Business Writing
Virtual Workshop

Customized for
WACKER
Business Writing

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Business Writing

“History will be kind to me for I intend to write it.” - Winston Churchill

The ability to write well is essential when you want to communicate your thoughts and ideas to an audience in an email. Writing well means that you can state your ideas clearly and in an engaging manner. It also gives you the ability to inform, persuade, and motivate others.

The written word is powerful. Passionately written letters have started and ended wars, spared lives, and have even become the legal foundation of a nation. On July 4, 1776, members of the Second Continental Congress drafted and signed a document declaring that the Thirteen Colonies of North America were “free and independent states” and that “all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be, totally dissolved.” It went on to lay the foundation for America’s laws and government with these famous words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

What were the results of these words? Among the most significant ones were the Revolutionary War, Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, and most laws that still govern our nation today.

In this virtual workshop, you will learn:

- What makes business writing effective or ineffective?
- The iSpeak model for effective business writing
- Essentials of email etiquette
- Grammar in business
- The importance of proofreading
Situational Conversations

“Half the world is composed of people who have something to say and can't, and the other half who have nothing to say and keep on saying it.”
- Robert Frost

Depending on the situation, the type of communication used can determine the effectiveness of the communication. When you communicate over the phone, you lose richness because visual cues are no longer part of your message. But, phone messages are still richer than written messages because the listener can use your vocal cues to interpret your meaning. Written communication is the least rich of all because visual and vocal cues are absent from the message (with the exception of emoticons 😊).

Communication Retention

We would all like to think that people retain every word we speak and implement all our advice, but this is simply not the case. People process information in one of three ways: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. People tend to rely on one of these approaches more often than the others, but use all three of these approaches at different times. When you understand that people learn in various ways, you can focus on incorporating different methods when you communicate.

Visual
People who learn by seeing. Words that work with visual learners include “see, watch, look, envision, imagine, and picture.”

Auditory
People who learn by listening. Words that work well with auditory learners include “hear, listen, sound, resonate, harmonize, sense, experience, understand, think, motivate, and decide.”

Kinesthetic
People who learn by doing. Words that are effective with these learners include “feel, touch, hand-on, do, grasp, concrete, get hold of, and solid.”
Written Communication

“Words, once they are printed, have a life of their own.” - Carol Burnett

In the past 20 years, the world has seen an explosive growth of communication technologies. Computers and personal electronics (such as mobile phones and handheld devices) have added thousands of ways to send and receive written messages. In a typical day, we send and receive email, text messages, electronic documents, presentations, spreadsheets, and instant messages. We use social networking technologies like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter to make information accessible to the public. We have all seen ineffective and poorly delivered communication. What makes communication unsuccessful? It could be the content, the delivery, or a mismatch between communicator, subject and recipient. What are the most common reasons for miscommunication in the workplace?

Eliminating miscommunication and improving written correspondence is important because:

1. Readers judge our abilities and competence.
2. Readers draw conclusions about your organization.
3. Readers determine how important (or unimportant) they are to us.

**Exercise: Business Writing Mistakes**

list the most common business writing mistakes you have seen.
Business Writing Model

“Put it before them briefly so they will read it, clearly so they will appreciate it, picturesquely so they will remember it, and above all, accurately so they will be guided by its light.” - Joseph Pulitzer

Prepare

Effective business writing is not haphazard. Research and solid logic are the first steps to writing clearly and persuasively. In the preparation phase of the writing process, you will perform the appropriate research, define the purpose of the document, and analyze the target audience.

Develop

Once you’ve collected the facts, you must begin with a well-constructed outline. By planning an outline that includes an effective opening, a body of facts, and clear call to action, you can achieve your desired results.

Write

Writing should be clear, concise, complete, and correct. Sentence construction, appropriate vocabulary, and correct grammar keep the reader focused on your meaning, not your mistakes.

