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**The Hard Facts About Editing**

**By Jennifer Minar**

**The Hard Facts About Editing**

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Whether you're interviewing for a new job, trying to woo a love interest on a first date, selling your work on the Internet, or submitting a query to an editor, you can never make a second first impression. It's true. It's just one of life's hard facts.

To sell your article, novel, product, or yourself, you need to work on that very critical first impression--and a surefire way to make a bad impression is to present poorly edited work. All the hours of researching, outlining, and writing are squandered if the final version of your manuscript is not tightly written and error-free.

How can you possibly convince an editor, agent, or customer that you can produce a great product when there are errors in your queries, on your web site, or in your marketing materials? I don't know about you, but I lose trust in what I'm reading once I've seen more than one error. In some cases (e.g., a web site for an editing service) even that one error is enough. I think it's careless and it leads me to wonder if the creator is as careless with the quality of his products or services.

Okay, now that we've made it clear that you will be judged harshly by your errors, let's work on ways to error-proof your work.

Editing Cures More than Typos. Proper editing cures not only typographical errors, but also inconsistent statements, ambiguities, poorly written sentences, and weak word choices. Appropriate attention to these aspects of writing make all the difference between a mediocre piece of work and an excellent one.

Spelling and Grammar Checks. Standard spelling and grammar checks are available to you, so use them! Remember, however, they won't catch everything.

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**Print Your Work.** Print a copy of your manuscript and whip out the red pen. Generally, you will find mistakes you weren't able to detect when reading on the monitor.

**Let It Simmer.** Put your manuscript away for a period of time so that you can look at it later with fresh eyes. After the established time period, print another copy of your work and again, pull out the red pen. Tighten your sentences, examine your word choices, and hunt down any errors you couldn't find before. I find this step to be invaluable!

**Ask a Friend to Read.** It's helpful to have friends look at your work. They'll see it with a new perspective, which in turn will help them find things you may have missed. But remember, non-writer friends may not always know what to look for. Friends may also be shy about correcting you. You need dead-honest criticism, so if you feel you won't get it from a particular person, don't ask him to read.

**Join a Critique Group.** Peer critiques can be a terrific way to get feedback on your work, and to offer feedback on the work of others. As an added benefit, you will learn that there's a lot to gain from

correcting others' mistakes. There are many online critique groups. (One place to look is Yahoo Groups

). Find one that works for you, then submit and critique as needed.

**Read Books.** There are many good books that can teach you to become a better self-editor. Check out a couple of them. Also, make sure to keep a style guide handy. One good one is Strunk and White's, "The Elements of Style."

**Hire an Editor.** A good editor will be able to reveal hidden mistakes and will ensure that your best possible work is being submitted. There are many editors who will gladly take your money, so be careful when choosing someone with whom to work. Ask friends for recommendations. If you'd like "my" recommendation,

works with a fantastic and super-affordable editor who owns

BookShelf Editing Services. I cannot recommend her highly enough for editing articles, novels, or web material. She can be found at

.

Remember, few things undermine credibility as quickly as work that contains errors. But, on a positive note, also remember that there are many actions you can take to avoid them.

Jennifer Minar is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance writer who writes for the health & fitness and writing markets. She is also the founder & managing editor of Writer's Break (

), a web site and ezine for fiction and creative non-fiction writers. Jennifer

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## **Is Your Offer a Bargain? Present the Facts!**

**By Wild Bill Montgomery**

### **Is Your Offer a Bargain? Present the Facts! by /"Wild Bill/" Montgomery**

Listing specific facts will aid you in backing up your claims. Listing them is not enough; you must also know how to present the facts. You can't just spew them out at your prospect like an erupting volcano. They must flow like a steady slow moving stream. Here are some pointers to help you in proving your offer is the one for them:

#### 1) Dramatize Your Facts:

Example: John Doe invested the last \$50.00 of his savings in our program and now John makes over \$5000 a month in his spare time!

#### 2) Use "Human Interest" Facts:

Present your facts in a clear, straightforward and interesting manner. Write in everyday language that people can understand. Don't get too technical. Don't present the facts from your point of view, rather present them from the prospective customer's point of view.

#### 3) Be Specific:

Convey all the details that are relevant to your product or offer. How did your product originate? Why was it created? Why is there a need for your product? How can product help them? Give details. Be specific!

#### 4) Use Testimonials:

Show you prospect how your product has helped others. Let them see what you product has done for other people in their own words. Get signed statements from your satisfied customers. Use a "diverse" list of testimonials from as many different sources as possible. Use full names and addresses whenever possible.

#### 5) Give a good reason for your price:

Whether your price is higher or lower you have to explain why. Make it interesting and convincing. If what you're offering is of better quality or offers more benefits, tell them. What you say can explain why your price is higher than your competitors. If your price is extraordinarily lower because you have an over abundance of inventory, be honest about it. People will buy your product at the price you set, if the reason you give is presented

properly.

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