#### Business Communication (3cr) MLI61A130

#### **Session 1**



Lecturer: Mark Badham

## Today's agenda

- 1. About me
- 2. Course overview
- 3. Communication strategy
- 4. Persuasive techniques
- 5. Instructions for A1 Written Request
- 6. Effective Business Writing
- 7. Session 1 Reflection
- 8. Session 2 info



## Zoom session guidelines

- Participation
- Cameras
- Microphones
- Respect





#### **Teaching EXPERIENCES:**

#### Australia:

Bond University

#### Finland:

- Aalto University School of Business
- Jyväskyla University School of Business & Economics
- University of Helsinki

# Germany, Lithuania & Estonia

## ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERIENCES:

- Mark 4:8 Strategic Communications
- Party in Fiji
- Magazines

# COMMUNICATION EXPERIENCES:

- Gloria Jeans Coffees
- Politicians & Australian Government
- NSW Health (state government)
- Gold Coast City Council (local government)



#### **Business communication:**

- Speeches (eg media spokesperson) & speech writing
- **Publications** (annual reports, magazines, newsletters, brochures, books, white papers, websites, intranets)



#### **Contact me:**

- Via MyCourses
- mark.badham@aalto.fi

## **2.** Course overview



- MyCourses
- Lectures in class
- Exercises in class
- Reading inputs
- Assignments

## Schedule in Syllabus

Session #	¥	and	Date
Session '	1	(13.0	-00
16.00)			

- Introduction
- Course overview
- Communication strategy
- Persuasion techniques
- Effective business writing
- Instructions for assignment A1: Written request Orion case analysis (in teams)

Γ	pic/s
	Communication
	strategy

- Persuasion techniques
- Effective business writing

#### Assignment/s

Prepare for next class:

1. <u>A1: Written request 1<sup>st</sup> version</u> (team assignment)

> Have your A1 Written Request 1st Version ready for peer feedback tomorrow. Another team will give you feedback in class. The final version will be due on Friday.

Read before class: Inputs 1, 2 and 3 (communication strategy, persuasive techniques, effective writing), available in MyCourses

## What should you expect in each session?

- '**Teaching**': I will mostly present theoretical ideas and practical knowledge about the topic for each session
- 'Facilitating': During session 'exercises' you will take active role in learning & I will facilitate your learning
- Be interactive: read relevant Inputs for each session
- Time for **reflection & Qs**
- Breaks

### Learning outcomes

On completion you will be able to:

- 1. analyse **audiences** & define **objectives** to create **targeted messages**
- 2. write coherent, convincing, reader-friendly emails
- **3. plan and deliver** clear, focused and engaging business presentations
- 4. critically assess your own and others' business communications



#### **ECTS Student Workload**

	Number of Hours			
Faculty-led engagement	24			
Self-study hours	56			
Work with course materials, eg required reading <b>16</b>				
Exam preparation <b>7</b>				
Individual research & writing <b>18</b>				
Team projects (meetings, research, preparation, etc.) <b>15</b>				
Total of all student workload hours	80			

#### **Grading** (5 assignments + participation & contribution)

Course Requirements and Values	Due	Weighting (%) or maximum points
A1 Written request. Group.	13.00 Session 3	10%
A2a Persuasive presentation outline. Individual.	13.00 Session 4	15%
<b>A3 In-class test</b> . Quiz (10%) + Written Task (20%). <i>Individual</i> .	In class Session 5	30%
A4 Team presentation. Group.	In class Sessions 7 / 8	15%
A5 Critical presentation appraisal. Individual.		
Requirement 6 <b>Participation</b> (including contribution to group assessment work)	A6 Contribution to group assessment work: 11 pm Sunday,	10%

#### **Grading** (5 assignments + participation & contribution)

Course Requirements and Values	Due	Weighting (%) or maximum points
A1 Written request Group 5000 A2a Persuasive presentation outline. Individual.		
A3 In-class text. Qu. (1/0)+ Written Task (20%). Individual.	In Clas Session 5	30%
A4 Team presentation. Group.	In class Sessions 7 / 8	15%
A5 Critical presentation appraisal. Individual.	11 pm Sunday, 13 February	20%
Requirement 6 <b>Participation</b> (including contribution to group assessment work)	A6 Contribution to group assessment work: 11 pm Sunday,	10%

## Attendance

- Regular Zoom session attendance is required
- Attendance records kept for each session.
- Students expected to be in session on time.
- Late arrivals seen as being discourteous to teacher and other students.
- If you are going to be late, you MUST email me to say why you will be late (standard professional practice).
- SEE CLASS PARTICIPATION POLICY IN SYLLABUS

## **Business Communication**

#### Internal External Comms Comms • Websites Social Media • Intranet Advertising • Flyers • Emails News Releases • Events • Meetings Conferences Photography • Training • Speaking • Newsletters **Engagements** • Phone Calls

# **3. Communication Strategy** (based on *Input 1*)

Want to communicate with busy professionals?



