Memorandum

Memoranda are brief, informal reports used to establish a record. They generalize the communication process by transmitting the message from one or more authors to one or more recipients. E-mail messages typically take the form of memoranda. The memorandum is among the most versatile of organizational documents. From brief research reports and progress reports to thumbnail proposals, the memo form is widely used to communicate technical and administrative information.

Memoranda are written for numerous internal purposes—for example,
- to request information,
- to make announcements,
- to outline policies, and
- to transmit meeting minutes.

Thus, in most organizations, memos play a crucial role in establishing a record of decisions, requests, responsibilities, results, and concerns.

The Memo Heading

The distinctive element of the memorandum is its heading, which is used to frame the message in a very accessible and transparent manner.

Example on next slide.
Meeting Documents

- Use meeting documents as tools to encourage productive and efficient meetings.
- The two principal meeting documents are the agenda, which tells participants what topics will be discussed at the meeting, and minutes, which record what actually occurred.

Agenda

- An agenda is a simple list of topics to be discussed (in order of listing), along with the names of individuals who have agreed to lead discussion of those topics.
- An agenda helps focus a meeting on a core of topics and allows you to control the pace and flow of a meeting and identify important items to be acted upon.
- Meetings without published agendas generally seem unfocused and unproductive.
- Prepare and circulate an agenda of items to be discussed for each meeting.
- Circulation of an agenda before a meeting will allow your audience to consider their responses to items listed and will help stimulate discussion.
- Agendas may be circulated by e-mail or hardcopy.
- The advantage of hard-copy agendas is that they may be brought to a meeting to facilitate the taking of notes during discussion.
- Experienced meeting leaders recognize that both hard-copies and electronic copies of agenda are usually misplaced, so they bring enough copies for everyone present at the meeting.

Example

Development Team Agenda
1. Report by Mr. Hamid on investigation of possible security software
2. Report by Miss Sara on development of database prototypes
3. Discussion of possible hardware platforms
4. Review of deadlines for project
5. Agenda for next meeting

Minutes

- Keep accurate minutes of meetings, both formal and informal.
- Minutes are an essential part of organization life.
- They maintain an institutional memory of all actions taken or proposed and the key points of discussion.
- They also inform appropriate individuals who were not present at the meeting of the key action and discussion items.
- Minutes can be formal or informal.
- Formal minutes are often required by federal, state, or local law, by-laws, charters, or regulations.
- They are usually distributed to the members of the group before the next meeting, and then approved (sometimes after being amended).
Some minutes are legally parts of the public record and available to anyone.

Often, however, organizational minutes are private and confidential documents, which should be distributed only to appropriate individuals.

If the minutes are confidential, each page should be stamped with a message such as "CONFIDENTIAL--DO NOT DISTRIBUTE."

The following information, adapted from Robert's Rules of Order, is usually included in formal minutes:

- The name of the group that is meeting and what kind of meeting it is (for example, a general meeting, an emergency meeting, or a meeting devoted to a single issue)
- Precisely where and when the meeting is being held
- Names of the group members in attendance and members absent; names of all other individuals present, except for public meetings with an audience
- The name of the person who called the meeting to order and at what time
- A report of whether or not the previous meeting's minutes were read and, if they were read, whether or not they were approved (or approved with modifications)
- Summaries of any reports presented to the group and any action taken on them (acceptance, approval, endorsement, referral)
- A summary of the discussion of each item on the agenda and any other important issues discussed at the meeting
- A record of all formal motions, including the name of the individual making the motion
- A record of the vote on all motions, including the number of votes for and against, and the number of abstentions
- The time that the meeting was formally concluded
- Informal minutes also include the date of the meeting and the names of all members attending or absent, but they focus more on summarizing key points of discussion and listing all action items to be performed by individuals or the group.

Proposals

- In a proposal, identify a specific problem and state how you will solve that problem.
- Most organizations rely on successful proposal writing for their continued existence.
- You will most likely spend a major part of your professional life writing proposals.
- Proposals are carefully prepared and just as carefully reviewed by granting agencies.
- Proposals do not succeed on the strength of a name or as a result of flashy rhetoric.
- Rather, successful proposals demonstrate that you understand the scope of the problem (its background, theory, and application) and, furthermore, that you have developed a valid and well-focused approach for reaching proposed objectives.
• All proposals develop a plan of action in response to a specific need or problem.
• Some proposals are external, written in response to a request for proposals or an invitation to bid that has been published by an external organization.
• Other proposals are internal, written in response to a need within your own organization.
• In either case, your proposals must show that you understand the nature of the problem and that you have a specific and well-developed plan for arriving at a solution.
• Most proposals share a general structure for identifying the motivating problem, the objectives, and the proposed course of action.

**General Structure**
• Learn the basic structure of a proposal.
• Proposals share a general document architecture, which is usually modified to suit specific circumstances.
• The overall structure of a proposal can be broken down into four parts:

**Proposal Structure**
• Front matter
• Body
  – Introduction
  – Technical approach
  – Management requirements
  – Work plan
• End matter

**Front Matter**
The front matter of a proposal includes the following components:
  – Letter of transmittal
  – Title page
  – Summary
  – Table of contents
  – List of figures and tables

**Body**
• In the introduction to a proposal, do the following:
• Identify the motivating need or problem.
• Develop the immediate context in which this problem has been highlighted.
• In external proposals be sure you are responding to the published need and motivation as identified by the outside agency.
• Focus your proposal by stating the key technical issues, as you perceive them, underlying the motivating problem.
• State explicitly, and with unbiased language, your objectives.
• Identify and explain fully the technical approach you are taking to reach your objectives.
• Ground your technical approach in a brief explication of necessary theoretical background:
  – applicable theory,
  – analytical models,
  – previous work, and
  – hypotheses.
• Present your method and design for reaching your stated objectives.
• You will most likely make reference to figures in this section.
• State how pertinent data will be acquired, and just as important, describe your data analysis methods.
• Explain clearly how you will manage the development of your proposal project.
• Proposal reviewers pay strict attention to this section because here you show that you have the required know-how to bring a project to completion.
• In this section, you will present the following information:
  – A timetable (or Gantt chart)
  – Required facilities and resources
  – Materials and equipment
  – Personnel (include résumés in appendix)
• Include a work plan, sometimes called a project plan, as a separate section in all lengthy proposals.
• Preliminary project plans are also sometimes appropriate in feasibility and recommendation reports.
• In addition, most progress reports refer to all or part of previously existing project plans.

End Mater

• End Matter
  – Bibliography
  – Résumés
  – Appendixes

Kinds of Proposals
• Proposals may be written or oral, for government agencies or the private sector.
Revision

- Memorandum
- Meeting Documents
  - Agenda
  - Minutes
- Proposals
  - Proposal Structure