

Excellence in Business Communication, 12e (Thill/Bovee)
Chapter 9 Writing Negative Messages

- 1) During the process of composing a negative message, you should try to
- A) choose a buffer that will distract your reader.
 - B) gain the reader's acceptance of the bad news.
 - C) leave the reader with hope that you will change your decision.
 - D) avoid stating the bad news.
 - E) surprise the audience with the bad news.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Gaining acceptance of the bad news is one of several goals to seek in writing a negative message. You also need to focus on conveying the news, maintaining goodwill and a good image for your company, and in some cases, limiting further correspondence on the matter.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 2) When you're planning a negative message, _____ in order to minimize the damage to business relationships and encourage acceptance of your message.

- A) analyze the situation carefully
- B) be direct at all times
- C) emphasize your needs and concerns
- D) quote the policies and regulations of your company
- E) avoid stating the bad news in the message

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Analyze the situation carefully to better understand the context in which the recipient will process your message.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

3) If you must deliver bad news, determine _____ to help you choose the direct or indirect approach for delivering the message.

- A) how much you care about the audience
- B) how important the news is to the reader
- C) your writing style preferences
- D) how much time is available to develop a message
- E) if a strong buffer can be developed

Answer: B

Explanation: B) When you must deliver bad news, consider how it will affect your audience, choose your approach, and then use a respectful, audience-centered tone to deliver your message.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

4) Consider the following statements. Which one of them is phrased in a negative way?

- A) Please clarify your request.
- B) Your copier will be repaired next week.
- C) Your payment is late.
- D) Thank you for sharing your concerns about your shopping experience.
- E) Please verify the enclosed statement and provide a correct copy.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) "Your payment is late" does not consider the situation from the recipient's point of view. Instead, it focuses on his/her failure, which is likely to alienate the recipient.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

5) When you're writing a negative message, use _____ to take some of the sting out of the bad news and to help your reader accept the message and move forward.

- A) facts and figures
- B) clarity and sensitivity
- C) subtlety and innuendo
- D) blame and leverage
- E) praise and promise

Answer: B

Explanation: B) By writing clearly and sensitively, you can take some of the sting out of bad news and help your reader accept the decision and move on.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 6) One of the primary goals of a negative message is to
- A) sell products and services to unwilling customers.
 - B) empathize with fellow employees.
 - C) rally support for unpopular causes.
 - D) gain acceptance for the bad news.
 - E) encourage future questions and communications.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) Gaining acceptance for the bad news is one of five goals to seek in delivering a negative message. The message should also focus on conveying the news, maintaining goodwill, maintaining your company's reputation, and in some cases, limiting further correspondence on the matter.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Easy

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 7) Use the _____ to deliver bad news, if you have to get the reader's attention immediately.
- A) dialectic approach
 - B) bidirectional approach
 - C) direct approach
 - D) indirect approach
 - E) persuasive approach

Answer: C

Explanation: C) The direct approach can help you get attention immediately, if the situation is an emergency or if someone has ignored repeated messages.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 8) When composing negative messages, don't use language that
- A) conveys respect.
 - B) avoids an accusing tone.
 - C) protects your reader's pride.
 - D) pinpoints the reader's shortcomings.
 - E) is overly positive.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) Tone is critical in a negative message. Any hint of blame or accusation can cause the recipient to focus on anger and resentment rather than the message itself.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

9) Use the _____ when you must deliver bad news, if your audience has an emotional investment in the situation.

- A) blended approach
- B) discretionary approach
- C) direct approach
- D) indirect approach
- E) persuasive approach

Answer: D

Explanation: D) If the reader has an emotional investment in the situation or the consequences are considerable, the indirect approach is often best, especially if the bad news is unexpected.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

10) Use the _____ if you must deliver bad news that will shock or surprise your audience.

- A) indirect approach
- B) discretionary approach
- C) direct approach
- D) introverted approach
- E) persuasive approach

Answer: A

Explanation: A) If the bad news might come as a shock to readers, use the indirect approach to help them prepare for it.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

11) When you need to maintain a close working relationship with someone to whom you are sending a negative message, you should generally

- A) assume they will handle the news professionally.
- B) analyze the situation carefully.
- C) have someone else deliver the message.
- D) combine the direct and indirect approaches.
- E) delay the message as long as possible.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) To help decide which approach to take in any situation you encounter, ask yourself if you need to maintain a close working relationship with the reader. If so, the indirect approach lets you soften the blow of bad news and preserve a positive business relationship.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 12) Using the direct approach for negative messages
- A) makes a shorter message possible.
 - B) is rude and unprofessional.
 - C) is always preferable when communicating internally.
 - D) means you end with a statement of your main idea.
 - E) requires more time for your audience to understand.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Stating the bad news at the beginning can have two advantages: it makes a shorter message possible, and it allows the audience to reach the main idea of the message in less time. Using the direct approach is not rude or unprofessional. When you're communicating internally, the best approach will depend on a number of different factors.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 13) Which of the following is *not* a goal when communicating negative information?
- A) to convey the bad news
 - B) to gain acceptance for the bad news
 - C) to minimize damage to goodwill as much as possible
 - D) to maintain a good image for the organization
 - E) to reduce or eliminate the need for future correspondence on the matter

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Depending on the situation, you can have as many as five distinct goals when communicating negative information: (1) to convey the bad news, (2) to gain acceptance for the bad news, (3) to maintain as much goodwill as possible with your audience, (4) to maintain a good image for your organization, and (5) if appropriate, to reduce or eliminate the need for future correspondence on the matter.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 14) To avoid awkward situations, it is best to deliver bad news for employees in writing whenever possible.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: For employees, the best way to deliver negative news is in person rather than in writing. Taking the time to meet personally can give an employee a sense that he or she is being treated like a valuable human being, not simply being "moved through the system."

