

## 10 TIPS FOR WRITING CORPORATE COPY LIKE A PRO

Communication collateral—print or electronic—often serves as a prospect’s first impression of your company. Because printed words send verbal and non-verbal messages, your copy must be strong and clean if “competence” is the non-verbal message you wish to send; basic errors in language or facts instead say “incompetence” and “poor attention to detail.” Demonstrate you’re professional by writing like a professional.

- 1. BE GENUINE** – Authenticity of your message attracts the clients you want and repels the ones you don’t.
- 2. THINK** – Creating copy quickly without much forethought generates fluff. This type of writing gets the chore off your desk fast, but fluff is pervasive, boring, and glossed over by readers. The writing process begins with thinking and it pays, literally, to put thought behind what messages to convey and what those messages should accomplish. Provide meaningful information and prospects will take notice.
- 3. KNOW WHO YOU’RE TALKING TO** – Understanding your target audience and speaking their language touches the heart of the customer experience and establishes trust of your product or service through that personal connection.
- 4. TALK ABOUT THEM NOT YOU** – Ditch hype about how great your company and products are. Instead, stand out from the crowd by emphasizing how your product or service addresses your customers’ needs and solves their problems.
- 5. AVOID “NOTHING WORDS”** – These are trite, ubiquitous words—such as very, little, pretty, nice, or excellent—that attempt to qualify. Use distinct words and descriptive phrases that are strong by themselves. Be specific rather than general; concrete rather than vague.
- 6. JUST SAY NO TO CLICHÉS** – Clichés are long-overused phrases that have lost originality and impact. A mish-mash of clichés using terms not typically associated with your business roadblocks readers’ comprehension by causing them to take a mental pit stop to translate the cliché. Maintain attention on your message by using clear, succinct language that communicates easily and quickly.
- 7. BE CONCISE** – Long, verbose text that explains a point in two to three different ways is hard to follow and digest. Edit for sentences that are redundant; use a single word that means the same as your two words. Less clutter clears way for greater emphasis on main points.
- 8. PRESENT A CALL TO ACTION** – Tell readers what you want them to do now that they have been moved by your message. “Call to obtain your free copy.” “Visit our website to download a checklist.” “Contact Jen Smith to learn how sponsorship can support your marketing objectives.” Close the communication loop by offering a next step.
- 9. CONNECT THE DOTS** – Verify what you say in copy with what actually happens when customers go to the website, call customer service, or whatever it is you want them to do. Literally follow written instructions to make sure it directs people as intended, call customer service phone numbers to make sure the numbers are correct, and jump online to ensure website URLs actually point to the site referenced in the copy. These simple but far too common mistakes render prior production and marketing efforts useless.
- 10. PROOFREAD** – You’ve heard it before: Don’t rely on spell check alone. Your hard work and professional image stand to be undercut by sloppy errors in spelling and syntax that easily could have been detected with one last simple proofread.