Target your Audience
Writing Purpose Statements

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TCO 341

What is the Problem?

Reader doesn't understand why he/she should be reading this

What is the solution?

Clarify the purpose of your writing

Technique

Use 3-part purpose-statement guideline:
1. *Fact A/B statement – ideal vs. problem*
2. *Your role*
3. *Purpose of the document*

Writing a purpose statement is an *important act of communication.*

It requires you to determine the *rationale* of what you are doing – and *why* are you doing it.

How can you write an effective purpose statement?

Try a guideline that divides it into three parts:

1. A statement of the problem – Fact A/B

2. Your role in solving the problem

3. The purpose of the document

Part 1: Statement of the Problem

- Fact A/B Statements: the ideal vs. the conflict
- A is a fact (ideal); however, B (which conflicts) is a fact (represents actual state).
- "We purchased sixteen new speakers; however, we had only budgeted for twelve and have now experienced a cost overrun."

Part 2: Your role in solving the problem

- In this stage of the problem-solving process, you must write how you have *performed some activity or investigation* to solve the problem or meet some organizational need.

- You must also state your position in the organization, as in

  "…as lead engineer on this project, I have researched this issue…"

Part 3: The Purpose of the Document

- This step involves writing down your purpose and the expected action of the reader.

- "…I recommend that we purchase the E865B modulator and begin installing it right away."

- "…I'm sending you this feasibility study for review concerning purchase of the E865B modulator."

Complete Purpose Statement

- Problem Statement, Your Role, Purpose of Document

- "We stocked the fish pond with 2,000 bass; however, almost 1500 have died. As junior researcher with the Dept of Wildlife, I have investigated this issue. I recommend that we launch a complete clean-up of the pond as soon as possible."

Reflective Thoughts

- What is one of the biggest problems in the workplace today?

- Why are purpose statements considered as part of technical communication or technical writing?

- How do they affect workplace communication?