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

15) You can help establish the right tone in a negative message by using positive words rather than negative, counterproductive ones.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Taking a negative or accusatory tone accomplishes nothing and makes your recipient feel worse than is necessary. You want your tone to be as positive as possible without being unrealistic or condescending.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Easy

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

16) What are your five main goals when delivering bad news?

Answer: In any negative message, your main goals are to (1) convey the bad news, (2) gain acceptance for it, (3) maintain as much goodwill as possible, (4) maintain a good image for your organization, and (5) (if appropriate) reduce or eliminate the need for future correspondence on the matter.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

17) Rewrite the following negative message using positive words rather than negative ones:

"Since you failed to send payment, we cannot ship your order."

Answer: By sending payment promptly, you can receive your order within 5 business days.

LO: 9.1: Apply the three-step writing process to negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

18) If you're using the direct approach to deliver a negative message,

A) save the bad news for last.

B) state the bad news at the beginning.

C) embed the bad news in a parenthetical expression.

D) subordinate the bad news in a compound sentence.

E) begin with a neutral buffer.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) With the direct approach, open the message with the bad news.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 19) When you deliver negative messages, you
- A) should always begin with a buffer.
 - B) should not include reasons for the decision or information.
 - C) should use language that conveys respect.
 - D) can expect your audience to be offended.
 - E) should not worry about tone.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) By using respectful language, you preserve the recipient's sense of pride and avoid any feelings of resentment or humiliation.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 20) If you choose to apologize in a negative message, you should
- A) phrase the apology in a conditional manner ("If I have offended anyone ...").
 - B) imply that not all of the blame lies with you or your company.
 - C) be sincere and make it a true apology.
 - D) always demonstrate sincerity, but never accept blame.
 - E) always urge the reader to avoid legal action.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Apologies in business can be fraught with difficulties. Before apologizing, make sure that you are not jeopardizing your company or yourself in some way. Any apology you do end up making should be sincere and honest, even if it is limited in scope.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 21) Explaining negative news in the body of your message
- A) is required in all negative messages.
 - B) adds unnecessary verbiage to the message.
 - C) is guaranteed to confuse even the most conscientious readers.
 - D) is required for external audiences but isn't useful for internal audiences.
 - E) is often helpful when you're writing to an important customer.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) In most cases (but not all), you should provide an explanation. A carefully worded explanation won't confuse your audience, no matter whether it's internal or external. When you're writing to an important customer, a detailed explanation in a negative message can help you maintain that business relationship.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 22) When it comes to apologizing for corporate mistakes, judges, juries, and plaintiffs tend to
- A) react negatively when companies apologize.
 - B) dismiss such apologies as insincere.
 - C) be more forgiving of companies that apologize.
 - D) understand that companies should never admit guilt.
 - E) expect non-profit organizations to admit guilt, but not for-profit companies.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Judges, juries, and plaintiffs tend to be more forgiving of companies that express sympathy for wronged parties; moreover, an apology can help repair a company's reputation. Recently, some prosecutors have begun pressing executives to publicly admit guilt and apologize as part of the settlement of criminal cases—unlike the common tactic of paying fines but refusing to admit any wrongdoing. Judges, juries, and plaintiffs expect both for-profit and non-profit organizations to admit guilt.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 23) When you're closing a message about an error that your company made, explaining the steps being taken to avoid similar mistakes in the future

- A) is a bad idea, since it distracts attention from the main idea.
- B) is helpful, even when those steps are not likely to make a difference.
- C) should always be avoided since it acknowledges guilt.
- D) can underscore the sincerity of an apology.
- E) will usually result in skepticism among your peers.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) A description of the actions being taken to avoid similar mistakes in the future can be an important element of a respectful close. Such explanations signal that the person or organization is serious about not repeating the error. Taking those steps is likely to make a difference, so they won't cause skepticism among your peers.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 24) Use the direct approach for negative messages, if the message will have a relatively minor impact on the audience.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: When the situation is fairly simple and the bad news won't come as a shock, a direct approach is preferred for delivering negative news.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

25) An advantage of the direct approach for communicating bad news is that it keeps the message short.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: The direct approach delivers the negative news up front, thereby keeping discussion and questions to a minimum.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Easy

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

26) What are the two benefits of stating the bad news at the beginning of a negative message?

Answer: Stating the bad news at the beginning makes a shorter message possible and requires less time for the audience to reach the main idea of the message.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

27) Briefly describe the elements of a negative message that uses the direct approach.

Answer: The opening should start with a clear statement of the bad news. The body should give the reasons for the bad news, and the closing should end with a positive statement aimed at maintaining a good relationship with the audience.

LO: 9.2: Explain how to use the direct approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

28) Instead of announcing the bad news up front, you can open with a _____ to establish common ground with the reader.

