

TO: Mrs. Leslie Mateer
FROM: Lia DeStio
DATE: March 30, 2009
SUBJECT: Business Messages Rhetorical Analysis

Dear Mrs. Mateer:

This memo will provide a rhetorical analysis for the four attached business messages. Each letter serves as an example for a different kind of business communication: a persuasive request for action, a positive message, a negative message, and an offer acceptance. Although all four messages are used to convey information, different strategies are applied in each to deliver the message in the most appropriate method. All situations described in the messages are fictitious, but represent typical business situations an economics major might face after graduation.

Persuasive Request for Action

The persuasive message asks Ketchum, a Pittsburgh-based public relations firm, to consider representing PNC Bank to the media during its acquisition of National City Corporation. The PNC and National City merger has created tension in the Pittsburgh area because the markets overlap, creating a need for 5,200 layoffs before 2010. PNC is interested in hiring Ketchum to create a positive atmosphere in the media and in the community about the conversion.

This proposed partnership is a persuasive request for action, so it utilizes the AIDA approach to prepare an organized and compelling argument. The letter uses a four paragraph structure, one for each part of the AIDA approach. The first paragraph focuses on attention. The opening sentence of the letter expresses PNC's dire need for an experienced and reliable public relations firm like Ketchum and establishes common ground by mentioning that both companies were founded in Pittsburgh before growing to the national level. The second paragraph demonstrates interest by explaining the relevance of the partnership and the importance of communicating effectively with PNC's customers. Desire is promoted in the third paragraph, where the writer explains how this partnership will benefit Ketchum. This paragraph also mentions a recent award Ketchum received as an accolade of their qualifications. Finally, the letter closes with a request for action, demonstrating the timely need for moving forward with this partnership.

As with most persuasive messages, the letter utilizes an indirect approach, which is demonstrated through the AIDA model. The indirect approach is necessary because Ketchum may be initially hesitant to take on PNC as a client because of the current attitude towards PNC in the Pittsburgh area. If potential customers see Ketchum as taking on an irresponsible and unprofessional client, Ketchum could potentially lose future accounts. Therefore, the letter attempts to assure Ketchum that PNC is acting responsibly and that Ketchum has the ability to change local attitudes towards the bank. Additionally, the letter balances logical and emotional appeals in order to persuade the recipient to engage in the process and form the proposed partnership.

Positive Message

This positive message informs a PNC customer that he has been approved for a low interest credit card. This routine reply is delivering good news, so it begins with the main idea through a direct approach. The first sentence of the letter informs the recipient that he has been approved for the card. Directly after the news has been delivered, the letter provides necessary details, such as the credit limit on the card, the wide array of businesses accepting the card, and the high caliber customer service. The letter devotes an entire paragraph to security, an extremely important issue to credit card holders. The message assures the cardholder that he is equipped with the most reliable and secure card on the market.

After delivering the good news, PNC has the opportunity to engage in resale. Since PNC assumes that the customer will be happy to hear the news and satisfied with the product, this creates the perfect opportunity to cross-sell another product related to the card. In this situation, PNC also provides a credit monitoring service to help the recipient maintain or improve his credit score.

The message ends with a courteous close, encouraging the customer to contact customer service if he requires any assistance. The close is also personalized as the recipient is addressed by name and congratulated again for receiving the credit card. Finally, PNC thanks the recipient for his business and encourages him to select PNC again for future banking needs.

Negative Message

This letter regretfully informs the recipient that her checking account has been suspended because of an overdraft. The message goes on to inform the customer that she needs to contact customer service to reactivate her account and reset her PIN number.

Even though this is a negative message, it follows a direct approach because this is a fairly common mistake and not incredibly serious. Therefore, the letter opens with the bad news and briefly explains the situation. However, there is good news tied to the negative message. An overdraft fee is automatically applied to all overdrawn accounts, but because this is the customer's first offense, PNC is happy to provide a courtesy refund when she calls to reactivate her account. This good news is emphasized in the top half of the letter.

