

Business Communication

Document Formatting

Letters vs. Memos

The letter format is used when the receiver(s) of the correspondence is outside of your company or organization. The memo format is used when the receiver(s) of the correspondence is a member of the company or organization you work for (inter-office correspondence).

Formatting Letters

Letter Types

Personal Business Letters – letters written to a business or organization on behalf of YOURSELF. Example: You write a letter of complaint to Dave Smith at the Pepsi Company because you found a mouse tail in the bottom of a can of soda you were drinking.

Business Letters – letters written by a business/organization to another business/organization or an individual on behalf of the BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION. Example: Dave Smith at Pepsi writes a letter of apology to you based on your letter of complaint. Dave, although writing the letter, is really expressing the opinion of the company he works for.

Alignment Formats

Block Format – All lines in the letter align at the left margin.

Modified-Block Format – All lines except the date, closing, and signature block align at the left margin. The date, closing, and signature block BEGIN at the center of the page.

With Indented Paragraphs – Either of the above formats may also include indented paragraphs.

Punctuation Formats

Open Punctuation – NO punctuation following the salutation or closing.

Mixed/Standard Punctuation – A colon follows the salutation, a comma follows the closing.

Second Pages

If a letter extends on to a second, third, etc. page, the second and following pages have a one inch top margin and a header at the top that is left-aligned. That header includes the name of the person receiving the letter, the date, and the page number (in that order, on separate lines).

Formatting Memos

Format

Two common formats for memos are used: standard and simplified. Details for formatting these types of memos are explained more completely in the examples that follow.

Second Pages

If a memo extends on to a second, third, etc. page, the second and following pages have a one inch top margin and a header at the top that is left-aligned. That header includes the name of the person receiving the memo, the date, and the page number (in that order, on separate lines).

Examples

Letter & Memo Formats to be used in ITBE 353

1. Business Letter in Block Format with Open Punctuation
2. Standard Memo

Business Letter

Block Style with Open Punctuation

August 24, 2010

Date – Always type out in full. Begins at least ½” below the letterhead. For the purpose of this class we will begin at 2”.

Ms. Kathryn M. Amsbury
Home Care Nursing, P.C.
6807 Crestridge Drive
Hopkins, MN 55343-1921

Address Block – Includes the name, organization, and address of the person receiving the letter. Should appear a QS below the date. One or two spaces are typed after the state abbreviation. We will use one!

Dear Ms. Amsbury

Salutation

As you requested, I shall be happy to meet with you on August 30 at 10 a.m. to review your copy needs. I am confident that we have just the right copier for you.

Please come to my office at our new address, which is shown in the letterhead above. Bring some figures relating to your volume of copying as well as information about size and color needs. After determining your needs, we can then visit our adjoining showroom so that you can select the model that will be best for you.

HiTech is dedicated to providing up-to-date office services in the greater Twin Cities area. Our new, expanded facilities will help us achieve that goal. I have enclosed a brochure about the company that may answer any questions you have.

Body – SS with a DS between paragraphs.

Sincerely yours

Closing

David G. Kramer
Customer Relations Associate

Signature Block – title either next to the name, separated by a comma or typed below the name as here. Which you use is determined by length. Name appears a QS below the closing.

dls

Reference Initials – the initials of the typist (not the writer)

Enclosure

Enclosure Notation – included if another item(s) is being sent along with the letter.

c: John Smith

Copy Notation – included if a copy of the letter is being sent to someone other than the stated recipient.

Memorandums

Standard Memo in Block Style

Memorandum ←

Memorandum title – May not be necessary if your company has letterhead for memos. If letterhead is used the top margin should be at least ½” below the letterhead. If no letterhead is used, the top margin should be approximately 1 ½ – 2”.

TO: Curtis Marlowe, Home Designs

FROM: Doug Nestell, Sales Director ←

DATE: October 18, 2010

SUBJECT: TIMBER CREEK SITE

Memo headings – format can vary. Some formats bold the headings (to, from, etc.), some do not capitalize the subject line, some align the headings based on the colon. We will use the format suggested here. The subject line should be followed by a triple space.

Some observations seem appropriate now that the laying of wiring and conduits for Phase I of the Timber Creek site is being finalized. It is my understanding that a high percentage of Timber Creek residents likely will be first-time home buyers.

Cost will be an important criterion; but on the basis of our previous experience with this type of development, other factors should be considered. Our model homes should reflect today’s informal life-style. The use of a great room rather than both a family room and a living room is one way to reduce costs. Also, since both the husband and wife in most homes will work outside the home, there should be two-car garages. We have also found that many people like the option of leaving certain areas unfinished; these can be finished later as the family grows and as finance permit.

I shall be happy to meet with you to discuss these concerns.

dls ←

Reference Initials – the initials of the typist

Note: Both standard and simplified formats can include Enclosure and/or Copy notations just like letters. Both are formatted in the same manner as letters.