Review

Whether you are simply re-reading your email before sending it or spending time proofing a business proposal, the appropriate review of all written documents ensures error-free documents are presented to the target audience.
Concise Communication

“Perhaps the best test of a person’s intelligence is their capacity for making a summary.” — Lytton Strachey

Effective business writing can be identified by answering a simple question, “Did the document achieve its objective?” When we write well, we are saying that we thought about our message, we took the time to understand the reader, and we wished to project a positive image of ourselves. In addition, when we write well, we improve the bottom line. Why? We save time, frustration, and inconvenience; all of which represent costs. Effective business writing can be described as: Correct, Clear, Concise, and Complete.

Legend has it that when Ernest Hemingway was challenged to write a six-word story, he came up with, “For Sale: baby shoes, never worn.” Inspired by Hemingway’s short, short story, SMITH Magazine challenged readers and famous writers alike to submit their own six-word memoirs for a contest. “Not Quite What I Was Planning” is a book documenting thousands of entries sent in response. The results are devastating, poignant, hilarious, and good lessons to all. Each is a nugget for a larger story, and universal themes abound. Many will inspire you to think about and write your own stories, beginning with the six-word essence and expanding onward and upward.

The discipline of using six words helps make ideas stand out more starkly. Also, this kind of exercise is a terrific way to get to know the members of a team. It’s a creative, fresh way to think about yourself, and what’s important to you. This concept can also be used to create a headline for your written message.

**Exercise: Six-Word Memoirs**

Write your life story in six words.

_________________  __________________  ______________

_________________  __________________  ______________
Email Etiquette

“Writing is the action of thinking, just as drawing is the action of seeing and composing music is the action of hearing,” - Brenda Ueland

The average employee spends 25 percent of his or her time at work processing the hundreds of emails they send and receive each day. And yet, according Barbara Pachter, author of “The Essentials of Business Etiquette: How to Greet, Eat, and Tweet Your Way to Success,” there are still many business professionals who do not know how to use email appropriately.

One thought to keep in mind when it comes to business writing and email: “Type unto others as you would have them type unto you.”

Exercise: Email Mistakes

In the space below, list the most common Email mistakes you have seen.

_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________
The Essentials of Email Etiquette

Email is the preferred form of communication in today’s workplace – it’s easy and convenient. But it’s often this convenience that leads people to making embarrassing mistakes that may be detrimental in a professional interaction.

Corporate America started using email about 20 years ago. With little guidance, it’s no wonder that email etiquette is all over the place. Author and career coach Barbara Pachter outlines modern email etiquette rules in her business etiquette book. Below are the most important ones to remember:

1. Include a clear, direct subject line.
   “People often decide whether to open an email based on the subject line,” Pachter says. “Choose one that lets readers know you are addressing their concerns or business issues.”

2. Think twice before hitting “reply all.”
   No one wants to read emails from 20 people that have nothing to do with them. Refrain from hitting “reply all” unless you really think everyone on the list needs to receive the email, Pachter says.

3. Use professional salutations.
   “The relaxed nature of our writings should not affect the salutation in an email,” she says. “Hey is a very informal salutation and generally it should not be used in the workplace. She also advises against shortening anyone’s name. Say “Hi Michael,” unless you’re certain he prefers to be called “Mike.”

4. Use exclamation points sparingly.
   If you choose to use an exclamation point, use only one to convey excitement, Pachter says. “People sometimes get carried away and put a number of exclamation points at the end of their sentences.”

5. Be cautious with humor.
   Humor can easily get lost in translation without the right tone or facial expressions. In a professional exchange, it’s better to leave humor out of emails unless you know the recipient well.

6. Proofread every message.
   Your mistakes won’t go unnoticed by the recipients of your email. “And, depending upon the recipient, you may be judged for making them,” Pachter says. Read and re-read your email a few times, preferably aloud, before sending it off.
Exercise: New Expense Report Process Email

Write an email to your team informing them of a new expense reimbursement process that will begin on September 1, 2018. Be sure to include a detailed subject line. The email will include a PDF attachment with the specific details of the new three-step process.