Compete for their time & attention!

So, need a strategy

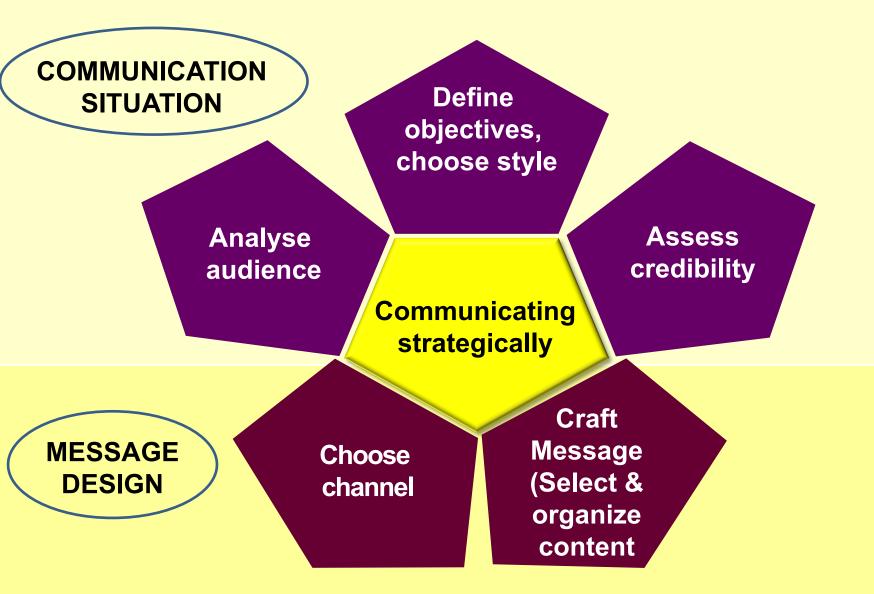
#### Your strategy:

plan of action designed to achieve overall aim within specific time period

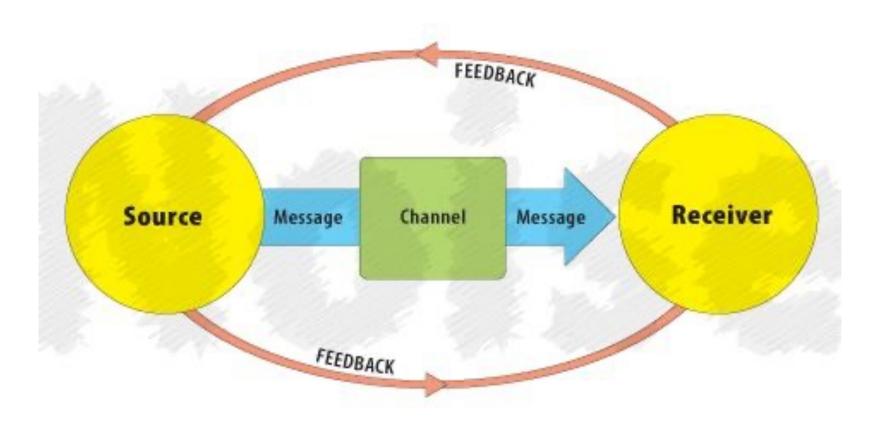
RACE

 the art of planning and directing overall military operations and movements in war





#### Early communication model



Shannon-Weaver Model (1949)

#### "AUDIENCE STRATEGY"

"Communication takes place in the mind of the listener, not in the speaker" – Peter Drucker, Management Consultant & Author

