

Business Letters

“Letter writing is the only device for combining solitude with good company” – Lord Byron

It is important for professionals to be educated on the functional importance of effective writing. In letter writing, precision and clarity of meaning are extremely important. Time is a valuable resource, and precise communication helps save the time of the writer as well as of the recipient.

To write an effective letter, one needs to understand the purpose of writing and then draft the letter focusing on the reader’s perspective. To convince our readers, we need to follow these seven Cs:

Seven Cs

- Clarity
- Conciseness
- Correctness
- Completeness
- Conviction
- Cordiality
- Courtesy

Purpose

Formal letters are written for varied purposes as mentioned below:

- ☐ To inform
- ☐ To enquire
- ☐ To request
- ☐ To complain
- ☐ To sell a product, service or scheme
- ☐ To congratulate
- ☐ To order
- ☐ To collect dues
- ☐ To make an adjustment
- ☐ To apply for job

Structural Elements of Business Letters

- **Heading :** It is also known as the letterhead. The heading shows the organization’s name, full address and phone number.

<p style="text-align: center;">Hard n Soft</p> <p style="text-align: center;">13, Elgin Road Bangalore – 560001</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Phone:(080) 2335810 Email:hard_n_soft@yahoo.co.in</p>

- **Date:** The component refers the date on which the letter is written. The format of date is – 3 August 2013 or August 3, 2013

- **Inside address:** This part of the letter identifies the recipient’s address and it is separated from the date by at least one blank line. It is always best to address the letter to a specific person.

Mr M Sinha
Info Industries Ltd.

The General Manager
Info Industries Ltd.

3-A East Patel Nagar
Mumbai – 400001

OR

3-A East Patel Nagar
Mumbai – 400001

• **Salutation:** This is nothing but greeting. The greeting in a business letter is always formal. It normally begins with the word ‘Dear’ and includes the person’s last name.

Dear Professor Sinha

Dear Mr Pande

And if the person’s name is unknown, it is advisable to use

Dear Sir/Madam

• **Message or The Body:** The body is written as text. It should be single spaced, with a blank line separating it from the preceding and the following parts of the letter. Skip a line between the greeting and the body and also between the body and the close.

• **Complimentary close:** This short, polite closing ends with a comma. Depending on the style of the business letter, it is written either at the left margin or its left edge. Here is a list of expressions that can be used for complimentary closing:

Sincerely, Cordially, Truly, Faithfully, Faithfully Yours, Truly Yours, Yours Obediently etc.

• **Signature Block:** The complimentary closing line is followed by the signature block, which includes the writer’s signature, name and title. The signature block is placed four lines below the complimentary close.

Cordially,
Mr Shivam Singh
Sales Executive

• **Additional Elements:** Addressee Notation, Attention Line, Subject Line, Reference, Enclosure Notation, Copy Notation, Mailing Notation, Postscript

Layouts

Suitable an correct layout enhances the overall effectiveness of any letter. The layout helps to arrange all the elements of a formal letter in an organized manner. There are various layouts. But three major letter layouts are widely used.

☐ **Block / Complete block:** All elements except the letterhead heading are aligned with left margin. End punctuations are omitted. Space after each element

☐ **Modified block:** Date, Complimentary close—aligned with right margin.
Comma after salutation and complimentary close

☐ **Semi Block Layout:** The heading, complimentary close and signature block are aligned vertically with the right margin. Each paragraphs begin a few spaces away from the margin.

Sample Formal Letter with standard additional elements (Full Block Layout)

Heading	Residents' Welfare Association 345, Neheru Colony, Jawahar Nagar, Coimbatore – 000011 Phone: 9817580324
Date	January 13, 2011
Mailing Notation	By Speed Post
Address Notation	Personal
Inside Address	Water Works Department Moorthy Complex Bapu Nagar Coimbatore
Attention Line	ATTENTION: Mr R. Kumar, In Charge, Water Supply
Salutation	Dear Mr R. Kumar,
Subject Line	SUBJECT: No water supply on January 10, 2011
Body	<p>I am extremely sorry to inform you that our colony did not have any water supply on the 10th of this month and we had to face acute water shortage because of this.</p> <p>I contacted your office on 10th January at 10.30 a.m. and the person at the receiving end informed us that the water supply has been stopped for certain areas because of some problems in pumping. But he ensured that the supply would resume by 5 p.m. To our dismay, we could not receive water on that day. The complaint letter signed by all the residents of this colony is enclosed. Please look into the matter and see to it that such lacuna does not occur at least in future.</p>
Complimentary Close	Regards Sincerely,
Signature Block	Ranbir Sinha President
Enclosure Line	Enclosure(1)
Copy Line	Copy: Chairman, Water Board

