

Unit 6

Handling memos



Warm up questions

1. What is the main purpose of writing office memos?

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2. In your opinion, is it necessary for a secretary to write an effective memo? Why?

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Key vocabulary

Verb + Noun Collocations
- prepare a memo
- write a memo
- organise a memo
- send a memo
- remind someone
- give information to someone
- change information
- arrange a meeting
- postpone a meeting
- confirm a meeting
- announce the new policy
- cancel the appointment

Introduction

A memorandum or memo for short, is a written form of communication distributed to people within an organization. It can be inter-departmental memo, inter-office memo or inter-company memo (Millan & Toselli, 1996). In multinational firms, it is very common for people to correspond with one another by using memos. Memos can be sent by fax or emails. In the

workplace, memos can be put on a notice board for everyone to see or circulated via internal mail. In the latter case receivers may be asked to sign the memo to acknowledge that they have read it (Ashley, 2013, p, 251).

The memo has a unique format. The company name, address or company department usually appears at top of the memo. A memo should state who it is for, who it is from, the subject, and the date. It may be signed. People send memos for various reasons such as making enquiries, providing information, reminding, requesting or confirming something. According to Ashley (2013), memos can address many different subjects, from informing staff of a retirement to announcing administrative or structural changes within the company. Memos can be short or long, but they should be relevant to the topic. Too many points in one memo can confuse readers. In case that a secretary has many topics to inform the staff, it would more efficient to write a separate memo for each topic.

Memo format

There are two main parts of a memo: the heading and the body.

Generally, the heading of a business memo includes four parts, which are:

TO: (receiver's name and job title)

FROM: (writer's name and job title)

DATE: (complete date)

SUBJECT: (what the memo is about)

Source: Geffner (2013, p. 123)

Heading of the memo

Samples of the memo heading are as follows:

Sample one

Charles & Smith Co., Ltd.

TO: Robert Smith, Regional Sales Director

FROM: Nick Clare, sales representative

DATE: 10 March 2018

SUBJECT: Sales plan 2018

Sample two

QC Production Co., Ltd.

TO: All staff

FROM: Mr. Henry Ford, General Manager

DATE: 19 July 2018

SUBJECT: Mr. Yoshida's visit

Sample three

Bunbury Chemicals Co., Ltd.

TO: All staff

FROM: The President

DATE: 20 May 2018

SUBJECT: Mr. Lance's retirement

Sample four

General Motor Co., Ltd.

TO: All Department Heads

FROM: The President

DATE: 1 June 2017

SUBJECT: Management meeting

Memo language

Memos can be used to communicate for different purposes and they can be sent to people in various departments or various organizations. Before distributing business memos, senders should make sure that language use in the memo is businesslike, polite, and clear. It is very important for a secretary to edit the business memo before sending it.

The content of a memo can be written as follows:

1. To inform something

- I would like to inform you that Mr. Francis Mores from Canada will visit our company on Friday at 10am.
- Please note that we will have a staff meeting on Tuesday afternoon at the meeting room 3.
- I would like to inform you that the office number has been changed to 02 6778901.
- Kindly note that on Monday January 1st 2018, an inspector from Tokyo will come to inspect our factory from 9am – 11am.

2. To confirm something

- This is to confirm that Mr. Suree Kraiwutta will attend the telecommunication conference in Denmark.
- We would like to confirm the booking of Grand Ballroom for 240 TKK staff members in July.
- I would like to confirm that the opening ceremony of our new factory in Rayong will take place on 10th December 2018.

- This is to confirm that the sample products were sent by courier on May 22nd 2018.

3. To request something

- Could you send us your price list of the office furniture please?
- Could you fax us your new address please?
- Could you give us Mr. Pete's flight details please?
- We would be grateful if you could send us the serial number of the damaged products.
- Could you forward us the location of your factory in Indonesia please?
- Could you tell us the date and time of your visit please? Would you like us to book accommodation for you?
- Can we have a copy of your monthly report as soon as possible?

4. To attach something

- Please find attached our order No. NJ 2144.
- We have attached the confirmation letter for you.
- Please find attached the quotation for office furniture as requested.
- Attached please find our winter catalogue as requested. If you require more information, please do not hesitate to contact us.
- Please find attached the name list of our management.
- Attached are the results of the marketing survey in 2017.

Sample memos

Memo one

Bunbury Spareparts Co., Ltd.

TO: All staff

FROM: The President

DATE: 20 May 2018

SUBJECT: new CEO

With effective from 1 June 2018 Mr. Andrew Simkin has been appointed CEO. We wish him every success. All department managers please attend the meeting in the Meeting room 3 on 1 June at 9.30 a.m. where they will be introduced to Mr. Simkin.

