

Sample Student Work (have signed permission from two enthusiastic students)

Acknowledgement to Oge Anoliefoh and Vicky Tsui for their generosity and enthusiasm for business communication in sharing their first written business communication assignments written in the first term of the first year of their studies at the British Columbia Institute of Technology. I hope you will appreciate their excellent, thoughtful work as much as I do.

Workplace Communication Document Provided by Oge Anoliefoh

store operations **BC LIQUORSTORES**
t 604. [REDACTED] f 604. [REDACTED]

Date: July 26, 2010
To All Store Managers, Assistant Managers, and Store Staff
From: [REDACTED] Director Store Operations
Subject: Safety Footwear – Clause 13.3

Under the new signing of the Master Agreement (April 30, 2010), footwear allowance claims can only be reimbursed **once every 2 years** for all employees.

Effective April 30, 2010, the 15th Retail Stores & Warehouse Component Agreement, Clause 13.3 Safety Footwear states:

Where employees are required by the Workers Compensation Board Regulations or by the Employer to wear safety toed footwear in the performance of their regular duties, upon production of a receipt, employees will be reimbursed, **every 2 years**, on the following basis:

Regular employees and auxiliaries who have worked 1827 hours in a 15-month period, up to:

\$131.00 effective March 29, 2009

Auxiliary employees who have worked in excess of 210 hours, up to:

\$65.50 effective March 29, 2009

Part-time regulars shall be prorated.

For those employees who have purchased footwear in 2010, another claim **cannot** be made until 2012.

For those employees who have purchased footwear over 1 year ago, another claim can be submitted, with future claims eligible every 2 years thereafter.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
cc: Area Managers [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Manager Store Operations
[REDACTED] Director, Human Resources
[REDACTED] Manager Occupational Health & Safety

Final Workplace Writing Memorandum Analysis

Prepared by Oge Anoliefoh

This example of a workplace memorandum was found posted on a bulletin board in the lunchroom at a BC Signature Liquor Store. It contains information about the reimbursement of safety footwear allowance claims.

The memo uses the correct memo format by including

- headings (date, to, from, subject)
- names (blacked out) with respective job titles (Store Managers, Assistant Managers, Store Staff)
- a signature at the end (blacked out)
- copy notation (cc: Area Managers)

Since this is an internal message, and not a formal letter, addresses and a salutation are not used. However, because the memo was circulated to all BC Liquor Stores from the Store Operations office, a letter heading was used which includes a telephone and fax number (partially blacked out). I am assuming the phone and fax numbers are for the Store Operations office.

The writer is a specific person who is the Director of Store Operations and the subject is stated as Safety Footwear – Clause 13.3. The subject also includes the clause this memo is written from and only store employees may be familiar with it. The subject does not include an indication of the type of message but it gives you a clear purpose of what this memo is about (safety footwear). The main purpose of this memo is to let the readers know that their required footwear entitles them to a reimbursement every two years with a receipt as proof of purchase.

The memo is very straight forward. Each paragraph begins at the left-hand side with no indents. The first sentence states the main purpose of the message (footwear allowance claims can only be reimbursed once every 2 years). “Once every 2 years” is underlined and set in bold to emphasize the importance of this statement. “Every 2 years” is repeated and underlined again in the body of the memo, therefore it must be an important piece of information; an action the reader can repeat only every two years. There are dates indicating when the information in this memo is effective. The main body of the text is set in bold and has a box framed around it. Included is a short list directed to specific readers with full sentence headings. This is effective for highlighting essential information so that if the readers read nothing but the box enclosed text they will still get the main purpose of the message. This is a very effective example of at-a-glance understanding.

Short paragraphs, key phrases “2 years”, bold, underlined and boxed text are all features used to enhance the retention of this letter. At the end it has been indicated that a courtesy copy has been sent to other readers who have a higher status than the original readers (cc: Area Managers, Manager of Store Operations, Director of Human Resources and Manager of Occupational Health and Safety). They are probably the employers who need to ensure that this document is viewed by all employees indicated as the readers.

