



AUM

American University Of The Middle East

**Excellence in Business
Communication - Chapter 4
ENL 320**

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Excellence in Business Communication

- **Chapter 4**
- **Planning Business Messages**

Learning Objectives (1 of 2)

1. Describe the three-step writing process.
2. Explain why it's important to analyze a communication situation in order to define your purpose and profile your audience before writing a message.
3. Discuss Information-gathering options for simple messages, and identify three attributes of quality information.

Learning Objectives (2 of 2)

4. List the factors to consider when choosing the most appropriate medium for a message.
5. Explain why good organization is important to both you and your audience, and list the tasks involved in organizing a message.

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Understanding the Three-Step Writing Process

- (LO 1) Describe the three-step writing process.

The Three-Step Process

1 Plan	→	2 Write	→	3 Complete
Analyze Situation		Adapt to the Audience		Revise Message
Gather Information				Produce Message
Choose Medium and Channel		Compose the Message		Proofread Message
Get Organized				Distribute Message

Planning Business Messages

Analyzing the
Situation

Gathering
Information

Choosing Media
and Channels

Organizing the
Information

Defining Topic and Main Idea

TABLE 4.2 Defining Topic and Main Idea

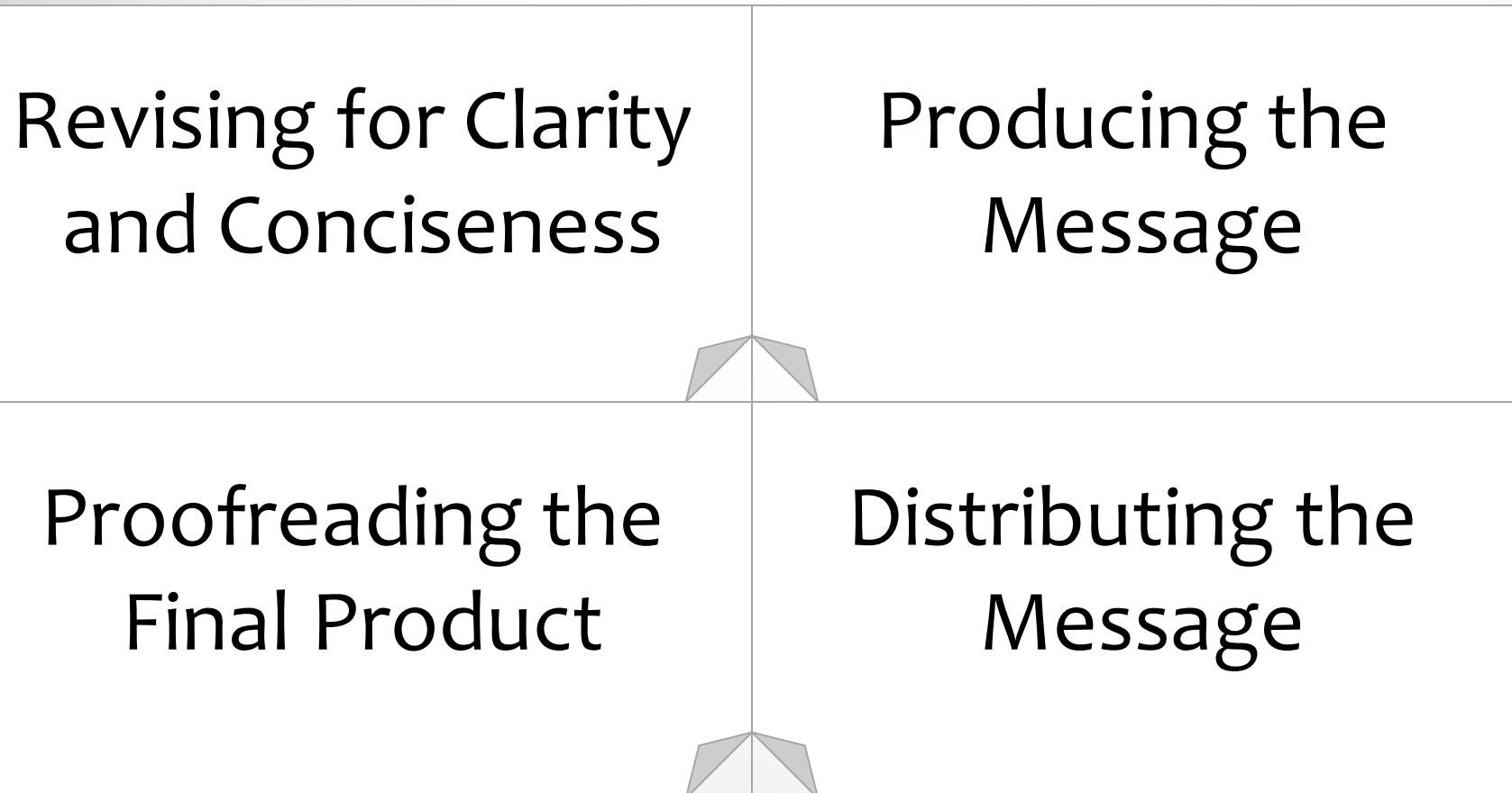
General Purpose	Example of Specific Purpose	Example of Topic	Example of Main Idea
To inform	Teach customer service representatives how to edit and expand the technical support wiki	Technical support wiki	Careful, thorough edits and additions to the wiki help the entire department provide better customer support.
To persuade	Convince top managers to increase spending on research and development	Funding for research and development	Competitors spend more than we do on research and development, enabling them to create more innovative products.
To collaborate	Solicit ideas for a companywide incentive system that ties wages to profits	Incentive pay	Tying wages to profits motivates employees and reduces compensation costs in tough years.

