

Marketing

- No matter what else,

**EVERYTHING YOU WRITE IS A
MARKETING COMMUNICATION!**

- You are marketing the company in everything you write



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Marketing

- Be aware that you will have an impact
- Poor grammar, bad spelling ... it detracts from your message
- If you have a Word Processor ... use the spell checker and the grammar checker
- You can always CUT & PASTE your stuff into an email or other document



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A Caution

BE WARY

Spell Checkers and Grammar Checkers are handy tools, but you can only trust them so far

READ YOUR MATERIAL CAREFULLY

Your reader won't blame your spell checker, they'll blame YOU



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Beware of Grammar Checkers & Guides

- 'Good' Grammar is not always readable or effective
- Grammar is really the sum of how we actually speak and use English ... NOT what your English teacher taught you
- Grammar is really a fluid set of guidelines that help us communicate, when they interfere with the communication then we should ignore them
- Grammar also changes over time ... think about what was considered 'good' in the 1850's vs. NOW



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Types of Short Written Communications

- Emails
- Message Board Posts
- Letters
- Email Blasts
- Advertising Copy



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Why are you writing?

- To provide *Good News*
- To provide *Bad News*
- To *Persuade Someone*
- To *Answer Questions*
- To *Provide Information*

WHAT IS YOUR OBJECTIVE IN WRITING?



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Your Writing Goal

- GREAT Writing

- G** - Goal
- R** - Relevant facts
- E** - Emotional Tone
- A** - Action
- T** - Time frame



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REMEMBER!

- You won't be there to EXPLAIN!
- Good writing has to stand on its own, it has to be self-explanatory
- If you have to explain the meaning of what you've written to someone, then you've failed



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The 4-Step Process

1. Get the Facts
2. Determine your Objective
3. Consider who the reader is going to be and how they will react
4. Plan your piece



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Basic Writing Styles

- Direct
Use it when you're giving good news
- Indirect
Use this for bad news
Or
Use this when you need to persuade someone



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Direct Communications

1. Begin with the answer
2. Identify what you are replying to if this is a reply
3. Arrange your note in logical order
4. Handle negatives directly
5. Add any necessary extras
6. Make sure you use a cordial close
7. Use illustrations if possible



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Indirect Communications

1. Setup the opening carefully
2. Provide your reasoning
3. Handle the situation positively
4. Use a good will closing

When Persuading

1. Open Strongly, grab the reader's attention
2. Make a request asking for action



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Writing and Editing

The most **COMMON** problem with people's writing is poor editing

- Don't worry about editing at first, just get your ideas on paper
- Start wherever you can with whatever you know ... it's not wrong to go back
- Word Processors make it easy to start and reorganize things easily



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Getting the Ideas Out

- Microsoft Word
 - Outlining
 - FreeWriting
- Outline Applications
- Mind Mapping
 - Inspiration
 - Axon



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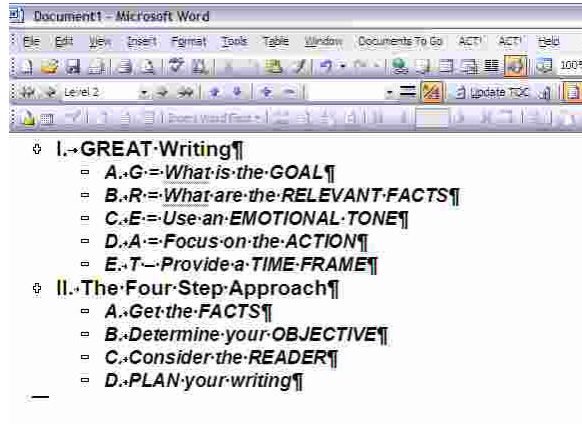
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Word Outlining

Microsoft Word has a very powerful outliner that allows you to enter your thoughts and ideas and then reorganize the structure, and then shift into document mode to build your piece



