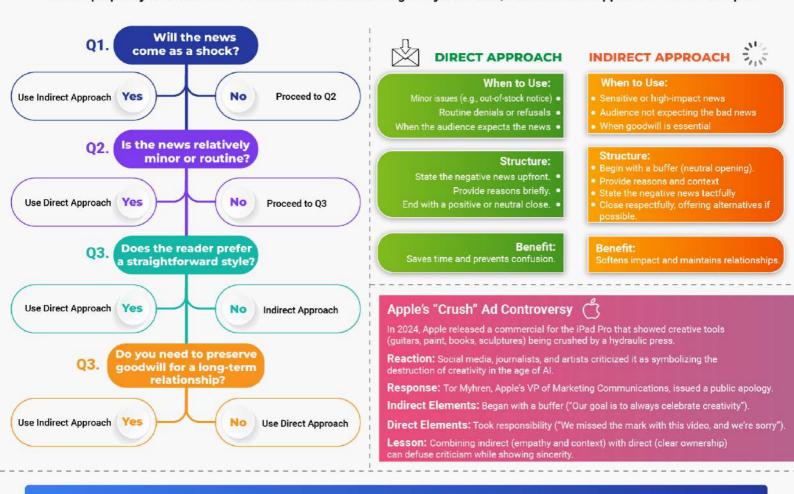
Direct vs. Indirect Approaches for Negative Messages

Choosing the right strategy can preserve trust, reduce conflict, and protect relationships in business communication.

Delivering negative news is one of the toughest challenges in business communication. Should you state the bad news up front—or prepare your audience first? Use this decision tree to guide your choice, and learn from Apple's real-world example.



How to Deliver Negative Messages Effectively

- Use empathetic, bias-free language to avoid sounding accusatory.
 If using the direct approach, keep tone respectful and constructive.
- If using the indirect approach, make sure the buffer is genuine—not misleading. Whenever possible, offer alternatives or solutions to reduce the sting of bad news.
- Proofread carefully even small errors look careless in sensitive situations.



Business Communication Today, 16th Edition. See Chapter 9, Writing Negative Messages. **Key Insight:** Business Communication Today, 16th Edition, equips students to choose between direct and indirect approaches with confidence. By learning how to balance honesty, empathy, and strategy, they gain the tools to deliver difficult news while preserving trust and strengthening professional relationships.

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