Business Letter Type and their Objectives

Types Objectives

Credit	To enquirer or request for loan
Collection	To collect past due accounts
Enquiry	To enquire the status of something
Order Placement	To place an order for products or services
Claim	To lodge a complaint and ask for a remedy
Adjustment	To inform how the complaint would be taken care of
Sales	To sell a product or service
Thank you/Follow up Letter	To express courtesy / get updated information
Acceptance/ Rejection	To take up/refuse an offer or assignment
Persuasive	To convince someone

Some sample letters

Letters of Enquiry

An enquiry letter is useful when we need information, advice, names or directions. There are two types of enquiry letters – solicited and unsolicited enquiry letters. Solicited letters of enquiry are written when a business or agency advertises its products or services. A letter of enquiry is unsolicited if the recipient has not prompted the enquiry.

Solicited letter of enquiry (Modified Block Layout)

Institute of Research and Technology
Sector -54, Gurgaon
Ph: 0124-41424344, Fax: 0124 -434956
www.irt.edu.in

15 July, 2014

Mr S. Rana
General Manager
LG Electronics Ltd.
Okhala, Mthura Road
New Delhi – 110038

Dear Mr Rana

I am writing this letter to find out more about the newly launched LCD projector by your company. We happened to see your product in operation at a recently held international conference at Pune and subsequently read a couple of your advertisements in Times of India, New Delhi.

We have gone through your website to get detailed information on the product but have not been able to find the exact information we are looking for.

We are large technical institute operating in Gurgaon with 900 students in various professional

courses.

To make our classroom lecture delivery more effective, we are in the process of installing LCD projectors in each class.

We would like to seek your help in finding answers to the following questions:

1. What are the limitations of your products?
2. How long it can be used on a continuous basis?
3. Can the colour combination on be changed on the spot?
4. What is the life time of the product?

We would appreciate technical and objective answers to these questions, which will help us come to a decision with respect to this product.

I look forward to an early response.

Yours Faithfully

.....
Dr. R. Kumar
Dean, Academics

Claim Letter

A claim or an adjustment request is made when a company's product or service is not satisfactory. Followings are the objectives of writing a claim letter:

- ☐ To bring the mistake either/fault to the notice of the supplying company
- ☐ To rectify the mistake either by repair or

Effective complaints letters (and any other way of complaining) should be:

- ☐ **Concise** letters can be understood quickly.
- ☐ **Authoritative** letters - letters that are well written and professionally presented - have more credibility and are taken more seriously.
- ☐ **Factual** letters enable the reader to see immediately the relevant details, dates, requirements, etc., and to justify action to resolve the complaint.
- ☐ **Constructive** letters - with positive statements, suggesting positive actions - encourage action and quicker decisions.
- ☐ **Friendly** letters - with a considerate, cooperative and complimentary tone - are prioritised because the reader responds positively to the writer and wants to help.

A complaint letter can be written for any of the following reasons:

Billing Errors	Goods not matching the sample
Damaged Goods	Difference in agreed prices
Wrong goods/ quantity	Late delivery/ Non delivery
Unsatisfactory quality	Poor service

Sample Letter of Complain (Semi Block Layout)

Steelco Furniture
50, Lenin Srani, Kolkata- 700031
Ph: 044 – 48975612

Our Reference : TT/432
Your Reference: MB/45

May 6, 2014

Apex Mattresses Ltd.
Mayurganj
Vijay Nagar

Dear Sir,

Thank you for promptly delivering 200 mattresses in response to our order no.TT/432 on May 2 2014. However, we are sorry to state that upon checking of the consignment, we found that 55 of the 200 mattresses sent are badly soiled and faded.

I had placed this order for your high quality, affordable products, based on the recommendation. We propose to sell these mattresses at a winter sale in our area, five days from now. Advertisements for the same have already been made through the local media.

The mattresses received at our end must have been affected during transportation by water seepage owing to the recent rains. Therefore, I request you to replace these 55 damaged mattresses immediately. I have very little time left to arrange them from elsewhere. The damaged products will be sent back to you within two days at your cost by transport on receipt of the confirmations about replacement.

Kindly send us the replacement within two days of receipt of this letter and oblige. We thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

.....

S. Gupta
Sales Manager

Sample Adjustment Letter (Block Format)

**J.V. Chemical Ltd.
G.T. Road, Gaziabad**

August 9, 2014

M/S Ashoka Leathers Ltd.
13, S.Market, Pathankot

Dear Sir,

Please accept our sincere apology for delay in execution of your order dated July 5, 2014.

Owing to month long strike in the factory, followed by power cut and strike of U.P. Electricity Board Employees, the production has remained suspended for more than one month. This resulted in our falling behind the delivery schedule. Kindly understand our position that circumstances were beyond our control.

We feel extremely sorry about this inevitable delay that has caused you inconvenience. Now the situation has changed. We are doing our best to execute the pending orders.

