Delivering Positive Messages

(Adapted from Kinzler and Locker's Business and Administrative Communication, 10th Edition)

Business communication always delivers a message of some kind. Often times, this message falls into one of four categories: positive, negative, mixed positive and negative messages, and persuasive.

Positive messages are usually informative in nature and do not usually have a persuasive element. Positive messages include things such as: acceptances, positive answers to requests, information about meetings, procedures, products, services, or options that you expect to be well received by your audience, and changes that are advantageous to your audience. In short, positive messages are informative messages that your audience already wants to hear.

Primary Purposes:

• To give information or good news to the receiver or to reassure the receiver
• To have the receiver view the information positively

Secondary Purposes:

• To build a good image of the sender or the sender’s organization
• To build a good relationship between the sender and the receiver
• To deemphasize any negative elements
• To reduce or eliminate future messages on the same subject

Positive messages are often the easiest to write because the audience is expected to be fairly receptive of the presented information, thus they tend to follow the direct pattern by stating the idea at the very beginning following with the explanation. In the explanation, writers will once again want to consider using various highlighting tools to improve readability. Writers will conclude the message courteously and with a request for action by a given date, if necessary.

Many positive messages are organized in the following manner:

1. Start with good news or the most important information that summarizes the main points.
2. Provide details, clarification, and background information that answers all the questions your audience may have. Present information in order of importance to your audience.
3. Present any negative elements in your message as positively as possible by making the negatives clear, but putting a positive spin on them.
4. Explain the benefits to your audience by showing what they stand to gain from what you are offering.
5. Extend goodwill in the closing with a positive, personal, and forward-looking closing idea.