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Dynamic and Effective Writing Skills

A Comprehensive Learning Approach:

- Developing the finesse of traditional Language Arts

- A quality focus on business success and excellence

- Applying the proven approaches of Language Arts and Psychology

- Implementing correct grammar and composition strategies

- Using related technical skills

- Upgrading to new technology of communications

- Sensitivity in the written word

- Power tools, phrases and words

- Valuable takeaways

Business Writing Skills

A skills training course focused on improving employee skills and increasing company performance. Learning is a business strategy! A competitive company will position skills and talents toward success in today's dynamic business environment. This course sets the stage for writing by establishing an atmosphere and attitude conducive to effective writing instruction. The course provides effective tools to create "Writing Power" by developing writing skills and habits for the participant. Course material is relevant to the Engineering and Construction Industry.
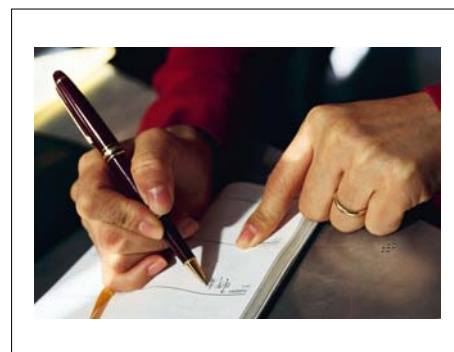
Learning is a business strategy!

The ability to effectively communicate in writing is essential for professional success. Every letter, email, report and proposal written reflects an individual's and a company's professional competency. In today's fast-paced, information-driven world, the pressure is on to achieve results quickly from each written document. Improving writing skills will save significant time, prevent misunderstanding, and improve results. Up to 80% of working hours are spent communicating with employees, clients, colleagues, and upper management.
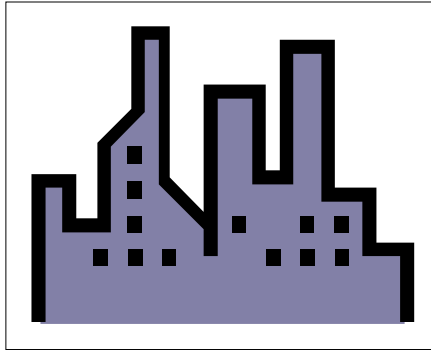
About the Course

The quality and clarity of writing plays a major role in the impact of reports, proposals, memos and letters. People now have less time and inclination to read intricate correspondence. Consequently, it is important to put ideas across in a fashion that is clear, precise and concise to save time for both writer and reader. This is a skill.

This one-day course will focus on the basic fundamentals of effective business writing and provide the participant with tools to create dynamic written material. Visuals and Handouts will provide powerful takeaway tools for the participant and give examples of potent ways to write high-impact letters, memos, e-mails, reports and proposals.
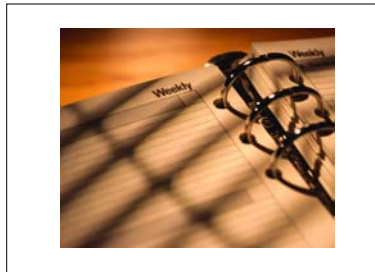
WHO WILL BENEFIT:

The course will help sharpen writing skills, give the writer confidence to create lucid, crisp and persuasive documents, within the framework of their own personal style and the company requirements.

The course will benefit the company and the individual who feels that they spend too much time writing and re-writing memos, letters, e-mails or proposals but yet sees the importance, necessity and value of written communications.

"Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it, and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light."
Joseph Pulitzer

1909 portrait by John S. Sargent of the founder of the most prestigious award in Journalism.

COURSE CONTENT

- Components and foundations of effective business communication
    1. Prescriptive grammar and editing
    2. Spelling and vocabulary
    3. Integrated functional writing
    4. Directed writing
    5. Oral language
    6. Literature and reading
    7. Presentation
        a. Paper / hardcopy
        b. Handwritten
        c. Computer
        d. Tech reports
        e. Visual presentations
- Strategies for productive writing habits
- Guidelines for appropriate tone, style, language and format
- Insights into reducing your writing time and condensing document length
- Corporate communication
- Publishing procedures for print or on-line
- Techniques for improving your persuasive power
- Practical exercises and skill building activities

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Upon completion of this workshop, you will be able to:
- Understand that effective business writing is a skill than can be learned and developed through continuous practice and application
- Focus on readers as "customers" by uncovering and understanding their priorities, interests, and needs
- Incorporate quality writing standards that apply to all written documents, including email, letters, memos, and individual sections of reports
- Plan, prepare, and publish clear, concise, and correct business documents
- Ensure your message is received positively and clearly the first time
- Write efficiently when time-challenged - succeed in class exercises
- Access a wealth of reference resources, power words, quotes, phrases, example letters and presentations - all resources will listed in a class binder.

