

THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

This session was all about the **power of the written word to get your message understood.**

This applies to all your written words whether it is an email to a client, marketing collateral, marketing campaigns or promotions, website or landing pages, blog posts or articles, formal documents, invites, social media posts, bio or profile, newsletters etc... anywhere you need to communicate with a client.

Remember – *no matter what the message, you are communicating with a human.*

THE KEY POINTS

- ⇒ Clear and concise beats fluffy and fancy. *Get to the point.* Don't use more words than you have to or the message will get lost. Avoid trying to be too cute or clever. People don't have time to work out what you're trying to say.
- ⇒ Keep your copy simple and easy-to-read and steer-clear of complicated words or jargon.
- ⇒ Know your voice (or that of your businesses) and the appropriate tone. This is dictated by 'who' you are talking to - your ideal client.
- ⇒ For any written communications that people may read on a device, be sure to break up blocks of text using:
 - Line spaces (no more than 2-3 lines of text before a line space)
 - Headings
 - Bullet points (always an odd number ie. 3,5,7)
 - **Bolding**
 - *italics*
 - Underlining

Email or direct client communications:

- ⇒ State the purpose / message in the opening sentence and reinforce it again at the end.
- ⇒ Write as if you were speaking to your client – keep it conversational (and use the right amount of formality, tone and language that's appropriate for your ideal client).
- ⇒ Use templates where possible and personalise around the edges.
- ⇒ Label attachments clearly and limit the number attached to any one email (to avoid overwhelm). You're better off sending a couple of emails with less attachments.

Blog posts or articles:

- ⇒ Create a central place for capturing all your ideas for content so when it comes to writing, you have a wealth of ideas to tap into. This can include anything that your ideal client needs to know, should know or would like to know. Research what they are interested in, or even better, ask them!
- ⇒ Capture all your ideas on a page – then go back and structure / format and edit. Don't try doing all this at once.
- ⇒ If it's easier, voice record what you want to say and listen back then write – or get the voice recording transcribed. A great resource for getting voice recordings transcribed is rev.com.
- ⇒ Write your introduction and heading LAST. Sometimes it easier to come up with a temporary intro / heading to give you direction, however once the content is created, go back and modify.
- ⇒ Headings/ titles are critical to make sure your post gets opened. If the reader thinks it will benefit them, there's a greater chance they'll open it.
- ⇒ Some ideas that work include:
 - How to ...
 - What most people do....
 - Imagine...? ie. imagine being able to...
 - Don't let this happen to you...
 - What if...?
 - Discover...

Or use numbered lists:

- 5 ways to...
- 3 things that...
- 7 habits to...

Or number lists with a negative slant:

- or 5 ways not to...
- 3 things to avoid...

The positive or the negative – both work ie. 5 ways to save for retirement OR 5 ways to avoid paying fees on your credit card.

The beauty about using a list with numbers is it gives people a clue as to how much reading's involved. Again, if using numbers, make it an odd number – 3,5,7 etc.

- ⇒ Write your first draft and then revisit 24 hours later and edit where possible.

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- ⇒ Read it out loud to 'hear' how it sounds.
- ⇒ Get someone else to do a final 'proof read'. You'll be surprised at what you'll miss.
- ⇒ As much as SEO (search engine optimization – google's way of prioritising you in a search) is important, writing to connect with the client trumps every time.
- ⇒ Don't use blocks of text, break it up (same rules apply as above). And you can use links, images, icons etc. to make it interesting and support your message.
- ⇒ If writing is not your thing – or you don't have time, you could consider outsourcing it to a 'ghost writer' where someone else writes the content based on what you want to say and using your voice so it sounds like you said it.
- ⇒ Your value is in the actual message itself – so work with the best way to get your goodness in front of the people who need to hear it.

Websites:

- ⇒ Less is more, so make every word count. Getting the message right is one of the most important factors when building or refreshing your website.
- ⇒ Let your voice and personality shine through. You don't want to sound like everyone else. Sound like you.
- ⇒ The home page needs to make it clear - WHO you are for, HOW you help and WHY I should find out more. *Typically*, if someone does not know this in the first 8 seconds, they'll jump ship.
- ⇒ Let people know what they need to do next, don't leave them wondering. It's called a 'call to action'. It can be along the lines of:
 - Read more about ...
 - Learn more about...
 - View our ...
 - Register now...
 - Contact us...
 - Find out how...
 - Check if you're eligible...
- ⇒ Include genuine testimonials and case studies to make it clear how you help people like them. Include a heading for each testimonial or use the 'best line' of the testimonial that captures the essence as the heading. Use "quotation marks" so it's clear that these are your client's real words.
- ⇒ SEO (Search Engine Optimisation - the words google searches for) is important for all websites, but even more important if you rely on getting clients directly from visits to your

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website. If this is you, it's worth spending the time investigating what words your clients use when they are searching for something you can help them with.

- ⇒ The rules of breaking up blocks of text also apply to website copy. White space, bullets, headings, subheadings, bold, underlining, images, icons, links, photos etc. all help tell a more compelling story and make it easier to digest.
- ⇒ It's wise to review your website content (copy) every 12 months to make sure the message is right for the type of clients you want to appeal to. It's common for a re-write to take place every 3 years (or sooner if you change direction).

The overall rule when it comes to the written word is to keep it simple and straight forward enough, so the message is understood.