

MEMO

To: George Lucas, Senior Vice president of Development

From: Shauna Evans

Date: February 6, 2013

Subject: Writing Sample Scenario for Internship

The following memo serves as a supplemental guide to show my skills as a business writer. Requested as a part of my application, this memo is composed of five sections: 1) a summation (below), 2) a scenario response, 3) a discussion about the composition process and a conclusion. In addition, an initial draft is attached to the Appendix. Each section within the document demonstrates my writing process when responding to a theoretical customer's email.

In this hypothetical situation, I was given the position of hotel manager at the Scottsdale Hilton. The goal is to respond to a former customer Deborah Leverette, who sent an emotional letter regarding the accidental poisoning of pigeons at the hotel. Mrs. Leverette threatened to never return to the Scottsdale Hilton unless we changed our policy. This incident occurred when the hotel decided to respond to the customer complaints about pigeons surrounding the hotel. In the end, we hired an exterminator that recommended using a safe drug Avitrol, in order to prevent the birds from coming around the hotel. The drug ultimately poisoned and killed the pigeons leaving many of our customer's and non-customers angry.

Taking the evidence into consideration, I found that the incident to be unintentional and that a change in hotel policy will not . As a result, when answering Mrs. Leverette's complaint, I must remember she is a loyal customer and that we must regain her trust. In addition, I must provide a solution to the issue or shed light on the future intentions of the company. I will send her an apology respecting her complaint and give her information behind the incident.

SCENARIO RESPONSE

To: Deborah Leverette <dlvrette@gmail.com>
From: Shauna Evans <sevans@aol.com>
Date: February 7, 2013
Subject: Response Pigeon Incident

Dear Mrs. Leverette:

We have received your personal complaint regarding the pigeon incident that recently took place. At Scottsdale Hilton, we appreciate your concerns and we genuinely understand your reasoning.

To address the issue, the harming of the pigeons was not our intent. Originally, we got many customers complaints about the pigeons surrounding our hotel. We then decided to shoo the birds away in order to satisfy our loyal and future customers. We called a control specialist that recommended using Avitrol which was suppose to be a safe sedative. It was simply supposed to disorient the birds preventing them from returning to the hotel. If we had known that Avitrol would have harmed these birds in such a horrific way, we assure you this would not have been an option. The sedative was immediately taken out of the vicinity of our hotel and will never be used again. In the future, here at the Scottsdale Hilton we are only going to use the safest and securest methods to prevent the birds from coming to our hotel. Currently, due to our research, we are considering installing netting that will form a barrier that will seal entry from birds. This method will ensure a safe and clean environment not only for the customers but for the birds as well.

On your next visit, we will grant you a three night stay with complimentary breakfast and happy hour on behalf of the Scottsdale Hilton. Here at the Hilton we acknowledge your concerns and we promise to provide you with the best service in order to satisfy your needs.

Regards,

Shauna Evans
Hotel Manager
Scottsdale Hilton Resort
www.hilton.com
Tel: (480) 555 – 2343
Fax: (480) 555-2367

COMPOSITION PROCESS

The three-step writing process is what I used in order to create a proper memo and to compose a suitable email. This process requires planning, writing and completing your message. It will verify that your writing will be efficient (making optimal use of your time and the audiences') and effective (meeting the needs of the audience).

