ChatGPT Part 2: Writing and Editing Business Documents

Business documents help people decide, coordinate and record what was agreed. ChatGPT can draft and polish them quickly, but a fluent text is not always a correct one. Four habits make the result reliable: job, source, voice and edit. Each habit answers one simple question. In this part, Hadeel, an HR coordinator at a training company, shows how it works.

1. Job

A good document starts with a clear job. Before asking ChatGPT to write, we decide what the text must achieve, such as to inform, to request or to confirm. The question is: who will read it, and what should they do? We tell ChatGPT the type of document, the reader and the action we want. A vague request such as improve this gives a vague result. A clear job also lets ChatGPT leave out details the reader does not need.

Example: A volunteer wants to remind members about a meeting. She uses the Job question: who will read it, and what should they do? She asks for a short reminder that tells members to confirm their attendance by Friday.

At work: Hadeel must announce a new training schedule. She uses the Job question: who will read it, and what should they do? She asks for a short notice to all trainers, telling them to confirm their sessions by Thursday.

2. Source

ChatGPT does not know our company's facts, so we give it the facts to use. We paste our own approved notes, dates and names, and we mark anything uncertain as unknown. The question is: which facts are approved, and which are unknown? When we ask for a rewrite, we also say which meaning must not change. If a fact is missing, the draft should show a gap instead of an invented answer. Confidential material is added only when the account and the company rules allow it.

Example: A club treasurer asks for a short update to members. She uses the Source question: which facts are approved, and which are unknown? She pastes the approved balance and marks the date of the next payment as unknown.

At work: Hadeel asks for a summary of a supplier meeting. She uses the Source question: which facts are approved, and which are unknown? She pastes her approved notes and marks the delivery date as unknown, so the summary does not promise one.

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3. Voice

The same facts can sound warm, formal, brief or strict. We describe the voice in plain words and set limits that we can check, such as length, reading level and required sections. The question is: what tone and limits does this reader expect? We also say what must not be added, such as a promise, a reason or a new deadline. A few clear priorities work better than a long list of style rules.

Example: A shop owner writes to a customer about a late order. He uses the Voice question: what tone and limits does this reader expect? He asks for a polite message of three short sentences with no excuses.

At work: Hadeel writes to a client about a changed course date. She uses the Voice question: what tone and limits does this reader expect? She asks for a calm, formal email of one short paragraph that does not blame anyone.

4. Edit

A first draft is only a starting point, and separate editing passes catch more. First we check that the document does its job. Then we compare names, dates and figures with our source. The question is: did the edit keep the meaning? When one part needs work, we ask ChatGPT to change only that part, and we read the changed lines again. The final decision always stays with us.

Example: A student asks ChatGPT to shorten her cover letter. She uses the Edit question: did the edit keep the meaning? She compares both versions and restores one achievement that the shorter text had dropped.

At work: Hadeel asks ChatGPT to tighten her email to the client. She uses the Edit question: did the edit keep the meaning? She checks the new date against her notes and finds that one word made the date sound optional, so she changes it back.

Conclusion

In summary, a good business document is built on four habits. We define the job, supply approved sources, set the voice and the limits, and edit in careful passes. Before every send, the key question is simple: would we be comfortable if the reader acted on every word?

Sources

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