Subject: _______________________________________________________

Salutation: ________________________________________

Sign-off: ________________________________________________
Grammar in Business

“I never made a mistake in grammar but once in my life and as soon as I done it I seen it.” - Carl Sandburg, Poet and novelist

The ability to write well is essential when you want to communicate your thoughts and ideas to an audience in a more formal way than speaking. Writing well means that you can state your ideas clearly and in an engaging manner. Write so that the reader can focus on your meaning, not your mistakes. In this section you will learn to avoid common grammatical mistakes.

Exercise: Grammar Drill

A) Rachael Ray finds inspiration in cooking her family and her dog.

B) The famous line “I am your father”, was James Earl Jones, the voice of Darth Vader.


D) They’re going to love going there - I heard their food is the best.

1. Improper comma use

To Separate Elements in a Series
Each element in the series should be separated by a comma. Please note that the last comma is optional. It’s called an “Oxford comma,” and whether you use it depends on your own preference.

To Separate Independent Clauses
An independent clause is a sentence that can stand on its own, so when in doubt whether a comma needs to be in the sentence, take the second part of the sentence and ask yourself if it would make a full sentence on its own. If it does, add a comma. If it doesn’t, leave it out.

To Separate an Introductory Word or Phrase
At the beginning of a sentence, we often add an introductory word or phrase that requires a subsequent comma. “For example,” would be an example.
2. They’re vs. Their vs. There
One's a contraction for "they are" (they're), one refers to something owned by a
group (their), and one refers to a place (there).

3. Its vs. It’s
This one confuse even the best of writers. “Its” is possessive and “it’s” is a
contraction of “it is.”

4. Quotation Marks
Another great grammatical debate involves whether or not punctuation belongs
inside or outside of quotation marks. The period and the comma always go
inside quotation marks. The dash, the semicolon, the exclamation mark and the
question mark go inside when they apply to the quoted matter (if it’s not the
entire sentence) but outside when they apply to the whole sentence.

5. Your vs. You’re
The difference between these two is owning something versus actually being
something: “Your” is possessive and “you're” is a contraction of “you are.”

6. Affect vs. Effect
The easiest way to remember the difference between the two is that “affect”
means “to influence.” So if you’re going to influence something, you will affect
it. If it’s the result of something, it’s an effect.

7. Fewer vs. Less
Another common mistake, “less” refers to quantity and
“fewer” to a number.

8. Alot vs. A lot
A lot is two words - no exceptions. You wouldn’t write “alittle,” so why write
"alot?".

9. Too vs. To vs. Two
“Too” is either the start of an infinitive or a preposition. “Too” is an adverb to
express excess and can often replace the word “also.” “Two” refers to the
number.
10. i.e. vs. e.g.
Many people think they mean the same thing and are interchangeable, but they’re actually different.

i.e. is Latin for id est, which means “that is.” You can think of it as meaning “in essence,” or “in other words.” It either offers more information or paraphrases the idea in a clearer way.

e.g. is Latin for exempli gratia, which means “for example”. Use this to provide a list of examples.

11. Semicolons
Semicolons help writers connect two independent clauses that, though they could stand on their own, are closely related and should remain in the same sentence. For example, “It’s her birthday; a party is inevitable!” Notice that each clause could be its own sentence - but stylistically, it makes more sense for them to be joined.

12. Colons
Colons should be used to introduce or define something. For example, we used one in the workshop title, “The Write Stuff: Practice Clear Communication.” Before the colon we give you the title of the session, and after the colon we define what we will do in the session. You may also use a colon before a list, or when preceded by a clause that can stand on its own.

Exercise: Grammar Drill

that that is is that is not is not is that it it

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

Your Welcome, Megan!!! 😊

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

We will have coffee cheese and crackers and grapes during the break.

______________________________________________________________
A variety of soft drinks coffee tea etc. are on the table.

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

You ___________ (to / too / two) could attend the next virtual class if you do not have a previously scheduled meeting.

______________________________________________________________

(Fewer / Less) than 25 participants will attend the “How to deliver a Virtual Presentation” workshop next quarter.

______________________________________________________________

(Irregardless / Regardless), there will be ________ (alot / a lot) of people attending the session.