Writing Business Messages

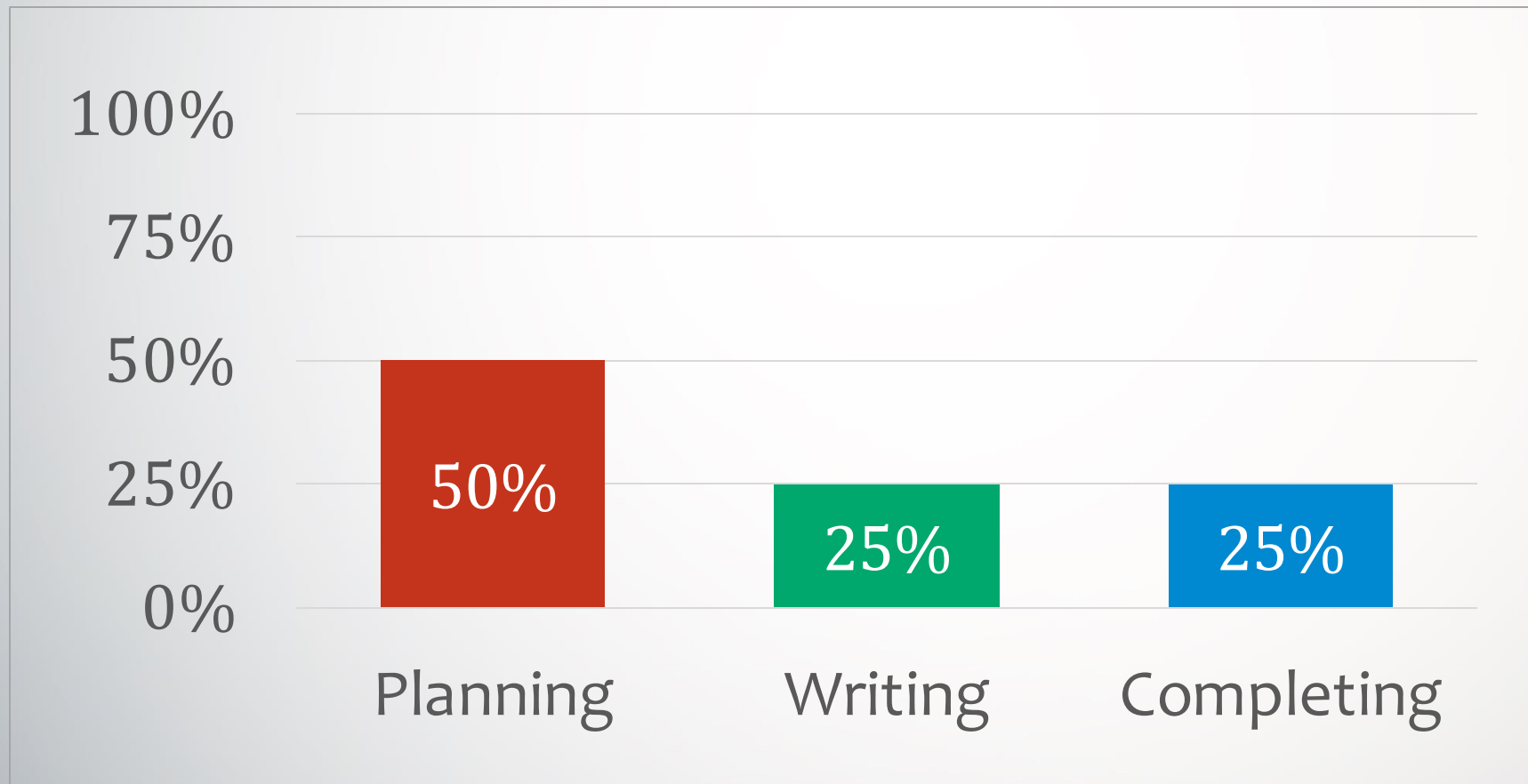
Adapting to the
Audience

Composing the
Message

Completing Business Messages



Optimizing Your Writing Time



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Analyzing the Situation

- (LO 2) Explain why it's important to analyze a communication situation in order to define your purpose and profile your audience before writing a message.

