March 19, 2002

Professor Paul Kellermann
3 Scott Building
University Park, PA 16802

Dear Mr. Kellermann:

This collaborative report has been prepared in an effort to reveal to you the different various types of writing in our distinct majors. The four areas discussed are Public Relations, Marketing, Business Logistics, and Operations Information Systems Management. Through personal interviews and extensive research of each major, this letter will inform you how specific types of writing in these four professions are applied to their occupation.

    PUBLIC RELATIONS

Business writing for the public relations field is a channel to inform while essentially building and maintaining positive relationships between a company and its internal and external publics. Specialization in public relations writing demands being versatile, concise, and accurate for the various presentation modes it encompasses. An interview with Tom Bradley at Altoona Area School District gave insight into examples of public relations publications.

One important type of writing used in the public relations field is a press release to mass media outlets such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. A press release is a document that is written out in a specific format that is used to make an announcement
about something that you feel is newsworthy. “Getting your business mentioned in the press is an extremely good way to achieve a positive image”
(http://www.bizmove.com/media_directory/news-release.html). As the information liaison between the school district and the community, Mr. Bradley supervises news releases and assists in writing stories pertaining to education for the media. (Appendix A)

Sometimes the goal of a public relations writer is not only to inform the target public, but also to persuade and motivate others to do something that is beneficial to the clients. Mr. Bradley has designed and authored a range of publications that accomplish both of these goals including community newsletters, employee newsletters, information brochures about the school district, and packets of information for realtors and prospective residents. (Appendix B)

As Director of Public Relations for the Altoona Area School District, Tom Bradley’s other writing obligations include writing occasional speeches for Board members or the Superintendent. He is responsible for maintaining communications with community organizations and citizens by responding to requests or sending appropriate thank you acknowledgments. Mr. Bradley also writes grants, annual reports, and thank you letters on behalf of the Altoona Area School District Foundation as well as writing recognitions necessary for various programs honoring retirees or academic achievements.

In efforts to address all of these literary/ publication areas handled by his public relations office, approximately 65% his time per month is spent writing.
Dr. Keith Niedermeier, the Assistant Professor of Marketing at The Pennsylvania State University, partakes in numerous tasks involving writing within his position. The vast majority of his writing is in the form of formal research and academic reports to be published. Most professors at Penn State are published already and continue to have new works published from year to year. However, a lot of time is still spent on those previous works. There are always new studies being done, new information being discovered, and many publications require constant updating and modification because of it.

In addition, there are memos within the department and email correspondence among co-workers and students that take up some time. Many faculty in the department use email more than any other means of communicating. Lastly, nearing the end of each semester, come the requests from undergraduate students for letters of recommendation. These requests come prior to the student’s job search, as well as for those applying for graduate schools. While he may only have six to eight recommendations to write, each one is different and requires effort and brainstorming. When asked to estimate the time he devotes to his writing, he approximated 40 hours per month.

The second person interviewed was Jeannie Vassallo, Regional Director of Charrette, a company that sells office equipment and machinery. Charrette has locations all over the country, and their employees communicate almost solely via email correspondence. Ms. Vassallo constantly has emails to read and write concerning the business and its clients.
Quarterly, she has to write formal sales reports to her superiors so that they may keep track of her, the sales team, and their progress. These reports often follow a similar format each time and range in length from 3 to 6 pages. Overall, Jeannie estimated that she spends roughly 30-35 hours per month writing.

The answers received from these two people, involved in two different aspects of marketing, shows how variable business writing can be. Both utilize email on a regular basis, but Ms. Vassallo rarely does any writing for publications, and Dr. Niedermeier never has to write sales reports. This just goes to show that while writing is a regular task, the type and amount of time spent on it is dependent upon your field.

**BUSINESS LOGISTICS**

Business writing is an essential characteristic of business in general. In Business Logistics, communication is especially important. According to [http://www.itbp.com/opsmanagement/iebm/logistics.htm](http://www.itbp.com/opsmanagement/iebm/logistics.htm), “In any transaction, customers desire nine ‘rights’: the right product, the right quantity, the right quality, the right place, the right time, the right form, the right price, the right packaging and the right information.” This clearly defines what logistics is and portrays the amount of information required to allow all these “rights” to occur without disruption. When speaking to Carla Cunha, an Operations Supervisor at Airborne Express, she clearly expresses the need and importance of communication throughout the firm.
The primary way of communicating is email. This is most likely so because she has 30 to 40 subordinates she is responsible for keeping informed. Email is the preferred method used often with upper management because it allows for quick adjustment and implementation of decisions. When asked about memos, Ms. Cunha states her format of email could be seen as a memo if the objective of the email is to inform and not solicit a response.

