

## **Essence of Corporate Communication**

**N. Pratheeba**  
=====

### **Abstract**

Corporate communication revolves around the written skills of the people involved in it. Unlike creative writing, it needs to be specific and accurate. It must be succinct and crisp because people do not have time to read round about circumlocutory writing in this age of information overload. In addition to flawless language, corporate communication ought to be polite and courteous without being blatant. This paper attempts to delineate the essential approaches, namely, the ‘you approach’ and the ‘we approach’ that will help the writer to reach the target audience in a seamless manner.

**Key words:** communication, business, corporate, vision, retail communication, direct approach, “you approach”, “we approach”, Bad News Messages

### **Introduction**

Corporate communication revolves around the written skills of the people involved in it. Unlike creative writing, it needs to be specific and accurate. It must be succinct and crisp because people do not have time to read round about circumlocutory writing in this age of information overload. In addition to flawless language, corporate communication ought to be polite and courteous without being blatant. This paper attempts to delineate the essential approaches, namely, the ‘you approach’ and the ‘we approach’ that will help the writer to reach the target audience in a seamless manner.

### **Definition of Corporate Communication**

The Financial Times defines Corporate Communication as a management function or department, like marketing, finance, or operations, dedicated to the dissemination of information

to key constituencies, the execution of corporate strategy and the development of messages for a variety of purposes for inside and outside the organization.

Knowledge Vision for Corporate Communications defines it in the following manner: Corporate Communication is how you keep up a business on message, with everybody speaking the same language.

Communication is the life blood of all organizations. It is the medium through which companies large and small access the vital resources they need in order to vibrate (Cees et.al 2007). Further, the communicator must know when and what to communicate. This involves analysis, judgment, counseling and planning - in addition to and prior to communicating (Newsom, 2014).

### **Types of Corporate Communication**

The Internet technology has altered corporate personae and the mode, channels and methods of corporate communication and feedback. It has minimized the power distance and ushered in a new type of relationship between corporations and their relevant publics. (Ihator, 2001) Corporate Communication can be internal or external, vertical or horizontal, company to client, client to company, company to service providers, service providers to company and so on. Internal communication is important for building a culture of transparency between management and employees, and it can engage employees in the organization's priorities. (Mishra, 2014) It can be in the form of manuals, reports, proposals, memos, magazine articles, business letters, complaint letters, quotations, orders, and such. The essence of Corporate Communication is such that it is always formal in all respects. Understanding the target audience lends a helping hand to determine the tone and level of formality. It needs to focus on the recipient's demands and interests rather than that of the sender. Though corporates need to talk a lot about their company's profile, products and available service, it has to be done in such a way that the needs of the target readers are fulfilled. The executive staff are also responsible for corporate communications, since for most businesses, the real message comes from the top rung of administrators.

### **Effective Corporate Communication**

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 16:4 April 2016

N. Pratheeba

Essence of Corporate Communication

Corporate communication is both the newest and perhaps the least understood. It is related to the other sub-disciplines like management communication, business communication, and organizational communication. (Paul, 1996) Corporate Communication can be termed good if it follows the seven C's of communication, it has to be brief and precise. It has to be factual, unambiguous, accurate and relevant to both the company's and target audience's needs and requirements.

Corporate Communication should be objective, detailed and well documented. In addition to the above mentioned factors, it needs to be homogeneous. Interpersonal Intelligence serves as an essential Factor for Effective Corporate Communication. In a nutshell, Effective Corporate Communication explains the benefits of the primary customers. It also helps to establish credibility among the various user segments and the company staff. Last but not the least, an effective corporate communication invokes curiosity about the company and products in the midst of prospective customers and motivates them into action. Rather, the purpose of corporate writers is to influence public opinion and attitudes, particularly among potential investors, in ways that create support for organizational practices or undermine opposition to them. (Conaway et al., 2010)

The following approaches will help the writer to achieve his end or drive home his facts. It is equally applicable to all involved in corporate communications.

### **Direct Approach or the YOU Approach**

Executives employ a variety of communication methods, including face-to-face communication, to communicate with employees. The executives' chosen communication strategies aim to build trust and engagement with employees. (Mishra, 2014) Good News Messages and Direct requests that do not require any convincing can be classified under this approach. It can be used in the following situations, but not limited to documents regarding claims and complaints, appointments, orders, reservations, request for action and promotion and inquiries about goods, people or services. It can start with the main idea of request or any good news. Devices for easy reading like bulleted lists, numbered questions, brochures, catalogues, news bulletins, can be used then and there. And stylistic features that give more importance to

the usage of the Second Person You pronouns rather than First person Pronouns will lend a professional YOU attitude to the document under consideration. Prof. Hurley says, “A polite closure that ensures a clear action (what action you want the reader to take and when) and an easy action (enclosing reply envelopes, phone numbers, fax, e-mail IDs etc., will really work wonders.”

### **Indirect Approach or We Approach**

Bad News Messages and Indirect requests that do not require any convincing can be classified under this approach. It can be used in the following situations, but not limited to documents regarding refusal of claims, credits and complaints, declining services and favour, cancellation of already placed orders etc., and inquiries about damaged goods, or unavailability of services. It can start with the buffer paragraph of appreciation, or any positive note. Devices for easy reading like needed details, answers to relevant questions pertaining to the document under consideration can be used then and there. And stylistic features that gives more importance to the usage of First Person I, WE pronouns rather than Second Person You pronouns will lend a professional WE attitude to the document under consideration. As mentioned earlier, a polite closure that ensures a clear action (what action you want the reader to take and when) and an easy action (enclosing reply envelopes, phone numbers, fax, e-mail IDs etc., are mandatory in this approach also.