A) humorous anecdote

B) buffer statement

C) diversionary tactic

D) heartwarming story

E) series of facts and figures

Answer: B

Explanation: B) The indirect approach to delivering bad news opens with a buffer. A buffer is a neutral, uncontroversial statement that establishes common ground with the recipient.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

29) You can use an agreement strategy to write an effective buffer statement if you

- A) find an attribute or achievement to compliment.
- B) express sincere thanks for receiving something.
- C) demonstrate that you understand the reader's goals and needs.
- D) discover a point on which you and the reader share similar views.
- E) start with the most favorable part of your message.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) In order to build a buffer statement on an agreement strategy, find a point on which you and the reader share similar views.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

30) The buffer of a negative message

- A) should be neutral and noncontroversial.
- B) implicitly says no.
- C) is a form of apology.
- D) should be very vague about the subject of the message.
- E) allows you to indicate fault before stating the bad news.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) A buffer should be neutral and noncontroversial, but also sincere, genuine, and relevant. A poorly written buffer serves no purpose. The recipient views a poorly written buffer as a ploy and feels extra resentment for being "handled." A well-chosen buffer makes the bad news more acceptable.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

31) A well-written buffer can

- A) trivialize the reader's concerns.
- B) divert attention from the problem.
- C) mislead the reader into thinking your message actually contains good news.
- D) indicate empathy with the audience.
- E) flatter the reader.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) A poorly written buffer can trivialize the reader's concerns, divert attention from the problem, or mislead the reader.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 32) One important goal of a buffer is to
- A) delay stating the bad news.
 - B) establish common ground with your reader.
 - C) make your reader wonder what the message is about.
 - D) divert the reader's attention to a more pleasant subject.
 - E) shift the blame to the reader or a third party.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) A well-written buffer establishes common ground with the reader.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 33) In the reasons section of a negative message, you should
- A) prepare the reader for the negative news.
 - B) state the bad news directly.
 - C) apologize for the negative decision.
 - D) establish common ground with the reader.
 - E) indicate the company policy that leads to the bad news.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) If you do a good job of laying out your reasoning, you will prepare the reader for the main idea, which is the bad news itself.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 34) One way to be tactful when giving your reasons for bad news is to
- A) explain why the decision is good for you and your company.
 - B) focus on facts and imply the bad news.
 - C) explain that the decision is based on company policy.
 - D) apologize for having to be the bearer of bad news.
 - E) explain how hard the decision was to make.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) If benefits of the negative decision actually exist, pointing them out can be extremely heartening to your recipient. For example, in turning down a candidate for one position you may indicate that the rejection makes her eligible to apply for a better position later on in the year.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

35) According to the indirect approach for delivering bad news, you should place the negative news

- A) immediately after the buffer.
- B) immediately before the reasons.
- C) immediately after the reasons.
- D) at the very end.
- E) in the opening paragraph.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) In the indirect approach, a buffer is followed by a reasons section that builds a case for the third section, the delivery of the negative news itself.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

36) According to your textbook, which of the following techniques is a best practice for delivering bad news?

- A) Maximize the space devoted to it.
- B) Make the bad news seem trivial.
- C) Withhold important information.
- D) Deemphasize it visually and grammatically.
- E) Emphasize how much you wish you had good news.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) You can use visual and grammatical techniques to deemphasize bad news.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

37) If you _____, you can close a negative message in a positive way.

- A) limit goodwill
- B) suggest alternative actions
- C) repeat the bad news
- D) invite future correspondence
- E) pretend the bad news didn't happen

Answer: C

Explanation: C) You can close a negative message in a positive way if you try to build goodwill, suggest alternatives, and look toward the future. However, don't dwell on the bad news.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

38) In a negative message, the explanation section should

- A) distract readers with current events.
- B) apologize for any inconvenience the message may cause.
- C) lead readers to your conclusion before you state it.
- D) establish common ground with the reader.
- E) clearly indicate the bad news.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) An ideal explanation section in a bad news message will lead your readers to your conclusion before you come right out and say it.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

39) With the exception of _____, all of the following guidelines can help you close a negative message on a respectful note.

- A) being sincere
- B) managing future correspondence
- C) avoiding an uncertain conclusion
- D) promising an optimistic future outcome
- E) expressing optimism, if appropriate

Answer: D

Explanation: D) All of the following guidelines can help you close a bad news message respectfully: avoiding an uncertain conclusion, managing future correspondence, expressing optimism (if appropriate), and being sincere.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

40) Consider the following statement: "Our profits, which have been disappointing, are only part of the total picture." This statement uses a _____ to deliver negative news.

- A) mixed metaphor
- B) parenthetical expression
- C) deflective reference
- D) contingent modifier
- E) conditional statement

Answer: B

Explanation: B) The bad news is delivered in a parenthetical expression that's inserted in an independent clause.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

41) When delivering bad news, wording such as "We must turn down," "I am unable to," and "We cannot afford to"

- A) softens the blow by drawing attention away from the reader and onto the sender.
- B) will impress the reader as being straightforward and forceful.
- C) is likely to cause pain and anger in the reader.
- D) is unavoidable.
- E) displays your professionalism.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Always be sure to avoid overly blunt statements that are likely to cause pain and anger such as "must refuse," "must deny," "am unable," "cannot afford," "much as I would like to attend," or "must turn down."

