MEMOS Interoffice Correspondence

Memos (or memorandums) are documents written to people within the writer's organization and are sometimes called "interoffice correspondence." They are generally less formal than letters and reports. Good memos begin with the most important ideas and are clearly and logically organized.

1 Heading—A typical memo contains the following information in the heading:

To:

From:

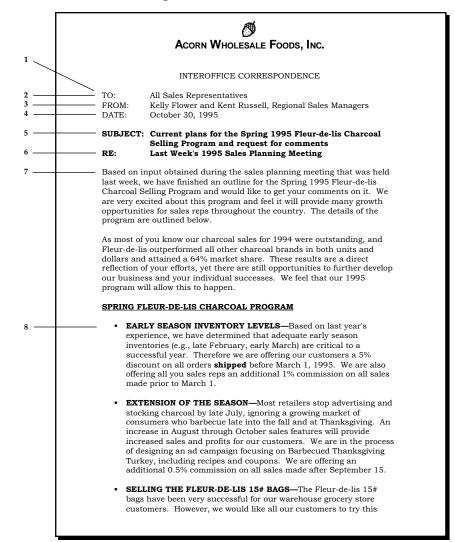
Date:

Subject:

The arrangement of these elements and their placement on the page vary considerably. Some memos insert the *Subject* immediately after the *To*; others place the *date* in that location.

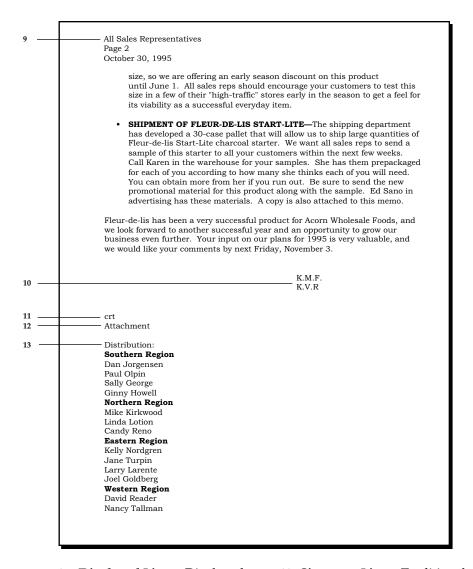
- 2 Receiver line—This line lists the people the memo is to be sent to. If the list is long, it can be included at the end of the memo under a *Courtesy Copy* line or a *Distribution* line.

 Courtesy titles are generally not necessary on a memo.
- 3 Sender line—Some memos omit the *From* line and have a typed name and signature at the bottom instead.
- 4 Date Line—Usually, the date order is month, date, year: July 10, 1995. However, the U.S. Government and many foreign countries place the day before the month: 10 July 1995. Abbreviations are not used.



- 5 **Subject line**—The *Subject* line should be as specific as possible so the reader or readers are clear about the purpose of the memo. Long subject lines are single-spaced and centered.
- 6 Reference Line or Block—The heading may also contain a *Reference* line or block. If the reference is short, it can be placed two lines below the date if the *Date* line is right of center. If the reference is extensive (several lines), it can be placed before or after the *Subject* line.
- 7 Body—The body of the memo is usually single-spaced with a double-space between paragraphs. Paragraphs may be indented or not indented, depending on the preference of the writer or the style preferred by the writer's organization. Headings, lists, and emphasis techniques are useful for organizing the information presented in a memo that is longer than a single page. They also help the reader(s) to quickly find information.

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- Displayed Lists—Displayed lists are indented to give more visual emphasis to the listed items.
- **Headings for Continuation Pages**—Continuation pages begin with a heading that contains the name of the addressee, the page number, and the date. This information can be typed flush left in a block or it can be typed on a single line with spaces between the elements.
- 10 Signature Line—Traditional memos do not have a signature line-the writer's name is given in the heading after *From*. However, some writers prefer to validate their memos with their initials or their whole names. This signature line, with handwritten or typed name/initials, appears two lines below the last line of text.
- 11 Reference Initials—Reference initials in a memo usually are the typist's initials typed in lowercase letters two lines

below the last line of text or below the signature line. They are flush with the left margin. However, if the writer's initials are included, they are in all capitals, followed by a slash or colon, and then followed by the secretary's/typist's initials in lowercase letters. If the writer is different from the person sending the memo, the sender's initials come first, the writer's initials come next, and the typist's initials come last. Colons or slashes can be used to separate the initials.

Attachment notations are not common but can be used to remind readers that one or the reference initials. In some memos with a number of

12 Attachment Notation—

- more items are included. These notations appear directly under attachments, the names of the attachments may be listed after the attachment notation. 13 Courtesy Copy or Distribution
 - **Notation**—Courtesy copy notations, which show the distribution of the memo, appear two lines below the attachment or reference notations and are flush left. Memos that are to be sent to a large number of readers may have a distribution list instead of a courtesy copy list. If a distribution list is used, it generally appears in the heading following To. If the distribution list is used in place of the courtesy copy list at the bottom of the memo, the cc is replaced by Distribution and following Distribution is a list of the names and departments (if appropriate) of the individuals who are to receive the memo.