



Eliminate Communication Clutter

Increase organizational credibility when you empower employees with strategic business writing skills.

Whether crafting a sales letter, website copy or a news release, effective writing has the power to help an organization meet its goals.

Effective writing is the result of a logical process that usually begins with research, creativity and organization, as indicated in *Strategic Writing: Multimedia Writing for Public Relations, Advertising and More*. Before documents have accomplished their goal, they've likely been revised, edited, approved, distributed and evaluated. Good writers also must consider ethics, diversity, persuasion and the law. Good writing is hard work!

Are you seeing these common communication challenges in your organization?

1. *Lack of research.* Sometimes research is skipped altogether and other times writers don't do enough digging to uncover the quality research sources most valuable to their pieces.
2. *Lack of strategic focus.* What is the writer trying to accomplish? If the writer didn't begin with a goal in mind it is doubtful the goal was accomplished.
3. *The final version feels like a first draft.* Without revising and editing, writing pieces aren't polished.

Without professionally developing employees and empowering them with strategic writing skills and tools, it is unlikely the stakeholders organizations rely on will receive effective, credible communication.

Build relationships through writing. **Who are these stakeholders?**

Organizations are continually working to build relationships with customers, vendors, employees, media and others through the written word. Public relations tools such as news releases, media kits, newsletters, annual reports and websites are helpful, but require a strategic focus to succeed. Identifying and understanding your audience and writing to that group's interests goes a long way in building the relationship and, ultimately, persuading that specific group to take a desired action.

Make sure your message is heard.

Do the research. Plan the message.

First things first: get a handle on the objective of the writing and the target audience for the piece. What is the goal and what do you know about the intended reader?

Key facts to determine for the intended reader:

- Demographics: gender, age, income, ethnicity, employment status
- Psychographics: personality, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyle
- What appeals to the target audience of this piece?
- Who does this group consider as the organization's direct/indirect competitors?
- What is this group's current impression of the organization, product or service?

What is the one, unique, clear message of the writing piece?

“Target audience, you should _____ because_____.”

“Target audience, we promise you_____.”

What's the supporting evidence for the strategic message? Where's the proof? What are the selling points?

Evaluate and execute your message.

Revise, edit, polish and organize.

Writing goes from good to great when reviewed, edited and polished. Consult colleagues or outside reviewers to ensure that your message is clear, your piece is free from errors and your thoughts are well organized. Consider the format of your piece and what will be useful for your intended audience. Will a formal letter make the most impact, or will a postcard or brochure be more efficient?

Business letters make an impression (or not).

Congrats! You are delivering good news! Ouch! It's bad news. Doesn't matter. To effectively communicate an organization's message, making even a simple request requires a well written business letter. The same can be said for strategic communication in the sales and marketing areas of organizations. Simply put, strategically executed sales and fundraising letters cause recipients to act.

Brochures can make an even bigger impression.

Printed brochures are like long-lived credibility takeaways. Therefore, in addition to being sparkling clean from errors, content should be organized with a beginning, middle and an end. The beginning might ask a question or pose a problem while the middle answers that question or provides a solution. Strong headlines will lead the reader through the content. Sub-heads serve to break up the information into reader-friendly passages. Bulleted lists are also helpful. The ending copy ties the content together by summarizing and calling the reader to action.

Strategic Writing Checklist

Content

- Do the content and its execution meet the objectives?
- Does the message authentically represent the organization's values?
- Does the message speak to the values of the intended readers?

Organization

- Does organization enhance content?
- Does each part of the message transition logically to the next?

Grammar

- Is the content sparkling clean from errors?

Format

- Does the execution of the message look the way it was intended?

Do you need help clearing the communication clutter in your organization?

Empower yourself or your employees with the necessary skills to become a more effective communicator. Enroll today in the Professional Communication Certificate Program or a Formal and Interactive Communication one-day seminar offered by University of Louisville Professional Development. Contact Julijana Curcic by email at julijana.curcic@louisville.edu or by phone at 502.852.5636 to learn more.