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

42) When rejecting a request because of company policy, you should

- A) simply cite the policy as the reason for your decision.
- B) be sure to include a copy of the policy with your rejection.
- C) explain the policy so the audience can try to meet the requirements later.
- D) say that violating the policy will get you into serious trouble.
- E) admit that you think the policy is unfair, but you have to follow it anyway.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Skilled and sympathetic communicators explain company policy (without referring to it as policy) so that the audience can try to meet the requirements in the future. Avoid hiding behind company policy to cushion your bad news. If you say, "Company policy forbids our hiring anyone who does not have two years' supervisory experience," you imply that you will not consider anyone on his or her individual merits.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 43) Encouraging additional communication in the close of a negative message
- A) is expected, even if you really don't want to discuss the matter any further.
 - B) should be avoided unless you are truly willing to discuss the matter further.
 - C) is appropriate for internal audiences, but never for external audiences.
 - D) should be done only if you direct the audience to contact someone else.
 - E) isn't a good idea, no matter what the circumstances may be.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) When closing a negative message, manage future correspondence. Encourage additional communication only if you are willing to discuss the situation further. If you are not, avoid statements such as "If you have further questions, please write."

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 44) When the bad news appears to be a logical outcome of the reasons that precede it, the reader is more prepared to accept it.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: This is the goal of the indirect approach—to make the reader view the bad news in its context as the logical and inevitable outcome of a sequence of events in which no one acted unfairly or foolishly.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 45) You can deemphasize bad news by minimizing the space or time devoted to it.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Limiting the amount of time or space devoted to negative news can deemphasize the news; however, don't trivialize the news or fail to divulge all of the details in the interest of being brief.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Easy

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

46) Briefly describe the elements of a negative message that uses the indirect approach.

Answer: Begin with a buffer (a neutral statement that sets the stage for the bad news). Follow with the reasons for the bad news, then state the bad news as diplomatically as possible.

Emphasize any good news and de-emphasize the bad. End with a positive, forward-looking statement that is helpful and friendly and tries to preserve goodwill.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

47) List three techniques for deemphasizing bad news.

Answer: Three methods for deemphasizing bad news are (1) minimize the space or time you devote to the bad news, (2) subordinate your bad news in a complex or compound sentence, and (3) embed bad news mid-paragraph or use parenthetical expressions.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

48) You are faced with informing your supervisor about massive production delays. Company policy dictates that you must provide this information in writing. What questions should you consider when deciding between the direct and indirect approaches for your message?

Answer: (1) Will the bad news come as a shock to my audience? (2) Does the audience prefer short messages that get right to the point? (3) How important is this news to my audience? (4) Do I need to maintain a close working relationship with the audience? (5) Do I need to get the audience's attention? (6) What is my organization's preferred style for delivering bad news?

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

49) What four guidelines should you follow in writing effective closings to negative messages?

Answer: (1) Avoid a negative or uncertain conclusion—there's no need to refer to, repeat, or apologize for the bad news. (2) Manage future correspondence. Don't encourage additional communication unless you're willing to discuss your decision in more detail. (3) Be optimistic about the future instead of anticipating problems with statements such as, "Should you have any further problems, please let me know." (4) Be sincere, avoiding meaningless clichés.

LO: 9.3: Explain how to use the indirect approach effectively when conveying negative news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

50) Employees who observe illegal or unethical behavior in the workplace may resort to _____, if they're unable to resolve the problems through normal channels.

- A) stacking the deck
- B) calling the game
- C) whistleblowing
- D) mold breaking
- E) blackmail

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Employees who see wrongdoing may resort to *whistleblowing*, in order to express their concerns internally via company ethics hot lines or externally via social media or the news media.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

51) When you must deliver bad news in the workplace, remember that

- A) you should de-emphasize the news at all costs.
- B) your feelings, as well as the feelings of anyone who receives the message, are irrelevant.
- C) delaying, downplaying, or distorting the news may be unethical or illegal.
- D) internal and external audiences will react to the news in the same way.
- E) it is often easiest for the receiver if the news is delayed.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) The challenge of sending and receiving negative messages can tempt one to delay, downplay, or distort the bad news. However, doing so may be unethical or illegal.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

52) When you must deliver negative messages in the workplace, strive to maintain high standards of ethics and etiquette because

- A) laws and regulations dictate content and delivery of many business messages.
- B) negative messages have minimal impact on the lives of those who receive them.
- C) negative messages limit emotional content for both senders and receivers.
- D) it is easy to determine the emotional state of the receiver.
- E) there are no laws to regulate negative messages, so the writer must establish their own level of ethics.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Ethics and etiquette are important when delivering negative news for three reasons. First, laws and regulations apply to business messages with potentially negative content. Second, negative news can affect the lives of those who receive it. Third, negative messages will stir the emotions of senders and receivers.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

53) Employees who engage in whistleblowing

- A) are disloyal and should be terminated.
- B) usually haven't tried to resolve their problems through normal channels.
- C) are, in many cases, providing vital information to their employers.
- D) rarely provide information of any value.
- E) are not protected by any government regulations.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Although some people think that whistleblowing involves "ratting on" colleagues or managers, it has an essential function. According to international business expert Alex MacBeath, "Whistleblowing can be an invaluable way to alert management to poor business practices within the workplace. Often whistleblowing can be the only way that information about issues such as rule breaking, criminal activity, cover-ups, and fraud can be brought to management's attention before serious damage is suffered."