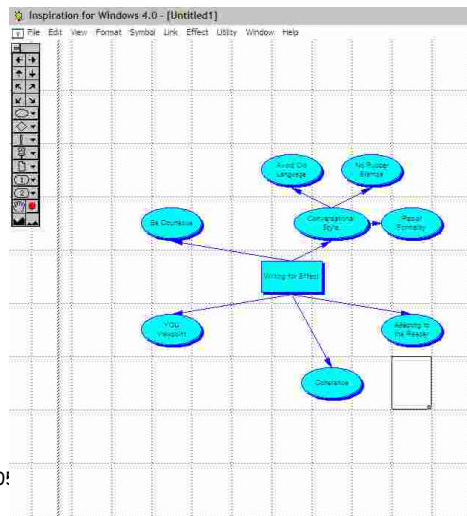
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Mind Mapping

There are applications you can buy that will let you mind map on the computer ... this is a tool called **Inspiration**



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Mind Mapping Process

- Start with an idea or an image in the center of a piece of paper
- Write related ideas connected to the central idea by a line
- For each related idea, add additional ideas related to it
- If ideas come up related to something you're not focusing on ... add it where appropriate



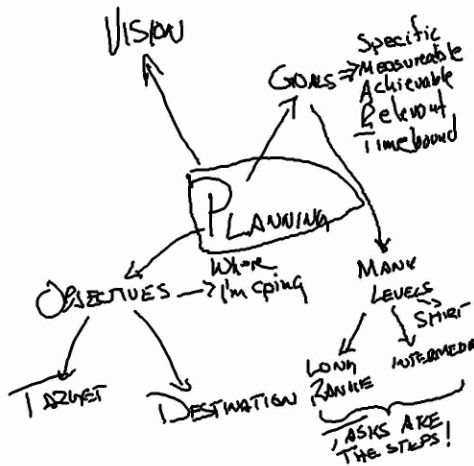
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Mind Mapping

Mind Mapping is a great way to break free and just free associate ... start with your central thought or idea and just record all other thoughts and ideas associated with it ... you can get a lot down on paper quickly ... enough to get started writing



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What is FreeWriting?

- Simply: Put your pen on the paper and start writing and don't stop
 - Write whatever comes into your mind
 - Some books suggest not taking the pen from the paper
 - It's usual to set a time limit
- You can do the same thing on the computer
- Focused FreeWriting is writing with a topic in mind
- You DO NOT think about what you are writing or about editing it, you simply write without stop whatever comes into your mind



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Basic FreeWriting

- Begin with a blank computer screen and a watch (or the clock on the computer). You might use a pad instead--freewriting involves generating words, not correcting them or getting just the right word.
- Set a time for yourself. Try one, five, or ten minutes. Longer times may not be that productive since freewriting is a "warm up" for more focused writing.
- Begin to type or write about anything that comes into your head. Don't stop until the time is up.
- Then review what you have written. Are there words you like? Ideas that might work for the next project you are doing?



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Focused FreeWriting

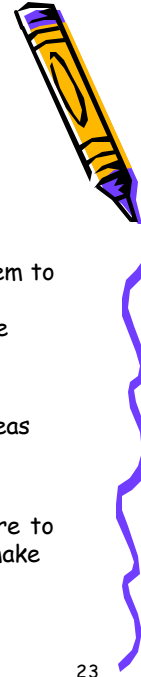
- Put a topic of your choice at the top of a blank page.
- Set a time limit and begin Freewriting. Write things that seem to be related to the topic. Don't worry about order of ideas or grammatical correctness. Don't worry if the ideas seem to be digressions.
- When time is up, look over what you have written. Pull out ideas and phrases you can use later.
- Practice putting the Freewriting into outline form. If you were to use the writing to begin short note, which points would you make first? Second?



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Sample FreeWriting

This is a sample of a longer piece of freewriting ... no changes or corrections have been made and no editing has been done. This is just as it came straight out of my head ...

