

Brilliant Business Writing Skills

Overview

Course duration: 2 days.

This two-day course provides delegates with immediate and practical guidance on how to communicate more accurately, effectively and professionally in writing.

Have you ever thought of how your writing could become even more effective? What makes a document easy to read and understand? How can we encourage our reader to read on and act quickly? Practical exercises, discussion and one-to-one feedback from your trainer will answer these questions. You will learn how to get started, adopt the right style and tone for specific situations and enhance your image in your reader's eyes.

Is it right for me?

The ability to write clearly, accurately and concisely is indispensable. It creates a positive impression, saves time and achieves objectives faster.

By improving your English writing skills, you will be able to achieve more efficient and cleaner communications, while giving your words more authority and power. Achieving this means using the right tone and lexicon, but also ensuring your grammar, spelling and punctuation are correct.

Covering all these issues, this step-by-step course will increase your awareness and improve your knowledge of good written English - and therefore both your confidence and effectiveness in work-related writing.

What will I learn?

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Understand and follow the six principles of professional business writing, including planning, process and proofing.
- Focus on and satisfy readers' expectations to ensure your message is quickly understood and acted on.
- Write convincing, persuasive and powerful documents that achieve their objectives.
- Edit and proof to eliminate errors and streamline documents, so that they are always clear, concise and credible when you send or submit them.
- Successfully plan and construct your documents; choosing the right style to achieve your objectives, the reader's expectation and business situation.
- Avoid common mistakes that impact on your professional image and use a proven checklist to help proofread the final document.
- Build successful sentences and paragraphs – using punctuation that guides your reader.

- Follow the rules of grammar that matter, knowing which are obligatory, optional or defunct.
- Keep documents succinct by making the best choice of words during the writing and then editing down as required.

These will be learnt through guided practice; written and oral exercises; analysis of different kinds of business writing; and examples of edited documents. Use is made of a range of business texts – from emails and letters to memos and proposals.

Pre-course activity

It would be beneficial to bring along examples of your written work. You can then review them throughout the course and edit if appropriate. To help the trainer focus on your specific needs, you will be asked to complete a pre-course questionnaire.

What will it cover?

The Foundations

- Six principles of business writing
- Grammar Quiz / English Refresher
- The 5 Ws – what questions to ask before writing
- Review of personal examples

Developing a 'Lean & Fit' Writing Style

- Putting yourself in the readers' shoes
- Tailoring our message to the reader's needs
- Is the reader clear as to WHY we are writing?
- Clear and concise writing
- Active and passive voice (what is the difference and guidelines for use)

Giving your Writing Rhythm and Pace

- Sentence and paragraph constructions
- Bulleting information
- Punctuation to aid meaning

The Nuts and Bolts of Written Language

- Grammar: the rules to know and apply; those to question and use with discretion; those to ignore, where they are archaic or otherwise redundant; explanations of common grammatical terms.
- Punctuation: the most misunderstood marks and how to use them properly; how punctuation practices have changed; how to use punctuation to optimise clarity and minimise length.

- Spelling: the most commonly misspelt words; spelling rules, exceptions and pitfalls; homophones, and informed use of the spellchecker.
- Meaning: using the right words; commonly misused words and correct alternatives.

Structure and Style

- Structure: building sentences and paragraphs that guide your reader; drawing a plan of your document before you start writing; producing appropriately logical structures.
- Plain English: the virtues of simplicity and the principles of 'plain English', as illustrated in good and bad real-life business examples.
- Corporate style: the importance of adhering to your house style; its defining characteristics to know, develop and apply.

Editing and Proofing Skills Practice

- Editing for economy: cutting and streamlining your writing for readability.
- Proofing techniques: ways to ensure you catch stylistic, grammatical and related errors before sending or submitting a document.
- Revision and rework of personal examples

The Perils and Pitfalls of Business Writing

- Current thinking regarding business grammar
- Tips to ensure we avoid grammatical errors
- Constructing sentences and paragraphs – with appropriate punctuation to create rhythm and flow
- What is 'business language'?
- How jargon, slang and clichés can get in the way of understanding
- Can 'action words' gain results?

Preparation and Structure for a Persuasive or 'Selling' Document

- How to select relevant information that helps to achieve the objective
- Using T.I.P.E. as a basis on which to build
- The need to present your proposal or idea in an organised, logical sequence using the four P model.

Persuasive Writing

- Techniques used to help persuade our reader to our way of thinking
- The A.I.D.A. approach
- Anticipating objections

Final review: "How am I 'Coming Across' to my Reader?"

- Is my style 'reader-friendly'?
- Using 'punchy' openings to gain interest

- Positive or compelling endings to ensure results
- The barriers to an effective, professional style
- Expanding your vocabulary to avoid repetition - keeping your writing 'alive'
- Is my tone persuasive and assertive?

The Final Stage

- Avoid wasting time re-writing: proofread and edit your writing
- A checklist and structured approach to help find those errors in your final draft
- Reference Aid
- You will receive a comprehensive course manual, containing the course information given on the above, for ongoing reference back in the office.

Action Planning

- Identifying your goals and a plan for achieving them.