Defining Your Purpose

General Purpose

- To Inform
- To Persuade
- To Collaborate

Specific Purpose

- What You'll Accomplish
- What Audience Will Do
- What Audience Will Think

Analyzing Your Purpose



Will the *Message* Change Anything?



Is Your Purpose Realistic?

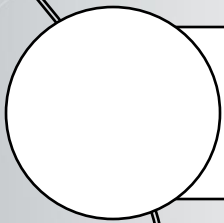


Is the Timing of the *Message* Right?

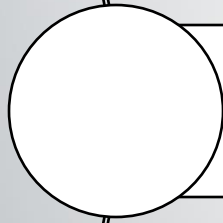


Will Your Purpose Be Acceptable?

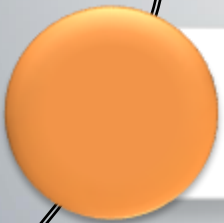
Developing an Audience Profile (1 of 2)



Identify Primary Audience Members



Determine Audience Size and Location



Determine Composition of the Audience

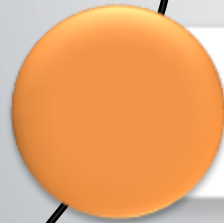
Developing an Audience Profile (2 of 2)



Gauge Their Level of Understanding

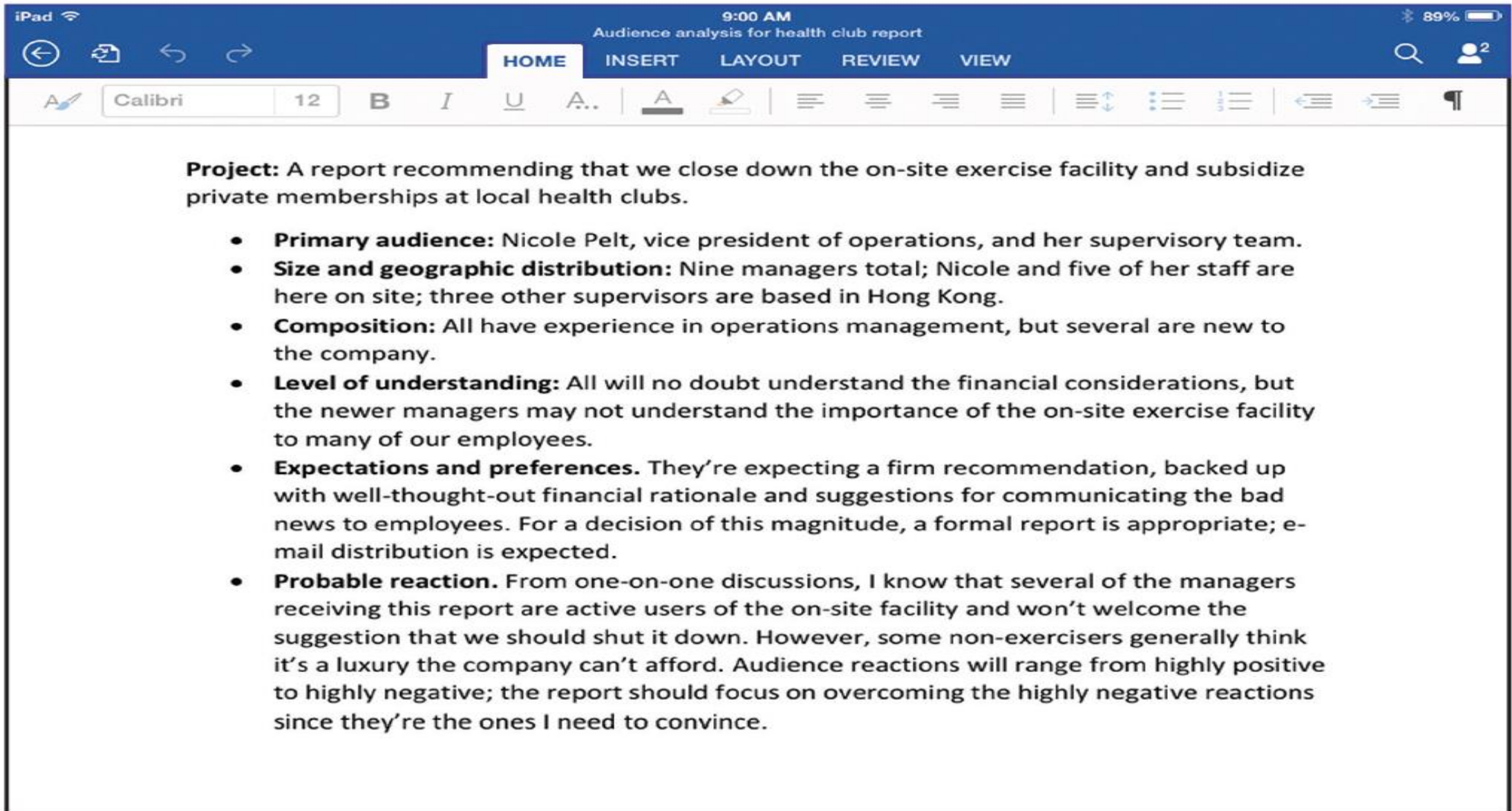


Check Their Expectations/Preferences



Forecast Their Probable Reaction

Using Audience Analysis to Plan a Message

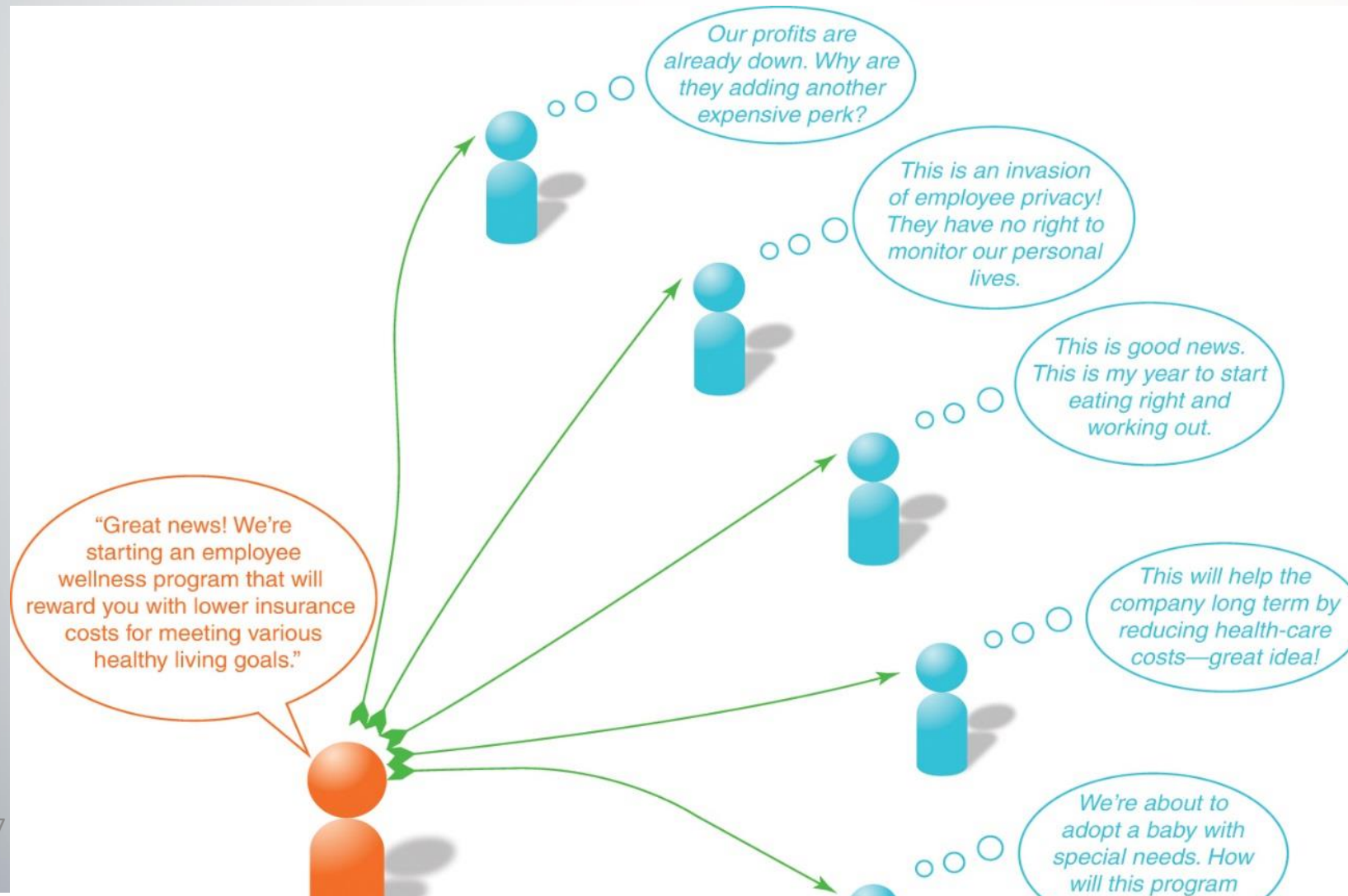


The screenshot shows an iPad interface with a document editor. The top status bar displays 'iPad', signal strength, Wi-Fi, '9:00 AM', and '89%' battery. The document title is 'Audience analysis for health club report'. The editor has a blue header with tabs for 'HOME', 'INSERT', 'LAYOUT', 'REVIEW', and 'VIEW'. Below the header is a toolbar with various editing tools like font selection (Calibri, size 12), bold, italic, underline, text color, background color, and alignment options. The main content area contains a project description and a bulleted list of audience analysis points.