We hope you will be supplied your goods before August 18, 2014.

Yours faithfully,

.....
D. Kumar
Sales Executive

Sales Letters

Sales letters are the most cost – effective and time – efficient means of marketing products or services. They are also a form of advertising. A good sales letter is able to achieve the following objectives.

Catching the reader's attention: The most immediate purpose of a sales letter is to capture the attention of the reader. For this, the beginning of the letter should be so captivating that the reader should read.

Creating a Desire: Having aroused the interest of the reader, the next part of a sales letter strives to sustain it. For this the letter has to point the benefits, features, and advantages of the product.

Carrying Conviction: Having created a desire in the reader's heart for the product, the next step is to convince him/her of the authenticity of our claims by arranging free demonstration for the potential customer, by providing a guarantee etc.

Inducing Action: The closing paragraphs of a sales letter is designed to persuade the reader to take action. Generally, in this part, we are required to make the offer tempting by making special offers etc.

A Sample Sales Letter

Florence Optical Ltd.
23. R.S.Road
Kolkata -1
Ph: (033) 5467023

Sima Mathur
243, Gandhi Marg
Kolkata -7000003

29 September, 2013

Dear Customer

Sub: Introduction of 'the ultimate' in the Hi tech series of sunglasses.

Eyes, your beautiful eyes, are the fathomless ocean of expression that deserves protection. With this aim in mind we at Florence Optical are constantly researching to provide better products to our customer.

'The Ultimate' is our latest range of optical accessories that caters to the need and comfort of your most precious eyes. The sunglasses designed incorporate the latest Light Sensing Technology. The glasses as well as the lenses have in built micro sensors that control the amount of light entering your eyes.

It is our tradition to not only employ the best of technology but also to infuse our products with the elegance and style that enhances your personality. Our limited edition range of sunglasses is simple and elegant in design without any false ornamentation. We feel that you deserve to be the first worthy owner of these glasses at a special 50% discount.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours
M. Sharma
Chief Executive

NOTICE WRITING

A notice is a formal means of communication. The purpose of a notice is to announce or display information to a specific group of people. Notices are generally meant to be pinned up on specific display boards whether in schools or in public places. Notices issued by the government appear in newspapers.

Format:

A notice should be written in the following format:

- the name of the organisation issuing the notice
- the title ‘NOTICE’
- a heading to introduce the subject of the notice
- the date
- the body of the notice
- the writer’s signature, name (in block letters) and designation

Name of organisation/office issuing the notice	
Date	Notice Heading Body of letter
Signature Name Designation	

Points to remember:

- A well-written notice must inform the readers about the 5 Ws:
 - What is going to happen, (that is, the event)
 - Where it will take place
 - When it will take place (that is, the date and time)
 - Who can apply or is eligible for it
 - Whom to contact or apply to (that is, the issuing authority)
- Only the most important points should be written.
- A.O.D. – that is, any other detail given in the question.
- One is free to add any relevant information not included in the question.
- The sentences should be short and grammatically accurate.
- They should be in the passive voice as far as possible.
- The notice should be presented within a box.
- The word limit for a notice is 40–50 words (only the words in the body of the notice are counted).
- Information given in a notice must be clear and should not cause any misunderstanding or confusion.
- A notice must be catchy and appealing – it should attract the reader’s attention at once.
- Increase the visual appeal of your notice by using bold letters, catchy slogans, striking words and phrases, etc.
- Standard abbreviations are allowed.

Sample notice:

The Residents’ Welfare Association, Green Park is organising a ‘Holi Fiesta’ in the locality. As the president of the association, draft a notice in not more than 50 words informing the residents about the same. Give other essential details too.

Residents’ Welfare Association
Notice

10 Jan 2007

Holi Fiesta

The Residents’ Welfare Association is organising a Holi bash in the colony as per the following details:

Date : 17 February 2007

Time : 9 am to 5 pm

Venue : Green Park Club

The residents are requested to come along with their families and friends and add colour to the rejoicings.

Ravi
Ravi Kumar
President, RWA

WORKSHEET

1. There is going to be an inter-section debate for all the students of Class VIII on the topic ‘Tobacco companies should not sponsor sports events’. As the cultural secretary, draft a notice providing all relevant details in not more than 50 words.
2. You are Krrish, a student of Class VIII. You have lost an expensive watch in the school premises. Draft a notice to be put up on the school notice board giving details of the watch and offering a suitable reward. Use not more than 50 words.
3. As president of the student’s council of your school, write a notice is not more than 50 words asking the students of your school to donate old clothes, books and bags for the Anubhav Shiksha Kendra, a school for the underprivileged being run on your school premises.
4. The Hindustan Times Pace Programme is planning to hold fun-filled workshops on candle making and clay modelling for all Class VIII students on Children’s Day in the school. As Keni Pinto, the Head Boy, write a notice informing students about it. Include necessary details and write the notice is not more than 50 words.

