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High-performance communication: Writing for results in the business workplace [2]

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High-Performance Communication:

Writing for Results in the Business Workplace

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IV. Developing Purpose & Structure

- Brainstorming
  - 1. Define the issue at hand.
  - 2. Begin listing ideas & concepts.
  - 3. Typical rules don't matter.
  - 4. Illustrate as necessary.
  - 5. No judgments 'till everything's on the table.
  - 6. Once ideas are on the table, discuss/ review/ refine.
  - 7. Merge and meld ideas. Select / prioritize.

- Pre-writing
  - 1. What must I write? (Concept and structure)
  - 2. Who is my reader?
  - 3. How would my reader answer **"W.I.I.F.M.?"**
  - 4. What are my goals? (Integrate with reader's WIIFM)
  - 5. What are the results of my brainstorming?
  - 6. How do results integrate with concept / structure (#1)?
  - 7. Organize key points. (Outline only)
  - 8. Organize key supporting facts. (Outline only)
  - 9. Write.
  - 10. Review, revise, edit, proofread, submit.

- Standard Business Structure
  - Letter
  - Memo
  - E-Mail

Handouts: BUSINESS LETTER FORMAT, MEMO FORMAT

V. Content issues

- Letters
  - Yes letters
  - No letters
  - Blame letters
  - Sales letters
  - Pitch letters

Handout: LETTERS HANDOUT

- **Reports**

Executive Summary (250 words or less)
Introduction (What's the issue?)
Body of the Report (Details)
1.
2.
3.
Conclusion (What this means is…)
Recommendations (What we should do…)
Research consulted (If applicable)
Appendix / documentation (If applicable)

VI. Clarity and Comprehension

- Phrasing (Keep it simple – think **Joe Six Pack**)
- Wordiness (Eliminate redundancies)
- Clichés and Jargon (Don't always take the easy way out)
- Take the numb out of numbers (Seek metaphors and comparisons)
- Grammar and punctuation (Keep it simple – with a guide)
- References (Simple, relevant documentation for claims made)

Handout: COMMON COPY ERRORS, EDIT. & PROOFR. TIPS

VII. Proofreading, critique & revisions

Here are excerpts from model consent forms put out by medical schools. A Johns Hopkins University study rated them for readability by grade level. Medical schools typically strive for an eighth-grade level.

Consent forms a prescription for complexity, study says (Associated Press, 2/23/03)

- **College:** You voluntarily consent to participate in this research investigation. You may refuse to participate in this investigation or withdraw your consent and discontinue participation in this study without penalty and without affecting your future care or your ability to receive alternative medical treatment at the university.

- **12th grade:** Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without prejudice to your future health care or other services to which you are otherwise entitled.

- **10th grade:** Your participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time. Participation or withdrawal will not affect any rights to which you are entitled.

- **Eighth grade:** Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You have the right to leave the study at any time. Leaving the study will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

- **Sixth grade:** Taking part in this study is your choice. If you decide not to take part, this will not harm your relations with your doctors or with the university.

- **Fourth grade:** You don't have to be in this research study. You can agree to be in the study now and change your mind later. Your decision will not affect your regular care. Your doctor's attitude toward you will not change.

Wrap-up

- Hands-on practice
- Homework

http://www.uwlax.edu/faculty/swanson/