



Strengthen Your Writing and Strengthen Your Job Security

With more and more companies laying off key employees and eliminating jobs, it's a good idea to put your best foot forward and add to your job security. One way to do this is to make sure your writing is clear and professional. Here's a refresher on the key points of writing to impress.

Think before you write. What is it you want to communicate? What is the best way to deliver your message? Some messages require an official memo while others only need an email. And sometimes it's best to pick up the phone or walk down the hall to talk face-to-face.

Plan your writing. If your message is more complex, make a few notes—or even an outline—before you write. This will help you write and make your message flow more logically.

Write clearly. Don't let your sentences get bogged down with lots of phrases. Shorter sentences and precise words will help your message get across more accurately. And shorter paragraphs make writing easier to read. Unless you're writing an academic paper paragraphs really don't need more than five or six sentences.

Choose your words carefully. Remember to use active words, eliminating helping verbs like "be," "can" and "should." Avoid using jargon or too many acronyms. Be precise ("My recommendation is to...") so you communicate clearly. But avoid being too blunt ("The sales forces isn't working hard enough.") so you don't insult someone.

Watch for errors. Spelling, grammar and word usage errors reflect on your professionalism and abilities. Take the extra minute to proofread your writing before you send it. Keep a dictionary and punctuation primer handy when you're not sure how to spell a word or use a punctuation mark.

Take ownership of your writing. Remember to sign your name on all your email messages and that your report or memo might reappear on your desk or in your performance review. Give your writing a little more attention to demonstrate your commitment to your organization and doing your job well.

With best wishes for a happy holiday season and a prosperous, peaceful 2009.

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.

DeYoung Consulting Services
Helping People Learn up to Their Potential
4834 Park Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 822-8872
(612) 220-3440 mobile
deyoung4@aol.com
www.deyoungconsultingservices.com