Additional Examples - FYI

Other Acceptable Letter & Memo Formats

1. Business Letter – Modified Block Style, with Mixed Punctuation
2. Simplified Memo in Block Style
3. Personal Business Letter – Block Style with Open Punctuation
4. Personal Business Letter – Modified Block Style with Mixed Punctuation

Business Letters

Modified-Block Style with Mixed Punctuation

August 24, 2010

Ms. Kathryn M. Amsbury
Home Care Nursing, P.C.
6807 Crestridge Drive
Hopkins, MN 55343-1921

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Sincerely yours,

David G. Kramer
Customer Relations Associate

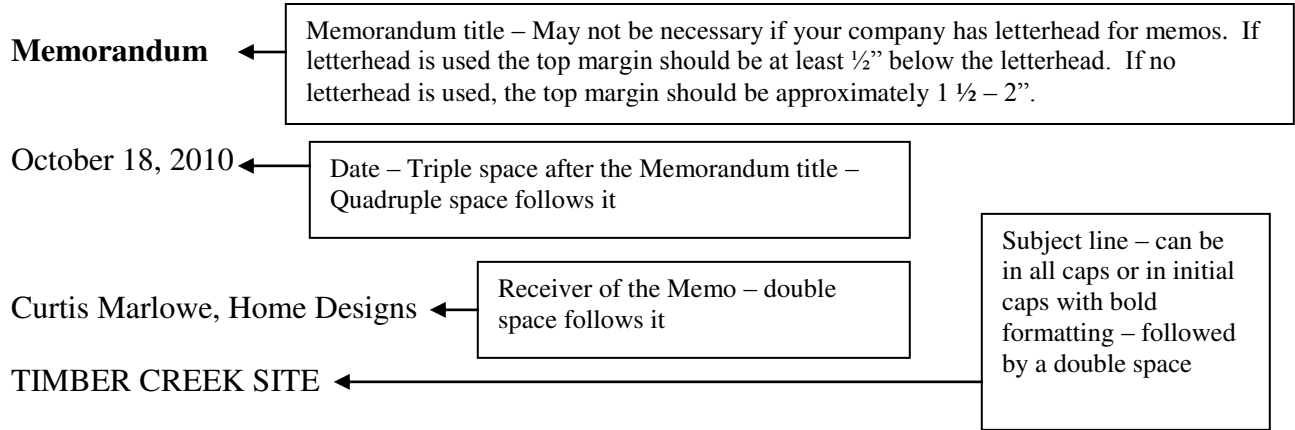
dls

Enclosure

c: John Smith

Memorandums

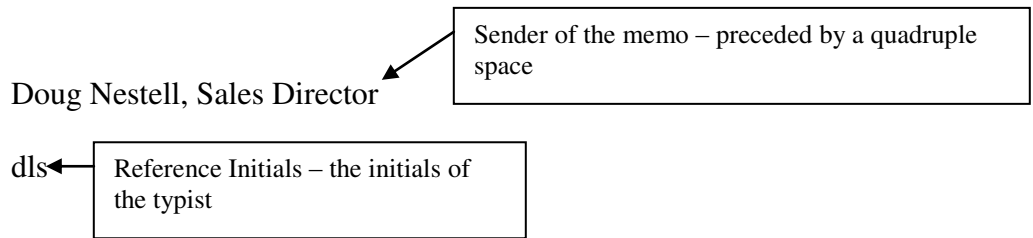
Simplified Memo in Block Style



Some observations seem appropriate now that the laying of wiring and conduits for Phase I of the Timber Creek site is being finalized. It is my understanding that a high percentage of Timber Creek residents likely will be first-time home buyers.

Cost will be an important criterion; but on the basis of our previous experience with this type of development, other factors should be considered. Our model homes should reflect today’s informal life-style. The use of a great room rather than both a family room and a living room is one way to reduce costs. Also, since both the husband and wife in most homes will work outside the home, there should be two-car garages. We have also found that many people like the option of leaving certain areas unfinished; these can be finished later as the family grows and as finance permit.

I shall be happy to meet with you to discuss these concerns.



Personal Business Letters

Block Style with Open Punctuation

Date – Always type out in full. Top margin varies depending on the length of the letter. For the purpose of this

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Home Care Nursing, P.C.
6807 Crestridge Drive
Hopkins, MN 55343-1921

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Body – SS with a DS between paragraphs.

Sincerely yours

Closing

Signature Block – Name appears a QS below the closing.

Denise L. Schulz
259 West Ottawa Avenue
Dousman, WI 53118

Enclosure

Enclosure Notation – included if another item(s) is being sent along with the letter.

c: John Smith

Copy Notation – included if a copy of the letter is being sent to someone other than the stated recipient.

*Note: Reference initials are generally not keyed on a PBL. The assumption is that the person typing the letter is the one writing it as well.

Personal Business Letters

Modified-Block Style with Mixed Punctuation

259 West Ottawa Avenue
Dousman, WI 53118
August 24, 2010

Ms. Kathryn M. Amsbury
Home Care Nursing, P.C.
6807 Crestridge Drive
Hopkins, MN 55343-1921

Dear Ms. Amsbury:

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Sincerely yours,

Denise L. Schulz

Enclosure

c: John Smith