

Title:

Improving your Business Writing in a New York MINIT: Five Steps to Better Communication

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Summary:

The article is a How To publication for business people who struggle to write on the job. The framework of the New York MINIT will assure business people writing success that leads to Career Advancement.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

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You know the feeling?

You've dodged the writing bullet for days...

It's time to hit that send button and share your words of wisdom. Your supervisor or your client is waiting. And you've got nada, nothing except a blank screen and a deadline. What's worse is you're having flashbacks to college. It's the night before a term paper is due and you have zip to show! Instinctively, you reach for that old familiar standby...Cliff Notes! Yes, Cliff Notes got you through English class!

But, there's no Cliff Notes for weekly summaries, reports, evaluations, or RFP's! And, no amount of excuses, coffee or Red Bull will help you now. But a tight plan that saves you from being a master of disaster when it comes to business writing can save the day, and those sleepless nights that proceed the deadline day!

You are not alone. These anxious writing moments are suffered in offices across the world. They create enough job stress to collectively power a small city. And they shake even the most confident business person throughout the organization, from the mail room to the board room.

Writing skill matters in business. You may be the Face to Face deal closer

extraordinaire or the networking legend in your workplace, but your balance sheet is out of whack if you can't talk the talk in writing. Today's complete business person balances oral and written skill. Confident writers know the power of INKING THEIR THINKING, and they use it to advance in their career.

Facing your writing demons means growing up. You've got to get rid of the negative image being a poor writer. More than likely, it's a view left over from inadequate high school or college classes. Sometimes it's the result of no real experience as a writer. Can you imagine hitting a 67 on the Golf course each Saturday without constant practice and instruction? Well, writing, like golfing is based on muscle memory. The more you think and write, the more you imprint the process through application, the easier it is to write. Avoidance is the killer, and those deadlines keep coming. Think what it would feel like to be a confident wordsmith. You can be, and you can do it quickly...using the New York MINIT process as your model.

The New York MINIT writing framework reflects the urgent pace of a New York minute when things get done in a flash. After years of writing neglect, you need to get capable on the job, fast. And the New York MINIT framework let's you develop a quick, clean process. You can internalize the MINIT system and use it easily, days before your writing is due for deadline. You'll confidently meet a deadline. And, with practice, you'll learn to write quickly, perhaps even in a few short minutes as you move from one meeting to the next during a busy day! So whether you are in Des Moines or Chicago, or Manhattan or Memphis, you can use the New York MINIT framework to quickly and clearly process your thoughts into written products. You'll soon create written business documents that get attention and praise from your readers in a New York minute!

The NEW YORK MINIT

Writing is a process. Good writers move their thinking forward from envisioning an idea to presentation of a final product. These 5 Steps in using the New York MINIT for Business Writing Success will help you do the same. They are sequential. Depending on your skill, you may become stuck in the early stages. If you run dry, return, as you should, to step one...being stuck is a sure sign that your writing idea is too broad. By starting over, you can narrow and define your thinking.

Step One: M means.... Make time to "Prewrite"!

- Think and draft your writing WITHOUT Writing: Allow yourself to "dream" it, massage your thinking, and let your mind go. Good writers do a lot of "Prewriting" before they actually put pen to paper! This could take hours or a

few days, but it is MOST important. Prewriting is done without paper.

- Think about your audience: Who will read this? Put yourself in his or her shoes as you pre-write. Think from the client's point of view. What do they WANT to know? If it's not clear. Get on the phone and ask!!

Step Two: I means... Incorporate "Feedback Lines"!

- Find a writing buddy: Use someone not related to you who can talk to you about your prewriting thoughts in a quick conference. Tell the partner you want them to listen for small details of what you've thought about. This should take five minutes! It is not a critique, it's a coaching session. Your partner listens and does not control the talk. You should be doing the talking. You are trying to narrow your broad thinking.

- Note to Self: Use post-its, use tape recorder, one scrap of paper or your blog. Start to write your idea. For a sustained period of time of at least 15 minutes.

- Put the Editing Police on Notice! DO not stop to look at individual words as you get your ideas down....DO NOT edit yourself at this point. It is too early in the process. Research shows this is the time when people give up. It is not the time to nitpick over word, phrases or spelling. You want to make meaning. Give yourself permission to write a little garbage if you have to. Don't get stuck here. Write freely! It's for your eyes only.

- Take Inventory: Look at what you have written and circle the main points. Do they seem to be tied to a small enough idea? The mistake writers make is they take on too much and overwhelm themselves and the reader. You may have a template you use for a weekly report which should tighten your direction. If you have no template, remember less is often more. If you have the best points on the paper, you won't need to be a Ramblin' Man or Woman when you write the draft!

- Outline Away! Use whatever means works to create a quick outline. Use traditional Roman numerals, use bullets, use post it's. Use what fits as you order your thinking.

Step Three: N means....Now Write!

- Write your draft! and begin with one or two sentences that you use a formula over and over. Write an opener that you can tailor later just to get you started. Then write past this opener. You can always go back and revise it.

Treat it as your running start from the high diving board. You might need it the first time you write, but chances are you will cut it in the final version.

- Don't look at your first free-writing! Just keep your points in mind and begin fresh. Looking to the free-writing may cause you to become unfocused. You want your ideas to flow and new stronger thoughts to bubble up.

- Think simple! You are building a simple house of text! You need a front door, a kitchen a living room and a bedroom and a back door. Walk your reader through the house! It's five rooms...Front door is the opener or Intro, the three rooms are main phases, points, articles, or benchmarks, depending on the writing task. Your closing is the back porch. Remember, keep it tight. No need to build a mansion! .

Step Four: I means... Invest in Voice!

- Make your draft live: Use a few writer's age old tricks:1. Take out your wordy adjectives and long phrases.2. Vary the length of your sentences: short-short-long-short 3. Load your text with strong verbs 4. Avoid the passive voice (No "en"or "ed" verb endings that have the words was, were, is...like "was chosen". Use a subject and verb constructions that are active in Voice.) 5. Use a resource book if you want to use some specific vocabulary, but make your choice natural for yourself. Your report should be written in your business voice, not sounding like a textbook!

- Take another look: Reread your work and if your writing buddy can help you, read it quickly to him or her for clarity.

Step Five: T means... That's a Wrap!

As you near the point of sending the writing:

- Use Spell check! • Read your work yourself...backwards from the end to the intro, checking the spelling yourself. • Give the report to another to read and EDIT, not to change content. • Double back to your writing buddy through email, if necessary

Following this process, with special attention, and your result will be a more confident you. Remember, you have a lot to make up for, years of avoiding writing. You can prove yourself a capable business writer using these steps. Do it in a New York minute!