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**Be Concise**

**By Dr. Donald E. Wetmore**

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Concision. (Sounds like I made up another word.) It's the idea of being concise in our ongoing communication with others, both written and oral.

Many take forever to say so little. These are the same people who spend a lot of time in meetings. Some who may have little to say use lots of words to say what could be said in a few words. It is boring. It wastes time. It reduces productivity. Theirs and yours.

I do not suggest that all of our communications ought to be reduced to one or two words. There ought to be time in the workplace for idle chat. It leads to relationship building and a better quality of life. However, it is sometimes more productive to simply say "blah" rather than "blah, blah, blah".

As a practical matter, it is becoming more and more important to be concise as we drown in this era of information overload. We get more information impressions in one day than our great-grandparents 100 years ago got in a lifetime. Think about it. 100 years ago, you may have looked a seed catalog, a shared newspaper, and an occasional book, if you owned one. Today, we have information coming at us from all directions.

The average working businessperson receives, on average, 150 new communications each day via telephone, voicemail, mail, fax, and email. When email became available a few years ago, it was supposed to take the place of a lot of other communications, including first class mail. The truth is, all other forms of communication have held their volume (or even increased) and we now have email to deal with on top of it all.

Want to be more concise in your communications and save time? Here are two suggestions.

Think before you communicate. Before you make that call or meet with someone, think out what you how hope to accomplish. A lot of extended, unnecessary communication is in search of a purpose of

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the communication in the first place. When you know what you are trying to accomplish, when you achieve, it is over and you can move on.

Practice. When you write an email to someone, look it over before you send it. See if you can say what you need to say in fewer words. I use this technique in a communications class I teach for MBA students. I ask them to write a five–page paper. They submit it, I return it, and ask they re–write the paper in four pages, but cover all the essential points from the five page paper. They later re–write the same paper as a three, two, and one page paper. Each must contain all that was covered in the original five–page work. It's a tough assignment but with practice, they get better at saying more with fewer words. You can too. If you write something, re–write it several times, each time making it shorter than the previous attempt. The more you practice, the better you'll get.

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## **Optimizing for Visitors not Search Engines**

**By Michael Medeiros**

Most people feel that optimizing is to target the search engines alone. In my opinion, this is not the only case. Optimization requires a balance of traffic enhancements and a user friendly atmosphere that provides clear navigation. Most will agree it would be much better to have people accept offerings from a Site, rather than masses of people who do nothing. Here are some general tips and thought to make pages user–friendly.

Focus on the Offerings

Is something being offered? Make it clear for people to see what is being offered. Give an eye catching call to action for your offers. For example, if you're a Real Estate Agent offering, "Free CMA's," make it clear for people to see the offer. Use font styles or colors to give the offers prominence over the rest of the text. Give links to offers a focal point on the page. This can be done by centering the offers or putting them on top of menus.

Keep your pages concise. Many search engine optimization programs and professionals suggest keeping your pages under 750 words. In my opinion, this is good for visitor optimization as well. Focus

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your page on the topic at hand. As in the example above, if someone clicks a link that reads, "Free CMA," the next page should be about free CMA's. Don't waste valuable space describing a CMA. Give a concise explanation, and then a call to action.

### Keep your pages fast

In addition to pages loading fast, they should be fast at delivering information. Consider why people are surfing the Internet. In my opinion, the internet is used for finding and retrieving information. Because of this, pages need to be concise. If I follow a link that says, "Available widgets," that's what I want to see on the next page, front and center. I want to find the information I am looking for quickly and easily.

Don't overcrowd the sub-pages. While your front page is bound to have a variety of topics and links, your sub-pages should be concise. I often come across pages that focus on several topics. In my opinion this is a bad technique. Make two pages instead of one page with two topics. This helps establish fast information retrieval.

### Use Headings for clear navigation

Headings are recognized by the search engines and they provide clear navigation. Using headings will give pages an outline format. This allows people who browse your pages to quickly find the information that is relevant to their needs.

Heading tags in HTML start with H1 and range through H6. In my opinion, you should only have one H1 tag on a page. This tag should describe the overall premise of the entire page. If there are multiple

subheadings, use H2 tags. If there are additional subheadings, use the H3 tags and so forth. You can also use text bolding to call attention. Try to scatter your keywords throughout the headings so search engines will know what the page focuses on, but keep it user-friendly.

### Using colors

Make it easy for people to read the text on the Webpage. Designers often get the urge to make their websites appear unique. Uniqueness is good, but hard to read text is bad. I strongly urge the use of colors to make different aspects of a page stand out. However, you should ensure that there is enough contrast to make the text stand out. Pages that are hard to read or pages that have hidden text, lose credibility. This gives the impression of deception and is overall frustrating. Unless your site uses an overwhelming amount of Audio, make sure people can read the page.

Making your pages user friendly has many significant benefits. Your pages should achieve their goal with a limited amount of traffic. Surfers are more likely to bookmark the site. This will establish a user base and generate a larger audience as time progresses. Most importantly, other webmasters are more likely to put links to your Website.

Michael Medeiros is the owner of

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