



FRAN'S FINE EDITING

COPYWRITING AND RESEARCHING
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RESUME PREPARATION

My Top Three Tips for Business Writing

Writing anything can be a daunting task, if you don't have to do it every day. It is a particularly tough task if the success of your business depends upon how well you do it. Here are the three challenges I run into most often when I am writing, and the tips I can give you to solve them:

Tip #1: Check for Typical Mistakes

Three writing errors I see most frequently are:

- o Using "it's" when you mean "its" ("It's" is the contraction of "it is"; "its" is the possessive of "it"). Examples of correct use: "It's a sale!" versus "Its inventory is sold out".
- o Using "their" when you mean "they're" ("Their" is the possessive of "they"; "they're" is the contraction of "they are"). Examples of correct use: "Their customers are now our customers!" versus "They're now our customers!"
- o Using too many commas. Not good: "We're happy, to have you as our customer!" Better: "We're happy to have you as our customer!" The general rule of thumb is: if you would say the sentence out loud with a natural pause, you should probably use a comma at the pause.

Tip #2: Use Active Verbs

If you want to write with the greatest impact, use active verbs rather than passive verbs. In other words, identify the **subject** of your sentence rather than just the **object**. For example:

- o "The report was issued on June 16, 2009" ("was issued" is passive - we don't know who did it, just the **object** of the action ("report")).
- o Better: "The Chamber of Commerce issued the report on June 16, 2009" ("Chamber of Commerce" is the **subject**).

Tip #3: Let It Sit

If you have just written a lengthy document, don't try to do a final review of it immediately. Let it sit until tomorrow, then edit it. I have always done this, and I am amazed at what I find after I have taken time away from it. Better yet, have a disinterested person critique it; even the best writers have trouble sometimes editing their own work.

Best of luck with your own business writing!

Fran Fahey, 9/18/09