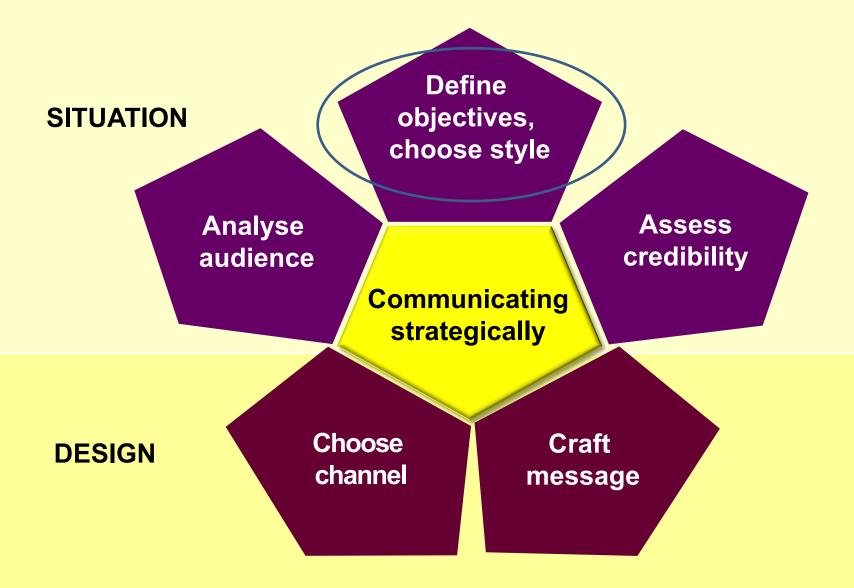


5 Qs to understand your audience:

- Who are they? (primary, secondary & influencers)
- 2. What do they **know**, **want** & **expect** regarding your topic?
- How do they **feel**? (positive, negative, deadline & budget pressures)
- 4. What **objections** might they have?
- 5. What will **persuade** them? (WIIFT)



Munter (2012) adapted



#### "COMMUNICATOR STRATEGY"



**Communication objective**: 'As a result of this message, I want my audience to...'

If the objective is not clear to  $\underline{you}$ , it won't be clear to the audience



Munter (2012) adapted

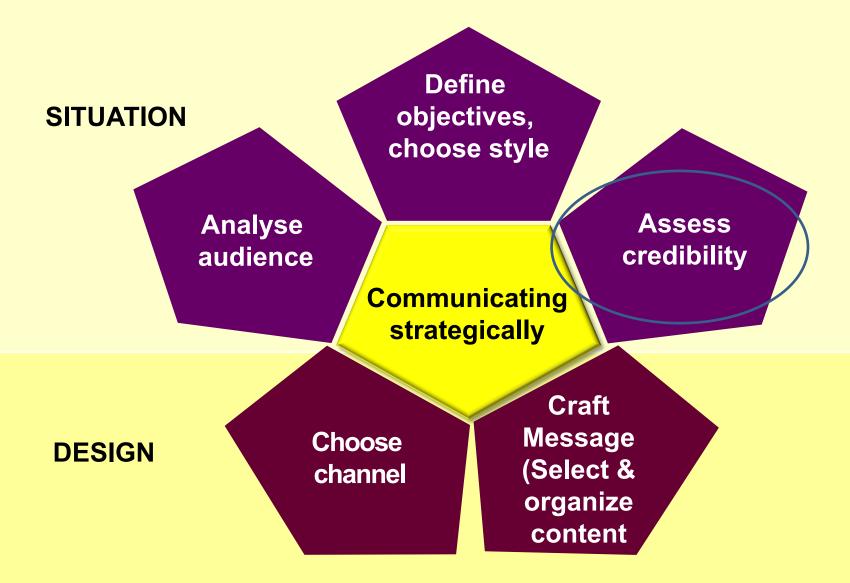
Define objectives, choose style How will your objective influence the overall communication style?

- Relational message: to build / maintain good relationship with audience (use "we", "you")
- Informational message: clearly explains & describes (use facts)
- **Promotional (persuasive) message**: to sell an idea, concept, service or product
- Transformational message: to inspire or challenge (use personal story)



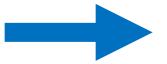
# **Communication objective** : 'As a result of this message, I want my audience to...'

- ... know how to write effectively. (informational)
- ... be a speaker at our event. *(persuasive)*
- ... feel that they belong to our company. (relational)
- ... be inspired to change their lives. (transformational)





Initial credibility



Acquired credibility – through communication

#### Assess your credibility as a communicator

Your credibility affects your communication with the audience...

and it affects the content you choose...



How well do they know you? Same hierarchical level? Similar background / profession & age? Level of message formality depends on relationship with audience *Read Input 1 for more info* 



#### "COMMUNICATOR STRATEGY"



- 1. (Your) Rank
- 2. (Their) Goodwill (towards you)
- 3. (Your) Expertise
- 4. (Their) Image (of you)
- 5. (Your & their) Common ground



#### **Assess and enhance credibility**

Factor

Emphasise

- **1. Rank** title, position
- 2. Goodwill established relationship with audience
- 3. Expertise knowledge, qualifications, track record
- 4. Image attributes the audience finds attractive
- 5. Com ground shared values, ideas, and beliefs

