



Common Business Writing Mistakes That Will Slow Down Your Career—and How to Fix Them

We're excited to be here!



Tracy Zampaglione
Public Information Officer
Orange County Corrections
Favorite Thing to Write: Feature
Article



Bailey Jacobs
Director, Communications and Marketing
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
Favorite Thing to Write: Proposals &
Presentations



7 WRITING MISTAKES

That we're all guilty—at some point—of making, as well as tips to avoid making them in the future.



1.

**You don't follow the
three C's.**

Compelling. Concise. Content.

Some Rules of Thumb

7.4 Seconds

Average TV Sound Bite

15 – 20 Words

Reccomended Average Sentence Length

60 Seconds

Average Time Journalist Spends Reading a Release



2.

You're Not Real.

Authenticity in writing is everything!

Show vs. Tell

The people were casually dressed.



The young men and women wore t-shirts and jeans.

Suddenly I awoke, frightened.



Suddenly I awoke in a drenching sweat, my heart racing.

The local playground is in disrepair.



At the local playground, weeds poke through cracked concrete and climb over collapsed, rusted swing sets.

3.

You Don't Tailor.

Writing needs to fit the tone, format,
style, and grammar of the audience.
Not the other way around.

BUSINESS WRITING TIPS

- We've All Seen Decks That Look Like This.
- I didn't think about your visual engagement at all
- Sentence Case
- Font Size
- The Color Red Is Hard To Read, Making You Even Less Engaged In My Content.
- I'm not consistent in my formatting or style
- See How Boring This Is?
- Death By PowerPoint—amirite?!
- Are You Still Reading?
- I Bet Most Of You Have Stopped...



#PRNews | @BaileyDC



4. You're Sloppy with Styles.

For PR professionals, style matters.
Always.

Style Matters...Some Reminders

- › Time: 9:30 a.m. **NOT** 9:30 AM
- › Dates: June 14 **NOT** June 14th
- › Percent vs %
- › Entitled vs. Titled
- › The dreaded –ly
- › Write-out numbers
- › Know how to capitalize a person's title



5.

You Think You're Proofing Perfect.

Spoiler Alert: Even the best writers need a proofing buddy.

SHAME! SHAME! SHAME!

**CIRULAR ECONOMY
TOOLBOX**

The graphic features five circular icons in a row: a globe, a red shirt, a circular arrow, a landscape with mountains and a sun, and a yellow washing machine. Below the icons are the logos for The Sustainability Consortium, U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, and RILA.

THE SUSTAINABILITY CONSORTIUM™

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION
Corporate Citizenship Center

RILA
RETAIL INDUSTRY LEADERS ASSOCIATION
Educate.Collaborate.Advocate.



6.

You're Not a Writing Leader.

PR professionals make an entire organization stronger by fostering a culture of strong writing.



7.

You Think Writing is a Natural Talent.

Writing is a skill—and one that can
always be improved.



What's Your Writing **PET PEEVE?**

Crowdsourcing exercise to learn from one another.

Writing Pet Peeves

Tracy

- › Word Confusion
- › Unnecessary Words
- › Punctuation Outside of Quotation Marks
- › Cliches

Bailey

- › EDT vs EST
- › Death by Long Sentences
- › Apostrophe Use
- › The phrase “in order”

Resources

- › [Ann Handley's "12 Books That Will Make You a Better Writer and Storyteller"](#)
- › [Slide Carnival](#)
- › [Word Hippo](#)
- › [Lake Superior State University's Annual List of Banished Words](#)
- › [New York Times Learning Section](#)

2018 Banished Words List

Unpack

Tons

Dish

Onboarding/

OffBoarding

Gig Economy

Covfefe

Drill Down

Pre-owned

Nothingburger

Let that sink in

Let me ask you this

Impactful

Fake News

Hot Water Heater

Thank you!
Any questions?



Tracy Zampaglione
Public Information Officer
Orange County Corrections
Tracy.Zampaglione@ocfl.net



Bailey Jacobs
Director, Communications and Marketing
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation
Bjacobs@uschamber.com