Project: A report recommending that we close down the on-site exercise facility and subsidize private memberships at local health clubs.

- **Primary audience:** Nicole Pelt, vice president of operations, and her supervisory team.
- **Size and geographic distribution:** Nine managers total; Nicole and five of her staff are here on site; three other supervisors are based in Hong Kong.
- **Composition:** All have experience in operations management, but several are new to the company.
- **Level of understanding:** All will no doubt understand the financial considerations, but the newer managers may not understand the importance of the on-site exercise facility to many of our employees.
- **Expectations and preferences.** They're expecting a firm recommendation, backed up with well-thought-out financial rationale and suggestions for communicating the bad news to employees. For a decision of this magnitude, a formal report is appropriate; e-mail distribution is expected.
- **Probable reaction.** From one-on-one discussions, I know that several of the managers receiving this report are active users of the on-site facility and won't welcome the suggestion that we should shut it down. However, some non-exercisers generally think it's a luxury the company can't afford. Audience reactions will range from highly positive to highly negative; the report should focus on overcoming the highly negative reactions since they're the ones I need to convince.

Predicting the Effects of Audience Composition



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Gathering Information

- (LO 3) Discuss information-gathering options for simple messages, and identify three attributes of quality information.

Informal Techniques for Gathering Information

- Consider the audience's perspective.
- Listen to the community.
- Read reports and company documents.
- Survey supervisors, colleagues, customers.
- Ask your audience for input.

Uncovering Audience Needs

**Needs That
Are Apparent**

**Needs That
Are Hidden**

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Providing Required Information

Is the Information Accurate?

Is the Information Ethical?

Is the Information Pertinent?

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Selecting the Best Combination of Media and Channels

- (LO 4) List the factors to consider when choosing the most appropriate medium for a message.

Channels of communication



Presented by:-

• Nirbhey Singh Patwa

The Most Common Medium and Channel Combinations

um

- In-Person Channel
- Digital Channel

- In-Person Channel
- Digital Channel

n

- In-Person Channel
- Digital Channel

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Rich media convey a message via more than one informational cue