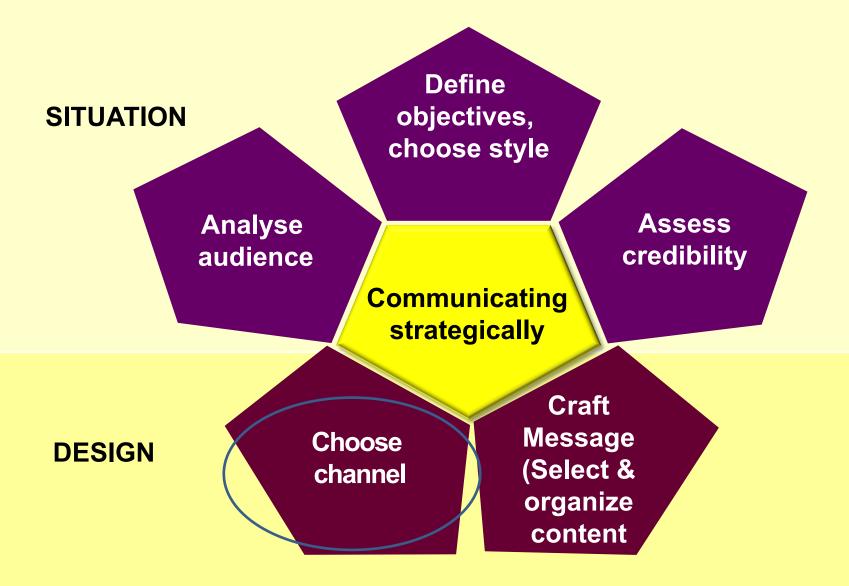
Based on Power and Influence, Kotter (1982) and Guide to Managerial Communication, Munter (2012)



#### My credibility with you

- Factor <u>My</u> Emphasis
- **1.** RankDr with PhD
- **2. Goodwill** I love teaching (want you to succeed)
- **3. Expertise** 20+ years teaching & experience
- **4. Image** I worked with CEOs, politicians, PM
- Com ground My son studying 2<sup>nd</sup> year Economics, so I understand student challenges









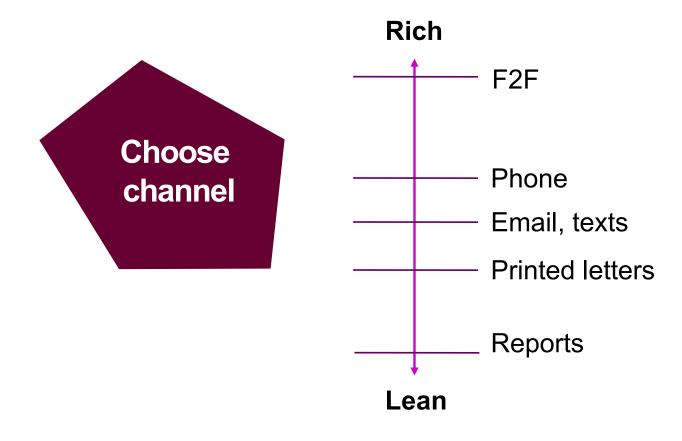
Print channels: memos, brochures, newsletters, reports, policy manuals, annual reports...



Electronic channels: email, Intranet, blog s, podcasts, social media, video confere ncing

Face-to-face channel tools: speeches, team meetings, board meetings, social events...

#### Media Richness (for engagement) Hierarchy







When to write?

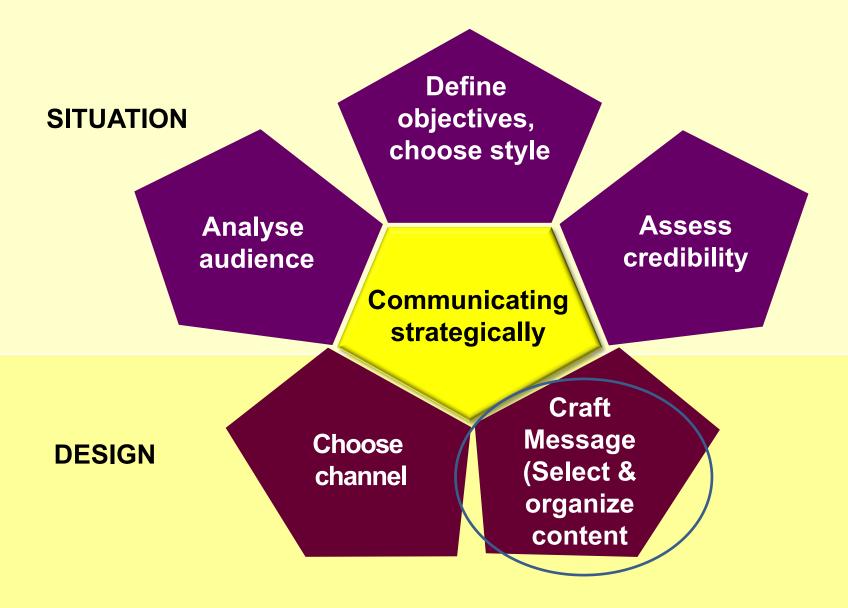
- Record
- Precision
- Mass audience

#### When to present?

- Instant feedback / interaction
- Build community
- Everyone gets message at same time? (Bradford)

When to combine?







