

EXCUSE ME, BUT YOUR WRITING IS SHOWING!

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By Doug C. Grant

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Think about it.

How many people do you write to during a business day? How many of these people know you only through your words?

Okay, so maybe you have shared a few handshakes with some of them. But their opinion of who you are and your worth as an employee or business person may still be judged primarily by the words you write.

It comes down to this. Everything...EVERYTHING!!!...you write is a picture of you. It might be the wrong picture but that doesn't make any difference.

The PERCEPTION of who you are is far more powerful than the REALITY.

DECLINING WRITING SKILLS IN BUSINESS

For over 30 years, I've served as a Business Writing Consultant to hundreds of companies, both privately owned and Fortune 500. During the past 15 years, I've noticed a steady decline in the ability of many business people to effectively express their ideas in writing. They are often extremely articulate in meetings. But when asked to reduce something to writing they can't get past the subject line.

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Here's an example. I recently received a phone call from a brilliant articulate middle management executive of a Fortune 500 company. He was calling from his office at the company's headquarters after nine in the evening.

He had just spent several hours trying to draft a Purpose Statement for a marketing proposal. This Purpose Statement was important. It set the tone for the rest of the written proposal. If it was clear, concise and promising, he could expect a full reading. If the statement was confused and dull, he was on his way toward rejection.

I had him fax me what he had written. It was little more

than company cliches strung together with connectives which said almost nothing. If I had not known and worked with this man on other projects, I would have considered him dull and ordinary.

I had him tell me in his own words what he wanted to say. We then worked together to draft a statement that helped sell his program...AND HIMSELF.

DOES EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING REQUIRE TALENT?

I won't deny that having a writing talent can help. Although I have seen many imcoms (important communications such as letters, memos, proposals and reports) fail because a literary style called more attention to the words than the message.

Effective business writing is not literature. It requires the application of common sense rules and easily learned techniques.

You start with the basic business writing formula...attention, interest, action. Although I don't promote formula writing, every imcom **MUST** include these basic steps to succeed.

ATTENTION

Every working day, countless imcoms are distributed with openings that say nothing. It's as though the writer is thinking, "Hey, I wrote this wonderful imcom so, of course,

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it will be read."

The reality is that an imcom has only two to three seconds to begin communicating. If it fails to grab a foothold on the target's attention immediately, it is either trashed, put on a 'read whenever' pile or quickly scanned and instantly forgotten.

INTEREST

Business people often equate interest to length. "People just don't read long imcoms," I am told. No, the truth is people don't read boring imcoms.

I have read two paragraph imcoms that were too long. I have also read multi-page imcoms that were just right. The difference was content.

Remember, you can never bore anyone into reading anything!

ACTION

The action desired might be a budget approval, acceptance of an idea or program, go-ahead on a project...whatever. However, too often, this action is never motivated or even asked for. The imcom simply shrivels up and dies at the end. Sometimes the imcom writer assumes a certain action will be taken. Or, the writer is afraid of appearing too pushy. Actually the reverse is true. A strong close suggests that the writer is in control, decisive and self-confident.

DO YOUR IMCOMS SPEAK WELL OF YOU?

Do they present you as an organized, intelligent and knowledgeable business person or employee? If not, you can do something about it. Becoming a power writer is neither difficult nor time consuming. It primarily involves a commitment to begin. You'll be stepping out ahead of a lot of other people if you make that commitment today. Discovering ways to impress when you express can put you months, even years, ahead on your career path.

Doug C. Grant is the author of `HOW TO MOVE FROM CUBICLE TO CORNER OFFICE WITH THE SECRETS OF POWER WRITING. A FREE preview plus details on receiving a no-cost Blue PencilEdit

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for one of your own imcoms is available by e-mailing:mailto:edit@newbieclub.com

Do You Have Excuse-itis When Looking for a Job?

By Marilyn J. Tellez, M.A.

How many times have you done or heard someone else say: "I don't have the time, I don't have the money, I don't have my family behind me, and on and on"?

This excuse-itis is worse than procrastination. Procrastination implies that you will eventually get something done. Excuses, however, are just little fears in disguise. It is hard to approach employers and ask for a job. The big fear comes out of the little one, which is REJECTION.

So, it is easier to complain, tell others that there are no jobs, stay at home doing chores, and fill in time that could be spent contacting others about jobs.

The continuing withdrawal from looking for a job is close to a mental impediment, which can lead to depression, illness, anger, alcohol indulgence, etc.

Now what can the hapless job seeker do except to hide? The best of all ways is to take action, regardless of the big, bad word of rejection. There might be many no words, but in looking for the: "You're hired" phrase, sure beats excuse-itis.

c, 2004

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Do You Have Excuse-itis When Looking for a Job?
What To Do When You Get Caught Surfing By The Boss!
Make Time to Write: Overcome Your Excuses
Is The Theme Reinforced In The Ending?
Tell Visitors Why

Write Around The World FREE!
Ebook Authors Interviewed
The Golden Book Of Proof
Disaster Preparedness and Crime Protection Manual
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