

POWER SALES WRITING



“Helping organizations motivate their people to communicate more powerfully and operate more profitably ”

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Dear Friends,

“The beautiful part of writing is that you don’t have to get it right the first time, unlike, say, a brain surgeon.” — Robert Cormier, novelist

Welcome to the Late Spring (feels like summer here in Scottsdale) edition of *Power Sales Writing*.

June 6, 2004 – Topics in this issue:

- Tips for Differentiating Yourself with Email
- What Does Your Email Say About You?
- Email Disclaimers: You Can’t Live With ‘em and You Can’t Live Without ‘em!
- Something to Think About!
- Did You Know?

Email week is June 10-16. I have no idea what this means! Perhaps a good way to celebrate is to refrain from using email for one entire day. If that is too much to ask (like giving up TV for a month), refuse to send any “blind copies” for the entire week! (If this idea doesn’t make sense to you, check out the Power Sales Writing archives.) Still too much to ask? Here is my final recommendation: Promise yourself (and me!) that you’ll apply at least one idea from this Power Writing ezine to improve the way you write email.

Tips for Differentiating Yourself with Email

What are you doing to communicate your uniqueness? Here are 6 tips to help you differentiate your ideas, product and service:

1. **Send mail to a person.** Years ago, Dale Carnegie said that the sweetest sound in the world is the sound of one’s own name. It’s still true today. One of the quickest and easiest ways to grasp attention is to use your reader’s name. Dear Sue, is much more powerful than the generic, Dear Author, or Dear Speaker, or Dear Buyer! In emessages, you can eliminate the Dear, if you’d like. Starting your email with, “Sue,” is acceptable. You don’t know their name, you say. Then maybe you’re sending spam instead of a sales letter!

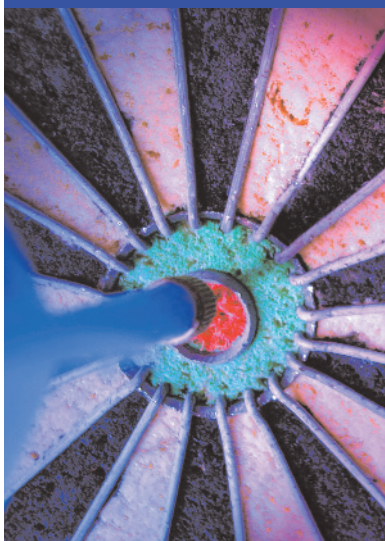
Q. First name or last name? Almost everyone today uses the reader’s first name so if you don’t know the person to whom you’re writing (if you did, this wouldn’t be a question you’d need to ask), and if it won’t seem too weird, phony or formal, try using his or her last name (Dear Mr. Smith:). Do something different! And, showing respect is always a good thing!

2. **Open strong.** It’s boring to begin with, “I’m writing to tell you about...” Just tell them! Start with a benefit to them or something classy and gracious and unusual. Instead of, “Thank you for your time on the telephone this morning. I appreciate the time you took to explain your meeting objectives,” try, “Your meeting will not only be memorable, we will work hard to make certain your attendees rave about the food, the service and their beautiful accommodations!” When they open your email they want it to be something that is interesting. Don’t disappoint them!

3. **Sound real.** This includes the words you use (if you were talking, would you prefer use or utilize, help or assist, show or demonstrate?) and the hype words you use. There is no need to be “thrilled, delighted, pleased” about everything — unless you are! In traditional mail, readers are a bit more likely to give you the benefit of the doubt; in email they click on delete without a second thought.

Q. If writing an email is like having a conversation, why do I need to worry so much? Email is a conversation that sticks around forever. There is no email heaven. You

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Do you have your copy of *Power Sales Writing* yet? Don't be the last one to

know how to use writing to set yourself apart! *Power Sales Writing* is available at all bookstores — on line, and bricks and mortar too! Just think of what one new idea can do for your success and profitability!

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might write an emessage to a colleague you've worked with for years, or a close client friend, and then he or she forwards it to another department for a response, and on and on. Think of email as if it's business casual. Remember those first Business Casual Friday's, when some associate dressed in shorts and a tank top? We know better now! The difference between comfortable and casual, and sloppy, is like the difference between a springer spaniel puppy and an alligator!