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

54) In most cases, withholding or delaying negative information in the workplace

- A) can help your audience accept it.
- B) will increase your credibility.
- C) may be unethical or illegal.
- D) will allow the situation to resolve itself.
- E) can forestall legal action.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) The challenge of sending and receiving negative messages can tempt one to delay or distort bad news. However, doing so may not only be unethical but also illegal. In recent years, various stakeholders have sued companies for allegedly withholding or delaying negative information in areas such as finances, environmental hazards, and product safety.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

55) When considering sharing bad news within an organization, managers must commit to

- A) determining what an employee may be implying, but not saying.
- B) responding only when each detail has been researched thoroughly.
- C) punishing those employees who spread bad news in the workplace.
- D) limiting the communication channels.
- E) listening when employees have negative information to share.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) Managers must commit to maintaining open communication channels, truly listening when employees have negative information to share and not punishing employees who deliver bad news.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

56) When the audience is aware of the possibility of negative news, the writer should

- A) use an indirect approach.
- B) consider how emotionally involved the reader will be with the message.
- C) minimize the bad news in the middle of a paragraph.
- D) thank the audience for their understanding.
- E) encourage the audience to respond with any questions they may have.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Consider using the direct approach when the audience is aware of the possibility of negative news, when the reader is not emotionally involved in the message, when you know that the reader would prefer the bad news first, when you know that firmness is necessary, and when you want to discourage a response.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Synthesis

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

57) When providing reasons and additional information for the bad news, the writer should

- A) explain why the news could be considered positive.
- B) trivialize the reader's concerns.
- C) allow the reader to think the news might be positive.
- D) tell the reader how the issue could be resolved.
- E) adjust the amount of detail to fit the audience and the situation.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) When providing reasons and additional information, the writer should explain why the news is negative, adjust the detail to fit the situation and the audience and avoid explanations if the reasons are confidential, complicated or irrelevant to the reader.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

58) Rewrite the following sentence using more respectful wording: "You shouldn't have put the blender into the dishwasher."

Answer: This type of blender should not be cleaned in the dishwasher.

LO: 9.4: Explain the importance of maintaining high standards of ethics and etiquette when delivering negative messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 59) When you are refusing a routine request from someone in an established relationship, you
- A) should use the indirect approach.
 - B) should invoke company policy if that is a possible out.
 - C) don't need to invest as much time and effort as you would for other kinds of negative messages.
 - D) should give the name of the person making the decision.
 - E) should use the direct approach.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) When a routine request from someone in an established relationship has been rejected, the audience is bound to be surprised and dismayed. This was one thing that your recipient counted on to be stable and reliable, and now she finds that it is no longer an option.

For these reasons, it is wise to tread lightly in this kind of situation and use an indirect approach.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 60) Do all of the following except _____ if you must refuse a claim.

- A) show that you understand the claim
- B) argue heatedly for your point of view
- C) explain your refusal
- D) suggest alternative action
- E) stick to the facts

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Control your emotions and approach the situation as calmly as possible to avoid saying or writing anything that the recipient might interpret as defamation.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

61) Your communication goals should include _____ if you're sending bad news about transactions.

- A) modifying the customer's expectations
- B) changing your plan for resolving the situation
- C) ignoring any damage to the business relationship
- D) pinpointing what the customer did wrong
- E) refusing to acknowledge the customer's concerns

Answer: A

Explanation: A) When you send bad news about transactions, you have three goals: modify the customer's expectations, explain how you plan to fix the problem, and repair whatever damage has been done to the business relationship.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

62) If the stakes are high for you or your receiver, use a(n) _____ to deliver negative information.

- A) direct approach
- B) irregular approach
- C) indirect approach
- D) topical approach
- E) persuasive approach

Answer: C

Explanation: C) The indirect approach works best when the stakes are high for you or for the receiver.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 63) Negative messages about business transactions are designed to
- A) confirm the customer's expectations.
 - B) explain how you plan to resolve the situation.
 - C) show the audience that whatever has happened, your company is not at fault.
 - D) let the audience know which of your employees caused the problem.
 - E) shield the company from liability, even if you must blame another organization.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) In a transaction, the recipient is usually not very interested in the cause of the problem on your end. Instead, the recipient wants to know about how and when you can fix the situation.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 64) Whether or not you should apologize when delivering bad news about transactions depends mainly on

- A) how much the customer has purchased from your company in the past.
- B) the medium you are using for the message.
- C) how long it has been since the problem occurred.
- D) the nature of the relationship with the customer.
- E) if you didn't meet agreed upon expectations.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) If you did set the customer's expectations and now find that you can't meet them, your task is more complicated. In addition to resetting those expectations and explaining how you'll resolve the problem, you should include an apology as part of your message. The scope of the apology depends on the magnitude of the mistake.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

65) A woman returns a formal dress to your store, asking for a refund. The bodice is stained and the hemline is torn, but she says she is returning it unworn because it doesn't fit. Which of the following would be the best way to refuse her request for a refund?

