



THE SUNDAY TIMES

泰晤士报商务版

成功 商业英文

Better Business Writing

- ★ 提高商业写作的技巧
- ★ 增进文案的表现力
- ★ 塑造自我鲜明的风格
- ★ 增强作品的感染力
- ★ IMPROVE YOUR TECHNIQUE
- ★ EXPRESS YOURSELF POWERFULLY
- ★ WRITE WITH STYLE
- ★ MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION

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the need for better communication

READ THIS, IF YOU CAN:

The world of business today, as never before, as is no doubt so often said, has a permanently and constantly varying and often frequently articulated requirement to communicate effectively, and in a timely fashion, in a manner designed to attract, to appeal to and to hold onto the readers' interests, with an increasingly wide variety of different audiences, such as customers suppliers employees shareholders^① partners regulatory bodies etc. In order for the reader to understand this point, it might be helpful for him (or her) to take the time to review determine, and, consider, some of the type's of communication's requirement's that a typical business might face in a typical - business day or week or month (or year), ie:

- To make a proposal for funding a new previously not done before venture.
- Describe a process so that those involved in the process will better understand the process and what they are required do about the process.
- Try to explain the process in order that the layman can

第 1 章 增进沟通的要求

请看下面这一段文字，只要你能看得下去——

今日的商业，正如大家一向所说的，比以往任何时候都持久、经常而变换着各种方式大声疾呼，要求我们进行更有效的沟通，同时要跟上时代，采用精心设计、引人注目的方式，以吸引并紧紧抓住读者的兴趣，适应一个不断扩大的对象群体——如顾客、供应商、员工、股东、合作伙伴以及管理机关，等等，等等。为使读者理解这一点，有必要让他们花上一点时间来回顾、确定并思考一下，一个典型的商业机构在典型的营业日/星期/月份/年度中所要求使用的沟通类型，即：

- 提出计划方案，为一项以前从未开展过的项目筹资。
- 描述一个项目，使参与其中的人更好地理解这个项目，以及他们各自的任务。
- 解释该项目，让外行人也能有效地理解它的模式和议定条款。

① shareholder: 持股人

develop a satisfactory efficacious understanding of its paradimes and protocols.

- Making an announcement to prospective governmental, municipal, educational and commercially orientated purchasers of the forthcoming availability of a recently developed product...

STOP! COME BACK!

By now, I must have lost you! Your eyes have glazed over. You try to get more comfortable to help ease the pain. This is a book about better writing? That was *terrible* writing! Relax. It was put there to make a point. I bet you've read tons of writing like that. Isn't it a *crime*!

This book is about writing well so as to achieve your desired result. As such, it must practise what it preaches. How can I rephrase what I've just said to get you enthusiastically in the boat, to 'partner' with me in improving your business writing skills? By involving *you* and bringing the language to *life*. By eliminating *abstractions* and making examples *real* and *tangible*^①. Try this:

If you're in business, look at the various communications needs you could face in a day:

- to ask for funding for your new idea;
- to show people how to carry out a task;
- to launch a new product to these markets:
 - governmental;
 - municipal;
 - educational;
 - commercial...

Notice how much easier that is to read? It talks to *you*, not 'the reader'. It sets you up for the story by putting you in context ('If you're in business...'). There are fewer words; fewer multisyllabic words next to each other (. . . announcement to

- 拟定一份宣传稿，向可能的政府、市政、教育界和商界客户推介我们新近推出的一种产品……

够了！打住！

看到现在，你肯定已经烦透了！你两眼发呆，只想干点别的让自己舒服一下。这哪是教人写作的书？它本身就写得一塌糊涂！且慢下结论，这段糟糕透顶的文字是我故意放在那儿的，就是想举个例子——我敢打赌，这种东西你平时肯定遇到过无数次。实在害人不浅哪！

这本书是要教人写出好文章，以便达到预期的目的。那它就得率先垂范，写得漂亮一点。就上面那段话，我怎么把它改写成一篇漂亮文字，吸引你加入到我的写作教程中来呢？关键是要让你有参与感，让文字“活”起来。我要删掉那些干巴巴的抽象文字，让例子变得真实可信。看这么改如何：

假如你是商界人士，你每天需要用到各种各样与别人联络的方式，其中包括——

- 为你的新想法申请款项支持；
- 告诉大家怎样去完成一项任务；
- 向以下市场推出一种新产品：
 - 政府方面；
 - 市政方面；
 - 教育界；
 - 商界……

看到了吧？这段话写得比原来明白得多。它在对你说话，而不是什么含糊其辞的“读者”；它让你直接参与到设定的情节中（假如你是商界人士……）；这里使用的字数较少，没有大

① tangible: 可触及的；实在的

prospective governmental municipal educational and commercially orientated purchasers of the forthcoming availability of a recently developed product...). And there's no redundancy^① (... describe a process so that those involved in the process...).

