



PBI's Communication (Business/Personal Writing) Offerings

The ability to communicate clearly and concisely is one of the most critical competencies in business (and life). In fact, in today's fast-paced, technologically complex, and diverse workplaces, effective communication—particularly written—can make the difference between success and failure (for an organization and/or an individual). It seems that the federal government agrees, and on October 13, 2010, President Obama signed The Plain Writing Act of 2010 (H.R. 946). This new law requires that federal agencies write government documents in "plain language," and that they provide training to employees on how to write in plain English. Writing in plain language does not mean "dumbing down" your writing; rather, it means writing in a simple, clear, concise, well organized, and direct manner.



If you (or your organization) are not writing in plain English or find your communications to be long-winded, off-the-mark, confusing, boring, riddled with errors, and/or ineffective, PBI can help "right your writing wrongs." We can help improve the communication and writing skills of both you and your employees in several ways, through:

1. In-house training workshops or seminars for learning effective writing skills and techniques
2. Individual/team writing consulting and/or coaching; and other services (as needed), such as:
 - a. Development of internal writing standards, procedures, and style guides
 - b. Plain-language writing and editorial services for your specific types of documents

We have also provided a brief description of some of our communication (writing) workshops and consulting/coaching services on the following pages.

Communication Workshops

PBI's suite of applied POWER Writing workshops helps business professionals to better plan, organize, write, evaluate, and revise their writing to create more effective and clearly written documents that get read and have a real impact. PBI's POWER Writing for Business courses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Communicating Effectively (Verbal & Non-Verbal)
- The Fundamentals & More
- Writing Effectively on Your Own
- Writing Effectively as Part of a Team (Collaborative Writing)
- Writing Effective Business E-Mails
- Using Visuals Effectively to Enhance Your Writing
- Putting POWER in your PowerPoint Presentations

Furthermore, we tailor each workshop to fit your needs and type of writing, and ensure they are very interactive – using video clips, group discussion, and exercise; and providing examples of well-written business documents, easy-to-use tip sheets, and individualized coaching.

1. **POWER Writing for Business: The Fundamentals and More**

POWER Writing for Business: The Fundamentals and More is PBI's 2-day applied workshop to help business professionals reacquaint themselves with old, forgotten language and writing rules (and exceptions); meet some new ones; and discover their communication strengths. It stresses writing in plain, simple English; and covers practical and applied grammar, structure, mechanics (including spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and more), and writing styles that go beyond the fundamentals taught in school or in most writing classes. We have taught this course several times to the Washington Post, the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County, and Xerox Corporation. It accomplishes the following objectives:



Knowledge

- Learn the latest grammar, structure, punctuation, and style rules, changes, and exceptions
- Understand how to communicate more easily and effectively following plain-language writing guidelines

Skills

- Practice identifying and correcting the most common grammatical, structural, mechanical, and stylistic writing "sins"
- Produce more professional and error-free business documents
- Hone your personal writing style and improve your written communication skills
- Write more clearly, in plain English, to avoid misunderstandings or looking unprofessional

2. **POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effectively on Your Own**

POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effectively on Your Own is PBI's 2-day interactive workshop that teaches participants how to use the holistic 5-phase "POWER Writing Process" model to Plan, Organize, Write, Evaluate, and Revise documents to communicate faster, more professionally, and with more confidence. This course uses video clips, group discussion, and exercises to teach practical and applied business writing processes, techniques, and communication skills. It addresses methods for breaking through "writer's block," becoming "reader-focused," organizing information, streamlining the writing of drafts, editing and proofreading for clarity and accuracy, using "visuals" effectively, and revising and finalizing the document. As part of this workshop, we provide easy to use tip sheets, writing process job aids, and individualized coaching. We have taught this course several times to the Washington Post, Fairfax County, and Xerox Corporation. It accomplishes the following objectives:



Knowledge

- Explain what constitutes a good business document and what it takes to ensure it gets read
- Learn the importance of "visual rhetoric"—how visual images communicate
- Learn how to improve the effectiveness of your documents using such visuals as color, graphics, headlines, and other techniques

Skills

- Practice using the 5-phase POWER Writing Process (incorporating instructor and peer feedback) to improve written communication skills
- Produce more professional, effective, and error-free business documents in a variety of formats (including e-mails, memos, reports, etc.) that drive actions and produce results
- Hone your personal writing style

3. POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effectively as Part of a Team (Collaborative Writing)

POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effectively as Part of a Team is PBI's new 2-day applied workshop that focuses on a collaborative writing process for team-developed communications. This workshop helps teams ensure that their finished product looks like design rather than accident, and reads as if one person had written it. We address group dynamics, challenges of scheduling, team communication, communication styles, team democracy, conflict resolution, and other factors that affect teamwork. We also focus on ensuring that the document has a unified flow and single perspective. This workshop builds on the lessons learned in *Writing Effectively on Your Own* and examines the differences between individual and team writing. Examples of well-written team documents as well as easy to use workbooks, handouts, coaching, and tip sheets help reinforce the concepts and learning. This course accomplishes the following objectives:

Knowledge

- Describe good team dynamics and how to improve teamwork skills (particularly with group writing)
- Explain the key roles and responsibilities required for a successful collaborative writing effort
- Understand how to effectively use interpersonal communications, team democracy, and conflict resolution as part of a team writing effort

Skills

- Use the 5-phase POWER Writing Process to work and write collaboratively
- Produce well-written and effective documents as a group that look like they were designed and written by an individual
- Hone your team and personal writing styles, and improve your written communication skills

4. POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effective E-Mails

POWER Writing for Business: Writing Effective E-Mails is PBI's 1-day (or half-day) workshop that provides a practical approach to writing more professional and effective e-mails that *get read and get results*. A good e-mail, properly worded and to the point, can make the critical difference between it being read or consigned to the trash. As part of this workshop, participants learn to consistently and effectively create e-mails that: are properly worded, are concise and to the point, and use the proper "tone." This workshop uses video clips, group discussion, and exercises to teach practical and applied tips on proper e-mail etiquette; addresses how to reduce your e-mail risks; and demonstrates how to write more professional and effective e-mails. We have taught this workshop at the Washington Post, Xerox Corporation, and many small businesses. It accomplishes the following objectives:

Knowledge

- Identify when e-mail is or is not appropriate
- Understand the appropriate "tone" to use and when
- Learn/describe what makes good e-mail etiquette
- Explain how to reduce your e-mail risks

Skills

- Evaluate e-mails to identify problem areas (improper tone, desired action not stated, etc.)
- Produce more professional and effective business e-mails that are free of grammar, structure, spelling, and mechanical errors
- Hone your personal writing style and improve written communication skills

5. POWER Writing for Business: Using Visuals Effectively to Enhance Your Writing

POWER Writing for Business: Using Visuals Effectively to Enhance Your Writing is PBI's 2-day workshop that helps participants use "visual rhetoric" to get their message across more effectively. During this workshop, participants learn how to enhance written documents (or slide presentations) using effective and appropriate graphics, charts, audio visuals, and/or multimedia aids. This course is NOT a technical graphic design class; rather, it will help you learn the importance of "visual rhetoric"—how visual images communicate—and how to improve the effectiveness of your documents using color, graphics, headlines, and other techniques. Participants will also learn how to illustrate, focus, reinforce, demonstrate, or attract attention; and understand the appropriate use of color to increase the effectiveness of your message. We have taught this workshop at the Washington Post, Xerox Corporation, and many small businesses. It accomplishes the following objectives:

Knowledge

- Explain what "visual rhetoric" is—how visual images communicate
- Learn the importance of "visual rhetoric"
- Learn how to improve the effectiveness of your documents using such visuals as color, graphics, headlines, and other techniques

Skills

- Practice creating graphics and visual aids to illustrate, focus, reinforce, demonstrate or attract attention
- Produce business documents that "get your message across" more effectively
- Hone your personal writing style and improve written communication skills

Communication (Writing) Consulting/Organizational Development

PBI's Communication (Writing) Consulting and Coaching services build on our various POWER Writing workshops, with emphasis on helping individuals and teams create effective business communications written in plain, simple English with a reader-centric focus; and with the "bottom line on top." Poor communication costs businesses millions of dollars in lost time, lost customers, and faulty decisions based on improperly understood information. Therefore, good business writing is a basic requirement for all businesses and essential for advancement in any organization. In fact, according to the Harvard Business Review, the ability to communicate was rated as the most important factor in making a manager "promotable."

As we stated earlier, effective communication—particularly written—can make the difference between success and failure (for an organization and/or an individual). Thus, as illustrated on the right by PBI's Cycle of Excellence, with better communications comes more collaboration, improved trust, and higher performance.

PBI can help "*right your writing wrongs.*" Let us help you with our proven POWER Writing approaches, whether for an individual staff associate, manager, or executive; or for a team working on a special project. We will work with you (or your team) to identify and understand the current state of writing and help formulate a learning and action plan to get to them to the desired state.



The focus of our Communications/Writing Development can be on any aspect of business writing including, but not limited to, the following: grammar, structure, mechanics, style, e-mails, visuals/graphics, and typical business documents (such as proposals, letters, manuals, reports, regulations, handbooks, user manuals, and more). Some additional services that PBI provides include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Development of internal writing standards, procedures, and style guides
- Plain-language writing and editorial services for your specific types of documents

We handle these engagements on a case-by-case basis given the unknown nature of the current and desired states and the work/time needed. Call us for a no-cost consultation.