

Getting it Right....or is it Write?

Writing Right!

Ron King, CPPB, CPPO, VCO

Writing Right!

Why is it important that all our business
correspondence be well written?

- ❑ Poor writing reflects badly on us/our entity.
- ❑ Limits the influence we can have on others.
- ❑ Steals time away from those who have to decipher what we mean.

Writing Right!

Basic Formula for Writing

- State your claim.
- Write an outline.
- Write the first draft.
- Revise and polish.

Writing Right!

First Rule of Writing

Consider your purpose and audience, because they determine many critical features of your document, including:

- format;
- strategy; and
- word choice.



Writing Right!

First Rule of Writing

Along with your purpose and audience, you must consider the stakeholders (those who may be affected by the document) and the context (the background of and situation in which the document is created).



Writing Right!

Audience Analysis

- Consider your readers based on their:
 - expectations;
 - characteristics;
 - goals; and
 - context.



Writing Right!

Audience Analysis

- Identify information readers will need, and make that information easily accessible and understandable.



Writing Right!

Format

Business Letter—preferred when presenting information to others outside of your entity or when the communication will be seen by many.

Writing Right!

Format

Memo—less formal style used when the information being communicated:

- is of less importance;
- does not leave the office; or
- is with subordinates.

Writing Right!

Format

E-mail—least formal style and should only be used for informal communication such as:

- reminders;
- questions; or
- When preferred by the recipient.

NOTE: E-mail is public domain!



Writing Right!

Strategy

It is important to know your audience's interests and biases, as they will have a tremendous impact on your communication strategy.



Writing Right!

Strategy

If your audience has a high interest level, you may go directly to the point without taking time to arouse their interest. Build a good, logical argument.

Writing Right!

Strategy

If your audience has a low interest level, you should use more of a tell/sell style to motivate the reader's interest. Keep the message as short as possible, as long documents are intimidating, and readers tend to tune out what seems like rambling.

Writing Right!

Strategy

Know your audience's probable bias.

- If positive or neutral, reinforce their existing attitudes by stating the benefits that will accrue from your message.

Writing Right!

Strategy

- If negative, try one of the following:
 - Limit your request to the smallest one.
 - Respond to anticipated objections.
 - State points you think they'll agree with first.
 - Get them to agree that there is a problem.

Writing Right!

Strategy

- If you anticipate strong opposition, use the “inoculate” technique—list the opposing arguments and explain why you reject them.



Writing Right!

Word Choice

Limit the use of jargon and acronyms to as few as possible, even if the primary audience is familiar with them.



Writing Right!

Structure

An effective introduction has 3 aims:

- to build readers' interest;
- to explain your purpose for writing; and
- to provide a preview of the document.

Writing Right!

Paragraphs

Each paragraph should begin with a claim, and every sentence in the paragraph should support that claim.

Writing Right!

Paragraphs

Transitions should be used between all paragraphs to ensure the document flows from one idea to another.

- First, Second, Third, etc.
- On the other hand . . .
- For example, . . .
- As a result . . .

Writing Right!

Sentences

A complete sentence contains a subject AND a verb.

Avoid wordiness and flowery language; be concise.

Writing Right!

Editing

Check for proper:

- spelling;
- grammar; and
- punctuation.

If possible, put the draft away. Later, read it aloud—listening for awkwardness and areas that need clarification or more information.



Writing Right!

Reports

Though defined by each situation, all reports have one factor in common: they are a description of a task, project, or research activity either at its completion or at some mid-point to recount and summarize actions taken.



Writing Right!

Reports

Good report writing includes the ability to plan the layout and organization of the report.

- You must decide: (1) what elements will be useful in the report and how to include them so they form an effective framework for the material and (2) what information you wish to relate.



Writing Right!

Reports

The format of the report will be determined by its purpose and audience. Longer or special reports may include cover letters or memos, tables of contents, summaries, glossaries, etc.



Writing Right!

Instructions

Instructions are simply steps explaining how to do a particular task. They shape a reader's attitude toward a process or product. Good instructions, therefore, are not easy to write.

Writing Right!

Instructions must:

- be clear and able to be followed;
- be correct; and
- contain the appropriate amount of information.

Writing Right!

Instructions

Most people do not like reading (or following) instructions. You, therefore, must persuade the reader to use your instructions by using:

- an inviting and clear visual design;
- precise and pertinent information; and
- good balance between reading and doing.



Writing Right!

Instructions

Visual design and page layout are important.

Readers must be able to find their places again if they set the instructions aside to perform a step. The use of white space and visual aids, therefore, are necessary—as are illustrations, when appropriate.



Writing Right!

Instructions

Because correctness is paramount, once instructions are written, they must be tested – preferably by someone representative of your intended audience or readers.



Writing Right!

Need help with grammar/usage rules?

<http://www.chompchomp.com/rules.htm>

<http://www.yourdictionary.com/grammar-rules/index.html>

http://www.speakspeak.com/html/d10_english_grammar.htm



Writing Right!

Questions/Clarification



Writing Right!

Please complete your
class evaluations.
Thank you!