### **Beginnings & endings**



**Message organisation: Direct** (get to the point) or **indirect**?

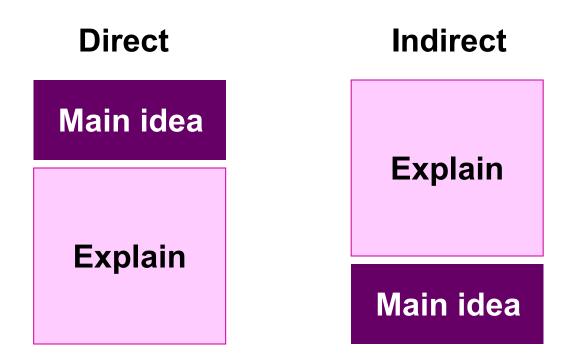
### Message content:

- **Ethos** (character/trustworthiness)
- Pathos (emotions)
- Logos (logic).

Aristotle in Business Communication (2007)



## **Choose message organisation**





### "MESSAGE STRATEGY"

Direct best when:

Purely informational message

Audience likes your message

You present a sensitive message + you have high credibility &/or the audience wants results **Indirect** best when:

You have a sensitive message

Audience has negative attitude to message

You lack credibility

Audience is analytical

Aristotle in Business Communication (2007)



# **4. Persuasive techniques** (based on *Input 2*)

### 4 considerations:

- 1. Ethos of the communicator (character, credibility, trustworthiness, expertise)
- 2. Pathos of the audience (emotions, needs, concerns, fears, attitude)
- **3. Logos** of the content (logic: evidence, benefits).
- 4. Persuasion through message structure

# 1. Ethos: persuading through communicator credibility

Establish credibility for yourself as communicator (make your "own character look right" – Aristotle)

Establish credibility through quality of message (make your message "worthy of belief" – Aristotle)

# 2. Logos: persuading through claims based on relevant evidence

Elements of a convincing argument:

Claim: what do I want to prove?

Evidence: how can I support my argument?

Warrant: what is the link between claim & evidence? (Why is all this important / relevant?)

### HE'S SO SICK, **HE COULD DIE** BEFORE YOU GET TO WORK.

A baby like Nirob dies every six minutes in Bangladesh because healthcare is out of reach. But, right now, you can give £5 to help build a life-saving clinic.

TEXT BABY TO 70008 NOW.

NO CHILD BORN TO DIE



# 3. Pathos: persuading by appealing to audience emotions

Show empathy

### 4. Persuasion through message structure

- Opening & Closing
- Establish common ground before disagreeing
- Problem / Solution (Here's the problem... help!)
- Foot-in-the-door technique (1st a small request, then bigger request)
- 2-sided structure (list all objections both sides of argument)
- "Ask for more" technique (extreme + acceptable options)
- Point out danger of no action
- Use persuasive patterns...

### **Persuasive pattern 1: Four Ps**

Position	Show the audience you know their position	
Problem	Show the audience you understand their problem	
Possibilities	Outline the possible options	
Proposal	Make your suggestion	

### **Persuasive pattern 2: Motivated sequence**

Step 1	Get attention – arouse interest, focus on message	
Step 2	Show the need – identify the problem	
Step 3	Satisfy the need – present a solution	
Step 4	Vizualize the results – point out the benefits	
Step 5	Request action – obtain commitment	

German, Gronbeck, Ehninger & Monroe (2010)

### Persuasive pattern 3: A I D A

Attention	Convince them of the importance of the message	
Interest	Explain how it relates to them, give details	
Desire	Support your claims, provide evidence	
Proposal	Proposal Suggest the action you want them to take	

# **5. Instructions for A1 Written request**

Work in TEAMS (for A1 Written request + A4 Team presentation)

#### Teams:

Assignment A1 is done in a team of 4 students.

We'll form 8 teams now

# A1 Written request: ORION (10%)

### Situation

Write a request to ORION to persuade them to participate in your university course project

### Writer (your group)

Aalto Biz student & management intern at Orion

### Recipient

Orion's Corporate Responsibility Manager

Draft (1<sup>st</sup> version) due Session 2 (tomorrow) Final version due Session 3



### 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 and work as a part-time employee for Orion, a leading pharmaceutical company in Finland. In your job as a management intern, you have become increasingly aware of and frustrated with the fact that many people in developing countries cannot afford basic medicine that would improve their health and, for instance, reduce child mortality.

