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Communication Skills Training[™]

Practical techniques for clear & persuasive communication.

10 Clear Ideas
to help you think clearly
and write what you mean.

Finger - Perspective

To change the way you communicate (write) begin by changing the way you *think* about communication (writing).

Car in parking lot – what do you think about? Not the mechanical function of the vehicle. Fuel/air ratio, compression.
Strategy and tactics – where do I want to go, why do I want to go there, what's the best way to get there.

Those are the kind of ideas we'll look at in the next hour.

I started working as a business writer in 1985. Spent a lot of time in refineries and chemical plants and around people in this business.

Worked with Shell, Pennzoil, Texaco Lubricants, Monsanto, Total, Lyondell, Enterprise Products, Anadarko and many others.

I'm going to share 10 ideas with you. These are all ideas I use and they work for me – I believe they'll work for you too. If you use them.

Clear writing is clear thinking made visible.

1. You're a creative genius

You were born with a gift – to be you, and see the world your way.

Ever done something awesome? It's a wonderful feeling.

Thelonious Monk – sometimes I play things I never heard myself

Your readers love it too! Be mindful of your genius. They want your perspective and insight. And part of your job is to help your colleagues – not make their life more difficult!

But we get stuck in a rut. We do the same thing same way and expect a different outcome

So step out of your rut and repeat after me

“I am a creative genius!” The way you communicate is one way you share that creative genius with others.

2. Why am I writing?

Ask: why do you write?

To get things done. Write to inform or persuade.

To help your reader think, say, know, give you permission, change a process, other actions

Lose your bad habits

K.I.S.S. Be concise 5th grade level Dumb it down

Fill up space

Delete the idea that writing is a process of filling up space or not filling up space.

We're not doomed to only communicating by 140 character tweets!

People love to read. There's more to read than ever in history. We just have less patience. People will read what you write if you keep their interest by making it relevant and useful.

3. Who is my reader?

Your readers don't usually see the world the same way you do.

It will help you if you understand that.

Who are these people?









3 kinds of learners

Pay attention to your readers. They will tell you what they want, and how they want it.
We all have all of these qualities, but people tend to respond better to a certain style.

Visual

Auditory

Tactile

Who is your reader?

List some of the people who read what you write.
Then add a few words that define that person to you.

I used these ideas with a guy name Charlie Yao - story

List a few of your readers

How do they make decisions?

What's their perspective?

What's important to them?

What dumb questions they ask you? Those are great!

I have a learning style assessment that includes more detailed descriptions. Send me email if you want me to send it to you.

4. What do I want my reader to learn?

Not what do I want to say – that’s filling up space, or not filling up enough space

What is it about the facts that will inform or persuade your reader to understand or make a decision

Use words with intention – “analyze” Dave the Pharmaceutical VP

You are chefs. You have one million ingredients, all free! Use them with purpose to achieve the outcome you want.

Garlic/chocolate chip cookies

English now has one million words including emojis. Fastest growing language according to lexicographers – google it.

Elmore Leonard

“I leave out the parts my readers skip.”

5. _____ What do I expect to accomplish? _____

A clear objective helps you define:

1. what am I writing
2. who is my reader
3. what do I want to accomplish

After reading my _____, my reader will _____.

think
do
agree
give
understand
contribute
support
sign
buy
attend

4 types of objectives

Tell

Sell

Consult

Join

Tell Objective

After this meeting, Steve will understand the revised production schedule.

Sell Objective

After reading this email, Mike will agree to approve the budget.

Consult Objective

After this phone call, Chris will send me the date, time, and location for the meeting with Pat.

Join Objective

After this lunch meeting, my staff will agree to email me descriptions of their project roles by 4:30 today.

Write a few one-sentence objectives you have during your workday.

After reading this (type of document), (reader name) will (action or decision.)

Keep in mind – vague questions or expectations yield vague responses

Send me your thoughts vs are the numbers accurate on page 7?

6.

1. Plan

Why am I writing?

Who is my reader?

What do I want my reader to learn?