______________________________________________________________

(It’s / Its) a gift that a child would love, ___________ (e.g. / i.e.), a little red wagon.

Yes, ___________ (thats / that’s) my daughter serving the volleyball.

The two ___________ (CEOs / CEO’s) met to broker the deal.

The ___________ (director’s / directors) signature is required to approve this proposal.

Appointments have been delayed because ___________ (its / it’s) a holiday.

The special ___________ (effects / affects) in the movie were used to great ________ (effect / affect).

___________ (There / Their / They’re) playing ___________ (there / their / they’re) video games over _________________ (there / their / they’re).

You answered all these questions before anyone else; ______________ (your / you’re) fast!
Purpose and Audience

“Failure to prepare is preparing to fail.” - Coach John Wooden

Purpose

Every effective communication has a clear purpose. It should be a concise and detailed statement that describes what you want from your audience after they have read your message. Identifying the objective of your message early in the preparation process will help to focus your email development (introduction, supporting data, and call to action) on applicable information that applies to why you are writing in the first place. Anything that does not relate to your objective should not be included in your writing. Questions to ask yourself as you document your message’s purpose include:

Know

What do I want the reader to understand, believe, or think about the message?

Feel

How do I want the reader to feel about this information? Inspired? Worried? Confident? How do I want them to feel about me? My company? My department?

Do

What action do I want the reader to take as a result of the message?

Audience Analysis

Another important aspect of writing is connecting with the audience. An analysis of your reader will help determine how to relate your message to your audience. What does your reader want from your message? Below you will find some general categories that you should include in your preparation.

- **Who are they?** What is their status compared to yours? Are you equals? Are you a level below the reader on the organization chart? Higher? Will the reader be a customer, boss, co-worker or employee?

- **Are the readers experts in your field?** What do they know?

- **Why are they reading your message?** Are they decision-makers?

- **What do they want from you?** What biases do they have? What doubts and questions are they likely to have? Why?
Exercise: Message Preparation

Identify the situation, purpose, audience, and time for an upcoming message.

What’s the Situation?

Purpose

KNOW:

FEEL:

DO:

Audience

Who will be reading your message?

Are the readers experts in your field?

Why are they reading your message?

What do they want from you?
Structure and Supporting Material

“Don’t tell people everything you know. Tell them what they need to know.”
- Jerry Weissman, Presentations Coach and Author

The body of your written communication is where you present the data that supports your introduction. It is important that the body is well organized so that the reader can follow the progression of your ideas. You want to present the facts, backup information, arguments and other necessary information that will ultimately bring the audience to the intended goal of your presentation.

The biggest mistake we see from writers is the perceived need to overpopulate the message. The assumption seems to be that if you provide a little bit of everything, there will be something for everyone. We call this the “show up and throw up” method of communicating. A well-structured email or document will be much more effective, making it memorable and thought-provoking.

The Rule of Three

The “Rule of Three” is based on the fact that people tend to remember three things. Any more than three and retention suffers. By focusing your message on three significant points and repeating them in different ways throughout your message, you will help guide your audience to remember and retain the main purpose of your presentation. Aristotle introduced this concept in 350 B.C. when he referred to “three forms of proof” in Rhetoric.
### Exercise: Supporting Material

Document the types of Supporting Material you could use in your message.

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<tr>
<th>Key Point</th>
<th>Supporting Material</th>
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### Exercise: Key Points and Supporting Material

Write the key points and document supporting materials for your message.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Point #1</th>
<th>Supporting Material</th>
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Visual Appeal

“Writing is the only thing that, when I do it, I don't feel I should be doing something else.” - Gloria Steinem, Author

The audience is much more likely to read and understand an email or report that is visually appealing. Documents that appear full of long paragraphs with no tables, lists, or diagrams can be cumbersome to read. The easier it is for the reader to understand the logic of the content, the greater the chance that it will be completely understood and accepted.