Since the customer is feeling more positive after receiving the good news, there is an opportunity for PNC to utilize resale in the third paragraph. The bank offers an overdraft protection service that would prevent the recipient from having this problem again. The paragraph goes on to explain how the service works and how the recipient could benefit from the program.

Finally, the letter closes with a positive message by thanking the recipient for her commitment to the bank and encourages her to continue to use PNC for her banking services. Also, PNC reiterates the availability of customer service representatives to take care of any additional concerns she might have.

Offer Acceptance

The final message is an offer acceptance letter that a graduate with an economics degree could potentially send to a future employer. The letter begins by graciously thanking the manager for extending the offer and then formally accepts the position within the first paragraph. This direct approach tells the manager that the future employee is confident about her acceptance and is excited to join the company.

The second paragraph reiterates the candidate's qualifications for the position. This reassures the manager that he made the correct decision in hiring a qualified and responsible candidate. The candidate also states that she will thoroughly review written materials so she can enter the workplace and immediately become productive.

The letter goes on to specifically discuss the training program because the candidate knew it was especially important to the manager. This section of the letter uses bank specific jargon, but it is appropriate in this situation because both the candidate and the manager are very familiar with the terminology.

The letter ends with a courteous close and a respectful request for action. The candidate would like to receive some additional information about products to prepare herself for the workplace. However, the candidate understands that the manager is busy, so she also offers to pick up the materials if it might be more convenient. Finally, she reiterates her appreciation for the offer and her excitement to join the company during the summer.

Even though all four of these messages convey different points, they are similar in that they consider the specific audience and his or her position on the matter. After the audience's position is taken into consideration, the writer then evaluated whether a direct or indirect approach would be more appropriate. Then, the writer structured the message accordingly with the most important information supported by details and explanations. Finally, all of the messages end with a courteous close and a respectful request for action when appropriate. Additionally, all of the messages utilize a personal but professional tone and address the recipient by name in the body where appropriate.

Sincerely,

Lia DeStio

Lia DeStio
PNC Financial Services Group
249 5th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Lorraine Thelian, Senior Partner
Ketchum
6 PPG Place
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

March 30, 2009

Dear Ms. Thelian:

As PNC begins its integration of National City, making it the fifth largest bank in the nation, we are in dire need of an experienced and reliable public relations firm to negotiate the transition. As two companies founded in the Pittsburgh area, we certainly know the importance of growing business on a global level while continuing to steward and grow our local community. We believe that Ketchum is poised to do exactly that – provide the bank with superior media relations and internal communications during this hectic time.

Even though your offices now span the globe, Ketchum's roots in Pittsburgh enable you to understand the core mission of this acquisition. We want to provide current PNC customers and new National City customers with a seamless transition, as well as reassure National City's clients that they are not losing the superior customer service and banking products they received at their community bank. Even though PNC has stepped from a regional to a national bank, our commitment to customer service is unwavering, and we will continue to provide the same excellent services to our current and new customers.

Ketchum will play a vital role in this process. Through a strategic combination of your skilled professionals and our in-house communication staff, we are certain that we can successfully communicate this mission to the Pittsburgh community. In addition, your recent Silver Anvil award is a great testament to the quality of your PR programs, and makes us very excited about the potential of working together on this campaign.

At your earliest convenience, please send me your rate quotes and summary of services. If you could also send a brief history of your partnerships with clients in the financial sector, I would greatly appreciate it. Lorraine, thank you for your time, and I'm looking forward to speaking with you in person.