The Plain Language Commission (Martin Cutts, 29 Stoneheads, Whaley Bridge, Stockport SK23 7BB, Tel: [01663] 733177, Fax: [01663] 735135, Web site: www.clearest.co.uk) has had much success in recent years getting organisations to clean up their written documents. It will even 'badge' documents as conforming to its Clear English Standard, after vetting. This book has been so badged.

Criteria established by the Plain Language Commission to meet its standard are as follows (reproduced by permission):

Purpose

- Is the purpose stated early and clearly?

Content

- Is the information accurate, complete and relevant?
- Does the information anticipate readers' questions and answer them?
- Is a contact point stated for readers who want to know more?

Structure

- Is the information well organised and easy for the readers to find their way through?
- Are there appropriate headings and sub-headings?
- Are paragraphs kept reasonably short?
- Is there appropriate use of illustrations, diagrams, summary panels and flow charts?
- If the document is being read by non-specialists, are any essential specialist terms defined?

Style and grammar

- Is the writing clear and crisp, with a good average sentence length (say 15–20 words throughout the document) and plenty of active voice verbs?

串大串的多音节词 (... announcement to prospective governmental municipal educational and commercially orientated purchasers of the forthcoming availability of a recently developed product...); 也没有重复冗余的地方 (... describe a process so that those involved in the process...).

简明语言协会 (联络人: 马丁·卡茨 Martin Cutts; 地址: 29 Stoneheads, Whaley Bridge, Stockport SK23 7BB; 电话: [01663] 733177; 传真: [01663] 735135; 网址: www. clearest. co. uk) 近年来成功地帮助许多家公司机构进行了文件用语的清理工作。这个协会还负责审查、认可那些符合其制定的“简明英语规范”的书籍与文章——本书就是经由它认可的。

简明语言协会规定的行文标准内容如下 (经版权人授权复制):

目 的

- 是否开门见山地说明了你的目的?

内 容

- 要传达的信息是否明确、完整且切中主题?
 这些信息是否针对读者的疑问并提出答案?
 是否为读者提供了解进一步信息的渠道?

结 构

- 文章结构是否合理? 是否容易被读者理解?
 大标题和小标题选得合适吗?
 段落是否有过长之嫌?
 插图、图表、流程图等运用是否恰当?
 如果文章不是写给专业人士看的, 其中涉及的核心专业词汇是否有解释?

行文风格及语法

- 行文是否简洁明了? 句子长度是否合适 (一般 15~20 个词左右)? 主动语态用得够多吗?

① redundancy: 冗余, 累赘

- Is the writing free from pomposity and officialese^①, using mainly everyday language (no aforesaids, notwithstanding, commencements and inter alias)?
- Is the English grammatical and well punctuated?
- Overall, is the style appropriate to the audience?

Layout and design

- Does it look good?
- Is the type easily readable?
- Is there enough space between lines of type?
- Is there a clear hierarchy of headings?
- Does the design help readers navigate through the document?

observe the Plain English Code

The Plain English Code has been established by the Plain Language Commission. If you follow it, your readers will thank you. Here it is (reprinted by permission – © 1994 Words at Work):

I will:

- match my writing to the needs and knowledge of the readers, remembering that many of them will be baffled by official jargon and procedures;
- consider carefully the purpose and message before starting to write, remembering that clear writing can only stem from clear thinking;
- structure the document clearly, perhaps with lists, headings and a pithy summary of key points;
- try to write sentences that average 15–20 words;
- try to keep the word order simple by putting the doer early in the sentence and following it with an active voice verb;
- take pride in everyday English, sound grammar and accurate punctuation;
- use 'I', 'we' and 'you' to make the writing more human;
- maintain the flow by starting some sentences with link words like 'but', 'however', 'so' and 'because';
- use commands when writing instructions;

- 写作中是否做到了摒弃浮夸的官样文章而使用平易的语言?
- 语法对吗? 标点符号使用正确吗?
- 总的来说, 你的行文风格适合于你的读者吗?

布局和格式

- 稿子看上去漂亮吗?
- 字体是否清晰可辨?
- 行间距够不够宽?
- 标题够不够明显?
- 文章格式是否有助于读者通篇阅读?

◎ 遵循“简明英语规范”的要求

“简明英语规范”是由简明语言协会制定的。如果你能遵循这一规范, 必将获得读者们的衷心感谢。下面就是这个规范的内容(经由版权人授权复制——© 1994 Words at Work):

我保证:

- 使我的文章与读者的要求及知识水平相符, 我不会忘记, 公文套话和程式会令许多读者产生畏难情绪;
- 在开始动笔前仔细考虑我写作的目的和要传达的信息, 记住只有思路清晰才能写出明白易懂的文章;
- 使文章结构清楚, 有可能的话, 我会使用一览表、小标题并简要总结文章要点;
- 尽量把句子长度控制在 15~20 个词左右;
- 尽量采用简单的句法结构, 把主语放在句子开头部分, 动词紧随其后, 并使用主动语态;
- 崇尚明快浅显的语言, 使用正确的语法和准确无误的标点符号;
- 行文中多用“我”、“我们”、“你”这样的称谓, 来创造亲切的人性化氛围;
- 用“而”、“然而”、“于是”、“因为”这样的连接词来引导一些句子, 使全文流畅自然;
- 在指导性的文章中, 插入一些旁白式的点评;

① officialese: 官话, 套话

- cut verbiage^① (at this particular moment in time);
- tell customers and colleagues clearly, concisely and courteously what has happened, how the situation stands, and what they can expect next;
- test high – use documents with typical users.

match your writing to the readers

Who are you talking to? (That seems to sound better than ‘to whom are you talking?’, which is grammatically more correct, but more pedantic. Listen to the sound of your words.)

