

M E M O

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 interests, 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.

You Can Get A Lot of Help From Suppliers

Obviously your choice of suppliers is a factor in the productivity of your own operation—but that's not all! Perhaps most importantly, your PROCESS of choosing suppliers can contribute to your own productivity.

Increases in productive work methods are available to you, frequently just for the asking. Many times, even before the initial purchase, just the investigation and planning necessary to a decision will yield benefits to you. In such cases, the expertise of a competent supplier, freely offered, may unlock the secret to another growth step.

Value-added suppliers generally have customer support systems to assist the business customer in choosing the right product or service.

The "value-added" supplier offers additional help to customers by analyzing their particular needs and then recommending the best product or service solution. A "value added" supplier may even send trained staff to the customer to ensure that the new product or service is being used correctly.

Such companies will actually take responsibility to determine, by measurement and documentation, that productivity or volume growth actually occurs as planned.

This additional support may make the difference between a profit or a loss for your operation.

Grass Clippings

Question: Our landfill will not accept grass clippings, so we have decided to return clippings to the fairways. Will this cause a thatch problem? (Michigan)

Answer: University studies have failed to link the return of turf clippings with thatch accumulation. When fairway mowing removes no more than 1/3 of the grass blade, the clippings are small and decompose rapidly. Many superintendents drag a chain or hose across the fairways to disperse clumps of clippings that result from infrequent mowing or mowing of wet turf. You could also use manure spreaders to disperse clippings into rough areas (see the March/April 1989 *Green Section Record*). A third possibility would be to start a compost area and use the organic material on the golf course. —USGA *Green Section Record*