



Colour Coded for Success

TOUGH LOVE FOR TIGHT WRITING: REVISING AND EDITING | *Key to Business Writing Series*

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In February, when all the types of love that bind family, friends and lovers to each other, we're going to skip over the heart of the writing process, and deal directly with love – the tough love of the rewrite.

Yes, after planning, drafting and just before proofreading the final written document we edit. Falling in love with their own words is a typical trap in which inexperienced and / or unfocused writers get caught. Words flow, sentences run on and the message becomes less far less effective than you had planned. In business this is the kiss of death in terms of capturing the heart or attention or your prospects.

The Two Hearts of Editing

REVISING – is looking at your completed paragraphs or drafts and improving the content. Believe that the magic of a well written message is in the rewriting. Most professional writers will tell you that they love having written but that the writing itself can be difficult. The degree of difficulty and where in the process it shows itself is different for each person or the project they are working on.

EDITING – is sometimes considered part of revising, but refers to judging your text for language and technicalities rather than content. Going on too long and allowing your copy to go out without a meticulous scan of the text for glaring grammar or spelling mistakes is to be avoided. Run on sentences only confuse your reader and dilute your message. These all make

you vulnerable to being ignored or discredited.

This month we begin a series of the specifics of how to achieve more while leaving less on the page. We start with revising.

Love Traps and Fixes

The amount of anxiety (for some), the research, hours of composition and struggling to find just the right words make each and every phrase so hard won and precious. It is a challenge for most of us to let extra words go. If you feel you deserve to send out your most powerful writing possible – then break up with unnecessary baggage is best.

More Tips for Trauma Relief

1. Use the SAVE AS function. Save those special sentences – forever if you must. Rename your document and get ready to be a merciless surgeon on those sentences the NEXT time you look at it.

2. Walk away. The heat of desire to keep all the data as is will pass with time. You will have more objectivity once you have taken a break if you feel overly tied to your hard won phrases and well crafted concepts.

3. Short on time? Find a 'friendly reader'. This is someone you can trust to read your work, look for continuity and logical clarity. It is also a person who will not hurt your feelings with harsh criticism or tell you only what your ego wants to hear. Balanced feedback is reliable and comes from a person with tact and honesty.

In most cases a 'revisit' of your work can cut out every 6th word! A good reread can often help you cut out HALF of your copy on the tough love road to a better relationship between you and the reader. And remember, all good writing takes time. I suggest you do it in what I call layers. Write it. Rest it. Revisit it.

4. If you are on a very tight schedule, reread and then edit in a different spot or light. It's almost as if a fresh team member is called in to finish the power play. Try it!

Till next time ask your self these critical revising questions:

- Did I stay on topic and write well presenting relevant information, arguments and examples?
- Does what I wrote follow logically within each paragraph's theme? Or, should I delete certain parts or move them somewhere else in the text?
- Do the paragraphs and sentences relate well to each other and follow logically taking your reader from one point to another easily?

VIP – Your very important point is to keep to the point in your content. It shows you know your audience, respect their time and offer value. When you are focused it says you are the expert professional you say you are and that you can convey your message clearly and quickly.

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