



Better Business Communications Workshop (082325)

Class Information

Meets for one session

Time: 9:00am - 12:00pm Pacific Time

Introduction

In a world where most of us aren't asked to stack 100-pound bales of hay or weld airplane fuselages, the top skill to possess is the ability to communicate. In fact, in a recent LinkedIn poll, communication was the soft skill employers said they value most. So, if you can ace giving a presentation, writing a convincing proposal, or even putting out an email that people actually read and then act upon, you're the kind of person managers hire and promote first. If you've never been shown how to have a way with words, this workshop will give you skills you can use tomorrow.

Description

In this workshop, we'll combine hands-on practice, critique, and a modest amount of lecturing to turn you into a more confident, convincing business communicator. Here are a few of the topics we'll be covering:

- Thinking about your audience and objectives well before you begin to write
- Organizing your thoughts and writing a One Key Message strategy statement before hitting the keyboard
- Writing tips for presentation decks, press releases, white papers, emails, and proposals
- Using AI tools to help you organize your thoughts and inspire you (but not do the writing for you)
- How to check all the boxes of William Zinsser's four-point test for better copy

Who Should Take This Class?

This course is for anyone who needs to write presentations, proposals, white papers, social media, or emails for business.

Prerequisites

None

Questions

If you have any questions about this course or SVC policies, please contact us at info@svcseattle.com

Outline

Welcome & Introductions
Communicating and persuading IS our job Beyond our technical skill, the most important capability we bring to our job is the ability to get your ideas across clearly and persuasively
Group Exercise: Persuasion Three people chosen at random make a pitch for a movie we should all see. The only requirement: Don't be boring. We vote on the best pitch and analyze what made it good.
Break
The building blocks of great communications 1. One Key Message 2. Flow 3. Story 4. Words and Pictures
TOPIC #1: Getting started with a One Key Message Examples of OKMs and the resulting work
Group Exercise: Communications Strategy Presenter gives the group a briefing on an assignment. Each participant then takes five minutes to write an OKM. Share and discuss as a group.
Break
TOPIC #2: Organizing your thoughts (with the help of ChatGPT) Figuring out the structure and flow of your pitch before you start writing
Group Exercise: Creating a communications framework Fix the Flow: Outline a poorly structured email and then revise it
TOPIC #3: Using the power of storytelling Why we listen more intently and retain more when information is delivered as a story

Group Exercise: Story ideas

What's the Story: Facilitator shares a topic area and participants offer up stories that highlight the problem or possible solutions.

TOPIC #4: Words and Pictures - Better Writing

Four "must-haves" of good writing

- a. Clarity
- b. Simplicity
- c. Brevity
- d. Humanity

Break

Group Exercise: Writing Critique

We share some examples of writing that could be better. Participants will discuss how each sample achieves or falls short of the Better Writing must-haves.

TOPIC #5: Words and Pictures - Better Presentations

Four "must-haves" of good presentations

- a. Instant readability
- b. Reliance on images, not words
- c. Slides are not handouts (nor a teleprompter)
- d. Rehearsal is mandatory

Why is this so difficult?

Workshop evaluation and wrap