Spacing

Business documents and reports are currently presented as single-spaced documents with a blank space between each paragraph. Much like this curriculum is written, you will find shorter paragraphs (no more than ~5 lines) all separated by a blank line. Shorter paragraphs with whitespace are more likely to be read completely than much lengthier paragraphs.

Formatting

Documents can be created with very rich and appealing formatting. By utilizing consistent styles for the body text, headings and sub-headings, the reader will understand how each element they read fits into the overall picture.

Bullets and lists

It is much easier to read and reference a bulleted or numbered list, as opposed to data presented in paragraph format. Numbered lists should always be used when the sequence is important. If the data can be read and understood in any random order, bulleted lists should be used.

Bold / italics

Bold, italic and underlined text is used for emphasis. The intensity of emphasis grows from weakest to strongest in this order: italics, underline, and then bold. To put a minor emphasis on a word, use italic; for a major emphasis, use bold.

Headings

Each major section of a report should be labeled with a heading. Labeling a section provides an easy method for the reader to transition from one topic to the next. Headings will also make it easy for the reader to find specific material in the future when they refer back to the document.

Table of contents

For lengthier documents (five pages or more) a table of contents provides an overview of the entire document, as well as a quick reference for jumping to a specific section. Microsoft Word and Google Documents can automatically generate a table of contents with the appropriate page numbers.
Review Your Work

“Amateurs work until they get it right. Professionals work until they can’t get it wrong.”

Every form of business writing, no matter how insignificant it may seem, is a direct reflection on your professionalism and your organization. Whether sending an email, writing a report, or presenting a proposal, the reader will use your communication to make assumptions about you, your level of education, and competence.

By defining the purpose in the Prepare phase of the writing process, the Review phase can serve as a “check” to make certain that the text created aligns with the original intent of the business document. When planning the development of your business documents, always set aside enough time to adequately review and proofread. 99.9% accuracy is not good enough and you should never settle for less than your professional best. Would 320 misspelled entries in Webster’s dictionary be okay?

Proofreading and revising your writing is an iterative process. Our best writing will not necessarily be done with our first draft. Through multiple reviews and revisions, the text can become much clearer and more concise. Lack of proper proofing is one reason for unprofessional emails. The following tips should be kept in mind when proofreading and revising your documents and emails:

- **Take your time**
  Quick proofreading will not allow the opportunity to locate or correct the errors that need to be addressed.

- **Limit your time**
  Reading a large amount of text at one time is not a productive form of proofreading. As the long session of reading and editing continues, the eyes and brain will become tired. Avoid proofreading when you are tired.

- **Take a break**
  After a lengthy time of reading and editing, take a break. Often times when you leave a document overnight and come back to it the next day, you will have a fresh perspective.

- **Check for typos**
  Commonly confused with misspelled words, a typo can actually be spelled correctly but it is the wrong word usage or simply incorrect data.

- **Use a third party**
  When the document is important enough to warrant impartial review, recruit a colleague to read the document and offer suggestions.
Virtual Business Writing Summary

“Practice does not make perfect. Only perfect practice makes perfect.”
- Vince Lombardi, Hall of Fame Football Coach, Green Bay Packers

The world has seen an explosive growth of communication technologies. Computers and personal electronics (such as mobile phones and handheld devices) have added thousands of ways to send and receive written messages. When we write well, we are saying that we thought about our message, we took the time to understand the reader, and we wanted to send a positive image of ourselves. In addition, when we write well, we improve the bottom line. Why? We save time, frustration, and inconvenience - all of which represent costs.

In this virtual workshop we learned the following:

- The iSpeak Business Writing Model Process consists of four phases: Prepare, Develop, Write, and Review.

- Every email or proposal must have an objective. Ask yourself, “Why have you been asked to provide a proposal?” You should be able to identify in a single sentence specifically what your audience should understand (informative) or believe (persuasive).

- Dimensions for audience analysis include Analysis, Understanding, Demographics, Interest, Environment, Needs, Customized and Expectations.