4. **Stop selling.** Whether you're trying to influence an internal committee decision or sell a multi-million dollar project, if you're selling, you're sweating! I remember a venture capitalist who stopped a young woman when she was about 2 minutes into her presentation. He said, "Stop selling me your product and sell me my investment opportunity." However you're communicating your ideas, whether it's by email, mail, phone, or F2F, when you sell, you're always pushing yourself on another. Relax! You know you have what it takes to make their day! Focus on just that — making their day (not yours). Help *them* to see *their* success. When the success of their event is as important to you as selling, servicing or setting up the event, they'll buy. Make it clear (and mean it!) that only if you can help them to achieve their goals would you want to do business with them.

5. **Have a clear purpose.** Sometimes I want to write to prospects just so that I'll be top of mind when they're making their speaker selections. I don't want to sound like I'm begging and I don't want to waste their time. Before writing, I ask myself: Why am I writing? What do I want to accomplish? What do I want the next step to be? Often, when I review my answers, I realize there is no reason to email them — other than maybe to annoy them! In that case, I'll opt for a traditional letter because it's less invasive. When I decide to email (because I know the recipient prefers email to other communication mediums), I'll make my point as quickly and clearly as possible. I might write, "I'm hopeful you'll think of me when you're making your 2005 speaker decisions. When the time is right, I'd be honored to work with you." Of course, if I have a new program to let them know about it, then I have another purpose for writing.

6. **Smile when you write.** You've heard the expression that people can tell if you're smiling when you answer the phone. Well, they can tell if you're pounding the keyboard when you respond! Draw a little smiley face on a post it and put it next to the computer. Or, hang a mirror where you can do face check from time to time. Is your reflection one of concentration or do you look angry, rushed, frustrated? Smile when you write — and, at the very least, you'll have a better day!

What Does Your Email Say About You?

If you received an email that you sent, what would you think about it? I'm not kidding! If you didn't know you, what would you think about the tone of your message, about your professionalism, about your style?

The truth is that we really are our own biggest enemy! We're so sure of what we want to say that sometimes we just don't bother to say it. We think we're being clear because we understand the situation and know the background, and to the other person, we could be writing Classical Greek!

Often, we respond without thinking through the ramifications of our words. So many of us are in such a hurry to be efficient that our effectiveness disappears. Just this morning, for instance, I received an email from my web host person. He responded to my email by saying, "As I've verified for you 5 times before..." What did he think he would achieve by writing that? Do you think he intended to purposely make me feel foolish/stupid/belittled? (He was probably more than a bit frustrated by my request... but if I didn't need an answer, I

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For more information, additional resources, or to schedule Sue to speak at your next meeting, please visit www.SpeakerSue.com or call 480-575-9711. Sue Hershkowitz-Coore's newest book, *Power Sales Writing*, is available in English and Chinese on line, or at your favorite bookstore.

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wouldn't have bothered him for the fifth time!) What professional purpose could he accomplish other than to make me annoyed (and possibly look for another more patient vendor!)? How often are we guilty of reacting to a message and writing back thoughtlessly rather than respectfully and professionally?

The most important thing you can do for your career is to learn to create email messages that are professional and respectful. Not only will you be less likely to be haunted by an email you've written that turns up as part of the discovery process in a court of law (see www.SpeakerSue.com for additional articles and ideas on this), but you'll get the results, respect and recognition you deserve.

Here are 6 important ideas to help you create more successful emails:

1. Use email only when it is the best communication medium. Ask yourself: Am I avoiding an important conversation by sending this email? Would it be better for each of us (the reader and me) if we could hear each other's tone of voice, and go back and forth on ideas in "real time"? Determine if you're using email to virtually manage, or if it is the most effective tool to use.

2. Respond to the issue, not the emotion. Whatever you do, don't respond in haste. You can honor the person waiting for your response with a quick response, as long as the response is purposeful and respectful. Try, "I see this a bit differently. When is a good time for you so we can talk this through?" Another alternative is: "I need some time to think about your viewpoint. I'll get back to you before noon tomorrow."

3. Always give reasons when you make a request. Researchers at Harvard, McGill and other prestigious universities around the world have determined that response rate is almost doubled when the reason for the request is provided, along with the request. Even if you think the recipient of your email knows why you're asking, you'll get a better response if you tell him/her again. Rather than write: "Please send me your notes by Friday," write, "Please send me your notes by Friday so I can include your input and get the report to Corporate headquarters before their deadline."

4. Don't email jokes. Ever. Eliminate anything that is C, R or L. That's Crude, Rude and Lewd. How do you know if it's C, R or L? If you have to ask yourself if it is, it probably is.

