?

Using Instant Messaging at Work

When to IM at work
• To ask a simple question, to convey information quickly, or to get a fast response
• In the way IM is used within your organization’s culture
• Not for personal or confidential business information
• Not for excessive personal messaging at work

How to IM at work
• Create a professional screen name.
• Start by asking, “Is this a good time?” or “Got a sec?”
• Keep IMs short and focused.
• Follow grammar, punctuation, and capitalization standards.
• Avoid using abbreviations, and use emoticons sparingly.
• Save important IMs.
• Follow your company’s IM policies.

Types of Goodwill Messages

- Recognition Notes
- Congratulatory Notes
- Thank You Notes
- Sympathy Notes

How to Write a Meaningful Goodwill Message

Be Prompt
Send a goodwill message while the reason is still fresh in the reader’s mind

Be Direct
State the major idea in the first sentence or two, even for sympathy notes

Be Sincere
Avoid language that is too flowery or too strong

Be Specific
Personalize the message

Be Brief
A personal note card or a one-paragraph email may be plenty

Congratulations message via e-mail

DEAR ELINOR:

Congratulations on your promotion to branch manager. I know that Eastern customers will be just as delighted with your efficiency and responsiveness as I have been for the past four years. I will certainly miss the personal touch you brought to your job, but I know that this promotion is an important career move for you. Please accept my sincere best wishes for continued success.

Cordially,

Jacque

Elinor Rhymes (erhymes@rcp.com)

CONGRATULATIONS!

- Message

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Neutral and Positive Messages

Planning and Organizing  Instant Messaging  Responding

Goodwill Messages  Online Comments

Deciding Whether to Respond

Social Media Posts

DISCOVER

Evaluate

Happy

No Response

Degrading

Mislled

Fix the Facts

Unhappy

Monitor

Opt

Reach Out

Consider

Respond

Restore the Relationship

Responsive

Online Comments

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