

# memo

To: Pam O'Brien  
From: Benjamin Briggs Brady  
Date: March 2, 2017  
Re: Changing the Business Letter to International English

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I write to you today to discuss the Pro-Tech letter addressed to Antonio Guzman from Frank Sims. I will summarize the article, discuss the changes I made and explain why I made those changes.

## **Summary**

Frank Sims, an employee at Pro-Tech, writes a letter to Antonio Guzman about a merger between their two companies. In the letter, Sims talks about how he wants to meet with Guzman to discuss the merger, the company, and about working with the United States. At the end of the letter, Sims tells Guzman that he will travel to Argentina to meet with him in person and that Sims needs information from Guzman as well.

## **Idioms**

One of the most frequent changes I made was changing Sims' idiomatic language. In his letter, he uses idioms like "drop you a line" and "we've had a spell" when speaking to Guzman. Someone who speaks English as a second language, or E2, will not understand idioms and will become confused when reading them. An E2 audience will read the idioms more literally and not understand the meaning behind them. I removed all of the idioms in the letter and replaced them with their more literal meaning to avoid this potential confusion.

## **Verbs**

Many times in Sims' letter to Guzman, he uses verbs such as, "have" and "had" and words that have "-ing" attached. An E2 audience will have trouble understanding those verbs and the different tenses that go along with them. It is simpler for an E2 audience to understand if the present tense is used throughout the message. I corrected this by eliminating any of those verbs and using the present tense throughout the letter.

## **Abbreviations**

In his letter, Sims uses abbreviations or shortens words followed by a period for an unknown reason. For example, he says "the ins and outs of our department struc., layout, employees, and prod. eff. quotas." Perhaps Sims speaks this way and wanted to convey a certain tone in his writing. These abbreviations and shortened words will confuse an E2 audience because they will not know the full word Sims refers to. To avoid this confusion, I used the full word or I removed the term entirely.

## **Time and Measurements**

Sims also uses the imperial system when referring to the temperature in the United States. In Argentina, and the rest of the world, they use the metric system when talking about

units of measurements, such as temperature. I changed the part where Sims says “in the low 80s today” to 27 degrees Celsius. This way, Guzman and other E2 audience can understand the temperature Sims refers to. Also, Sims uses the United States format for dates and time. In Argentina, they format dates – month, day, year – so I changed the date at the top of his letter to fit that format. When Sims says, “say, 1:00-1:30” I changed that to the 24-hour system that Argentina uses, to 13:00-13:30. I also changed his header and address header to Guzman to match the format that Argentinians use.

### **Small Talk**

Sims does not take the time to discuss small talk with Guzman at the beginning of Sims’ letter. Small talk before talking about business is customary in Argentina, and Sims does not include this in his letter. I added a small section of small talk to act polite to Guzman and respect the customs of his culture.

Frank Sims  
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01742 Concord Massachusetts  
United States of America  
Protech.com  
(1) 97 8534-2756

9 Mayo 2012

Antonio Guzman  
Canderas  
Mercedes 1067  
C1001AAT Buenos Aires  
Argentina  
(54) 11 4018 2100

Querido Señor Guzman:

I hope your family and friends are healthy. My wife and children are healthy. The weather is colder in Argentina. The weather in the United States is good. The temperature is 27 degrees here.

I am happy to hear that our Pro-Tech products sell in Argentina. Your presentation about the Smartboard T-C impressed many people. You impressed many people with your operations and your company. I enjoy the new company name, Pro-Tech International. I will help you with anything you need

I wanted to talk to you before the merger of our two companies occurs. I wanted to talk to you about our company and about work in the United States.

I will send you an email with the information about our company and our employees. This information will explain the company, the employees, and the product. From this information, I hope you will understand how to improve our company. I want to meet you in person to talk about the merger of our two companies. I want to have the information about your company.

I will travel to Argentina next month, so I hope we can schedule a meeting then. I want to speak with you before I leave for Argentina. Could we speak 17 May at 13:00? You can call me on the telephone at (+1) 97 8534-2756

Thank you for reading this letter. I will speak with you soon.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Sims". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Frank" and "Sims" being capitalized and prominent.

Frank Sims