You are currently participating in the course 'How to change the world: social responsibility projects' (6 cr). The purpose of the course projects is to find creative solutions to real-life social challenges that are linked to case companies. You have decided to approach Orion to request them to participate in your team's project.



With your group members, develop your creative solution to improve the access to affordable medicines in developing countries. Write an email request to Orion's Corporate Responsibility Manager to persuade her / her unit to participate in your team's project.

Think carefully about:

- Reader benefits. Why would the company want to help you? What's in it for them? (WIIFT)
- The arguments that you use carefully in order to get the response you want.



Thoroughly analyse the situation with your team by using the ideas discussed in <u>Input 1</u> (communicating strategically) and <u>Input 2</u> (persuasive techniques).

Then write the email request.



### **Deadlines:**

- Email me your 1st version by 12.00 tomorrow (before Session 2)
- Show it to another team in Session 2

Treat it as a final version to get good feedback.

- Get feedback in class
- Submit final version to MyCourses by 13.00 Session 3

Evaluation rubric available in MyCourses A1 submission box



## **Communication strategy for A1**

- 1. What is your *objective* in the case / in the email?
- 2. How much and what kind of *credibility* do you as the communicator have?
- 3. How does your *rather low credibility* influence your message?
- 4. Who is your *audience*?
- 5. What does the audience *know / not know*?
- 6. How is the audience *likely to feel* about your request?
- 7. How can you *persuade* this specific audience? i.e. what can you offer them?
- 8. How should you *structure* your message, and why?

# **6. Effective Business** Writing

### Learning outcomes

By the end of this session, you will be able to

- 1. Write persuasive, clear and concise business messages
- 2. Write with a strong audience focus
- 3. Ensure you get the desired response from readers

# **BUSINESS WRITING**

### When you write well...

- Enhances your credibility
- More chance of reader receiving & understanding your message
- More chance of reader doing what you want

So let's learn to write well!



Applies to emails, WhatsApp messages, executive summaries, PowerPoint reports...

# **BUSINESS WRITING**

# **Composing Techniques**

FIRST (yesterday's session):

- Communicator strategy
- Audience strategy
- Message strategy
- Channel Choice strategy

Then COMPOSE (write)...

Tips:

- Strategize
- Write 1<sup>st</sup> draft
- Edit &/or ask someone to check &/or test it
- Edit again



#### 1. Conduct research:

- Interview/s
- Company documents (eg online)
- Company communications (eg emails)
- Surveys

#### 2. Organize (overall structure):

Group ideas: mindmap/idea chart

#### 3. Narrow your focus:

- Skim
- Nutshell
- Bottom line
- Elevator pitch

#### 4. Draft your text:

- Organize (eg main points)
- Start writing
- Don't edit yet

#### 5. Edit (in this order):

- a. For strategy & focus 1<sup>st</sup>
- b. For macro issues
- c. For micro issues
- d. For correctness (eg spelling, grammar & punctuation)

### 3. Narrow your focus

### Skim (HSV: High Skim Value):

- Imagine reader skimming...
- What does reader need to know 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>... if he/she skims text?



### 4. Draft your text

- Don't start with blank page start with lots of unedited text
- Like sculpture, begin with 'mess' (in Draft stage) & methodically perfect (in Edit stage)

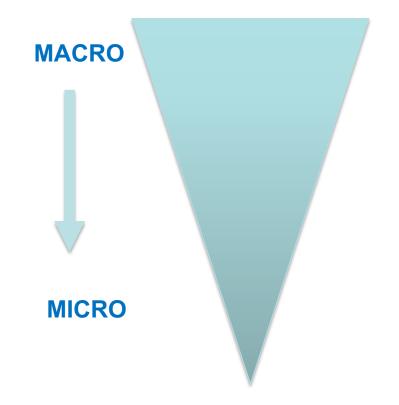


### 5. Edit

MACRO: structures (eg headings & paragraphs) – to suit your arguments

MICRO: sentences & words

- Brevity (conciseness)
- Transitions
- Appropriate style (formal/informal)
- Language correctness (eg spelling, grammar & punctuation)



## **MACRO** Writing

**Topic sentence** 

### Effective paragraphs have:

- clear topic sentence +
- supporting sentences +
- signposts +
- are short

Effective paragraph example:

An effective document structure includes three main items. First, you should create high skim value with message headings and enough white space. Second, you should use signposts to show connection in the text. Finally, each paragraph should start with a topic sentence, which all other sentences then support. MACRO