- A) State that company policy prevents you from accepting the return but that if you had anything to say about it, you'd take it back, no questions asked.
- B) Restate her complaint to let her know you understand it, explain as positively as possible that you are unable to accept the return of damaged merchandise, and recommend a tailor who can fix the tear and alter the dress for her.
- C) Challenge the woman to try on the dress and prove that it doesn't fit.
- D) Use humor to soften the blow of your refusal.
- E) Let her know that she's not the first customer to try this, and threaten to call security.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) The key to the situation is to be as polite and helpful as possible. What you don't want to do is give the woman any cause to feel she is being treated unfairly.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

66) To avoid being accused of defamation, you should

- A) refuse to communicate with unhappy clients.
- B) make it clear to disgruntled customers that you refuse to be intimidated.
- C) avoid any kind of behavior that could be considered abusive.
- D) frequently refer to company policy.
- E) frequently use hedge words such as "company policy" and "appears".

Answer: C

Explanation: C) From time to time, you will be involved in situations in which you just want to "tell the other person off." Outrageous things may happen, and people will try your patience, but no matter what you must never give in to temptation and call a person names or speak abusively. That opens both you and your company up to being accused of defamation.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

67) In refusing a customer's request for an adjustment, you become concerned about possible defamation charges. What should you do?

- A) Stress why the customer is at fault.
- B) Suggest that the customer do business elsewhere.
- C) Consult your company's legal advisors.
- D) Speak your mind bluntly.
- E) Make the refusal verbally instead of in writing.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Defamation cases arise if you speak or write abusively or if you treat a customer unfairly in some way. If you think you've said something or done something you shouldn't have, speak to the legal department of your company.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

68) When making negative announcements about routine business matters,

- A) the direct approach is generally best.
- B) the indirect approach is best in most cases.
- C) it is best to combine the direct and indirect approaches.
- D) there is no need to close on a positive note.
- E) using a buffer is not acceptable.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Although such announcements happen in the normal course of business, they are generally unexpected. Accordingly, except in the case of minor changes, the indirect approach is usually the better choice. You should never combine the direct and indirect approaches in a negative letter. You should always close on a positive note and use a buffer in a negative letter with the indirect approach.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

69) Offering discounts on future purchases, free merchandise, or other considerations in negative messages about business transactions

A) is almost always viewed as a hollow, insincere gesture.

B) should be avoided since it acknowledges guilt.

C) is a good idea only when dealing with government contracts.

D) has been shown to worsen relationships rather than repair them.

E) can go a long way to rebuilding a customer's confidence in your company.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) To help repair the damage to the relationship and encourage repeat business, many companies offer discounts on future purchases, free merchandise, or other considerations. Even modest efforts can go a long way to rebuilding a customer's confidence in your company.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

70) When you deliver bad news about business transactions (such as a delayed order shipment), you should always apologize to the audience.

Answer: FALSE

Explanation: You should offer an apology only if your company has made a mistake or has been negligent in some way. Otherwise, you should simply explain the situation and focus on how it can be fixed as soon as possible.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

71) One way to avoid being accused of defamation is to stick to the facts when communicating with customers.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Discipline is the key in avoiding defamation. No matter how out of line your customer is, don't get lured into being overly personal or emotional. Be scrupulous about facts and deal honestly and fairly with your customers.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

72) List at least three guidelines that can help you avoid being accused of defamation.

Answer: (1) Refrain from using any kind of abusive language; (2) Provide accurate information and stick to the facts; (3) Never let anger or malice motivate your messages; (4) Consult your company's legal advisers whenever you think a message might have legal consequences; (5) Communicate honestly; (6) Emphasize a desire for a good relationship in the future.

LO: 9.5: Describe successful strategies for sending negative messages on routine business matters.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

73) When you need to inform employees that a benefit or privilege will be eliminated,

A) the best approach is to leak the news as a rumor rather than make a public announcement.

B) minimize the impact of the bad news by presenting it in as positive a light as possible.

C) use the direct approach.

D) use as many hedging words as possible.

E) explain the decision is in the employee's best interest.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Losing benefits and/or privileges is something that employees don't take lightly.

If you are responsible to announce a cut in benefits or privileges, try to frame the situation as positively as possible. Explain the position of the company as best you can, aiming to make the employees see both sides of the situation – the employee side and the company side.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

74) Social media and other communication technologies have created a major new challenge:

A) competing in the global marketplace.

B) researching and developing new products and services.

C) communicating up and down the corporate supply chain.

D) attracting and recruiting qualified applicants for employment.

E) responding to online rumors and attacks on a company's reputation.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) Social media and other communication technologies have created a major new challenge: responding to online rumors and attacks on a company's reputation.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

75) When responding to rumors and countering negative information in a social media environment, a company should *not*

- A) engage customers early and often.
- B) monitor online conversations.
- C) rely on its reputation to protect it.
- D) respond appropriately and professionally.
- E) evaluate any negative messages.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) A positive reputation online must be diligently guarded and defended.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

76) A crisis management plan should

- A) define operational procedures and outline communication tasks and responsibilities.
- B) make provisions for concealing operational issues from the news media.
- C) avoid limitations on who is authorized to speak on behalf of the company.
- D) never include contact information for key executives and personnel.
- E) be built based on small business standards.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) A crisis management plan specifies company spokespersons, gives contact information for all key employees, and lists news outlets/social media to disseminate information.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

77) When a crisis hits, corporate communicators should

- A) deflect blame to third parties.
- B) reserve all comments for their favorite media outlets.
- C) get top management involved immediately.
- D) go into lockdown mode when asked questions.
- E) minimize the amount of information given to the public.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) When a crisis hits, get top management involved immediately.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

78) As soon as a crisis hits, companies should set up a news center for company representatives and the media. Best practices for the news center will include all of the following except

- A) releasing contact information for everyone involved.
- B) having trained personnel on site around the clock.
- C) directing incoming inquires to a designated spokesperson.
- D) providing complete information packets to the media as soon as possible.
- E) issuing frequent updates.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) During a crisis, don't release information that will violate anyone's privacy rights.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

79) With the increase in the use of social media, it is important to _____ those who don't follow the rules of ethical communication.