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facilitate feedback,

Oral Medium

In-Person Channel

- Conversations
- Speeches
- Meetings

Digital Channel

- Phone Calls
- Podcasts
- Voicemail

Written Medium

Print Channel

- Memos
- Letters
- Reports and Proposals

Digital Channel

- Tweeting and Texting
- Website Contents
- Book-Length Reports

Visual Medium

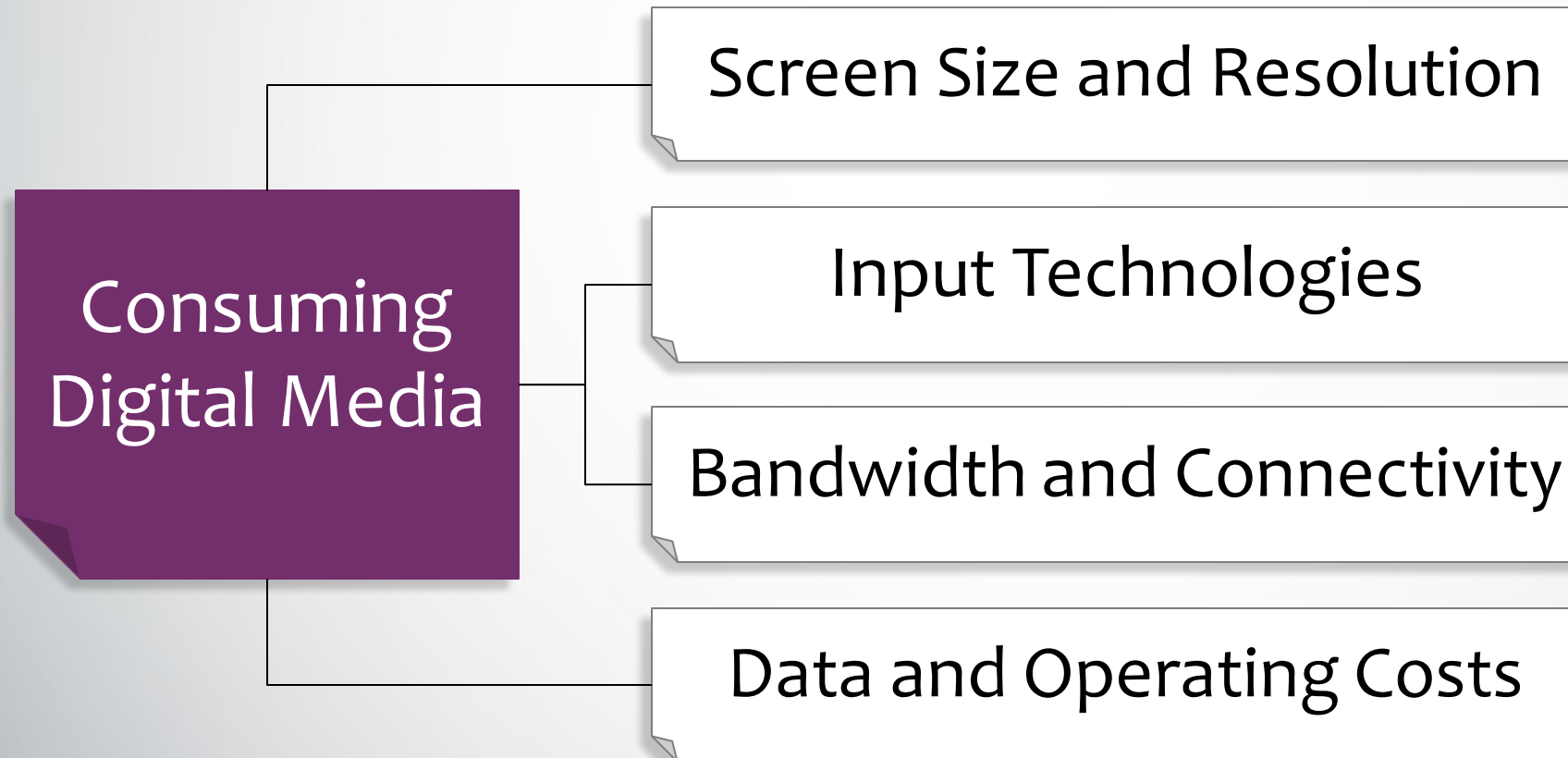
Print Channel

- Photographs
- Diagrams
- Charts and Graphs

Digital Channel

- Infographics
- Interaction and Animation
- Digital Video

Challenges of Communication on Mobile Devices



Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channels (1 of 2)

Media Richness

Level of Formality

Media Limitations

**Channel
Limitations**

Factors to Consider When Choosing Media and Channels (2 of 2)

Message Urgency

Message Cost

Audience
Preferences

Security and
Privacy

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Organizing Your Information

- (LO 5) Explain why good organization is important to both you and your audience, and list the tasks involved in organizing a message.

Effective Organization

Helps Readers

Helps Writers

Aids Understanding
Boosts Acceptance
Saves Time

Saves Time
Saves Energy
Builds Reputation

Defining Your Main Idea

What's the
Topic?

The Overall
Subject

What's the
Main Idea?

Your Statement
About the Topic

Generating Creative Ideas

What's
the Main
Idea?

- Brainstorming
- Journalistic Approach
- Questions & Answers
- Storyteller's Tour
- Mind Mapping

Defining Topic and Main Idea

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Limiting Your Scope

Main Idea

- Information You Present
- Overall Length of the Message
- Level of Detail in the Message

Choosing Between Direct and Indirect Approaches

	Direct Approach	Indirect Approach	
Audience Reaction	Eager, interested, pleased, neutral	Displeased	Uninterested, unwilling
Message Opening	Main idea, request, good news	Buffer statement; lead up to reasons	Statement or question
Message Body	Necessary details	Provide reasons; state bad news	Arouse interest; build desire to act
Message Close	Cordial comment; request action	Close cordially	Request action

Outlining Your Content (Basic Structure)

- I. First major point
 - A. First subpoint
 - 1. Examples and evidence
 - 2. Examples and evidence
 - a. Detail
 - b. Detail
 - B. Second subpoint
- II. Second major point
 - A. First subpoint
 - B. Second subpoint

