

Orange Level Strategies

Note: These reference guides do not take the place of assignment guidelines



Strategies for Establishing and Strengthening Cooperative Relationships

The Orange Level Strategies establish and strengthen the relationship between you and the reader. These strategies show readers that they are valued in the communication process and help establish a positive relationship between both parties. They are an essential component of successful communication.

Use Goodwill-Building Techniques

Goodwill-building techniques establish communicators as caring and empathetic individuals, show respect to readers, and increase the likelihood of successful communications, both now and in the future. There are three main methods of goodwill-building: giving thanks, acknowledging the reader's role, and acknowledging any obstacles the reader faces.

Giving Thanks

Giving thanks is a simple and effective way to build goodwill with readers. A simple and generic thanks is an effective way to build goodwill; however, the most effective method to give thanks is to directly acknowledge the reader's specific role in the exchange.

No Goodwill: "Your order will be shipped."

Goodwill through Generic Thanks: "Thank you for your purchase; your broom will be shipped."

Goodwill through Direct Acknowledgement and Thanks: "Thank you for your purchase and continued support of our company. We will ship your Nimbus 2000 immediately."

Acknowledging the Reader's Role

Acknowledging a reader's role in an exchange often goes beyond giving thanks. By congratulating others on their successes, hard work, and perseverance, readers feel supported and validated. The more specific the acknowledgement, the more goodwill is built.

Non-Specific Acknowledgement: "Good job out there."

Specific Acknowledgement: "You really gave it your all at the intercompany Quidditch match. Without your final goal, we would never have won the game. Great job!"

Acknowledging Any Obstacles the Reader Faces

Acknowledging obstacles shows that you recognize the difficulties your readers are facing and empathize with their struggles to overcome these difficulties. Even though you may not be able to remove the reader's obstacles, by showing that you understand their situation, you build goodwill. Furthermore, by offering assistance, you can build additional goodwill.

Lack of Empathy: "The product has been shipped."

Empathy through Acknowledgement: "We understand your frustration with the shipping process. According to our records, the Nimbus 2000 will arrive shortly."

Empathy through Acknowledgement and an Offering Assistance: "We understand your frustration with the shipping process. According to our records, the Nimbus 2000 will arrive in two-three days. If there is anything else we can do to help, feel free to contact us."

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Emphasize Reader Benefits

Emphasizing reader benefits answers the reader's primary question: "how does this affect me?" These strategies assist you in crafting your message so that readers immediately understand the specific impact your communication will have on them. There are many types of benefits for readers, and it is important to recognize them before and during the writing process.

Intrinsic Benefits

Intrinsic benefits are benefits that arise naturally from the communication or exchange. These benefits are a consequence of the exchange and cannot be separated from it. Intrinsic benefits can either directly or indirectly benefit readers.

Direct Benefits

Direct benefits are the most powerful and influential benefits to readers. These benefits directly relate to the reader in some way, such as by teaching a new skill, offering increased income potential, or giving the opportunity to network and make connections. Discovering and emphasizing these benefits is one of the most effective methods to create value for a reader.

Direct Benefits: *"The Nimbus 2000 is the fastest broom in the world. With it, no other player on the Quidditch field will catch you, almost guaranteeing that you will catch the snitch."*

Indirect Benefits

Indirect benefits are benefits that impact a reader's company, group, family, neighborhood, or some other entity related to the reader. Because indirect benefits affect whole groups, these benefits are likely to also benefit members of those groups. Emphasizing indirect benefits is a great way to appeal to your reader when they are not directly impacted by your communication or exchange.

Indirect Benefits: *"Even though the team could not afford to buy everyone Nimbus 2000s, by buying one for the seeker, we are giving our team a major advantage on the field."*

Extrinsic Benefits

Extrinsic benefits are benefits that don't arise from the exchange or communication itself but instead occur in addition to the benefits inherent to the exchange. These benefits can be strategically added to relate to the initial exchange, or they may be unrelated. Adding extrinsic benefits is an effective method for creating value for readers when the intrinsic benefits of the exchange have little appeal, making those benefits more attractive: loyalty cards, offering food, and prize raffles are all examples of extrinsic rewards.