5. The event management company, Altitudes Expeditions, has organised an Adventure Trip of Sitlakhet in the summer vacations for interested students of Classes VIII and IX. As president of the Excursions Committee, write a notice in not more than 50 words informing students about the trip and inviting them to join.
6. Write a notice for the school notice board informing the students about the visit of the Prime Minister in your school on 20.11.2007. Write the notice in not more than 50 words asking the students to maintain punctuality, cleanliness and discipline.
7. The school has decided to organise a Christmas Carnival in the Sports Complex. The Principal has asked you, as the school Prefect, to write a notice about this carnival, inviting the students and teachers to participate in it. The notice should be written in not more than 50 words including all the relevant details.
8. The Residents' Welfare Association, New Friends Colony is organising a Diwali Bazaar in the locality. As the president of the association, draft a notice in not more than 50 words informing the residents about the same. Give other essential details about the Bazaar.
9. You are the student editor of Saagar International School, Jaipur. Write a notice inviting names of those who would like to give articles, stories, cartoons, crossword, puzzles, jokes, etc for the school magazine. Write the notice in not more than 50 words.
10. You are Rohan Kapoor, the secretary of the Science Club of your school. Write a notice is not more than 50 words informing the students about the C V Raman National Science Exhibition to be held and requesting them to participate in it enthusiastically. Inform them that outsiders, too, are welcome to this exhibition.

Sample Meeting Minutes

(Excerpted from *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised Edition*)

MINUTES AND REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Minutes

The record of the proceedings of a deliberative assembly is usually called the minutes, or sometimes - particularly in legislative bodies - the journal. In an ordinary society, unless the minutes are to be published, they should contain mainly a record of what was done at the meeting, not what was said by the members. The minutes should never reflect the secretary's opinion, favorable or otherwise, on anything said or done. The minutes should be kept in a substantial book or binder.

CONTENT OF THE MINUTES:

The first paragraph of the minutes should contain the following information (which need not, however, be divided into numbered or separated items directly corresponding to those below):

- 1) The kind of meeting: regular, special, adjourned regular, or adjourned special;
- 2) The name of the society or assembly;
- 3) The date and time of the meeting, and the place, if it is not always the same;
- 4) The fact that the regular chairman and secretary were present or, in their absence, the names of the persons who substituted for them; and
- 5) Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved-as read, or as corrected-and the date of that meeting if it was other than a regular business meeting. Any correction is made in the text of the minutes being approved; the minutes of the meeting making the correction merely state that the minutes were approved "as corrected".

The body of the minutes should contain a separate paragraph for each subject matter, giving, in the case of all important motions, the name of the mover, and should show:

- 6) All main motions (10) or motions to bring a main question again before the assembly except, normally, any that were withdrawn* - stating:
 - a) the wording in which each motion was adopted or otherwise disposed of (with the facts as to whether the motion may have been debated or amended before disposition being mentioned only parenthetically); and
 - b) the disposition of the motion, including - if it was temporarily disposed of any primary and secondary amendments and all adhering secondary motions that were then pending;
- 7) Secondary motions that were not lost or withdrawn, in cases where it is necessary to record them for completeness or clarity-for example, motions to Recess or to Fix the Time to Which to Adjourn (among the privileged motions), or motions to Suspend the Rules or grant a Request to Be Excused from a Duty (among the incidental motions), generally only alluding to the adoption of such motions, however, as ". . . the matter having been advanced in the agenda on motion of . . ." or ". . . a ballot vote having been ordered, the tellers . . .";
- 8) All notices of motions and
- 9) All points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost, together with the reasons given by the chair for his or her ruling.

The last paragraph should state:

- 10) The hour of adjournment.

THE SIGNATURE

Minutes should be signed by the secretary and can also be signed, if the assembly wishes, by the president. The words Respectfully submitted - although occasionally used - represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

FORM OF THE MINUTES.

The principles stated above are illustrated in the following model form for minutes:

The regular monthly meeting of the L.M. Society was held on Thursday, January 4, 20__, at 8:30 P.M., at the Society's building, the President being in the chair and the Secretary being present.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved as corrected.

The Treasurer reported the receipt of a bill from the Downs Construction Company in the amount of \$5,000 for the improvements recently made in the Society's building.

The question put by the chair "that the bill be paid" was adopted. Mr. Johnson, reporting on behalf of the Membership Committee, moved "that John R. Brown be admitted to membership in the Society."

The motion was adopted after debate. The report of the Program Committee was received and placed on file.

The special committee that was appointed to investigate and report on suitable parking facilities near the Society's building reported, through its chairman, Mrs. Smith, a resolution, which, after debate and amendment, was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact words immediately before being acted upon, incorporating all amendments]."

The resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers, which was postponed from the last meeting, was then taken up.

This motion and a pending amendment were laid on the table after the chair announced that the guest speaker had received a phone message which would require his early departure.

The President introduced the guest speaker, Mr. James F. Mitchell, whose subject was _____. At the conclusion of Mr. Mitchell's talk, the resolution relating to the use of the Society's library by nonmembers was taken from the table.

After amendment and further debate, the resolution was adopted as follows: "Resolved, That . . . [its exact wording immediately before being finally voted on]." Mr. Gordon moved "that the Society undertake the establishment of a summer camp for boys on its lakefront property." Mrs. Thomas moved to amend [page 456] this motion by inserting the word "underprivileged" before "boys." On motion of Mr. Dorsey, the motion to establish the camp, with the pending amendment, was referred to a committee of three to be appointed by the chair with instructions to report at the next meeting.

The chair appointed Messrs. Flynn, Dorsey, and Fine to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 P.M.

Lashaunda Williams, Secretary

MEMO

A memo is a document written to pass information between people and departments within the organization. Since memos are written to deal with many official matter, one may be expected to write a memo to do any of the following in a professional organization:

To confirm
To request
To announce
To caution or warn

To suggest
To explain
To report

Sample Memo

J.K.Chemicals Ltd
Kolkata
Interoffice Memorandum

No: AK/265

Date: 24 March, 2013

To: Mr S.D.Dutta, Accounts Clerk

From: Mr R.D. Sharma, M.D

Subject: Absence from duty on 20 March, 2013

It came to my notice that you were not present in the office on 20 March, 2013. Your application for leave has not been received yet.

Will you kindly explain the cause for being the cause for being absent? If your reply does not reach o or before April 3, 2013, administrative action can be taken against you.

R.D.sharma
Managing Director

SPECIMEN OF A REPORT IN MANUSCRIPT FORM

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Business Correspondence & Report Writing

**A Report
on
the Attitude of Parents
towards
Higher Education for Girls**

**by
Richa Verma**

**A report submitted in partial
fulfilment of requirements of
TA C312: Technical Report Writing**

16 November 2000

Rs 1000 per month and having formal education only up to the higher secondary or high school (Category A), show a markedly distinct attitude from the rest (Category B).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Sri R.T. Ramanan for encouraging me to undertake this study. I am also grateful to Sri R.K. Gupta and other members of the staff who helped me prepare the questionnaire. I specially wish to thank the parents without whose cooperation this report would not have been possible.

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Summary

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2. Method of Collecting Data
3. Discussion
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Appendix

All respondents think that higher education gives social and economic advantages and agree that girls should be educated up to the undergraduate level. However, under financial constraints, a Category A respondents would prefer to educate their sons rather than their daughters, whereas only one-third of Category B respondents subscribe to this attitude.

Category A respondents exhibit conservative attitudes. They do not favour postgraduate education for girls because they fear that it may lead to their mixing freely with boys and may result in inter-caste marriages. They further believe that the continuation of education of girls after marriage is not necessary.

Category B respondents show a more liberal attitude in these matters. They would like their daughters to go in for higher education up to the post-graduate level. They, however, do not consider engineering education suitable for girls and think that a Ph.D. degree is not necessary for them. They prefer to leave the question of continuation of studies after marriage to the choice of the husband and his family.

1. Introduction

Women in India has long been a neglected section of society. Though there are individual cases of women who have distinguished themselves in various spheres of activity, education of women has not been one of the main concerns of our society. Even today with equal opportunities, the number of women studying in colleges is much smaller than that of men. To find out the reasons for this phenomenon, a large scale survey would be necessary.

The present study is a micro-effort in this area. Its findings are of limited value inasmuch as it is based only on the views expressed by BITS campus parents residing in Pilani, a small town of Rajasthan. It must, however, be mentioned that BITS is an all India institute. On its staff at all levels both teaching and non-teaching, are people from different parts of India. And this gives even to the small sample on which this report is based a representative character, and to the findings a wide significance.

2. Method of Collecting Data

The views of the parents were ascertained by means of a questionnaire (Appendix). As far as possible, persons with different educational levels and belonging to different income, linguistic and religious groups were selected as sample. The questionnaire was personally distributed by the author. Of those approached, 70 parents accepted it but only 43 returned it after filling in the necessary details. The break-up on different bases is given below.