Regards,

Sam Richie

Memo two

Smith & Son Co., Ltd.

TO: Robert Lloyd, Regional Sales Director

FROM: Nick Clare, sales representative

DATE: 22 January 2018

SUBJECT: Sales plan and budget plan 2018

I have attached sales plan and budget plan 2018 for Southeast Asia region as requested.

Best regards,

Nick Clare

Memo three

Topshop Co., Ltd.

TO: All staff

FROM: Mr. Henry Chapman, General Manager

DATE: 19 June 2018

SUBJECT: Mr. Yamada's visit

This is to inform you that on Monday June 30, 2018, an inspector from Honda Tokyo, Mr. Yamada Tamura will come to inspect our factory from 9am – 11am. Please welcome him on that day and answer any questions that he might have.

Regards,
Henry Chapman

Grammar Focus

1. Modal verbs

When writing business memos, we use *can*, *could* when we want to ask people to do things or take action. To make a polite request, you should use *please* at the end of the question or the sentence. The sentence structure for a question is:

Can / Could + subject + verb

- **Could you send us** your price list please?
- **Could you fax us** your new address please?
- **Could you give us** Mr. Pete's flight details please?
- **Could you send us** the serial number of the damaged product please?
- **Could you email us** the map of your factory in Indonesia please?
- **Could you tell us** date and time of your visit please? Would you like us to book accommodation for you?
- **Can we have** a copy of your monthly report as soon as possible?

2. Future tense

We use 'will' to talk about situations or actions that will be true in the future. The sentence structure of the future tense is:

Subject + will + verb

For example:

- Mr. Sato ***will visit*** our company on
- We ***will have*** a staff meeting on
- An inspector ***will come*** to inspect our factory on
- The opening ceremony ***will take place*** on
- Miss Tara ***will attend*** the conference next month.
- We ***will submit*** the proposals next week.
- The sales meeting ***will be held*** on

Language Practice

Exercise 1

Instructions: Choose the correct verb form.

1. Please *note/noted* that Mr. Charles is on leave. He will not be available until May 1st.
2. Could you *give/gave* your product number please?
3. We *have send/have sent* a quotation of 20 laser printers for you.

4. Could you *inform/informed* us the date and time of the visit of Mr. William please?
5. I would like to *visit/visited* your university next month.
6. Please be *inform/informed* that the staff meeting will be held in Meeting Room 3.
7. Could you *tell/told* all department managers to submit monthly report please?
8. Could you *book/booked* accommodation for Mr. Steve please?
9. This is to *inform/informed* you that the company will arrange language training for staff.
10. Please *send/sent* us brochures of your hotel in Vietnam.

Exercise 2

Instructions: Change the verb form in italics into future tense by using 'will'.

1. Mr. Jeff *visit* our company on Friday.

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2. We *attend* a small business workshop in Bangkok.

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3. The meeting *is held* in KhonKaen.

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4. The finance manager *has* a business trip to Japan next month.

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5. Mr. Simon submits the report at the end of next week.

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6. The president talks about current financial situations at the board meeting.

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7. Mr. Li meets our sales team tomorrow to discuss business plans in China.

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8. We launch the new product next week.

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9. The academic fair is in August this year.

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Exercise 3

Instructions: Practice writing the subject of a memo. Rewrite the following sentences into noun phrases.

1. Mr. Robert from Adidas Germany will visit our company next Thursday.

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2. Please note that the staff meeting will be held on June 15th.

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3. This is to confirm that four of our managers will attend the Technology conference in London.

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4. Kindly note that your order No. NJ98320 has been dispatched.

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5. Please note that the cross cultural training will be held in Amari hotel from 10-12 May.

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6. With effective from 1 April, all staff are not allowed to park in the factory area.

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Exercise 4

Instructions: Work in pairs and complete the following memo headings.

Heading 1

Siam Trading Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

Heading 2

Volvo Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

Heading 3

Acer Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

Heading 4

Sirin Import Export Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT:

Exercise 5

Instructions: Work in pairs. Write a complete memo. Subject of the memo is already given.

Memo 1

Tesco Thailand Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: company new address

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Memo 2

Nano Textile Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: Management meeting

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Memo 3

IBM Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: Mr. Roger's visit

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Memo 4

Panasonic Co., Ltd.

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

SUBJECT: New CEO



References

Ashley, A. (2013). **Oxford handbook of commercial correspondence**. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Geffner, A. (2013). **How to write better business letters**. New York: Barron's.

Millan, A.M. & Toselli, M. (1997). **On the job: English for secretaries and administrative personnel**. Madrid: McGraw-Hill.