Who are these people? Employees? Customers? Your bank manager? Your boss? A journalist? Someone with a complaint? Someone seeking information? Someone you want to romance or persuade? You must have a clear picture of who your audiences are before you can write an effective communication to them.

It’s easiest to write when you know the actual person who will read your words. Then you can imagine how they will respond to what you are saying. I always find it helpful to identify a member of the audience when I’m writing; a real person, ideally someone I know. If I don’t know the right kind of person I use my imagination. Then when I’m writing I think of how that person will react to my words. I form a mental picture of the person reading the document and I imagine the comments they’d make to themselves as they read. Whenever you have to write something, write down a list of your audiences for that task.

categorise your audiences

Here’s a list of typical business audiences:

- 不用艰涩的词语；
- 用简明而不失礼貌的语气向你的客户或同事们介绍所发生的事情、现在的形势以及下一步可能会怎样；
- 常用的文件格式要先让典型的使用者试用，以便定型。

◎ 对象决定文风

你在对什么人讲话？（这个句子也可以写成“To whom are you talking?”，比较而言，后者在语法上更严谨些，但是显得学究气十足。句子读起来是否上口，这也是要注意的事。）

你面对的是谁呢？员工？客户？银行经理？老板？记者？投诉者？咨询者？还是你要追求或者说服的对象？要取得更好的沟通效果，你就必须对自己的对象有个清晰的概念。

如果知道未来的读者是谁，写稿子是最容易不过的。这样，你就能想像出他对你的话会有什么反应。我写东西的时候，有个很讨巧的办法：在心里指定某个我认识的人，把他当做广大读者的代表；要是没有合适的熟人，我就想像出一位。在写作过程中，我会想到，这个人对我的文章会有怎样的反应呢？我仿佛能看到这个人正在看我的文章，还能听到他边看边做出评论。你若也需要写什么东西，不妨学我的样子，先在心里指定几个读者代表，会很有帮助的。

◎ 对象的分类

商务写作的对象大致分为以下几类：

① verbiage: 冗词，赘语

Internal

- management:
 - board directors;
 - management committees, your boss;
- employees:
 - current;
 - potential;
 - previous, retirees.

External

- financial:
 - funding sources;
 - shareholders;
 - investment analysts;
- customers:
 - current;
 - potential;
- competitors;
- media^①:
 - business and financial;
 - trade;
 - general;
- community;
- general public;
- government and regulatory bodies.

You need to talk to them in different ways according to who they are and what they do. You must recognise their working conditions and pressures so that your communication will get right through the haze of their other concerns. What do you want them to do, think or feel? Where are they coming from?

对 内：

- 管理方：
 - 董事会成员；
 - 管理核心成员，你的上司；
- 员工方：
 - 现有雇员；
 - 未来雇员；
 - 原雇员，退休员工。

对 外：

- 财务方面：
 - 融资来源；
 - 股东；
 - 投资分析家；
- 客户：
 - 现有客户；
 - 潜在客户；
- 竞争对手；
- 媒体：
 - 商务与财务媒体；
 - 行业媒体；
 - 大众传媒；
- 社区群众；
- 普通大众；
- 政府和管理部门。

不同类型和职能的对象要求你采用不同的方式与他们沟通。必须认清他们各自所处的情形和面临的压力，这样你的信息才能长驱直入，排除其他干扰，赢得他们的注意力。你想让他们做什么？要让他们产生怎样的想法或感觉？你知道他们从哪儿来吗？

① media: 传媒

understand your audiences

Look at the conditions and pressures of the audiences we've just reviewed. How should you act when communicating to them?

Management

- They have very little time and are usually impatient. Get to the point fast.
- They are preoccupied with many things. You're probably not 'top of mind'. They may have higher priorities than you. Put your item into the context of their 'big picture'.
- They want to be efficient. Have a bullet point *Executive Summary* on the first page. Don't keep them in suspense.
- They are not as well informed about technicalities or detail as you. Avoid jargon^① and assumptions.
- Their role is to plan, lead, organise and control. Make recommendations and suggest courses of action rather than seek advice. Make it easy for them to respond.

Employees

- Are they gung ho and loyal? Be enthusiastic. Celebrate the team. Wave the flag.
- Are they disillusioned and unhappy, with concerns about their future, job security, etc? Be reassuring.
- If you have good news: rejoice and congratulate.
- If you have bad news: clarify, be forthcoming. Never lie.

Financial

- Seeking funds? Be clear and show the numbers.