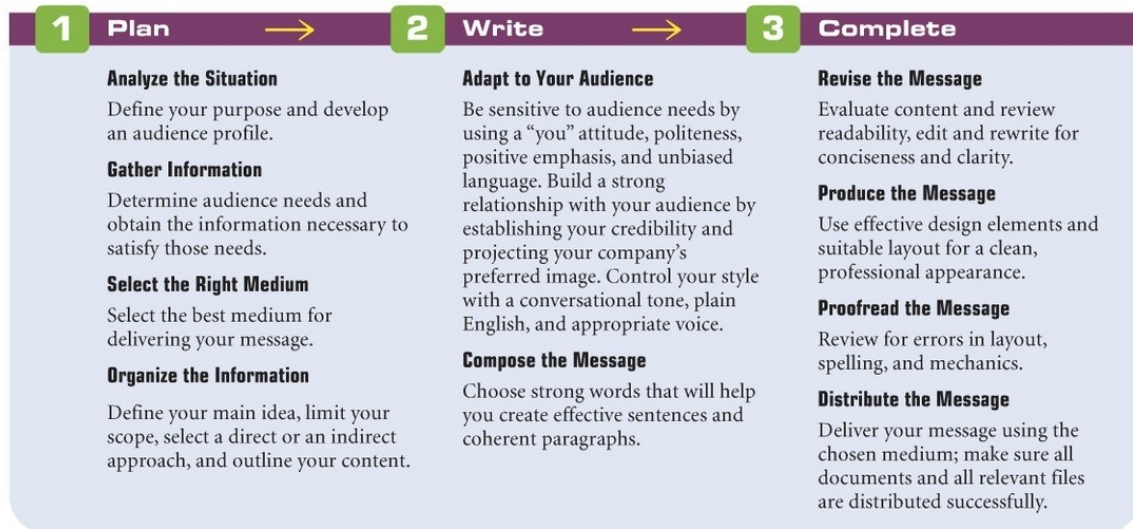


Figure 1 The Three-Step Writing Process

When comparing my initial response and the revision, I found that the direct approach is usually the best composition in regards to a negative message. The best way to handle a customer complaint is to acknowledge the issue immediately, followed by stating the main points and ending with a positive close. I feel confident when answering a negative issue especially when the complaint is from a customer. By addressing the issue right away it makes the company seem more serious about the issue and the customer tends to appreciate an immediate answer. After, the supporting main points must be compiled using relevant information to ensure the reasoning behind our answer. Then when closing with something positive it makes the news or response seem a lot less negative while regenerating trust with the customer. Lastly, before sending the message to the customer proofreading the message is essential. An error free paper gives the impression of a legitimate company that respectfully responds to their customers.

CONCLUSION

When dealing with a customer complaint, using the correct wording is vital. If a word seems out of place or misused it can cause the customer to look at the company in disfavor. I learned that we did not need to respond to the complaint in a negative manner instead using a more positive approach. "At Scottsdale Hilton, we appreciate your concerns and we genuinely understand your reasoning." Now, I am able to substitute positive words and meanings instead creating negative connotations. I also found that by notifying the customer about the future intentions of the company, it helps regenerate our trust and demonstrates as a company we are striving to improve. These intentions that we will tell the customer needs to be positive in order to gain the trust. "Currently, we are considering installing netting that will form a barrier that will seal entry from birds. This method will ensure a safe and clean environment not only for the customers but for the birds as well." I will be able to utilize these skills not only when I am faced with customers but colleagues as well. There will be times when working with a company I may have to deliver negative news. If I am able to use these aspects when dealing with negative situations, I will become a very effective and successful in the future.

APPENDIX - PRELIMINARY DRAFT CRITIQUE

Here is my initial response followed by a brief critique.

*To: Deborah Leverette <dlvrette@gmail.com>
From: Shauna Evans <sevans@aol.com>
Date: February 7, 2013
Subject: Response Pigeon Incident*

Dear Mrs. Leverette:

We have received your complaint regarding the pigeon incident that took place at the Scottsdale Hilton Resort. We would wish to explain the information behind this unintentional incident and that we are sorry for the deaths of these animals.

The harming of the pigeons was not our intent. We were simply trying to just irritate the birds so they could flee the vicinity. We got many customers complaints about the pigeons surrounding our hotel therefore, we simply wanted to shoo them away. The drug Avitrol we used was suppose to be a safe way disorient the birds and prevent them from surrounding the hotel. If we'd known that Avitrol would have harmed these birds in such a horrible way, this would method would not have been an option. We wish to inform you that the drug was immediately taken out off of our hotel and it will never be used again. In the future, we are considering installing netting and barbed wires that will form a barrier that will seal entry from birds. This method will ensure a safe and clean environment not only for the customers but for the birds as well.

Thank you for your time.

Regards,

*Shauna Evans
Hotel Manager
Scottsdale Hilton Resort
www.hilton.com
tel: (480) 555-2343
fax: (480) 555-2367*

My initial response to the incident was insufficient because immediately I responded in a ill-mannered way. This had to be my main weakness of my response because I was too aggressive. In addition, I began the response with a negative tone which will now continue throughout the remainder of the email. The sentences are also wordy and almost incomprehensible. This gives the impression that I was in a rush to answer and that I did not take the time to formulate a proper response.

In order to make this negative business message work, the five characteristics of business writing

needs to be employed. One of the characteristics is to give reliable facts that cannot be misinterpreted. In the message instead of stating that the hotel was “recommended by a specialist to use the safe drug”, I put the blame on the company by saying “the drug we used.” It gives the idea that we did not research the product we we're using. The word drug also has a negative connotation which may offend the customer so it needs to be changed as well. Additionally, I thought it would be a good idea to notifying the customer about the future plans we had for the hotel such as the barbed wire and netting but it is written in a way that sounds unappealing. Another characteristic, is to organize the information in an efficient manner but in the end it seems that my message was very compiled. The way I wrote the message is cloudy. I need to clean and rearrange few words in some sentences to conciseness. Lastly, I did not close the message with a persuasive argument or in other words a W.I.F.I.M. (what's in it for me). Instead I closed by saying “thank you for your time”, which does not sound as sincere because it so generic and short. This will leave the customer feeling unsatisfied and.

A few of the minor formatting issues was in regards to the spacing between each paragraph of the message. Instead I decided to improperly indenting each new paragraph or put one space in between the four-line email header.

However, I did find a few strengths in my response. I was able to show the customer-first response (the “you” approach). This created a more personal appeal in my response to the customer. I also responded in a way that let customer know the hotel was at blame for the accident and wrote it in a way so it didn't sound defensive. Another strength I recognized is that by revealing the future plans of the company to the customer, it made the company look like it was working hard to improve upon the the bad situation.