

Assignment 1: Written request (25%)

Deliverables

This assignment has **two** deliverables:

- 1a. Communication strategy analysis (10%)
- 1b. Email request (15 %)

Learning outcomes

- analyse an audience and define objectives to create a targeted business message
- write a coherent and convincing, reader-friendly business message (request)
- critically assess other business messages

Situation

You are an Aalto BIZ student. You are currently participating in the course 'How to change the world: sustainability projects' (6 cr). The purpose of the project you are working on is to find creative solutions to real-life environmental challenges in case companies.

As a case company, you would like to focus on IKEA, because you work for IKEA Finland as a part-time cashier. You have lately started feeling disturbed because you know that many of the products people buy from IKEA end up being thrown away after only a few years.

While IKEA claims to play a part in preventing climate change by "improving [their] overall energy efficiency and reducing [their] emissions of greenhouse gases" (www.ikea.com), you believe the main problem is that their current business idea encourages throwawayism. While their business model seems to be working at the moment, you believe that there will be a rapid shift in consumer behaviour against throwawayism in the next few decades.

To get the project going, you decide to send an email to IKEA Finland's environmental manager to request her to participate in your project. In the email, you need to persuade the environmental manager that participating in your project and developing alternative business models would be beneficial to IKEA.

1a Communication strategy analysis (10%)

Write a summary which highlights the key communication strategy issues that you consider to be important in approaching IKEA, as well as how you will address these issues in your email.

Use the following questions to help you analyse the situation (Munter, Ch 1).

1. What is / are your specific communication objective(s) in the case?
2. How much and what kind of credibility do you as the communicator have? How does this influence your message?
3. What are the important considerations about audience in this case?
4. How should you structure your message, and why?

1b Email request (15%)

With your group members write the actual email request.

1. Bring two hardcopies of 1a (your analysis) and 1b (email draft request) to class in Session 2. We'll use these for peer feedback and class discussion.
2. Write a final version based on the peer feedback. **This is due in by midday 11 November (Session 3).**

Evaluation criteria for communication strategy analysis

Grade 5: The summary fulfills all the criteria for grade 4. The main difference between 4 and 5 is that it is crystal clear in your analysis how the communication strategy issues are related to each other, and also how they will influence the email message that will be sent.

Grade 4: The summary provides a detailed analysis of all key communication strategy issues (communication objective, communicator strategy, audience strategy, message strategy). As such, the summary shows that the students have understood the key communication strategy issues in the case. However, it might not be crystal clear how these communication strategy issues are related to each other, or how they will influence the email message that will be sent.

Grade 3: The summary provides a good analysis of all key communication strategy issues (communication objective, communicator strategy, audience strategy, message strategy), but some of the issues could be analyzed more thoroughly. It might also be slightly unclear how the communication strategy issues are linked to each other or how they will influence the writing of the email request.

Evaluation criteria for request

Grade 5: The reader understands the purpose of the request and finds out what s/he needs to know. There is a strong reader focus: appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos are clearly tied to the recipient and his/her company. The tone is suitably polite throughout. The language is error-free and the tone is professional (not informal language). There are a suitable number of paragraphs and enough white space. The reader would respond positively.

Grade 4: The reader understands the purpose of the request and finds out what s/he needs to know. There are clear appeals to ethos, logos, and pathos in the request. The tone is suitably polite overall although there may be some slips. The language is mostly error-free and the tone is professional (not informal language). There are a suitable number of paragraphs and enough white space. The reader would be likely to respond positively.

Grade 3: The reader understands the purpose of the request and finds out what s/he needs to know. There are some appeals to ethos, logos, and/or pathos in the request. There are some issues with style, tone and

language that could be improved. The reader might respond positively. The solutions are implementable but not necessarily innovative.