Directly Related Extrinsic Benefits: *"If you buy three or more Nimbus 2000s, you will be entered into a raffle for a chance to win a set of Quidditch balls that have been autographed by a world-class player!"*

Indirectly Related Extrinsic Benefits: *"In addition to high performance broomsticks, we also offer a wide variety of Quidditch uniform gear—and all uniform purchases come with a money-back guarantee!"*

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Write with a Positive Emphasis

Writing with a positive emphasis is a powerful tool to gain the approval of your audience, because this strategy emphasizes the positive, or desirable, elements of your communications while deemphasizing the negatives. Using positive emphasis is not a tool to deceive or manipulate an audience; instead, it is a rhetorical strategy that encourages the effective and ethical use of tone to encourage readers to relate to your communication.

Rephrasing Negatives into Neutrals

Negative words should be avoided in professional communications, as they often misconstrue or overemphasize failures or problems. Most negative statements can be rephrased into neutral statements through revised word choice.

Negative Emphasis: *“The Nimbus 2000’s new marketing initiative has been a complete failure.”*

Neutral Emphasis: *“The Nimbus 2000’s new marketing initiative still has room to develop.”*

Watch for Less Obvious or Implied Negatives

Negatives are not always overt; instead, they can be subtle and/or implied. It is important for communicators to not fall into unconscious judgements and to eliminate them when found.

Implied Negative: *“Mary was chosen to explain the benefits of the Nimbus 2000 because she is the best flyer in the company.”*

Implied Neutral: *“Mary was chosen to explain the benefits of the Nimbus 2000 because she has four years of experience with the broom.”*

*Saying that Mary is “the best” implies that everyone else struggles with flying or is worse than Mary. By instead focusing specifically on Mary’s qualifications, there is no implication that her coworkers are less skilled or experienced than she is.

Implied Negative: *“There is only one thing wrong with your flying style, specifically your descent.”*

Implied Positive: *“Your ascent and form on your broomstick are both really strong, so let’s review your techniques for descending.”*

*Even though the first sentence states that “only a few things” are wrong, the focus on the “wrong” skills suggests an overall failure by the flyer. By first acknowledging the flyer’s skills, the second sentence simply makes focusing on descending the obvious choice due to the flyer’s current skill set.

Rephrasing Neutrals into Positives

Neutral statements are statements that hold little or no bias. These statements are an excellent way to reword negative statements, but they are also not compelling for the reader. When possible, it is helpful to restate neutral statements as positives.

Neutral Emphasis: *“The Nimbus 2000’s value has moved slightly over the last decade.”*

Positive Emphasis: *“The Nimbus 2000’s value has slowly grown over the last decade.”*

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Using Verbs Strategically

Verb choice can be used to strategically convey and alter the meaning of sentences. Verbs like will/would, can/could, may/might can all be used to emphasize and deemphasize parts of your writing. There are no set rules for strategic verb use; rather, it depends on your meaning and style. Below are just a few examples of the ways in which verb choice can affect a sentence's overall meaning.

Implied Possibility: "The CEO **would** like to attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight."

Implied Definite: "The CEO **will** attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight."

Implied Ability to Comply: "The CEO **can** attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight."

Implied Conditional Compliance: "The CEO **could** attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight if we can close this sale by 3 o'clock."

Implied Chance of Success: "The CEO **may** attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight."

Implied Slight Chance of Success: "The CEO **might** attend the Nimbus 2001's release party tonight."

Write with a Reader-Based Emphasis

Writing with a reader-based emphasis is a set of strategies that establishes the reader as the focus of the communication. By focusing on the reader, you show that you and the reader are co-participants in the communication and the reader is a valued and essential component of the exchange.

Phrase Sentences with the Reader as the Main Focus

Making the reader the focus of your communication allows you to focus your writing on your specific goal and to inform or persuade the reader to act toward that goal.

No Reader Focus: "A catered reception will be available after the release of the Nimbus 2001."

Reader Focus: "You are invited to attend a catered reception following the release of the Nimbus 2001."

Refer to the Audience's Concerns Specifically

Referring to the audience's concerns both addresses the audience's purpose for engaging with you as a communicator and focuses your writing on the aspects of the communication that the audience will find most important or relevant.

Does not Address the Audience's Specific Concern: "Your concern is noted."

Addresses the Audience's Specific Concern: "Your concern about the Nimbus 2001's performance is valued."

Protect the Audience's Ego in Negative Situations by Avoiding "You"

Similar to keeping a positive emphasis, strategically using "you" to emphasize good situations can engage readers with the exchange on a personal level, building rapport with you as the communicator. However, this can be inverted to deemphasize negative situations by avoiding "you," thereby protecting the reader from feeling directly blamed.

Does Not Avoid "You": "We lost the client because you misfiled the Nimbus 2001's paperwork."

Avoids "You": "The Nimbus 2001 client was lost due to misfiled paperwork."