What do I expect to accomplish?

2. Write

Turn off your monitor

XXXXXXXX

3. Revise

Don't delete

4. Edit

Give your writing to someone else

Read your writing out loud

Bored? Strive to thrill yourself!

Dave at Shell – is this the best you can do?

7. **Be a sales pro!**

We may not think of ourselves as sales people.
But we all are.

I give you something, you give me something –
we're both happy.

What do we ask people for? Time

I'm walking down the hall "Got a minute?"

give your readers something of value

People make decisions based on benefits
not features.

Features inform people. Benefits inspire people.

Features inform people.

Introducing the MP3 player

An MP3 player is a storage device that contains solid-state memory, like flash memory, and software that will let you transfer audio files from your computer to the player.

MP3 players commonly use the USB port on your computer for data transfer however some may plug into the computer's FireWire or parallel port.

Once you transfer the music files to the player they are stored in the player's memory. To transfer music from your hard drive using a basic Mp3 Player is often as simple as copy the files to the player.

Most MP3 players are battery-powered and may also come with an AC Adapter for charging. Others may be charged by plugging it in to a USB port on your computer.

Benefits inspire people.



Introducing the iPod. 1000 songs in your pocket.

8. Be inspired!

Read everything you like and several things you don't

IBM/Apple brochures

Warren Buffett – personal, honest, takes responsibility

“I want to make promises to my readers that I can keep.”

Confusing

Maturity and duration management decisions are made in the context of an intermediate maturity orientation. The maturity structure of the portfolio is adjusted in the anticipation of cyclical interest rate changes.

Clear

We will try to profit by correctly predicting future interest rates.

9. Ask good questions. Listen well.

Philosophy major. Ask simple questions Be skeptical

Who What When Where How Why
Your readers ask them “So what?”

I gave you a few other examples on page 21

Listening vs hearing Listening is an active skill.

Girlfriend/A.C.

Listen to your readers. They'll tell you what they want and what they don't want. They're trying to make your job easier

Questions

Asking questions helps you understand your objective and your reader.
The two things you have to know before you can start writing.

Why am I writing something?

Who is my reader?

What is the situation? Is there a problem that needs a decision?

What circumstances caused this situation?

What are the specific elements of this situation?

What is its significance? Why is it important?

What is the most important element or cause? Why?

What's my objective?

What is the reader's perspective about this situation?

How credible am I to this reader?

What objections might my reader have to my solution?

What goal must a solution achieve?

What does the reader need to know about the solution to make a decision?

What actions can achieve the goals?

What can I predict about the consequences of each action?

What are the pros and cons of each action as a possible solution?

Which action is best? Why?

What are the benefits to my reader or his interests?

What is the next step?

And one of the best: **So What?**

10. Be clear!

Ask: What's the most important goal in writing ?

Get my point across

Convey my ideas

Be clear!

Use the ideas we've talked about:

Understand your reader's perspective.

Have a clear objective.

Use words with intention.

Set clear expectations.

I'll leave you with a lesson I learned from one of my Zen Masters.
My son Andrew who was about 7 years old at the time.

He taught me to really pay attention to words.

Simplify!

Avoid

in regard to, in the matter of, with reference to
 due to the fact that
 in advance of, prior to, previous to
 for the purpose of
 in the event that
 on the occasion of
 in order to, for the purpose of, so as to
 until such time as
 at the point in time when, at such time as
 the question as to whether
 in connection with
 perform an analysis of
 make assumptions about
 be in a position to
 reach a conclusion about
 give consideration to
 make a decision regarding
 be dependent on
 make an examination of
 make a recommendation that
 effect a reduction in
 exhibit a tendency to

Write

about
 because
 before
 for
 if
 on/when
 to
 until
 when
 whether
 with
 analyze
 assume
 can/will
 conclude
 consider
 decide
 depend
 examine
 recommend
 reduce
 tend

Thank you!

See these 10 Clear Ideas, and more at
www.JohnSturtevant.Com/10ClearIdeas