



MaST Ireland

"With the rapid advance and increased volumes of electronic communication, the need for clear concise writing is more important than ever." writes Alfred Redpath

Typical problems our clients face revolve around e-mails, letters and reports that:

- Do not get to the point
- Are poorly structured
- Are far too long
- Contain ambiguous language and grammatical errors
- Are badly punctuated

Does it Matter?

Yes; and our clients believe so too. From an image perspective, a first rate face to face sales person can totally undermine a lucrative deal with a sub-standard written proposal.

It is not just communicating with the external client that matters. We get a lot of requests for help from internal audit departments. They want to write reports that get a clear, concise message across in a way that generates co-operation rather than antagonism.

High standards of writing are also critical in call centres where e-mail traffic is very heavy. A poorly composed e-mail can lead to a lengthy telephone call from a frustrated recipient requesting clarification which adversely affects the centre's performance.

So what is the secret?

Almost invariably, where a reader struggles to get the point, the writer struggled to put the point down on paper - or on the screen.

We have all had the unpleasant experience of writing an important letter or report and throwing countless drafts in the bin.

The secret is to organise your thoughts before you write anything at all. This is easier said than done. However, there are powerful tools that can help you bring clarity to your message by planning a clear structure before you start writing.



MaST Ireland

Short and Sweet

Once you have a structure to your message your problem won't be writer's block but writer's cramp. The message here is get it all down: and then edit. We often find we can reduce reports by 50% and more by using simple editing tools. You can even use a straightforward formula to calculate the clarity of your written work.

In a nutshell

Even if you know what your point is, organising your thoughts before you write will ultimately save you and your reader a lot of time and anxiety.

To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw who started a letter to his aunt with; "I'm sorry this letter is so long. If I had more time it would have been a good deal shorter"

Finally, can you find a sentence with more than 25 words in this article?



Alfred Redpath is a consultant with MaST Ireland. He has over 20 years' experience delivering Business and Technical Writing Courses to the financial services, pharmaceutical and manufacturing sectors.