

Write Like A Pro



5 Minute Writers Boot Camp

Communication is key. If you want to succeed in business, you need to communicate your thoughts, products and services clearly. Writing simple and succinct content can be a chore. Many people shudder at the idea of writing a speech, web content or a blog, but it doesn't have to be painful.

There are a few key principles to keep in mind. First, know your audience. Who are you writing for? What do they already know about your product or service? What do they need from you? Asking these simple questions will point you in the proper writing direction.

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Be brief. Tell your story in as few words as possible. Watch for wasteful words. Adverbs are particularly abused in writing. If you use a lot of adverbs and the words really and very, you need better verbs.

Pay attention to the medium used. Your writing style and design should vary with print and web content. Online content should be brief, with short paragraphs, plenty of white space and a monitor-friendly font, such as Arial. Print content can have longer paragraphs and serif fonts, such as Times New Roman or Garamond. (Serif fonts have little hooks or feet on each letter, which help you scan words more quickly in a print format.) Avoid writing any content in all capital letters. It's harder to read.

If you feel bold or want to spice up a dry topic, use some of the rhetorical devices you learned in high school and promptly forgot. Comparisons are always helpful when explaining something obscure. You can also add pizzazz to your writing by peppering your prose with alliteration. Onomatopoeia can make your words sizzle. Don't remember those last two devices? Alliteration is starting a series of words with the same sound, such as the three Ps of pizzazz, pepper and prose. Onomatopoeia is a word that makes the sound it describes, such as bang, crash, boom, splat, and sizzle.

Triads are also a fun tool. We like odd numbered lists, particularly threes. That's why we have movie titles such as “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly”, and so many jokes that start with three people walking into a bar.

This short space can't cover all of the writing tricks available, but you can find oodles of tips online. Just remember to be brief, clear and have a little fun. Be mindful of these ideas, and your next writing task will be a little less vexing.



Photo: Artistic Impressions Photography

Susan Portelance is the owner of Prairie Scribe, a Winnipeg-based writing and editing business.

Check out our services at www.prairiescribe.com. You can also visit Susan's blog for writing tips at <http://prairiescribewriting.wordpress.com/>. Susan can be contacted at susan@prairiescribe.com or (204) 998-0766. She loves to answer writing questions!