(i) Sex

Men	23
Women	20
Total	43

(ii) Income (per month)

Upto Rs 5000	11
Rs 5001 to Rs 7500	08
Rs 7501 to Rs 10,000	07
Rs 10,001 to Rs 12,500	09

Rs 12,501 to Rs 15,000	05
Above Rs 15,000	03
Total	43
(iii) <i>Formal education</i>	
Primary	02
Middle School	05
Higher Secondary and High School	11
College/University	25
Total	43
(iv) <i>Mother tongue</i>	
Hindi	18
Punjabi	06
Bengali	06
Tamil	03
Marathi	02
Marwadi	03
Malayalam	02
Urdu	01
Gujrati	01
English	01
Total	43
(v) <i>Religion</i>	
Hindus	26
Sikhs	08
Muslims	06
Christians	03
Total	43

The questionnaire was designed to find out what effects certain parameters have on the attitude of respondents. The variables on which information was sought are given in the questionnaire. Views were deliberately sought on certain programmes of education which have traditionally been considered to be the sole heritage of men.

3. Discussion

On the basis of attitudes reflected in the answers to the questionnaire, the respondents can be broadly classified into two main categories:

Category A Those with an income of less than Rs 10,001 per month and formal education up to the higher secondary or high school level.

Category B Those with a still higher income and with formal education up to the university level.

No clear correlation could be established between the attitudes and factors like sex, mother tongue and religion. This was expected. Category A respondents are people with a rural background drawn

from Pilani or nearby areas, whereas Category B belong to the educated middle class with an urban background drawn from different parts of India.

All respondents, however, agreed that girls should be given higher education to gain economic and cultural advantages. Category A respondents were in favour of education for girls up to the undergraduate level and Category B up to the post graduate level. The latter however did not favour girls going in for engineering education or a Ph.D. degree. The opinion reflects the influence of the traditional attitude that girls are not suitable for the engineering profession and that a Ph.D. degree is not necessary for them. It is significant to note that no such opposition to medical education was expressed by the respondents.

Category A respondents believed that husbands should have higher educational qualifications than their wives. They felt that if their daughters were very highly educated, it would be difficult to find suitable matches for them. Another reason was that they feared for which their community was not yet prepared. They were also opposed to girls continuing their education after marriage.

Category B respondents showed a relatively more liberal attitude in these matters. They expressed no hostility to the intermixing of the sexes, and about one-third who answered this question had no objection to inter-caste marriages. As to the continuing of education after marriage, they were of the view that it was preferable to leave it to the choice of the husband and his family.

Category A respondents considered the education of their sons as a necessary investment and expected them to contribute to the family income. Under financial constraints, they would choose to spend on the education of their sons rather than on that of their daughters. On this question there was a mixed response from Category B. One-third of the respondents favoured offering equal opportunities to their sons and daughters, another one-third if forced to make a choice, would prefer to educate their sons rather than daughters, and the rest did not have any definite opinion in this matter.

4. Conclusions

All parents favour educating their daughters, though they differ on the degree and level of education. However, those with lower incomes and less of formal education would educate their sons rather than their daughters, if the choice was forced upon them. All parents believe that higher education imparts social and economic advantages and increases the prospects for a better life. Those in favour of higher levels of education consider certain educational programmes such as engineering or a Ph.D. unsuitable for girls.

Appendix

The Attitude of BITS Campus Parents Towards Higher Education for Girls

Questionnaire

Note: Please tick ✓ in the suitable boxes except where asked to indicate your answers otherwise.

1. Please indicate your

(a) Age _____

(b) Sex _____

(c) Religion _____

(d) Mother tongue _____

2. Formal education level:

(a) Primary ☐

(b) Middle ☐

(c) High School/Higher Secondary ☐

(d) College/University ☐

Writing Resumes and Job Applications

Learning Objectives:

- ☐ Understanding the nature and importance of employment communication
- ☐ Knowing about resume design
- ☐ Knowing how to write a persuasive resume
- ☐ Identifying the components of a job application letter
- ☐ Knowing how to write effective job applications

Introduction:

Getting a job depends on many factors, some of which one cannot control. For example, one has no control over other applicants who might be more qualified, more experienced and better suited to the job at hand. But there is one factor that one can control, and that is, how well one communicates. Effective communication skills are the most important factor in helping job applicants find employment. A resume is a selective record of an individual's background. It is basically a professional employment-seeking document that presents a summary of an individual's education, professional training, experience, skills, abilities, achievements and references. It introduces the individual to a potential employer. A resume is sent to prospective employers when an applicant is seeking job interviews. So, the main objective of a resume is winning a job interview by highlighting the applicant's fitness for a particular position.

Resume Design:

There is no one right design for a resume. The design of a resume largely depends on a person's background, employment needs, career goals and professional competence in the area of specialization. For best results, a resume must be designed to reflect the candidate's personality, employment goals and his/her career aspirations. However, whatever the resume design, the resume must answer the following questions:

- ☐ How can the employer contact the candidate?
- ☐ What are his/her career objectives?
- ☐ Which institution has been attended?
- ☐ What courses (academic or professional) have been completed?
- ☐ What is his/her work experience?
- ☐ What is his/her career achievements?
- ☐ What are his/her special skills or capabilities?
- ☐ What are the honors and awards received?
- ☐ What are his/her activities/special interests/hobbies?
- ☐ Who are his/her references?