- A) limit website access from
- B) not respond to
- C) diligently guard and defend against
- D) identify corporate policy for
- E) hide unhappy customers and their potential for damage away from

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Whatever you do, keep in mind that positive reputations are an important asset and need to be diligently guarded and defended. Everybody has a voice now, and some of those voices don't care to play by the rules of ethical communication.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Synthesis

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

80) When preparing to respond to negative messages, it is important to consider

- A) how to combat the negative information.
- B) the source, tone and content.
- C) who the audience is.
- D) why the comment was made.
- E) legal ramifications of the comment.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) When you encounter negative messages, resist the urge to fire back immediately. Instead, evaluate the source, the tone, and the content of the message—and then choose a response that fits the situation.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Synthesis

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

81) Proactive companies use social media to engage with their stakeholders as a long-term strategy.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Forward thinking companies address the possibility of negative messages via social media by engaging early and often with their stakeholders.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

82) Provide at least five guidelines to observe when making negative organizational announcements.

Answer: (1) Match your approach to the situation—if the news is relatively minor, the direct approach may be best. If it will come as a shock, use the indirect approach. (2) Consider the unique needs of each group—not everyone needs the same information. (3) Give each audience enough time to react as needed. If a plant is closing, for example, employees may need months to find new jobs. (4) Give yourself enough time to plan and manage a response. Complaints and questions are likely to follow your announcement. (5) Look for positive angles but don't exude false optimism. (6) Minimize the element of surprise whenever possible. (7) Seek expert advice if you're not sure how to handle all aspects of the announcement.

LO: 9.6: List the important points to consider when conveying negative organizational news.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 83) When rejecting a job applicant, you can soften the blow by
- A) expressing appreciation for his or her application.
 - B) mentioning the qualifications of the person who was hired.
 - C) praising competitive applicants.
 - D) apologizing for wasting the person's time.
 - E) implying future consideration.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Finding something you can admire about the applicant or the application can do a lot to soften the blow of the rejection. Just be sure not to seem phony or come off as insincere.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 84) Which of the following is the most effective close for a letter rejecting a job applicant?

- A) If you have any questions about our decision, don't hesitate to call.
- B) We hope that despite this rejection you will continue to frequent our establishments.
- C) Again, we are very sorry that we cannot offer you a position at this time.
- D) I wish you the best in your job search. I am confident you will find a match for your skills and interests.
- E) We will consider your application for any other opening in the future.

Answer: D

Explanation: D) A good closing section is optimistic, avoids uncertainty or future correspondence, and is genuine and sincere in its sentiments.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

85) Which of the following can help you handle requests for recommendations in a social networking environment?

- A) responding to a request from someone you don't know
- B) writing a recommendation for anyone
- C) writing as much or as little as you're comfortable with sharing about the person
- D) writing only positive information on everyone
- E) asking the person to write the letter, and offer your approval

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Social networks give you flexibility. You can ignore or delete the request, refrain from writing any recommendations, and write as much or as little about the person as you choose.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Synthesis

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

86) As a member of an online social network, the recommendations you write

- A) must include extensive detailed information.
- B) cannot be seen by the other network members.
- C) become part of your online brand.
- D) don't affect your online profile.
- E) require little thought or planning.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) The recommendations you make in a social network become part of your brand.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 87) A letter rejecting a job applicant should
- A) avoid explaining why he or she was not selected.
 - B) point out the applicant's shortcomings.
 - C) be as personal as possible.
 - D) be as long as possible.
 - E) always offer an apology.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Explaining the rejection opens the door to legal problems. If the rejection reason you offer can't be proved legally, the rejected person can claim some sort of discrimination was actually the true cause of the rejection. Because of these kinds of complications, many companies advocate the "no explanations" approach.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 88) If you must give an employee a negative performance review,
- A) do so by email.
 - B) support your claims with careful documentation.
 - C) limit your discussion to the areas where the employee needs improvement.
 - D) minimize anything positive that the employee has done.
 - E) assume that you'll be firing the employee before too long.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) As with other rejections, saying negative things about a person opens the door to legal problems. If your evaluation is negative, you should be able to document your claims using performance records, reports of problems and difficulties caused by the person, and official complaints.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 89) When writing an employment termination letter, you should
- A) include words that are open to interpretation.
 - B) clearly present the reasons for the action.
 - C) not be concerned with trying to preserve a good relationship with the employee.
 - D) make clear to the employee that you have carefully researched relevant employment laws.
 - E) include contact information for the legal department.