5. Email isn't as formal as a traditional mail document and it isn't as informal as conversation. Email is a business communication and should be written with that in mind. Adhere to proper standards of grammar and punctuation. Email writers who can't be bothered to take a nanosecond to capitalize the beginning of a sentence, or insert a comma correctly, imply that they are too busy to pay attention to the details that would make their reader's lives easier. Is that the message you want to send?

6. Spell check and then read it. (I used to say re-read it but I'm beginning to think that some writers don't read what they write — ever!) Here are the latest entries into my "Thank Goodness I Didn't Write That" file (please send more examples!):

- Hell Sue (instead of Hello Sue – I'm lucky it didn't say, "go to...")
- To a new General Manager with the name of Bob: Dear Boob (nice first impression, don't you think!)
- To a member of the Royal family: Your Royal Heinous (writer lost the entire account)

Effective email writers create messages that are purposeful, respectful and professional. Keep these 6 ideas in mind to feel more confident with every email you send.

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Did You Know?
Anything you put in writing,
including e-mail, can be used
to form binding legal
contracts.

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Email Disclaimers: You Can't Live With 'em and You Can't Live Without 'em!

Email disclaimers may or may not be worth the air they are written on when it comes to protecting you from liability in court! What they will do for you, though, is to help your case, and maybe even exempt you from lawsuits against your organization. How can they help you?

- A. The simple presence of the disclaimer can stop people from going after legal compensation.
- B. The reminder can help your own team to be more careful about what they put in writing.
- C. If you include a disclaimer about not passing on confidential information (breach of confidence) and the recipient still passes it on, he or she can be liable too. (This helps with intercepted or inadvertently sent emails too.)

So, even though email disclaimers are not legally binding (and nothing but nothing will stop a lawsuit if you write something that defames another person), it's best to include them.

A friend in Australia uses this very simple disclaimer:

Two notes about privacy:

The contents of this email are for the person to whom it was addressed so if that's not you, please advise us and/or them and get it sorted out.

In accordance with the Australian Commonwealth Government's National Privacy Principles we are happy to tell you that we won't give your details to anyone without your consent. That's it!

Here is one from a U.S. company that is short and to the point:

This communication is confidential and may be legally privileged. If you are not the intended recipient, (i) please do not read or disclose to others, (ii) please notify the sender by reply mail, and (iii) please delete this communication from your system. Failure to follow this process may be unlawful. Thank you for your cooperation.

Something to Think About:

The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing that you will make one. — Ellen Hubbard

Can you imagine what I would do if I could do all I can? — The Artist Formerly Known As Prince

Remember to never split an infinitive. The passive voice should never be used. Do not put statements in the negative form. Verbs have to agree with their subjects. Proofread carefully to see if you words out. If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be avoided by rereading and editing. A writer must not shift your point of view. And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (Remember, too, a preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.) Don't overuse exclamation marks!!! Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents. Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided. Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors. Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky. Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing. Always pick on the correct idiom. The adverb always follows the verb. Last but not least, avoid clichés like the plague; seek viable alternatives. — William Safire

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Remember:

We cannot go back to make a new start but we can start now to make a new ending.

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Looking for a training session that will give your attendees specific, practical tools to drive revenue? “Email Etiquette: What You Don’t Know Will Hurt You,” is getting rave reviews. Call Deirdre or me (480-575-9711) for more information or visit our website: www.SpeakerSue.com. Every program is custom crafted to meet your needs so the titles and blurbs you see on the website or mostly suggestions. Let’s talk to see what sessions might motivate and energize your team at you next meeting or conference.

You received this complimentary e-letter, because you registered for it on line, or you gave me your card after a workshop you attended and asked me to send it to you. If these ideas are not helpful, please send an email to Sue@SpeakerSue.com with the word “Remove” in the subject area. I hope you learn new strategies you can use immediately to enhance your performance and professionalism. In fact, I hope this is so helpful that you’ll forward it to your colleagues and friends so they can get better results, too.

Your comments and questions are always appreciated! Forward this ezine to your friends and colleagues. Use it as a discussion starter at your next sales meeting.

Enjoy!

All the best,

Sue

Sue Hershkowitz-Coore, CSP

When your meeting attendees are looking for high energy, actionable content and down to earth fun, call! I’ll work with you to create a program that is memorable and practical — a presentation that will contribute to the success of each of your participants.

Check out *Power Sales Writing* (McGraw Hill- Sept 2003) in bookstores everywhere and on line. Now available in Chinese!