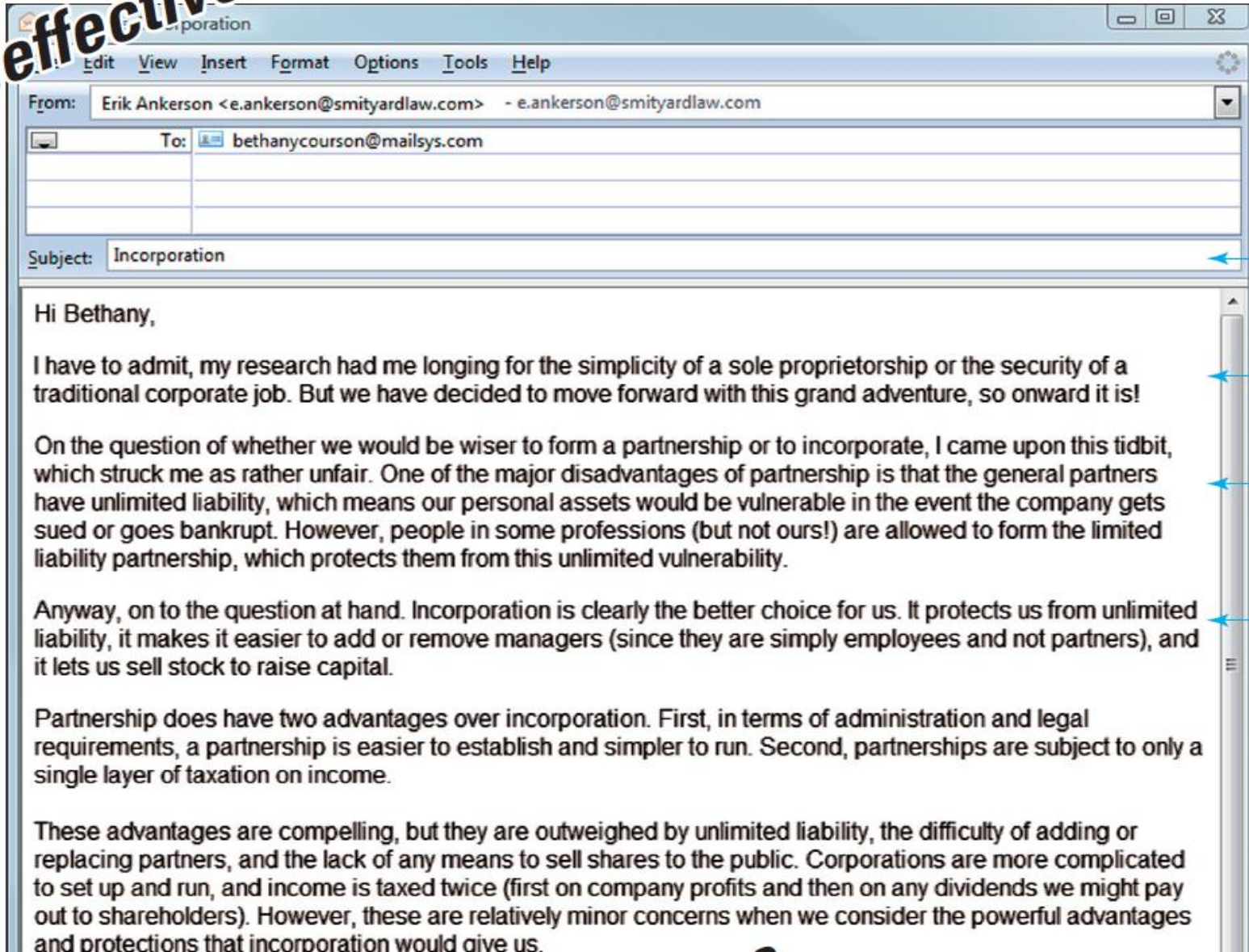
Six Types of Details

TABLE 4.3 Six Types of Detail

Type of Detail	Example	Comment
Facts and figures	Sales are strong this month. We have two new contracts worth \$5 million and a good chance of winning another worth \$2.5 million.	Enhances credibility more than any other type, but can become boring if used excessively.
Example or illustration	We've spent four months trying to hire recent accounting graduates, but so far, only one person has joined our firm. One candidate told me that she would love to work for us, but she can get \$10,000 more a year elsewhere.	Adds life to a message, but one example does not prove a point. Idea must be supported by other evidence as well.
Description	Upscale hamburger restaurants target burger lovers who want more than the convenience and low prices of a McDonald's burger. These places feature wine and beer, half-pound burgers, and generous side dishes (nachos, potato skins). Atmosphere is key.	Helps audience visualize the subject by creating a sensory impression. Does not prove a point but clarifies it and makes it memorable. Begins with an overview of the function, defines its purpose, lists major parts, and explains how it operates.
Narration (storytelling)	When Rita Longworth took over as CEO, she faced a tough choice: shut down the tablet PC division entirely or outsource manufacturing as a way to lower costs while keeping the division alive. As her first step, she convened a meeting with all the managers in the division to get their input on the two options. (Story continues from there.)	Stimulates audience interest through the use of dramatic tension. In many instances, must be supplemented with statistical data in order to prove a point convincingly.
Reference to authority	I discussed this idea with Jackie Loman in the Chicago plant, and she was very supportive. As you know, Jackie has been in charge of that plant for the past six years. She is confident that we can speed up the number 2 line by 150 units an hour if we add another worker.	Bolsters a case while adding variety and credibility. Works only if authority is recognized and respected by audience.
Visual aids	Graphs, charts, tables, infographics, data visualization, photos, video	Helps audience grasp the key points about sets of data or visualize connections between ideas.

