

11 Steps to Razor -Sharp Writing Habits

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PR News' Writing Boot Camp
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Challenges today- data driven

People talk,
chat, shorten
words, text, and
abbreviate ...

ASAP

BRB

FYI

HWTH



More effort today – Why?

- We reach and appeal to more audiences
- People are time driven
- Business to Business (B2B) differs from Business to Consumer (B2C)
- Social Media adds new dimensions

Tip # 1. Know your audience and reason for the piece

- Is it B2B, Business to Business?
- Is it B2C, Business to a client/customer?
- If to a client/customer, what are key demographics involved?
- Type of piece – is it casual, informational, or more of a professional slant?

Tip # 2. Determine the Voice

Is this coming from the CEO, an executive or staff?

- Word choices will vary – leader’s style as well as personality type

Or from a client?

- Decide on a casual tone or more formal
- Is this an interview style piece, recap, press release, blog or testimonial?
- “We put words in the mouths of people”

Yes, we put words in the mouths of people (and animals).

“The Voice of the Dog” (Confession)



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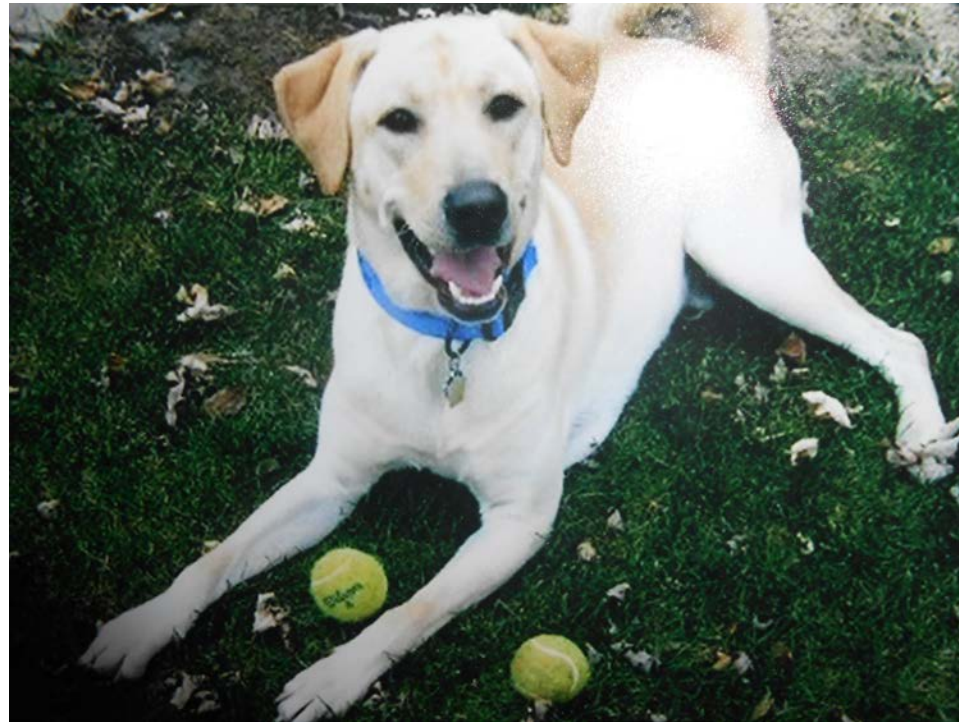
Tip # 3. Create and use a “Face”

Every company and business has an image, “Face”

Make sure the “FACE” of the business, company or person shows (not blurred)



The “Face” could be the Big Dog



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Tip # 4. Spell Check Doesn't Always Work.

Common Words

- I'll
- Air
- They're
- For
- Pear

Possible other matches

- Aisle or Isle
- Heir or Err
- There or Their
- Fore or Four
- Pair or Pare

Tip # 5. Get a second pair of eyes.

- Proofreading is critical
- Catching mistakes before the content is finalized and sent out
- Tactic – let the text “sit for a few hours” and go back to it
- Tactic – Don’t just review the text silently, read it out loud
- Tactic – Reach out to another colleague to help (to review)
- **Bonus tip** – don’t proofread when tired!

Original text:

“Hook the audience and wheel them in”

Corrected:

“Hook the audience and reel them in”

Tip # 6. The “slice & dice” tactic

The issue

- Time challenges as far as writing today
- Meeting deadlines!
- Multiple projects and pieces

The solutions

- Embrace content marketing tactics
- Longer articles - divide into segments and use in different ways
- Angles – Press release can be used for part of an overview, reuse favorite blogs, shorten overviews

Dessert – How do you “attack”?



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Tip # 7. Know how to spread written pieces.

- How do you keep a fire going? Fuel it with fire.
- “Content is the fire, but social media is the gasoline...”
- Decide what areas of social media are best fits.
- Use those avenues to “get the word out.”
- Example – management style articles
- Tactics – Facebook Business, LinkedIn, Twitter

Tip # 8. Commas save Lives.

Punctuation and grammar are still important

- **Example:**

“Let’s eat Mom.” (hopefully not)

“Let’ s eat, Mom.” (the correct version)

Resources for help

AP Stylebook

Roget’s Thesaurus

Online guides

PR News

Tip # 9. Words count. How to be found.

(Before)
definition of word count –
“The number of words in a document or passage of a text.”

- **Today** - Writing is more than just being concerned with the number of words.
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) – using keywords
- Word length and characters vary

Bonus tip: Attend “Surfacing Your Content: Writing That’s Findable on the Web” presented by Mike Samec

Tip # 10. Avoid jargon and acronyms.

- OCRA – Office of Community and Rural Affairs
- OSBE – Organization of State Broadcasting Executives
- IMF – International Monetary Fund
- Okra – “a flowering plant valued for its edible green seed pods.” (Chefs will know)
- OSBE – Brand of well known motorcycle helmets for distinct styling and technological superiority (Ask a motorcyclist)
- IMF – Impossible Mission Force (Tom Cruise fans will know)

The \$10 Norwegian Story...



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Tip # 11. Be on the lookout for your own grammatical foibles.

- Avoiding grammatical mistakes
- Dangling participles
- “Then” vs. “Than”
- Apostrophes – “It’s” vs. “Its”
- **Bonus Tip:** Online resources - Business Insider, PR News

Takeaways

- Don't fly solo! Ask colleagues, use content marketing strategies, ramp up on Google keywords
- Research personality types - Eagle, Peacock, Owl, Dove
- **Resources**
- PR News' Writer's Guidebook, Vol.1
- PR News has ongoing blogs
- *Content Chemistry: An Illustrated Handbook for Content Marketing* by Andy Crestodina, Orbit Media Studios

Continue to have that positive impact!

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