KEY FOCUS

- Developing individual writing styles
- Strengthen writing style
- Make language more active
- Organize ideas
- Draft, edit and check
- Get results from documents
- When to use the different writing formats - evaluate the receiver
- Awareness of your reader's style – NLP modalities
- Layout and structure of correspondence
- Adapt to the etiquette of e-mail
- Structure reports and proposals
- Identify, anticipate, prevent and reduce major time wasters
- Recognize the key stressors and master relaxation techniques
- Ten methods to overcome procrastination
- The new format for punctuation
- Correct and effective grammar that sells ideas
- Sentence structure that gets attention and communicates best
- Common business writing errors
- Strong and effective words
- Avoiding turn-off vocabulary
- How to add zest and interest to your written documents
- Selecting the most effective fonts, symbols and graphics
- Different needs of formal and informal writing
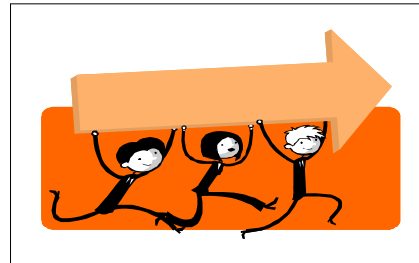
"Words are, of course, the most powerful tool used by mankind"
Kipling

THE COURSE:

Lesson 1   Objectives

- Know objectives and how they shape the message
- Know types of objectives that are relevant to business writing
- Know company formats, standards and mission statement
- Write in a reader-oriented fashion
- Choose method of communication.

Lesson 2   Know the reader

- Analyze reader – use communication modalities
- Identify what the readers know, do not know, or mis-understand about the writer (you), their position in relationship to the subject
- Identify how the readers feel about the subject.

Lesson 3   Select facts to accomplish objectives

- Know your subject matter
- Use only relevant information to achieve the objective
- Include information for reader to grasp objective.

Lesson 4   Organize for understanding / retention

- Structure from outside in: main points to sub-points
- Use an outline to organize
- Create a well organized message.

Lesson 5   Write clear openings and closings

- Write thesis statement with main points
- Write generalizations for every main idea and every sub-point that has its own details
- Use key words or points through-out – create triggers to keep message in mind of reader
- Write headings before generalizations using key words
- Include headings for sub-points that have own specifics
- Understanding relationships among ideas - triangular aid!
- Guideposts to ensure the reader comprehends idea shift
- Use transition words or phrases when you change ideas.

Lesson 6   Strategies for understanding message

- Write the context, content, and action at the beginning of every message
- Place memory information at the beginning
- Set the most cordial tone appropriate at the beginning
- Defuse negative affect with a buffer at the beginning.
- Emphasize important points in the ending
- Reiterate actions in the ending
- Select an appropriate difficulty or technical level
- Ensure that readers remember important information
- Use an appropriate formal or informal stance with the reader - keep positive approach
- Know any requirements for the document, especially legal requirements
- Satisfy reader expectations for the document.

THE COURSE (CONTINUED):

Lesson 7   Write for clarity

- Use simple words, sentences, and paragraphs
- Keep the terminology at the level and background appropriate for the readers
- Include enough detail in the explanation to make sure the reader understands
- Use clear, organized, coherent paragraphs
- Include graphics and charts
- Use transitions to help readers follow the story
- Talk out loud about what you are writing.

Lesson 8   Edit for clarity

- Date drafts
- Edit for overall organization first. Check thesis statement, generalizations, and specifics
- Check for conciseness and completeness
- Check sub-points for organization, conciseness, and completeness
- Keep sentences to 15 to 20 words or fewer
- Keep one or two ideas in most sentences, but no more than three
- Use action verbs when possible
- Grammar skills are important – review and observe and practice
- Keep ideas that work together close
- Review of things to be avoided
- Use active voice
- Break out lists into bullets
- Use words at an appropriate technical or difficulty level for the reader
- Use a tone appropriate for the message and relationship.
- Define terms and be certain that Acronyms are known
- Use precise words
- Avoid stilted words
- Use plain English words
- Avoid weak words that are so overused that they convey little meaning
- Include transition statements that help to hold the information together.

Lesson 9   Write concisely

- Eliminate deadwood and redundancies from the writing
- Shorten the word combinations that use too many words
- Combine sentences to use fewer words.

Lesson 10   Use an easy-to-follow format

- Know best margins and justifications to use
- Break all lists into bulleted lists
- Use numbered lists when you have a sequence, steps, or a procedure
- Keep paragraphs to five or six lines with an occasional four lines or seven lines
- Skip lines before and after headings in single-spaced documents
- Skip a line between paragraphs when you single-space a document
- Use headings for all sections
- Include graphics, charts and illustrations when appropriate
- Use appropriate fonts and be consistent. Use the Microsoft Word style function
- Use little bolding and underlining. Reserve them for the most important places
- Use the Tables function in Microsoft Word
- For online messages, have a clear heading that states the date, receiver's name, your name, and enough about the subject to let reader evaluate the message
- For online messages, use white space just as you would for printed writing
- For online messages, use shorter paragraphs, use headings and do not shout
- For online messages, write your message in one screen when possible and lines of text to fewer than 80 characters.

Lesson 11   Know communication technology

- Keep up to date on new methods of communication
- Gather, examine and use good examples
- Know the appropriate vocabulary.

Lesson 12   Proofread so usage is correct

- Go into a proofreading mode when you proofread
- Proofread for the things that would create problems for your company
- Proofread for formatting and consistency
- Proofread charts, graphs, and illustrations
- Do a separate numbers check – re-check calculations
- Verify all dates, times and phone numbers
- Proofread usage, punctuation, spelling - "Ewe can't always count on the spell checker"
- Proofread the text of your message
- Know the resources available to aid good writing
- Maintain a list of problems YOU normally incur.

I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent re-writer. ~James Michener