Improving the Organization of Your Message (1 of 2)

Ineffective



MyBCommLab Apply Figure 4.8's key concepts by going to mybcommmlab.com

← This vague subject line offers few clues about the topic of the message.

← The email starts off with an irrelevant discussion, doesn't explain what research this refers to, and fails to introduce the topic of the message.

← This paragraph introduces the topic but then shifts to an irrelevant discussion (it makes a good point about unlimited liability, but the point is buried in irrelevant material).

← The main idea, that the pair should incorporate, is buried in the middle of the message.

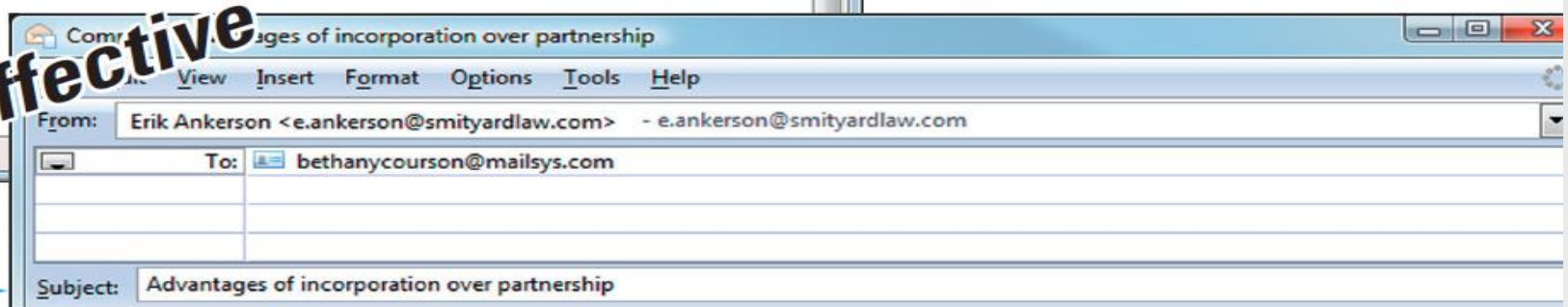
← By jumping from partnership to incorporation, back to partnership, and then back to incorporation again throughout the course of the message, the writer forces the reader to piece together the comparative evidence herself.

Improving the Organization of Your Message (2 of 2)

and protections that incorporation would give us.

Please let me know your thoughts,
Erik

Effective



The subject line states the topic (incorporation vs. partnership) and the main idea (incorporation is the better choice).

The opening provides a context by referring to a previous conversation and then states the main idea.

These two paragraphs support the main idea by showing how the disadvantages of partnerships outweigh the advantages.

The writer continues to provide support by explaining how incorporation overcomes all three key disadvantages of partnerships.

The comparison is completed by identifying two disadvantages of incorporation but noting that they are outweighed by the advantages.

Hi Bethany,

After our discussion yesterday about whether we should incorporate or form a partnership, I did some research to compare the advantages and disadvantages of the two structures. In light of our long-range plans for the business, particularly the need to raise funds for expansion, I believe the clear choice for us is incorporation.

Partnership does have two advantages over incorporation. First, in terms of administration and legal requirements, a partnership is easier to establish and simpler to run. Second, partnerships are subject to only a single layer of taxation on income.

These advantages are compelling, but they are outweighed by three disadvantages. First, the general partners in a partnership face unlimited legal liability, which means our personal assets would be vulnerable in the event of a product liability lawsuit or other calamity. Second, growth and succession issues can be tricky, such as if we decide to bring in another partner at some point or one of us wants to leave the company. Third, the inability to sell shares of stock really limits our opportunity to raise capital for expansion.

Incorporation addresses all three disadvantages of partnerships: our personal assets are not vulnerable in the event of lawsuits or company bankruptcy, adding or replacing managers is simpler because we are all employees of the corporation, and—most significantly—we can sell shares of stock to raise capital.

Yes, corporations are more complicated to set up and run, and income is taxed twice (first on company profits and then on any dividends we might pay out to shareholders). However, these are relatively minor concerns when we consider the powerful advantages and protections that incorporation would give us.

Please let me know your thoughts,