A judicious use of both the approaches mentioned above will definitely lend a professional look to the written document under creation.

### **Examples**

#### **Bus pass will not be issued unless you submit the No-Dues Form.**

As soon as the required documents are submitted by you, we will promptly deliver the Bus pass.

#### **Compulsory attendance effected a full auditorium.**

Auditorium was full since everyone attended the meeting.

#### **You have withheld the results of thirty students.**

We have not yet received the results of thirty students.

**Your indifferent attitude has caused this problem.**

A little more care would have avoided this problem.

The sentences in bold imply a impolite tone whereas the un-bolded sentences imply a more polite tone.

### **Five Golden Rules to Make Your Writing Rock**

Most people know English when they hear it. It is everyday language, free from the long words, and technical terms, that plague the prose of scientists, engineers, economists, doctors, lawyers and writers in their specialized disciplines. (Newsom, 2014) The five golden rules given below will definitely help make your corporate writing rock:

1. Follow the KISS principle in writing. (Keep it Short and Simple.)
2. Be stringent with words by avoiding cluttering phrases and neoplasms (redundant phrases). Strunk and White advocated " using scissors on the manuscript, cutting it to pieces and fitting the pieces together in a better order."
3. Prefer right ordering and proper emphasis. Follow the basic rule - adverb of manner is to be followed by adverb of place and time.
4. Express Negative ideas with words that carry a positive connotation instead of expressing it blatantly.

How to express a negative idea (Bowen, 2006):

Negative ideas expressed blatantly	Negative ideas expressed politely
The results were bad.	The results were not very good.
Their machinery is very old-fashioned.	Their machinery is not very modern.
The catalogue is very dull.	The catalogue is not very interesting.

We got rather a cool reception.	We did not get a very warm reception.
We are dissatisfied with the service we have received so far.	We are not very satisfied with the service we have received so far.
We are unhappy with some of the terms of the agreement.	We are not very happy with some of the terms of the agreement.
We made very little impact on the society.	We did not make much impact on the society.
He takes no interest in what we do.	He does not take much interest in what we do.
There is no alternative.	There are not many options available.
There is nothing we can do about it.	There is something we can do about it.

5. Be tactful by the optimum use of modal verbs and suitable modifiers.

Statements perfectly consistent with what you know might be inconsistent with what you do not know. (Cess, et al., 2007) Usage of modals and modifiers comes as a handy tool in such a tricky situation. Strategic information packaging, gatekeeping, timing and controlled reactive communication become more difficult to manage in the information age. (Ihator, 2001)

**Being Tactful (Bowen, 2006)**

Blunt statements	Tactful statements
Your order is going to be late.	Your order may be slightly delayed.
We want you to reply at once. (would/grateful)	We would be grateful for an immediate reply.
You have made a mistake in the invoice. (there/seem)	There seems to be a mistake in the invoice.
You still owe us Rs.35,000	You still owe us Rs.35,000

You have not given the discount you promised us.	We do not seem to have received the discount.
Our tuition fee will go up from January 2016.	There may be a slight increase in tuition fee from January 2016.
You have not enclosed the complete list as requested by us.	You do not seem to have enclosed the complete list as requested by us.
The delivery will be late due to some problems in the computer.	You may experience difficulty in the delivery.
You have withheld the result of 50 students.	We have not yet received the result of 50 students.
You must use the new sports complex. (whenever/need)	You may use the new sports complex whenever you need.

## Conclusion

Corporate Communication is an area that is very diversified in nature. Adopting the right mix of the We and You approach will certainly boost the image and brand the image of the company in the midst of prospective clients.

---



---

## References

1. Conaway, Roger N.; Wardrope, William J. Do Their Words Really Matter? Thematic Analysis of U.S. and Latin American CEO Letters International *Journal of Business Communication* April 2010 vol. 47 no. 2 141-168
2. Paul A. Argenti Corporate Communication as a Discipline: Toward a Definition *Management Communication Quarterly* August 1996 vol. 10 no. 1 73-97
3. Karen Mishra, Lois Boynton, Anil Mishra Driving Employee Engagement: The Expanded Role of Internal Communications International *Journal of Business Communication* April 2014 vol. 51 no. 2 183-202
4. Newsom, D. & Haynes, J. 2014, *Public relations writing: Form and style*, 10th edn, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston, CA.

**Language in India** [www.languageinindia.com](http://www.languageinindia.com) ISSN 1930-2940 16:4 April 2016

N. Pratheeba

Essence of Corporate Communication

5. van Riel Cees, Cees B.M. Van Riel, Charles J. Fombrun. *Essentials of Corporate Communication: Implementing Practices for Effective Reputation Management*. Routledge, 2007
6. Bowen, T. *Build your Business Grammar* Cengage Learning, 2006
6. Communication style in the information age Augustine S. Ihator  
*Corporate Communications: An International Journal* 2001 6:4, 199-204
7. [www.lovewonder.sg1006.myweb.hinet.net/.../Strunk&White](http://www.lovewonder.sg1006.myweb.hinet.net/.../Strunk&White)
8. [www.lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=corporate-communication](http://www.lexicon.ft.com/Term?term=corporate-communication)
9. [www.knowledgevision.com/...knowledge-vision/knowledgevision.../corp](http://www.knowledgevision.com/...knowledge-vision/knowledgevision.../corp).
10. <http://emedia.leeward.hawaii.edu/hurley/eng209w/index.htm>

=====

N. Pratheeba  
Professor  
Department of English  
Kamaraj College of Engineering and Technology  
Virudhunagar  
Tamilnadu  
India  
[pratheeba.bose@yahoo.com](mailto:pratheeba.bose@yahoo.com)