Topic: Getting People to Write Better

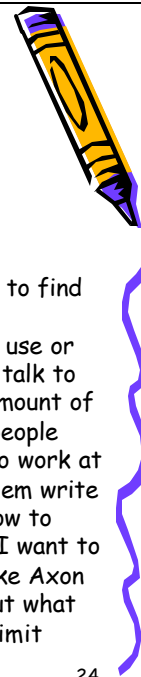
In order to get people to write better, I need to find good ways to make them understand just how important it is. This isn't about what words to use or how to write sentences, but about how people talk to each other when the medium is writing. No amount of instruction in grammar or spelling will help if people aren't interested in communicating. One way to work at it is to give them tools they can use to help them write more freely, as well as the knowledge about how to edit simply and easily. How can I do that? Do I want to show them applications they might purchase like Axon or Inspiration or do I want them to learn about what they can do with the tools they have. I don't limit myself to what is provided



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The Most Important Trick in Writing

- Getting Started
- If you've done your homework, gathered your information together, gotten familiar with your material ... then once you start, your material will flow out of your fingers

Have a Vowel Movement!



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Editing

- Only after you've got the material on paper is it worth spending the time to edit
- Don't worry if it's all there, if you can't get any more out, shift into editing mode

NEVER SEND ANYTHING WITHOUT AT LEAST ONE EDITING PASS

- It's best to edit it after you're done writing it, then put it aside and leave it for up to a day before doing a final edit ... sometimes, you just can't do that ... but DO give yourself a rest and read your piece before sending it.

Many people believe they know how to edit, but good editors are rare. Be careful when accepting advice from self-styled editors



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Tips & Tricks of the Editing Game

- Read your piece backwards or Upside Down

When you read backwards or upside down, you lose the connection to meaning and can see misspellings and awkward phrases easier

- Print it out

Trying to edit on the computer screen can be very difficult. Print your piece and go sit in a comfortable chair and read it with a colored pencil in hand.



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Tips & Tricks of the Editing Game

- Outline or Mind Map your Piece

Act like you've never read it, can you outline or mind map the points coherently?

- Follow the old dictum

"Cut when you're tired"

When you're tired, you're usually not willing to put up with excess verbiage or fancy writing



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Tips & Tricks of the Editing Game

- **Read Aloud**
Reading your piece out loud will highlight awkward phrasing and catch phony phrases. If it doesn't sound OK, it probably needs to be rewritten.
- **Listen to it Read**
When someone else reads your material out loud, you get a more objective view of what you wrote, but it can be very embarrassing.



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Basic Writing

- **Words**
- **Sentences & Paragraphs**
- **Writing for Effect**



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Words

- Choose your words well
 - Use concrete, specific words
A significant loss -or- A 53% Loss
Good attendance record -or- A 100% Perfect Record
 - Use familiar words
query or question?
 - Use short words
 - Avoid Latinized jaw breakers
 - Use the gutty, Germanic, direct words

They acceded to the proposition to terminate the business
or
They agreed to quit the business



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Words

- Limit Technical Words
Cerebral Vascular Accident or Stroke?
Legal Words should be forbidden:
Whereas, Herewith ...
- Stay away from uncommon expressions
- Be careful of abbreviations
 - Common ones are OK ... don't, won't, etc
 - Uncommon abbreviations are confusing ...
MIPS, FIPS, DMS, UTM



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Words

- Use words that have **STRENGTH** and **VIGOR** ... strong action words

Adjectives & Adverbs are weak
use **Tycoon** instead of
Eminently successful businessman

- Use **Sensory Language**
 - Visual - **It LOOKS OK** ...
 - Auditory - **I HEAR you** ...
 - Feeling - **I UNDERSTAND** ...



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Words

- Be **PRECISE** about meaning ...
fired, dismissed, canned, separated, & discharged
all mean the same thing, but have different connotations

- Limit **Camouflaged Verbs** ...
verbs masquerading as nouns
Verb - **acquire**
Noun - **acquisition**
Camouflaged - **make an acquisition**

- Use the **ACTIVE** voice
It has been done
vs
I did it



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Sentences & Paragraphs

- Use Short Sentences
 - Limit the content
 - Use words economically
 - instead of **For the purpose of** simply use **For**
 - Keep your meaning clear
 - The sentence should have an overall unity
 - A sentence should focus on **ONE** idea, no unrelated ideas
 - Pay attention to sentence design
 - Where is the emphasis in your sentence?



