

Business Correspondence Peer Review Worksheet

FOR THE PEER REVIEWER (answer questions for each message)

1. Look at the message as a whole. Does the layout/header/fonts look balanced and/or professional? Make suggestions.

Ki Hoon does a very good job of composing the three scenarios to look like real business messages. With one glance over I was able to identify many features within the document that would benefit anyone's piece. The overall layout is great, and the changes in font size, capitalization and bolded fonts clearly emphasizes what needs to be and helps the reader quickly understand the point.

2. Determine if the message contains the necessary components for its letter type. Give examples.

For the first scenario, Ki Hoon does a great job using apologetic language when informing employees that there will be no bonus, which is necessary when crafting this type of message. In the second message, the author did a good job using professional language when addressing all of the employees. However, I believe that it might be in the best interest to remove the name of the employee who was fired from the message to preserve the employees privacy and prevent any legal problems. The third email appropriately uses more direct language, as the main point is to ask for a refund or a deal on a new purchase. Ki Hoon does a good job of stating the facts, but asking for the refund or discount could have been introduced in the email earlier than it was. I believe there was a bit too much fluff in the last email, and that shortening it could increase the effectiveness of the message.

3. Determine if the message letter accommodates the needs of its audience. Is it clear that there is a specific audience?

The first two emails very clearly have a specific audience, but the audience becomes less apparent in the third email. I believe this is directly related to when the main idea of the email is introduced. The first two emails address the problem in the very first sentence, but the third email doesn't mention the problem until the very last sentence. This could easily be fixed by flipping the body of the email around so that the problem is introduced early on, followed up by the companies request.

4. Evaluate the use of the direct or indirect approach. Is the approach appropriate for the situation? Is the approach skillfully employed?

I believe that each of Ki Hoon's responses includes a skillfully employed approach. The first two emails are direct (specifically asking for something), but the third email is an

indirect approach, as it infers that multiple emails will be necessary to agree on a deal for the company.

5. Point out the strongest points in the message and state why.

In the first email, the strongest point is the last line, which indicates the companies gratefulness for the employees hard work and patience, and immediately after offers another gesture of sympathy for not being able to fulfill their promise of a bonus. This is very well worded and entirely achieves the purpose of the email. The second email has its strongest points in the second and third paragraph. They are to the point, and directly accomplish the goals of restating the company policies and informing employees of random computer checks that might occur. The third email's strongest point is expressing thanks for the Chamber of Commerce reaching out about this new opportunity to have a sign hung at the ballpark. It would have been very easy for the author to skip this and immediately begin the email with anger for not receiving a refund or an email back, but the "thank you" softens the tone of the email from the start.

6. Identify any weaknesses. Recommend ways the weaknesses could be eliminated.

I believe the first example does not have any weaknesses, and therefore does not need to be changed. The second scenario mentions the terminated employee's name, which should be eliminated and rephrased to hold the individual anonymous from the company's headquarters. The third scenario should get to the point in the first sentence instead of the last. Simply flipping the body of the email around will be an easy fix.

7. Comment on the language use. Could it be stronger? Look for weak verbs or wordy, vague expressions. Do any phrases sound awkward or "off"? Is the voice active or passive? Is the voice appropriate to the situation? Is the use of voice skillful?

The first paragraph in the third scenario sounds a little bit off. The paragraph is composed of three long sentences, which feel like run-on sentences when reading through quickly. These could be condensed into two short sentences and still get the same amount of information across. It is an active, direct voice which is good, but the phrasing could be condensed to have the email read more efficiently.

8. Comment on the word choices. Are there negative words or words that contain strong negative connotations? Could those words be eliminated? Offer suggestions.

Ki Hoon's word choice is what makes these three emails as strong as they are. He does an especially good job on the first two emails, finding a balance of apologetic language with more direct language to get his point across. With proper rewording, the third email will be just as strong on the final draft.

9. Look at the paragraphs. Are they relatively short, unified and coherent? Are the sentences varied in structure? Point out any sentence level, spelling and grammar errors.

The first two paragraphs are short and to the point, which I personally think is beneficial. When looking at examples in class, the long emails that dragged the point out were obnoxious and took too much time to get through. The third email is a bit too long in my opinion. You could condense the first two sentences into one, and the second paragraph should come first in the email.

10. It is likely that at least one of the messages should employ a buffer. Look hard at the buffer. Indicate ways it could be improved.

I think Ki Hoon uses the buffer well. In the first email, the buffer comes after the main point is presented, which in my opinion is beneficial. I believe that too often, people misuse buffers and they become fluff that result in negative reader response. When the buffer is used following the main point of the message, it can be more concise which ends up sounding more sincere.

11. If the message is conveying bad news, does it achieve the five purposes of communicating bad news? Where might there be a weakness?

Ki Hoon's emails effectively use the techniques to communicate bad news, especially in the first email. He gets right to the point and makes sure to soften the blow in the following sentences, which we could then expect would get a better response from the reader compared to an open ended email without the required buffer.

12. It is likely that at least one of the messages contains a persuasive element. Does the writer use AIDA framing? How effectively (or not)? Does the message balance emotional and logical appeals effectively? Is the reasoning going to be persuasive for this audience? Offer suggestions for improvement.

The only email that should have used the AIDA method was the third email. The AIDA method uses attention, interest, desire and action and talks *at* the reader instead of *with* them. This is more commonly used to persuade people of something, such as the third email when the writer asks for a discount or a refund. The other two emails are used to deliver bad news, in which case the AIDA method would be an inappropriate approach.

13. Poke holes (logically and rhetorically) in the writer's position. Point out where his/her argument is weakest/ strongest.

Your arguments are strongest in the first and second email, where you get to the point and are direct. Your third email needs to be reorganized to arrive at the main idea earlier, and use the second paragraph to finish the reasoning and bargaining on either receiving a refund or a discount.

BE SURE TO DISCUSS YOUR FINDINGS WITH THE WRITER AFTER THE REVIEW.