Structure of a Resume:

1. Heading: The heading of a resume includes contact information, which contains the applicant's name, full postal address with pin code, telephone number and e-mail address.

2. Position Sought: If applying for a solicited job position, the position sought should be mentioned so that the employer is able to distinguish the application from those who might have applied for other positions available in the organisation.

3. Career Objective: If responding to an advertised job position, the resume should include the applicant's career objective, which should be tailored to the position he/she is seeking. Thus, it should be a specific one-sentence focused statement expressing his career goals in relation to the targeted position.

4. Education: In this part of the resume, specific details regarding the applicant's education and professional training must be included. The names of the institutes attended, major areas of study, degrees/certificates received should be mentioned. Relevant training programmes, special courses, seminars and workshops that the applicant might have completed, attended, or conducted should also be included. Reverse chronological order is used to list educational information.

5. Work Experience: This part of the resume should provide a brief and specific overview of the applicant's work and professional experience. As prior work experience is a vital part of any hiring decision, the applicant must draft this part of the resume very carefully. Work experience should be given in reverse chronological order, by listing the most recent experience first.

6. Special Skills, Abilities, and Aptitudes: In this part of the resume, the applicant's special skills, abilities and aptitudes that are of significance and of direct relevance to the job applied for are listed. Examples of learned skills include computer programming, computer processing, data processing, foreign languages, machinery operation, drafting technical report and so on.

7. Other Activities and Interests: Extra-curricular, co-curricular, professional activities, and hobbies and interests should be mentioned in order to show that the applicant is a dynamic and energetic person who can face challenges and difficulties.

8. Achievements: The applicant's achievements, accomplishments and awards distinguish him from the rest. They convince the employer that he/she is an achiever and therefore worth hiring. This part should include scholarships, fellowships, awards, distinctions, commendations, certificates, or anything that shows achievement or recognition.

9. References: When applying for a solicited job, where the employer wants references, the names of three persons who can give letters of recommendations should be mentioned.

Final Tips:

- ☐ Give the Resume a Professional Look
- ☐ Be Factual, Complete and Objective
- ☐ Use Appropriate Writing Style
- ☐ Use Specific Details
- ☐ Organise the Resume properly
- ☐ Take Care of Grammar, Usage, Vocabulary, Spelling and Punctuation

Job Application Letters:

A job application letter (also called a “cover letter”) is written to apply for a specific position. It is a persuasive message that sells the applicant’s talents to a prospective employer. It persuades the reader to believe in his/her suitability for a particular position. It is basically a self promotion instrument used by the applicant to boost his/her professional value and career prospects. Although the basic objective of every application is to draw a clear connection between the job one is seeking and one’s qualifications, it serves several specific purposes. It

- ☐ Introduces the applicant to the hiring organization.
- ☐ Introduces the applicants resume.
- ☐ Highlights the applicant’s positive personal traits and achievements.
- ☐ Shows how the applicant’s special talents will benefit the organization.
- ☐ Emphasizes how the applicant is right for the job by matching the requirements of the job with his/her qualifications.
- ☐ Asks for an opportunity to be interviewed by the organization.

Structure of the Letter

Opening:

Solicited Application Letter:

1. Mentioning Source of Information: The letter may open by mentioning the source of the information about the job clearly--- newspaper advertisement, website vacancy notice, company circular.

2. Matching Credentials to Employer Needs: An important strategy to open a solicited letter of application could be to focus on the applicant’s qualifications that meet the needs of the prospective employer.

3. Using References: Making use of references is a popular strategy to open solicited application letters. It strengthens the application because most of the employers prefer to hire known people rather than strangers.

Unsolicited Application Letter:

1. Using Stimulating Questions that Highlight your Strengths: Using stimulating questions that highlight the applicant’s qualifications and strengths is an effective strategy to open unsolicited application letters. It attracts the attention of the reader by raising his/her curiosity to continue.

2. Using Facts that Show Understanding of the Employer’s Business: Using facts that reflect an appreciation, understanding, or knowledge of the employer’s business could be an effective opening for unsolicited application letters.

3. Using Startling Statement: An unsolicited letter of application may open by using a startling statement. Surprising or unexpected statements or statistics that surprise can be used as an attractive tool.

