Better Business Writing Skills

How to produce accurate, brief and concise emails, documents and reports.

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This one-day workshop-style training event covers all aspects of preparing, writing, proofing, editing and producing high-quality documents, reports, web copy, blogs and emails*. As well as the live training and group work, there is also a printed workbook, an A5 quick reference guide and a review of best-practice template examples (prepared before the training).

The course will be tailored to suit the writing output for each group.

Key features include

1. Pre-course 'red-pen' review by the trainer on participants own documents sent before the course (optional).

2. Participants work on their own real-life documents during the session, objectively editing and proofreading, working in pairs.

3. Pre-course consultation to review and develop best-practice examples before the training.

4. Learning exercises to practice composing, editing and proofreading skills on emails, reports and letters.

5. One-to-one review and coaching within small groups during workshop session.

Expert trainer with a solid background in business, customer service and writing, who is also an experience professional writer and published author.

Key learning points and objectives:

- Know and use the main elements of an impressive, inspiring and professional piece of written communication, regardless of length or type.

- Write any email or document in a way that radiates competence and courtesy that saves you and the reader time.

- Use more effective openings and endings – starting off right and ending correctly – for formal documents, emails and letters.

- Know what your reader needs, wants, likes or expects from your document, email or letter.

- Getting the balance right between formal and informal emails.

- Eliminating jargon, management-speak, clichés and non-sense. How to keep it short and simple without losing impact or appearing blunt or rude

- Email etiquette – the do's and don'ts of email writing, sending and managing.

- How to use the right style and tone when delivering bad news, apologising or resetting expectations.

- Editing techniques and skills practice to get your emails and documents right first time, every time.

- Proofing reading techniques and skills practice – for error-free emails.

- Advice on specialist documents - reviews, simple reports, online messaging, business plans and proposals, etc.

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Better Business Writing Skills - Course outline

This course is very interactive and practical. Regular learning exercises, case studies and practical sessions are scheduled throughout the course. It is designed for any and all levels of English.

One-day workshop 09.30 to 16.30 or as agreed.

Objectives and key principles of effective business writing

Introduction and key principles

- The writing process: A four stage approach to creating engaging, informative and accurate emails, reports, letters and any type of written business communication

- Understanding the different needs, expectations and preferences of your readers

- Using the right tone in your writing and making the message accurate, brief and clear

- The principles of business writing with best-practice examples, using the house style and tone guidelines

Better business writing part one: Think!

- How best to develop your ideas, content, message and points before starting to write

- Techniques to help you decide on the most relevant information to help the reader understand your points quickly and clearly

- Structuring and sequencing your points, content or messge in a way that creates order and encourages the reader to read

- Techniques to research, prepare plan and structure more complex written documents, not just emails.

Initial review of participants own examples and others prepared for the course.

Exercise to plan and structure a sample email or document.

Better business writing part one: Write

- Expressing your points clearly and clarifying your aim and objectives when writing a first draft.

- Using the right words, phrases and writing style that helps understanding and gets results

- Developing a persuasive or the 'tone of voice' to reinforce the points you are making or opinions you are writing to express

- How sentences and paragraphs can give power, rhythm and pace to your writing

- The five rules of writing clear and easy-to-read business documents

- Openings and endings – starting off right and ending correctly – with examples

- How to write persuasively, manage expectations and write 'difficult' or bad-news letters and emails.

Exercise to practice writing using these key learning points.

Improving your grammar, punctuation and spelling skills

- Quick quiz - how good is your English knowledge?
- Sentences, paragraphs and other English principles
- Common mistakes in grammar and punctuation
- Homophones, tautology and circumlocution – the three problem areas in business writing

Exercises and quizzes to improve knowledge of English, in an engaging and interesting way!

Better business writing part three Editing

- Editing techniques and skills to improve and reduce your first draft
- The clarity index and how to apply it quickly and easily
- Spotting repetition jargon, management-speak, clichés and non-sense
- ABC of editing: How to edit any document to improve its' accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Exercises: Participants work on their own documents and general examples to practice the editing techniques and skills described.

Better business writing part four: Polish

- Proofreading techniques and skills for different types of documents
- Signposting and flow – making your document easy and quick to read, regardless of length or complexity
- Knowing what to look for – quick check-list when proofreading
- Exploring ways to present your information visually
- Best practice guidelines for charts, tables and diagrams and making best use of appendices and links
- Creating effective table of contents, references and notes in longer documents
- The do's and don'ts of visual messages, including lists, bullet points, colours and fonts.

Exercises: Participants work on their own documents and general examples to practice the proofreading techniques and skills described.

Email etiquette and best practice

- Email etiquette – the ten do's and don'ts of email communication sending
- External customer facing emails: Links, attachments and security, plus the rules and standards for more impressive emails
- When to use the telephone or face to face conversations instead of an email

Personal practice on participant's own documents, letter or emails

This is a practical session with one-to-one consultation with colleagues and the course trainer.

Application: Learning summary

Exercise: Participants work individually to summarise their personal learning points and action plan to take away.