Answer: B

Explanation: B) To terminate a person you should strive to build an airtight case that demonstrates that the person could not perform up to company standards. Be as fair as possible. Avoid any personal criticism and limit your remarks to statements about facts and data rather than subjective opinions.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 90) Performance reviews in the workplace are designed to
- A) limit job requirements.
 - B) give employees negative feedback on their performance.
 - C) promote personal action plans for improving performance.
 - D) offer incentives and salary increases.
 - E) keep job descriptions up to date.

Answer: C

Explanation: C) Performance reviews clarify job requirements, give employees performance feedback based on those requirements, and establish a personal plan of action to ensure continued performance in the future.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

91) When you're appraising employee performance, _____ to support any decisions that need to be made about pay, promotions, or termination.

- A) write down your frustrations
- B) document performance problems
- C) evaluate each employee differently
- D) focus on each employee's faults and shortcomings
- E) compare each employee to coworkers

Answer: B

Explanation: B) Documenting performance problems will help you write an effective appraisal and support any decisions that you need to make about pay, promotions, or termination.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

92) Which one of the following is *not* an essential element of writing termination messages in the workplace?

- A) careful planning
- B) sensitive writing
- C) complete documentation
- D) personal allegations
- E) emotional ramifications

Answer: D

Explanation: D) Termination messages are fraught with emotions and legal ramifications, so careful planning, complete documentation, and sensitive writing are essential. Avoid personal attacks or insults of any kind.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Application

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 93) When terminating an employee,
- A) focus on problem resolution.
 - B) emphasize judgmental language.
 - C) avoid confrontation by withholding negative feedback.
 - D) allow the relationship to end negatively, and with hard feelings.
 - E) make sure reasons are objectively verifiable.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) When terminating employment, state your reasons accurately and make sure they are objectively verifiable. Avoid statements that might expose your company to a wrongful termination lawsuit.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 94) Writing an effective performance review requires
- A) evaluating all employees consistently.
 - B) knowing all employees will react negatively to criticism.
 - C) following the job description.
 - D) a focus on improvement, not on what the employee does well.
 - E) a focus on what the employee does well, minimizing potential areas of improvement.

Answer: A

Explanation: A) Consistency is not only fair but also helps protect the company from claims of discriminatory practices.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

- 95) To avoid a negative surprise during a performance evaluation, managers should
- A) keep a list of examples of poor performance.
 - B) let the employee know ahead of time the review is coming.
 - C) limit the use of status updates.
 - D) allow peers to provide input on the performance review.
 - E) provide regular feedback and coaching throughout the year.

Answer: E

Explanation: E) To avoid negative surprises, managers should provide regular feedback and coaching as needed throughout the year if employee performance falls below expectations.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

96) When responding to social networking recommendation requests, a single sentence that focuses on one positive aspect is often all that is necessary.

Answer: TRUE

Explanation: Social networking recommendations are much more flexible than conventional recommendations. When solicited, a recommender may contribute as much or as little as he or she sees fit.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

97) Define and discuss performance reviews.

Answer: Performance reviews clarify job requirements, give employees feedback on their performance relative to those requirements, and establish a personal plan of action to ensure continued performance in the future. Performance reviews also help companies set organizational standards and communicate organizational values. In addition, they document evidence of performance in the event that disciplinary action is needed or an employee later disputes management decisions regarding pay or promotions.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

98) Suppose you're a manager who has to write performance reviews. What can you do to help you prepare for writing a review that includes negative information?

Answer: If you need to write a review that includes negative information, keep the following points in mind: Document performance problems. You will need this information in order to write an effective appraisal and to support any decisions about pay, promotions, or termination. Evaluate all employees consistently. Doing so is fair. It also helps protect the company from claims of discriminatory practices. Write in a calm, objective voice. The employee is not likely to welcome your negative assessment, but you can manage the emotions of the situation by maintaining professional reserve in your writing. Focus on opportunities for improvement. This information can serve as the foundation for an improvement plan for the coming year. Keep job descriptions up to date. If a job evolves over time in response to changes in the business, the employees' current activities may no longer match an outdated job description.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Difficult

Classification: Critical Thinking

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

99) What are some viable options for refusing social networking recommendation requests?

Answer: The situation with recommendations in a social networking environment is more complicated than with a traditional recommendation because the recommendations become part of your online profile. Fortunately, social networks provide more flexibility when it comes to responding to recommendation requests. You can simply ignore or delete the requests, or you can (as many people do) make it a personal policy to ignore requests from networkers they don't know. Another option is to refrain from making recommendations at all, and just letting people know this when they ask.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Synthesis

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages

100) Explain the characteristics of an effective letter rejecting a job applicant.

Answer: Rejecting job applicants requires choosing your approach carefully—experts disagree on how much information to include in a rejection message, but the safest strategy is to avoid any explanations for the company's decision and to avoid making or implying any promises of future consideration. When writing a rejection message, be sure to personalize it by using the recipient's name, and then open with a courteous expression of appreciation for being considered. Convey the bad news politely and concisely, and avoid explaining why the applicant was rejected or why other applicants were chosen instead. Don't state or imply that the application will be reviewed later, and close with positive wishes for the applicant's career success.

LO: 9.7: Describe successful strategies for sending negative employment-related messages.

AACSB: Written and oral communication

Difficulty: Moderate

Classification: Conceptual

Learning Outcome: Describe strategies for developing negative messages