MICRO

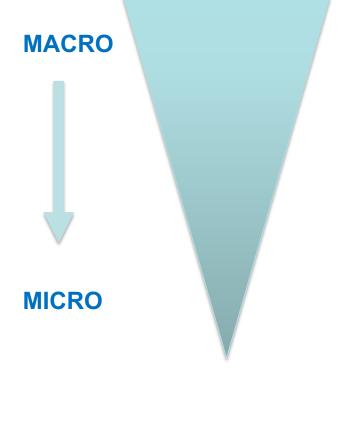
Signposts

## **MICRO** Writing

Design text to enable reader to read it all quickly + slowly

Make text easy to skim - gain High Skim Value (HSV) through:

- Headings (that highlight key messages)
- Numbered & bulleted lists
- Parallel headings & lists
- White space
- Easy-to-read typography



### Headings (& sub-headings)

### **Effective headings** have 3 features:

- 1. Tell (summarize) the message (main point) in the paragraph
- 2. Are parallel (conceptually & grammatically)
- 3. Have stand-alone sense



Headings tell (summarize) the message (main point) in each paragraph

Reader can skim quickly

Message heading (conveys main idea)	Question heading (focuses reader on answer)	Topic heading (indicates subject)
Top-level executives with strong background in finance	Who's the audience?	Audience
Readers prefer international trade news over sports	What are reader survey results?	Reader survey

Action verbs in headings – because most business communication involves making recommendations (persuading)

### Compare these:

We recommend that management take the following 4 steps:

- 1. A clear timeframe for the introduction of the new database important
- 2. Communication of the timeframe to all staff
- 3. Organising training sessions to ensure smooth implementation
- 4. Important to clarify job descriptions and explain to personnel how their input impacts the whole organisation

We recommend that management take the following 4 steps:

- 1. Establish a clear timeframe for the introduction of the new database
- 2. Communicate the timeframe to all staff
- 3. Organise training sessions to ensure smooth implementation
- 4. Clarify job descriptions and explain to personnel how their input impacts the whole organisation

### Numbered & bulleted lists

Rule of thumb:

- Use numbering when the sequence or number of items is relevant.
- Use bullets when the number or the order of the items doesn't matter.

#### Example:

Before arriving in Finland, please take the following four actions. First, enroll at **www.abcevent.fi/registration**. In this address, you will be able to indicate any dietary restrictions. Second, pay the registration fee through your mobile bank. If you don't have access to a mobile bank, please contact us. Third, book your hotel room through **www.abcevent.fi/hotel** to be able to benefit from a discounted rate. Finally, if you have any questions, please contact us. Before arriving in Finland, please take the following four actions.

- 1. Enroll and indicate dietary restrictions at www.abcevent.fi/registration
- 2. Pay the registration fee through your mobile bank or contact us for payment
- 3. Book your hotel room through **www.abcevent.fi/hotel** to benefit from a discounted rate
- 4. Contact us if you have any questions

Before arriving in Finland, please take the following four actions.

What can you notice here?

- 1. Enroll and indicate dietary restrictions at www.abcevent.fi/registration
- 2. Pay the registration fee through your mobile bank or contact us for payment
- 3. Book your hotel room through **www.abcevent.fi/hotel** to benefit from a discounted rate
- 4. Contact us if you have any questions

Notice action verbs

### Parallel headings & lists

Make sure they are conceptually and grammatically parallel, i.e. equal

Conceptual parallelism – making sure headings/listed items have the same relationship to the title of the document/list

### No conceptual parallelism:

Here are the main findings:

- All the steps in the process were carefully monitored
- 15% of the raw material was defective
- The finished product was tested at 5 minute intervals
- 2% of the seals received insufficient adhesive

### **Conceptual parallelism:**

Helps busy reader quickly skim &

nderstand

The pricing of the holiday apartments will depend on:

- location on the coast
- amenities in the neighbouring area
- number of bedrooms
- quality of furniture and fittings

## Parallel headings & lists

Parallel headings are similar items

Here are 3 actions you should take:

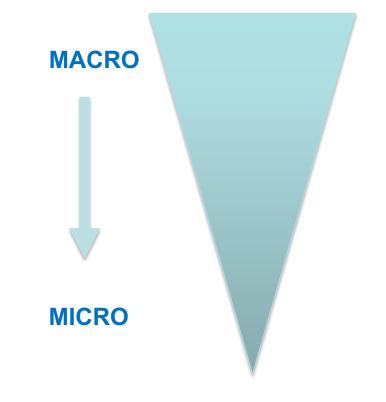
- 1. <u>Send</u> contact info to Susan Smith
- 2. <u>Pay</u> the course fee
- 3. <u>Prepare</u> the pre-course assignment

Note about emails: treat subject line as heading = put message in subject line

Examples:

```
"Brochure" vs. "New brochure for comments
by Monday"
"Meeting" vs. "Board meeting: Tue 9 am,
Room 102"
```

- Avoid wordiness (*Pleonasm*: the use of unnecessary words)
- Shorten & vary lengths of sentences
- White space: increases readability
- Typography: Bolding, underlining, italics – use sparingly, don't combine them



**Transitions** (Hansel & Gretel pebbles):

**Addition**: And, in addition, again, also, similarly, finally...

Contrast: But, however, or,

nevertheless, on the other hand...