I found it interesting that the union agreement's name, number and clause number (15th Retail Stores and Warehouse Component Agreement, Clause 13.3 Safety Footwear) are included in this message. Is it really necessary to state that it is the 15th agreement and include the clause number? I understand that it is probably important to know your union agreement inside and out, but who really does? I think that this memo would have been just as effective if that information was not included. It is understandable that it is important to include the date that this agreement became effective, so maybe the writer of this letter felt it necessary to include the certified name of the union agreement to make it more seem more "official".

This example of workplace writing is great because it utilizes all of the features of workplace writing. It shows how different added features, in this case box enclosed text and the key phrase "every 2 years", can be used to highlight essential information so the reader doesn't necessarily need to read the entire memo. However, a few things could have been eliminated to enhance its simplicity. The Director of Store Operations did a fabulous job of workplace writing.

Analysis of Recycling Sign

Prepared by Vicky Tsui

This example of workplace writing is found in the form of a recycling notice taped to the covering of a blue recycle box in the Great Hall at the Burnaby BCIT campus. The notice prompts the dutiful student body to place the appropriately marked items inside the box, as well as required treatment of the recycled product prior to depositing it into the bin.

The reader of this recycle notice ranges from students, staff, to visitors at BCIT. The purpose is to ask the reader to rinse out any containers prior to placing them into the recycle receptacle as well as to discourage the use of the blue boxes to recycle refundables or food waste. The reader is not directly commanded to recycle, however, users are prompt to follow certain rules (i.e. rinse and check the recycle number on the container) before engaging in the act of recycling using the specified blue box. There are no explicit references as to who should be following these instructions, such as the use of “you”. However, the message is implicitly intended for anyone who plans to recycle using the blue box. This notice demonstrates an important element of workplace writing in that it does well to focus on the specific reader and conveys specific action it wishes the reader to take after seeing it.

The instructions are easy to understand and additional information, concerning the type of container that the blue recycling box accepts, is provided in the form of text and illustrations. The main recyclables are listed in text while other materials, as denoted by the numbered recycling symbols, are included as visuals on the notice. These visuals comprise of a “list” of appropriate containers that the reader can recycle. However, the symbols may not be intuitive as to what materials they represent. Furthermore, what if a container is not labeled with any of the recycling symbols nor does it fall under the material categories listed in the text (i.e. plastic, tin cans, or glass)? It would be ambiguous if the item could still be recycled using the blue recycling box. An explicit reference of each recycling symbol may have been omitted because it would clutter the notice and the technical terms for certain plastics may not be understood by everyone. In comparison to an effective piece of workplace writing, this notice lacks supporting information (i.e. a brief list of categorical headings accompanying the numbered recycling symbols) or reference to external information to address further inquiries.

This example of workplace writing balances the amount of white space with text and pictures. It is a note to be quickly read and understood by its audience, so it does not follow any formal structure. The use of pictures and bold symbols help the reader identify which containers could be appropriately deposited into the blue recycling boxes. Also, incorporating pictures of the different types of blue recycling boxes to which this notice applies, helps the reader identify other blue recycling boxes present around campus and the appropriate actions to take while utilizing a different blue recycling box. The use of red, capitalized text highlights the point and catches the reader’s attention immediately and prompts them to follow the instruction.

In conclusion, my example employs various features of workplace writing. It focuses on the reader by stating what exact actions the reader should take after reading it. The message is concise and delivered in several short sentences. The placement of capitalized text and colourful visuals on a white background grabs the reader’s attention and allows them to understand the instruction at a glance. This example is accompanied by a secondary label that emphasizes the

appropriate usage, with more pictures, of the blue recycling box. The notice also refers to objects that should not be placed within the receptacle. However, the only element lacking on this recycling notice is the warnings or consequences of misusing the recycling box. Perhaps including a brief note listing other inappropriate objects that are commonly misplaced into the box could also be helpful? How else can the public find out where they may recycle a container if it is not adequately labeled?