

IMPACT

Employee Newsletter

July—September 2006

Did you know?

- Free “Simple Will” Kits are available from Claremont EAP
- A free credit report is available once per year
- Claremont EAP provides legal referrals for family law, consumer issues, traffic violations, and personal injury
- Referrals are available for child care, adult/eldercare, adoption assistance, school/college selection, and pet care

Claremont EAP

800.834.3773

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We're on the web
www.claremonteap.com

Communicating in Humor

Test your H.Q.: Humor Quotient

Are you ready to use humor as a communication tool, or do you need to brush up on your humor skills? Take this test to assess your “H.Q.” Give yourself 5 points for “Always,” 4 for “Often,” 3 for “Sometimes,” 2 for “Seldom,” and 1 for “Never.”

- _____ 1. I can laugh out loud with coworkers.
- _____ 2. I can laugh at my own mistakes.
- _____ 3. When someone pokes fun at me, I can join in the laughter.
- _____ 4. My sense of humor helps me deal with the stress of my job.
- _____ 5. My coworkers appreciate my sense of humor.
- _____ 6. I enjoy the jokes and stories my coworkers share.
- _____ 7. My sense of humor makes it hard for people to stay mad at me.
- _____ 8. I use humorous stories as a communication tool.
- _____ 9. I avoid humor that insults or hurts other people or groups.
- _____ 10. I watch/read cartoons, comedy shows, and other humorous entertainment.



Your score:

40-50: Excellent - You're either a comic genius or a liar!

30-39: Good - Your sense of humor is definitely an asset.

20-29: Room for improvement - You may be missing out on communication opportunities, not to mention fun.

10-19: A score like this is, well, no joke - Consider making a conscious effort to add some humor to your working life. Laughter is a learned behavior. As Oscar Wilde said, “Life is too serious to be taken seriously.”

Seeing the Funny Side

Make a list of the five most aggravating things you had to deal with this week at work. Now find something funny to say about each one.

“He who laughs, lasts.” Anonymous

Situation

Example: This contract deadline is giving me indigestion.

Efficient and Effective Memos

Memos are often an important part of the job. In fact, they may be the most important form of on-the job communication that you have. Knowing how to write effective memos will help you in your everyday responsibilities.

Memo Etiquette

- Avoid using memos for corrective feedback or criticism. They are too informal.
- Reserve memos for good news, praise, and factual information too complicated to be given by word of mouth.
- Keep memos short and to the point. Explain the task or information in a concise manner.
- Cover only one subject per memo.
- Make memos readable with wide margins and plenty of white space. Use short paragraphs or a list format.
- Memos are public property. Only write non-private information in a memo.



Parts of a Memo:

Heading

To: Use the formal name, not a nickname. If the memo is being sent to a list of people, replace individual names with a distribution list. List names below the last line of the message, in either alphabetical order or rank order.

From:

Date:

Subject: Be specific. For example: “Reducing Overtime in Production,” not just “Overtime.”

Opening Paragraph: All the important information should be here.

Main Message: Include all information needed to support the opening paragraph. Provide only necessary information. Avoid irrelevant details.

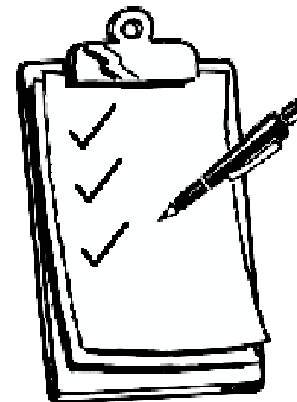
Closing: Use a closing paragraph only if you’re summarizing a long memo or need to add some further information, such as a meeting date and location or a contact number. Handwrite your initials next to your name as proof that you’ve read and approved the memo.

The Five C's of Good Writing

Use this checklist when you edit your next letter, memo, or report.

Conciseness

- Avoid unnecessary explanations or descriptions.
- Use as few words as possible (“now” instead of “at this point in time”). Avoid saying the same thing more than once (“final outcome,” “first priority”).
- Use short words instead of long words (“end,” instead of “terminate”).
- Use short sentences 10 to 14 words. Cut long sentences into two shorter sentences. Or shorten a sentence by cutting out unnecessary words.



Completeness

- Make sure your message says everything you need to say.
- Include relevant dates, times, locations, and contact numbers.
- Include facts to support statements you make.



Courtesy

- Courtesy is more than just saying “please” and “thank you”
- Use positive words and phrases instead of negative ones (“We are waiting to receive...” instead of “You didn’t send...”).
- Use a warm courteous tone even if you have bad news such as a refusal, a reprimand, or a complaint to convey. Finish a bad-news letter on a positive note.
- Avoid “blaming” words: “You stated...” instead of “You complained...”

Clarity

- Be specific: “We met or exceeded sales projections in all areas,” instead of “Sales figures look good.”
- Avoid jargon, unless the communication is intended for a group that understands the jargon.
- Avoid wordiness and large words.

Correctness

- Check for factual errors.
- Check all figures for accuracy.
- Check for incorrect word usage (“affect” or “effect”, “imply” or “infer”, “irregardless” or “regardless”).
- Check for spelling-check slip-ups (“their” or “there”, “were” or “where”).

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CLAREMONT EAP

Claremont distributes this newsletter to provide employees with general behavioral health information. If you have concerns about these or other behavioral health issues, you can call Claremont to arrange for assistance. You will be directed to an appropriate, experienced professional who can offer guidance in a variety of work and family matters.