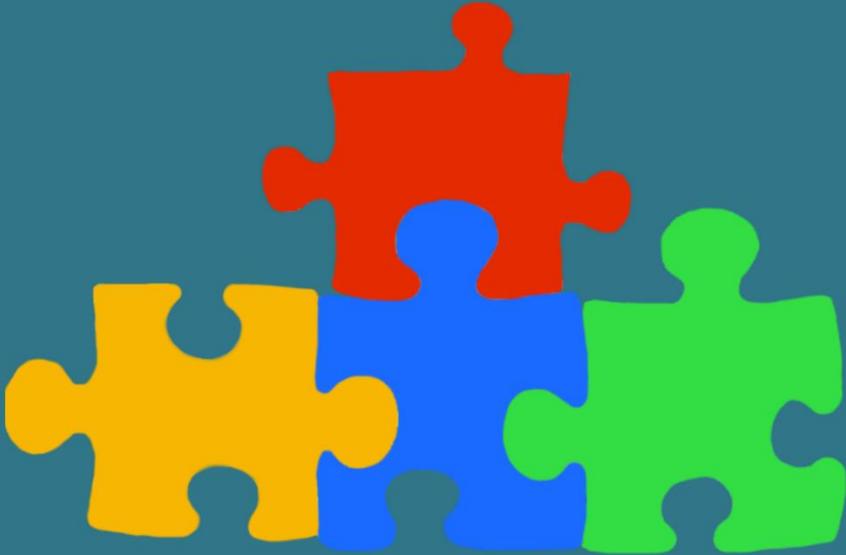


Written Communication



Lesley Morrissey

Book Eight
HANDS ON MANAGEMENT
Managing Yourself Series

Written Communication

Book Eight
Managing Yourself Series

Written by
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About the Author



Lesley Morrissey is CIPD qualified and has worked as a training manager, human resources manager and management training consultant.

She has worked in the UK and overseas with a diverse range of nationalities and with managers of many levels of expertise. Without exception, her practical approach to solutions has been received with enthusiasm by trainees and companies with who she consults.

A great believer in 'getting what you expect', Lesley helps people to focus on what they want and then create a path to success.

Practical and pragmatic approaches to real world results are a particular focus for Lesley's development

strategies. “Does it really work?” is the benchmark all these techniques focus on. In the end the success of anything is in the results achieved.

Lesley now runs Inside News Limited specialising in Reputation Marketing.

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How to use this book

This book aims to be a practical guide for you. There are many exercises that you will want to do – and should do to get the most out of what you will learn. You remember much more about something when you've actually done it for yourself, rather than when someone has told you how to do it!

There are places in the book where you can write notes and carry out the exercises. You'll recognise them when you see this sign:



By all means use these spaces to make this book truly your own.

If you have purchased an electronic copy you will need to print some, or all, of this out – or have paper handy. I find that it is a wonderful way to recycle the backs of old letters, printouts and photocopies that would otherwise have been thrown out!

If, like me, you have been indoctrinated at birth that defacing books is sacrilegious, then have a pad of paper at the ready!

If you simply read and don't take action you'll find the useful lessons will quickly fade and this will become another of those books that gather dust (or fill up your computer hard disk).

If you've bought this book because you want to improve your skills and your life - make this one count and take action!

What's it all about?

Preparation of written documents is an important part of the managerial function, however, few of us are formally taught the skills of business writing. Most of us get our first experience when we start work and are expected to know how to compose business letters, send internal communications effectively and compile reports.

Unfortunately, if we take our examples from business letters we have received we have no way of knowing whether these are well constructed and laid out, or poorly put together. Confusing correspondence is often the result of someone repeating errors made by others!

There are many ways of saying what you have to say – there are, however, some good basic rules that will help you to ensure that your written communication is both professional to the eye and the intent is clear to the reader.

Don't fall into the trap of putting everything in writing, bombarding your colleagues and business contacts with emails and paper. The first step is to decide WHY you need to communicate and WHICH METHOD is most appropriate.

The second step is to establish HOW you will say what you want to say. If you feel it is important to commit your message to writing, make sure that you use short words, short sentences, short paragraphs and simple language. You are not setting out to bamboozle, confound or confuse your reader; nor should you wish to impress them with your knowledge of the more obscure words in the English (or any other) language.

Step three deals with the construction of your message. This is to do with beginnings, middles and ends. Sometimes this can be achieved in one sentence; sometimes it can take several pages.

A well-written document can inform, persuade and clarify – a poorly written one can confuse, frustrate and misdirect. Even if your current written documents are pretty good – there is nothing like a bit of professional polish!

What's in it for me?

Poor writing skills confuse the reader – busy managers don't have time to have to keep rephrasing and repeating their communications, so the benefits for you as a busy manager are:

Personal benefits

- The more you practise the more effective your written communications will be and the more likely you will be to get the outcome you want.
- With practice writing will become easy and take less effort and less time to get the same excellent results.
- People will follow your communications to get the results you have asked for.
- Everyone will be clear on what is required.
- You will gain a reputation as a straight talker on paper, and people will not waste time trying to work out if you really mean what you say. This will reduce the political manoeuvring that oblique or confusing communications produce.

What other benefits will you get from improving your written communications?



Choosing your method

You have a message. One or more of your colleagues or business acquaintances needs to know about it. How can you give them this information?

- Email
- Letter
- Fax
- Telephone call
- Voice mail
- Verbal message to someone else
- Note on their desk
- Face to face – in person

Choose your method carefully – taking into account cost, speed, long term records, etc.

There are advantages and disadvantages to all the above methods – and, of course, an advantage in one situation may be a disadvantage in another.

The easiest way to relate to this is to think of a typical day (or yesterday if your days are very varied).