Sincerely,

Lia DeStio

Lia DeStio
PNC Financial Services Group
249 5th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Frederick Hatcher
1026 Allegheny Highway
Pittsburgh, PA 15116

March 30, 2009

Dear Mr. Hatcher:

PNC is pleased to inform you that you've been approved for a low interest credit card with a credit limit of \$4,200. PNC credit cards are accepted everywhere Visa is accepted, which includes more restaurants, shops, and businesses than any other credit card in the world. PNC and Visa credit cards are also widely known for their reliability and top-notch customer service, so wherever you are, PNC and Visa customer service representatives are on-call to help you with your personal credit needs.

PNC also means security. Your credit card is equipped with the most stringent identity theft protection available, so you can remain assured that purchases made with your credit card in-store, online, or over the phone are secure. PNC will alert you if your account incurs any suspicious activity to ensure that only your charges are credited to your account.

As you begin to use this line of credit, we hope that you will consider how your credit card use affects your credit score. PNC offers an excellent credit monitoring service that updates you monthly on adjustments to your credit score and offers personalized tips to maximize your score without limiting the use of your credit. Many of our customers rely on this service to maintain their credit scores and ensure that they receive the best rates and terms for future credit cards, loans, and mortgages. Maintaining your already excellent credit score is important to PNC, and we hope to help you continue to manage your credit responsibly. If you are interested in utilizing this service, please call the customer service number on the back of your card.

If you have any questions about your new card, please feel free to contact our customer service representatives who are waiting to assist you with all of your credit needs. Again, congratulations on your new line of credit, Frederick, and thank you for choosing PNC Bank!

Sincerely,

Lia DeStio

Lia DeStio
PNC Financial Services Group
249 5th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Sherri Goodman
561 Westward Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

March 30, 2009

Dear Ms. Goodman:

I regret to inform you that your account has been suspended because of a recent ATM withdrawal that overdrawn your checking account in the amount of \$54.62. In order to continue using your account, you will need to call our customer service department at 1-888-PNC-BANK to reactivate the account and reset your PIN number.

Because your account was overdrawn, a fee of \$31.00 will automatically be applied to your balance. However, since this is your first overdraw, please mention Courtesy Refund #6652 when you call the customer service number above to reactivate your account, and PNC will be happy to refund this fee. The representative will remove this charge from your account and assist you with any other checking account services you may need.

In order to prevent this from occurring again, we suggest that you consider purchasing PNC Overdraft Protection. For a small monthly fee, you can prevent your checking account balance from dipping below zero. This product will deny your ATM card for any purchases or withdrawals that would overdraw your account. In addition, it provides you with emergency alerts to your e-mail or cell phone when your account balance reaches a pre-set amount. This will give you adequate time to replenish your account before incurring a purchase denial.

Sherri, we appreciate your commitment to PNC Bank, and we hope you continue to bank with us. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to call our customer service representatives who are able to help you out with anything you might need.

Sincerely,

Lia DeStio

Lia DeStio
120 Lakeside Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15238

Frank Taucher
PNC Financial Services Group
249 5th Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

March 30, 2009

Dear Mr. Taucher:

Thank you very much for extending me an offer to join your team as a Treasury Management Analyst in July 2009. I am very pleased to formally accept this offer and very much look forward to learning from you and the rest of the department upon my arrival this summer.

My internship in Baltimore's Treasury Management department has given me a broad understanding of how TM products and services benefit different types of clients, and I am excited to learn about Pittsburgh's market and client portfolio. I will be sure to thoroughly review the product information I received this past summer so I am fully prepared to enter your team as a valuable asset.

I am also really looking forward to the analyst training program. PNC is the only company I have encountered that provides such a comprehensive and challenging program for its new employees. I very much appreciate your willingness to sponsor me through CORE, and I fully intend to take advantage of every training and professional development opportunity offered through the program.

If you get a moment, would you mind sending me product sheets specific to the Pittsburgh market? I would like to familiarize myself with the regional products and services before I arrive for my first day. If it is more convenient, I can stop in after my graduation in mid-May to pick them up myself.

Again, thank you very much for the employment offer, and I am very excited to be working for you this summer.

Sincerely,

Lia DeStio