**Example**: For example, for instance, such as, that is...

**Sequence**: First, second, third...

then...

**Conclusion**: Finally, therefore, in conclusion, as a result...

**Clarification/summary**: In other words, what this means is, to summarize...



## **Clear & logical structure**

Introductions (openings): provide background, explain why you are writing, preview rest of text

Length depends on how familiar reader is with topic

Effective intro does 3 things

- 1. Explains why you are writing
- 2. Establishes context
- 3. <u>Previews</u> rest of text



Examples:

As Alina told us last week, our customer feedback has been below target. To address the issue, we (Mikko, Matti and Salla) were assigned to suggest measures to enhance our customer experience. This report outlines...

We met at the *Speak IT!* event last month, and you told me that you give workshops on inspirational leadership. I am writing to ask if you would be interested in giving a workshop on this topic to our employees...



**Closings**: reinforce main ideas, state action points, give deadlines, offer help

Examples:

I will call you at the beginning of next week so that we can talk more about the workshop and possibly start organizing the details.

In order to take this process a stage further, could you please let us have ...

I look forward to receiving your comments on the attached draft by 3 pm on 31 August.

If you require more data on ... I would be happy to collate it for you.

# **Styles**

### Formal or informal? Professional or casual?

Depends on who is writing to whom + what you are trying to achieve (communication objective).

3 different examples:

Do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or would like additional information. Our office hours are ...

If you'd like more information, feel free to call me anytime between 8.00 and 16.30 Monday to Friday.

Want to know more? Just give me a call. I'm in the office 8-16, Monday to Friday.

# **Styles**

- Use a reader-centric 'you' attitude: what's in it for them (WIIFT)
- Beginning (salutation) and ending (complimentary close) that reflects your relationship with the reader

Formal messages		Salutation	Complimentary close
1.	Know the name, but have not written to	Dear Mr / Ms / Mrs / Miss + name, e.g.	Yours sincerely Sincerely yours
	them before	Dear Mr Sypniewska Dear Ms Ang Bee Hong Dear Ms T H Schaefer	Sincerely Cordially (Am.)

#### Note:

- Dear Ms + name is the most common way to address women, regardless of marital status.
- If you do not know whether the recipient is a man or a woman, simply use the full name, e.g. Dear Eun-Young Park

#### Informal messages

1.	Know the recipient	Dear + recipient's first name, e.g.	Best regards Kind regards
		Dear Mehdi	Kindest regards
		Hello Jaana	
		Hi Marlotte	
2.	Write to a personal	Hi	BR
	friend or close	Hi Peter	Cheers
	colleague	Peter	By for now
			See you



#### Jen & the Sales Navigator Team

Hi Mark,

As a valued LinkedIn member, I'd like to offer you a special gift a free trial of Sales Navigator!

Sales Navigator gives you the following additional features:

- 20 InMail messages (per month) so you can contact anyone, even if you're not connected
- Who's Viewed Your Profile, to see everyone who viewed your profile over the last 90 days
- Unlimited Searches with special filters including Job Function, Seniority Level, and Groups
- Actionable Insights and News that keep you updated on your Saved Accounts and Leads
- Lead Recommendations to help you find the right prospects at target accounts

Start your free trial today, and tap into the power of LinkedIn, the world's largest professional network of 630M+ members.

Sincerely, Jen & the Sales Navigator Team Upgrade Free →

# **7. Session 1 Reflection** (in MyCourses)

# 8. Work due Session 2

# A1 Written request:

Write your email request (in your teams) - consider:

- Audience focus what's in it for them?
- Style e.g. be polite (+ remember pathos)
- Readability e.g. high skim value
- Content reader must understand:
  - why you are writing
  - what it is that you want
  - how they would benefit

Have your 1st Version ready for peer feedback tomorrow.

You will work on it in class + show it to another team

Final version due Friday (Session 3)

# Session 2

# 13.00-16.00

<u>A1 Written request 1st Version:</u>

- Peer feedback
- Improvement exercises

Instructions for <u>A2a & A2b</u>: <u>Individual, 5-minute persuasive</u> presentation (a) outline & (b) presentation

Instructions for <u>A5 Critical reflection</u>

Read *Inputs 1, 2 and 3* (communication strategy, persuasive techniques, effective writing) - available in MyCourses

# **References / Acknowledgments**

See in-text citations Mike Baker, Christa Uusi-Rauva