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Tips for Good Business Writing

By June Campbell

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You can contribute significantly to your business' success by developing your writing skills.

If you're operating a business, eventually you will be required to write a business document. It could be a business letter, a business proposal, a business plan, a marketing strategy, copy for your web site, a white paper, a job description, an inter-office memo, a Board report, a press release, or...?

There is good news if writing is not your strong point. Writing is a skill that can be learned. With practice, almost anyone can learn to write an acceptable document.

Why is good writing important? First, some people will judge you by your writing. Why risk losing customers or investors because of a poorly written document?

Secondly, good business writing is easier to read and easier to comprehend than poor writing. Clarity is always a goal when writing business documents. Flowery prose is best left to those who write fine literature.

Many written documents show dramatic improvement when a few common writing errors are corrected. Try this test. Find a letter or document you have written, and go through it making the changes listed below. You could be surprised at the improvement when you follow these basic guidelines.

Use the Active Voice

Write in the active voice instead of the passive voice. That is, rather than writing, "The computer that belongs to my brother," say, "My brother's computer." Rather than writing, "The merchandise that was delivered yesterday," say, "Yesterday's merchandise delivery."

Many people find that by making this one change, they can improve their writing substantially.

Tip: Use MS Word's Spell and Grammar feature to help find the passive sentences. It's found in the Tool menu.

Use Tenses Consistently

Changing tenses through a document is a common mistake. Decide which tense you want to write in, then stick to it. "Tense" refers to the past, present, or future.

Past Tense: We did it this way.

Present Tense: We do it this way.

Future Tense: We will do it this way.

It is jarring to a reader to encounter tense changes such the ones in this paragraph:

"We started our business in 1995. We sold and serviced vacuum cleaners. My brother and I do everything ourselves."

The sentence would be better if written like this:

"We started our business in 1995. We sold and serviced vacuum cleaners. My brother and I did everything ourselves."

Use Consistent Spellings and Punctuation

Certain words or terms can be written correctly in more than one way. For example, "ecommerce" and "e-commerce" are both correct. The key is to pick one spelling and use it consistently throughout the document.

Similarly, Jane Doe, MD and Jane Doe, M.D. are both correct. Again, you want to pick one usage and use it consistently.

If you're using numbers, decide whether to use the number signs or to spell out the word. It's a common practice to spell out

numbers under ten and to use numerical signs for numbers over ten.

i.e. "We have eight employees."

Or

"We have 28 employees."

Limit the use of Adverbs and Adjectives

Business writing is improved when adverbs and adjectives are removed or used sparingly.

For example, "Our new facility is very, very spacious" is better written as, "Our new facility is spacious."

"Our spacious, new facility really meets our needs," is better written as, "Our spacious facility meets our needs."

And, most importantly of all:

Strive for Clarity

Be clear about your message. Identify the main point you want to make for the entire document, then condense that point into one sentence. You might use that one sentence, or you might not. But you **MUST** decide what it is. If you have not formulated this one point in your own mind, your writing will not portray the most important thing you want to communicate.

For example, what is the one main message I want to communicate with this article? It is sentence #1.

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10 Quick Tips To Writing Profitable Articles

By Ken Hill

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Tips for Good Business Writing

One of the best ways to promote your business for free is to write articles for publication in ezines.

To help you get started, I've compiled a list of ten tips that will not only help you successfully write your own articles, but also help you get the most out of the articles you do write.

To begin:

1. Put a lot of thought into the title of your article.

Writing a good title will grab your readers attention and encourage them to read through your article.

2. Keep the introduction and conclusion of your article short.

3. Write your article as a series of tips that center around a specific subject. This is a very effective way to present your information and hold your readers interest.

4. Use numbers to list the tips in your article. This allows your readers to go quickly from one tip to the next, and also keeps your article neatly organized and easy to read.

5. Keep your tips brief and to the point.

6. Keep your article focused on one topic. If you have several things you want to talk about then try writing separate articles for each topic.

7. Write your article with a sincere desire to help your reader. Don't write an article that is basically just a sales letter for your company. Save your self promotion for your resource box at the end of your article.

8. Do write a compelling ad for your business in your resource box. Entice your reader to go to your site or request more information from you.

9. Use your resource box to gain more subscribers to your ezine. An article is a very effective way to showcase the type of quality content your reader can expect as a subscriber to your publication.

10. Offer a free marketing course in your resource box. This will give you the opportunity to further increase your sales by following up with people interested in your information.

Once you start writing articles, you will find that your articles can bring a lot of free promotion to your business.

Write with your reader in mind and you will be on your way to creating more profit for your business with every article you write.



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