Body

- ☐ Describe Achievements
- ☐ Highlight Your Strengths
- ☐ Describe Capabilities

Closing

- ☐ Refer to the Resume
- ☐ Restate Interest in the Company or Reinforce Suitability for the Position
- ☐ Express Eagerness to Meet the Employer or Directly Ask for an Interview
- ☐ Include Contact Information

Final Tips:

- ☐ Give the Letter a Professional Look
- ☐ Use a Positive Tone
- ☐ Show Confidence
- ☐ Show Genuine Interest
- ☐ Use Specific Details
- ☐ Be Factual and Objective
- ☐ Organize the Letter Well
- ☐ Follow Consistent Style

GROUP DISCUSSION

Broadly speaking, Group Discussion means a group of people or even different groups of people discussing the various aspects of a given topic. However, over the years in professional circles, particularly in today's professional world, GD has assumed a specific meaning. A GD is a part of a job selection process or of an admission process for professional courses such as MBA where a group of people or candidates are asked to speak on a given topic, to assess their communicative ability and other qualities that an organisation is looking for. Group Discussion therefore forms an important part of the selection process in multinational corporations and big Indian companies and also for admission into professional courses.

What is it that would-be employers look for from a candidate at the time of a GD?

1. The evaluators look for leadership qualities.
2. They look for team spirit and inter-personal skills.
3. They expect you to have good communication skills.
4. They expect you to be smart, yet friendly.
5. You should also be someone who is logical and rational.
6. They try to test your knowledge about current affairs.
7. The examiners also look for commitment and integrity from you.
8. You will also be appreciated if you have personality traits such as flexibility, initiative, drive, assertiveness, along with the power to influence others.
9. They will also test your problem solving ability and decision making ability.
10. The employer would also look for creativity in the sense of an ability to look at a topic from fresh perspectives and capability to offer innovative ideas.

What is the Structure of a Group Discussion?

☐ Initiation:

In the GD, during the initiation you can start with a proverb or an adage or a quotation or a saying. You can also start with a brief anecdote or use rhetorical questions. However, you can tackle the topic head on by first defining the key terms.

☐ Continuation:

After the initiation, in the middle portion of the GD, the discussion has to continue with different members taking turns. Each member has to listen to others carefully, and then respond appropriately to what has been said. In your speech, refer briefly to what speakers before you have said so that there is a sense of continuity. The discussion must not deviate from its focal point and must move forward logically and smoothly and make an in-depth study of the subject matter.

☐ Conclusion:

After having had as much of an in-depth study within the fixed time limit, you will have to take the discussion to its logical end. Someone in the group----usually, it is the initiator or someone else who has emerged as the natural leader of the group--- will summarise all the major points

and draw a conclusion which may be positive, negative, or better still, one that reflects a balanced view.

Required Body Language:

It is essential that during the GD you carry yourself in a confident manner. The body and head must be erect. Your behaviour must be pleasant, you must have a friendly look on your face, and there must be proper eye contact with the team members. Look at others with warmth instead of disdain or indifference. You must sit down at the GD table without slouching. It also helps you to be the centre of attention if you are seated right in the middle of the group.

Checklist for GD

Dos:

1. Be clear about the topic, if necessary, ask for clarifications.
2. Seize the opportunity to initiate the discussion.
3. Allow others to speak, but you too should contribute fruitfully to the team.
4. Organise your points in your mind before you start speaking.
5. Speak calmly and logically.
6. Use concrete examples to substantiate your points.
7. Be a good team player, but also try to become the obvious choice as the leader of the group.
8. Help foster a friendly and cooperative atmosphere.
9. Maintain positive body language.
10. Use appropriate language forms.
11. Speak in natural and pleasant voice, audible to everyone.
12. Try to modulate your voice according to the requirements.
13. Listen to others very carefully and then logically connect with their ideas.
14. Be assertive and persuasive and place your points effectively.
15. Be considerate to others.
16. Be innovative in your attitude.
17. Interject firmly but politely when necessary.
18. Override interruptions politely.
19. Listen to others, weigh their opinions, but draw your own conclusion.
20. Be logical and analytical, but try to maintain your human warmth.

Don'ts:

1. Avoid hiding yourself in corners.
2. Don't sit with a rigid posture or be too casual.
3. Don't use negative body movements.
4. Do not be either too aggressive or be too passive at the time of the GD.
5. Do not merely keep on agreeing or disagreeing with the points of others without adding any more additional points from your end.
6. Do not show either superiority or inferiority complex.
7. Do not be rude.
8. Do not fumble during your speech.
9. Do not use language forms inappropriate to the occasion.
10. Do not deviate from the topic, or ramble for too long.
11. Do not fail to listen carefully to others.
12. Do not be unnecessarily emotional or over reactive.
13. Do not try to keep others silent by dominating.
14. Do not get into a heated discussion with any member.
15. Do not focus on only one member.

16. Do not speak too loudly or too softly or use a monotone.
17. Do not interrupt unnecessarily.
18. Do not be repetitive.
19. Do not come across as a loner who is cut off from the team.
20. Do not use wild gestures while opposing.