

September 2009: The Powerful Writing Edition

How Dare We?

Well, you have to admit that it is a bit daring to write a newsletter, claiming to offer tips and hints about powerful writing.

What if we get the newsletter wrong and the writing fails to engage you? What tips can we possibly offer?

Here are a few to get you started, literally. Five Top Tips for starting a piece of writing:

1. Start with a hook - something to engage your reader:
 - A question
 - A provocative assertion
 - Something confusing or intriguing
2. Make sure that, early on, you state something that is obviously true - you want your reader agreeing with you.
3. Create a real sense that there are consequences, to give your writing an edge. This creates tension and a sense of value.
4. Pose a question that will get your reader thinking and, ideally, wondering how you can answer it. This gives the reader a reason to read on.
5. Now promise an answer. But make sure the answer will be a good one. It is not true that style is more important than substance.

Let's look at two examples of these principles at work. Hands up who knows who wrote this:

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

The answer, as many of our readers will have known, is Jane Austen, and this is the opening of *Pride and Prejudice*. Did you notice what she did?

1. She started with a hook - an intriguing title
2. She state a truth, universally acknowledged
3. She created consequences - for the unfortunate man at least. Men as property, how dare they?
4. She raises a question: who is he?
5. She promises an answer - 308 pages to be precise

Here is the second example, if you think these tips are just for novelists: look at the title and opening paragraphs of this article.

Learn More: [Report Writing](#), 29 September; or [Business Writing Skills](#), 21 October. The technique also works for Presenters: [Presenting with Impact](#), 15 November.

Two Course Name Changes

Just how much do words matter? We think they matter a huge amount, so we have been reviewing the titles of our courses to ensure that the titles accurately reflect what you get when you come on the course, and why the course should matter to you.

Here are two examples:

[Employment Law - How your business can stay legal](#), on 30 September

Formerly called *Employment Law Essentials*, this course really does offer you the essentials: staying within the law and avoiding prosecution

[Your Receptionist - The face of your organisation](#), on 1 October

Formerly called *Reception Skills*, the new title emphasises how important your receptionist's skills are to the impression you give to your customers.

Writing and Psychology

The words you use can have a powerful affect on your reader. If you know who you are writing for, you can choose your words with real precision, to make your ideas more compelling. If you are writing for a general audience, then you may want a smattering.

Here are three examples:

- Enthusiastic, dominant risk takers (think Richard Branson) like action words like: *“results”, “focus”, “clear”*
- Cerebral, logical, cautious people (think Bill Gates) like concepts like *“quality”, “proof”, “plan”*
- Dominant, controlling, analytical people (think Gordon Brown) like solid *“facts”, “details”, “reasons”*

Powerful use of language is essential for managers and leaders. Learn more: [Leadership Programme for Directors and Senior Managers](#), 30 September and 21 October; [The Management Programme](#), 22 September, 15 October, 17 November **(limited places left)**.

More on [Basic Psychology for Business](#) - *Something special for experienced managers* - leading to a Transactional Analysis TA101 certificate, 22-23 September

What are your Minutes For?

Writing minutes can be a real science. Before you decide on the format, ask: *“what are they for?”* If they are to create a complete record, they will need to be thorough, detailed and formal in style. On the other hand, they may simply be to record what decisions the meeting made. Numbered points will be enough. If they are to get action on agreed tasks, list the people present and put the actions they agreed and the deadlines against their names.

Learn More: spend a day thinking about the options and honing your skills at capturing key information in real time. [Minute Taking with Confidence](#) on 23 September

Marketing and sales

Where is powerful writing more important than this, in the business world?

It's a rhetorical question, to remind you of the importance of questions in marketing and sales. When you ask your prospect a question, what do they do?

They think and, hopefully, come up with an answer. When you know what their answer might be and your product or service is a part of that answer, they have made the sale for you.

One of the key components of marketing is research - asking potential customers what they like. Don't forget our survey: just click here, or paste this link into your browser:

<http://spreadsheets.google.com/viewform?formkey=dDI5X1ZobmJOdndlejVNaEdOSVpob0E6MA..>

You could win a lunch for two.

Finally, nothing is more valuable in the face-to-face sales process than good questions and careful listening.

Learn More: [Increase Sales through Effective Marketing](#), 10 September; [Enhancing the Customer Experience](#) - **Only 4 places remaining**, 17 September; [Sales - the Client Meeting](#), 23 September

More Courses coming up

General Business Skills Courses

[Time Management](#) on 17 September

[Dealing Effectively with Conflict](#) on 24 September

[Managing Stress in the Workplace](#) on 25 September

[Project Management](#) on 29 September

[Team Leadership](#) on 30 September

[Management Essentials](#) on 30 September.

[Supervisory Management](#) on 8 October **Only 4 places remaining**

Office IT Courses

[Word Intermediate](#) on 24 September

[Excel for Beginners](#) on 30 September

Writing is fun ...

... at least it is for our

Newsletter writer, Mike

You may be interested to know that our regular newsletter author, Kent Trainers director Mike Clayton, has just published his first book: The [Management Models Pocketbook](#).

Filled with great management advice in the same easy to read format as our newsletters, you can pick up your copy of The [Management Models Pocketbook](#) from Amazon.

The [Management Models Pocketbook](#) contains ten powerful models for leading people, motivating people, understanding people, and being effective at work.