- While email has proven to be an extremely effective means of communication, it is only one of many communication tools. Tips for email include:

  - Respond in short paragraphs.
  - Utilize bulleted lists to make information easier to read.
  - Use proper punctuation and grammar.
  - Avoid run-on and lengthy sentences.
  - Answer every question that was initially sent to you.

- Organize the key points so your audience can clearly follow the flow of your presentation. An effective presentation guides your audience through a sequence that makes it easy to comprehend the key points of presentation.
Implement to Improve

“Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.” - Johann Goethe

There is no graduation date for a training professional. To remain at the top of your game you must remain motivated, educated and highly skilled in your profession. This iSpeak program has provided you with the information and the inspiration to improve your communication skills and increase your personal success. The final two steps are up to you. You must implement what you have learned and that will lead to improvement.

While the implementation phase can be the most trying, it is also the most significant. Without implementing the new knowledge that you have gained, improvement will be impossible. To assist you in the transition from classroom to real world experience, iSpeak offers this section to record how you will implement what you have learned in this course.

- Practice your skills regularly with an eye towards improvement. Remember to take educational courses as often as you can to brush up on your basic skills and to acquire new ones.

- Read about your industry and your trade – your students look to you for industry insight. They will expect you to not only know about your company and your industry, but also your competition.

- Focus on leveraging your strengths, while improving your weaknesses. Know your strengths, but also know your own limitations. Then use your strengths as often as possible and utilize education and practice to shore up your weaknesses.

Malcolm Gladwell, in his book “Outliers: The Story of Success” states that the prerequisite for great achievement is 10,000 hours of deliberate practice before you can really master a subject area or skill.
Corporate Ovations

“Many people give presentations, but rarely do people have this kind of thorough training for doing so. Corporate Ovations is a great way to get intensive training in public speaking and improve your skills to succeed.”
– Jan Gunter, The Ronald McDonald House

Who made the rule that all business presentations given in a corporate environment must be long, detailed and just plain boring? Corporate Ovations is the book to change all that.

In this book the authors teach you how to construct powerful and engaging presentations. Whether you are asked to speak for nine minutes on a project update or asked to deliver a keynote speech at the next industry trade show, you can prepare with this winning methodology. Don’t let your presentations end with a feeling of relief from your audience… learn how to end your presentations with a Corporate Ovation! Order your copy of Corporate Ovations today at Amazon.com.

About the Authors
Russ Peterson Jr. and Kevin Karschnik have been professionally speaking since 1991. Kevin and Russ have founded two successful companies and also experienced success working in the corporate world.

Their workshops have been attended by thousands of students from around the world, ranging from Account Executives to Corporate Executives. Now, in a culmination of their career experience and their success in the classroom, the boardroom, and on the stage, these two experts share their secrets to take your presentations from receiving obligatory applause to receiving Corporate Ovations. You can contact Russ and Kevin by emailing: info@CorporateOvations.com

“The Corporate Ovations workshop provided a great process for better presentation creation. It helped me feel more comfortable about how to do my next presentation!” – Mark Boeser, Dell Technologies
iSpeak Workshops

Our workshops are designed and delivered for maximum impact and behavioral change. Whether you are an executive casting a vision for your company or a sales professional communicating to potential customers, we can help you prepare, develop and deliver that message.

Business Professionals

As a business professional, you are asked to create and deliver messages that may be informative, such as a financial review, or they could be persuasive as in a request for a budget approval. The response from your audience is dependent on both you and your message. In these programs, you will learn how to write and deliver a presentation from beginning to end. Students are video recorded when presenting and receive documented feedback from a professional coach and their peers.

Sales Professionals

As a sales professional, you will be presenting your ideas to customers in a persuasive manner. You will learn how to uncover the data you need to effectively design and deliver a persuasive message that inspires action. These classes provide an opportunity to practice communication and questioning techniques, develop a presentation, and practice methods of persuasion.

Leaders

This program is specifically designed for leaders. In this program, you will learn professional methods to construct and deliver a message. After speaking you will receive one-on-one coaching from a professional speaking coach. Whether you are speaking at a team meeting or to the entire corporation, this workshop is designed to develop your effectiveness as a leader.