

MEMO

To: Golf Course Superintendent
From: Experienced Memo Writer
Date: Today
Re: Tips on Writing Memos

Some of you may sweat over writing memorandums. Others may find it a delight. Whatever, the more effective you can make them, the better it will be for yourself as well as the recipient of your memos.

Often, a well-written memo can be the difference in persuading someone to your viewpoint or in edging out someone for a new job.

Here are some tips:

1. Know why you're writing a memo. Write a purpose statement to yourself that tells you what *you* expect your readers to do or know when they finish reading your memo. Refer to your purpose statement as you write to be certain you're staying on track.

2. Quickly let your readers know the reason for your memo. Get to the point. Keeping people in suspense is for mystery novels.

3. Anticipate reactions. Chances are your memo should or will be read by anyone interested in the topic it addresses ... or you shouldn't be writing the memo. Consider the perspectives of all the possible readers.

4. Answer the questions they may have ... clearly. If your memo shows that you are sensitive to others' needs and interest, your credibility will be enhanced.

5. Does your memo appear to be too long? Take time to revise it. Be certain you say exactly what you *want* to say. Extra words dilute the strength of your message.

6. Polish your memo. Once you are comfortable with its organization, look at the memo's finer points.

7. Keep the tone of your memo natural. Read it aloud; listen to the language. Does anything sound awkward? Depending upon the readers of your memo, you may use an informal tone ... or a more formal one.

8. Be courteous.

9. Be factual.

10. Be specific.

11. Be brief.

12. Don't write anything you wouldn't say publicly. Privacy isn't guaranteed, even if you mark a document "personal" or "confidential." (*Often, sensitive issues are best dealt with face-to-face.*)

13. If you write a negative memo, wait a day before sending it. Should you reconsider, shred the memo ... Wastebaskets aren't private property.

Strong writing skills can gain you visibility and respect. If you find writing difficult, obtain a good writing handbook. Some diligent effort can improve your spelling and grammar.

All types of writers continually seek to improve their skills. Developing your memo technique is an excellent step toward a good, clear writing style that will benefit you in many ways.

Credit: Hole Notes 8/91



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