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Sentences & Paragraphs

- Paragraphs
 - Use Topic Sentences
 - Throw out unnecessary detail
 - Keep them short
 - Provide a sense of **MOVEMENT** ... going from the beginning to the end
 - Paragraphs should have a sense of unity
 - ... everything is about the same topic



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Sentences & Paragraphs

- For either sentences or paragraphs
 - Nothing is absolute
 - Vary the style, short & long
 - Keep the *AVERAGE* length short, but say what you need to say



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Writing for Effect

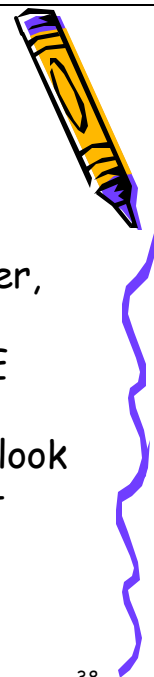
- Adapt to the **READER**
 - Make what you write about the reader, not about the writer
 - Everything should say that you *CARE* about the reader
 - Adopt the '**YOU**' Viewpoint ... always look at what you write from the point-of-view of your reader



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Writing for Effect

- Be Specific
- Use a good opening and close
- Provide a context for your material ... background, references, reference to previous letters or emails, etc.
- Backtrack - use words and phrases whole from the reader's previous emails or letters



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Writing for Effect

- Courtesy
 - Focus on the READER
 - Don't PREACH ... NO ONE responds well when you preach
 - Saying 'obvious' things
 - Lecturing
 - Be Sincere and sincerely concerned



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Writing for Effect

- Do more than expected
- DO NOT WRITE WHEN ANGRY
 - If you're angry when you write, your reader will feel it and be angry in return
 - Nothing is accomplished that way
 - Sometimes, it's good to be angry, write whatever you feel ... and then THROW IT AWAY! Never send a note that you wrote while angry



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Writing for Effect

- Conversational Style
 - Resist formality for most short communications ... short pieces need to be PERSONAL
 - Avoid 'old', 'stilted' language
"We beg to advise ..." or "This is to inform you ..."
 - Leave out 'Rubber Stamps' or clichés... phrases so common they could be on a rubber stamp
"In accordance with your instructions ..."
 - Use contrasting examples



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Writing for Effect

- Basic ways to create emphasis
 - Position
 - Space
 - Emphasis
 - Structure
 - Mechanical (font, bolding, italics, etc)



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Writing for Effect

- Coherence
 - Use 'tie in' structures to tie pieces together
design sentences so one sentence leads to the next ...
each sentence builds on what came before
 - Use KEY WORD repetition
 - Use pronouns
 - Use transitional words
in addition, besides, in spite of, in contrast, and many more



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Writing for Effect

- Respect the Reader's Time
 - Keep it clear and concise
 - Overly long communications wear people out ... unless you are clear about what you're writing, you'll lose people very quickly



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Writing for Effect MOST IMPORTANT!

**EDIT YOUR MATERIAL BEFORE YOU
GIVE IT TO SOMEONE!**



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Writing for Effect

- Put your stuff down, walk away from it, and reread it before you give it to any one
- Most people don't bother and send things out too quickly
- AIM is an excellent example of where you are FORCED to send unedited writing ... how often do we ALL make mistakes on AIM? Even on AIM, a moment spent rereading what you wrote will save you embarrassment at the least.



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Writing for Effect

- Don't forget other people
- Your writing will be stronger if you have someone else review it
- Collaborative Writing ... an excellent approach
 - We've built a number of collaborative documents with everyone working together through GoToMeeting
- Ask for Help
 - If you're not sure, we've got some EXCELLENT writers and editors here ... ask them to do a quick read through your stuff and ask for their suggestions



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Conclusion

- There are a number of us here with experience ranging from limited to extensive ... take advantage of us
- I'm available to read your stuff any time ... I'm happy to help if I can

tdettmann@gmail.com



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