Another form of communication used with upper management is a feasibility report. She has the ability to suggest changes with respect to the operating and running of her sector. A formal proposal is written and given to her supervisors. Once permission is granted, she proceeds with a feasibility report, which consists of a model that illustrates, through excel, the type of changes that should occur and the results that should be expected. Along with this document a recommendation accompanies this report because the model (spreadsheet) will have more than one option. A feasibility report is the most notable type of written communication in this field because of the clarity and significance of the data. The changes suggested by these reports often affect the efficiency and cost associated with the operation.

Although these reports are so valuable to the firm, its use is infrequent when compared to other ways of written communication. Emails encompass roughly 80% to 90% of written communication. This is because, with reports, time must be allotted for research, presentation of material, implementation of plan, and analysis of results. On a monthly
basis an average of 200 to 300 emails are sent. This number includes those to subordinates and those to upper management. In comparison one feasibility report is done, on average, one every other month. As this field becomes more complex, the frequency and complexity of communication via writing will also increase.

OPERATIONS INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

Memo writing is one of the most widely used forms of writing in business. Writing a memo is probably considered somewhat outdated today because of the increasing use of email. For the operations information systems major, these two areas of business writing are most valuable.

After interviewing Penny Skelton, a database designer at Lockheed Martin, she revealed how her memo writing and email composition are used on a daily basis. Ms. Skelton gave an example of how her memo writing is so important in her area of business through a Weekly Activity Report (WAR). (Appendix C) A WAR is a bulleted list of weekly happenings and news relevant to a division of Lockheed Martin. Ms. Skelton is required to submit anything that is of importance to her division for senior executives and management to notice and become aware of. This list is forwarded to senior management who then picks out ideas that are noteworthy and places them in a memo to the President of the company.
In respect to Penny Skelton’s profession, a WAR is not a technical writing, but rather a formal non-technical business memo written weekly. Each WAR becomes a permanent record for the Lockheed Martin archives (http://bizntech.rutgers.edu/dreamweaver_tutorial/322/memo_writing.html). Throughout an average month, Penny will write four memos, one each week. Each of these weekly memos is addressed to upper management. Other managers and employees are contributing as well by writing their own WAR. The President of Lockheed Martin receives the final draft of the business memo at week ending. In addition to the President receiving a copy of the WAR, the final draft is circulated throughout the whole corporation via email. Ms. Skelton spends about 10 hours monthly writing her individual WAR’s.

A memo is expected to be short and concise and should concentrate around one thesis (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~dancarp/memowriting.htm). Although a WAR is a memo, and does center around one theme, it is not your typical memo. It does not offer support for each itemized detail. Also, an executive summary is not included because the list is coming from all over the corporation (http://www-personal.umich.edu/~dancarp/memowriting.htm). It would be hard to include an executive summary for this type of memo because there are different points of view from each employee in the company.

The second area of business writing is email composition. Email has become a form of memo writing. Keeping with the example of a WAR, it gets circulated via email once the
President receives the final draft. Now a memo is being distributed as an email and makes for an even larger audience (http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9905/12/effective.idg/).

Penny Skelton writes more than 40 emails daily. This is her major form of communication with her employees and customers other than the telephone. Emails are a more informal way to present information and convey messages that are almost instantaneous. As in the past, an Information Technology person such as Ms. Skelton would have had to take the time to write a formal memo to her employees to inform them. One disadvantage to email composition is that it is usually written off the top of your head whereas a memo would be more thought out. Also if writing a memo via an email, it should be send it out as an attachment to allow for the aesthetics of the memo to be present (http://www.cnn.com/TECH/computing/9905/12/effective.idg/). Ms. Skelton spends approximately 50% of her time writing emails to ease her time spent on the phone and writing memos.

**SUMMATION**

According to the different majors shown in this report, one will notice that each varies quite differently. According to figure 1.1, you will notice that although Marketing, Business Logistics, and Operations Information Systems Management are all business majors, the time spent writing depends particularly on that major. Marketing does not utilize as much time as the other two business majors. As for Public Relations, a majority of its time during business hours is spent writing. The three business majors
mentioned email as a primary source of communication, while Public Relations relies heavier upon Newsletters and Press Releases.

![Amount of Time Spent Writing Per Major](image)

Figure 1.1

After reading our collaborative report, it is very evident that writing is a crucial element used in business. We expect that you will have a better understanding of the different types of writing used in Public Relations, Marketing, Business Logistics, and Operations Information Systems Management.

Sincerely,

Betsy ****   Angela *****   Angel ********   Nicole ********