Bracken Business Communications Clinic

Effective Use of Bullet Points in Business Writing

Business writing must be concise, well organized, and formatted to ensure ease when scanning a document for important information. Bullet points can help business writers organize and emphasize information quickly and effectively. Consider the document's purpose and its intended audience, when deciding how best to convey the information using bullet points or other business formatting.

Effective bullet points rely on strong headings within a document. The effective use of headings signals the type of information your bullet points will cover, helps the reader identify key areas of information, and improves the reader's ability to scan for pertinent topics of interest.

The effective use of bullet points in business writing can help highlight important information, direct the reader to themed lists, and improve a document's overall readability. These simple tips provide a guide for using bullet points successfully in business writing.

The purpose of bullet points:
- Draws attention to important information
- Improves the ability of the reader to scan information easily
- Communicates information efficiently

How to use bullet points:
- Keep bullet pointed information short; each element in the list should be no more than two lines in length.
- Use parallel form when constructing bulleted lists. For example, use the same part of speech to begin each bullet.
- Make all bullet points approximately the same length and ensure that the format is consistent within each list.
- Use a strong heading to group related items together.
- Use the same font and margin width for each bullet point.
- Use periods at the end of each line only if they are complete sentences.

As with any formatting technique, overusing bullet points will detract from the overall goal in writing and formatting a business document. Bullet points should highlight important information only. Use them wisely to emphasize key information within the text.