



DeYoung Consulting Services

Helping People Learn up to Their Potential

A successful proposal or report should be easy to read and deliver a clear message. Last month I shared with you the three parts of any written document: the introduction, body and conclusion. Writing in this format will help you communicate clearly and concisely.

The following tips will help you fine-tune your piece to make it easier to read.

- Think clearly. Write clearly. Be logical and organized. Don't get diverted into side topics.
- Keep the report or proposal concise. It should be short but complete. Omit things that are repeated in other areas of the document. Don't try to impress anyone with long, complicated sentences.
- Proofread. Check grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Have a co-worker or friend read your document. Remember, this is a business setting so don't be too casual.
- Read the report or proposal aloud. This is a good method to find misspellings, typos and other errors. It will also make you think about what you wrote and help you determine if it makes sense.
- Filter facts through your key point. Are the facts true and accurate? Are they important to what you're trying to communicate? If not, they shouldn't be in your report.
- Think and write with your summary in mind. What is the most important point you want remembered? What do you want to happen?
- Review all requirements in a proposal. Are all questions answered? Who will do the work? Why should the reader choose you? What needs to be done? How will the product/service be delivered? When is a decision needed?
- Don't be afraid to rewrite your document. Professional writers do it all the time.
- Plan ahead. Start the writing process several days or weeks before the due date by drafting a short outline and then a rough draft. This will give you time to revise and re-read it to make sure you are submitting a quality document.

Just like any skill, writing takes work. By following these tips consistently your writing will continue to improve. Your reports will become more clear and concise. And your readers are sure to appreciate your work.

Karen DeYoung is principal of DeYoung Consulting Services, which provides quality learning experiences for individuals and groups. We develop training materials and activities that advance individual, team, and organizational learning. Our work is done with integrity, reliability, and accountability.

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4834 Park Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 822-8872
(612) 220-3440 mobile
deyoung4@aol.com

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