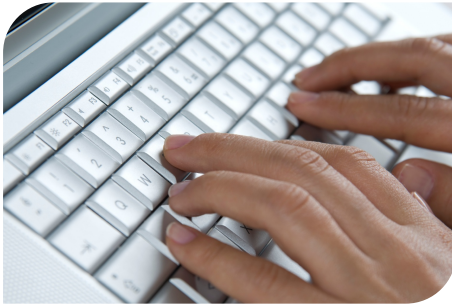


Applying the KISS principle to your writing



It's time for us to KISS and tell. We're finally admitting we are strippers by trade. We take a huge, overdressed concept and start to strip it back bit by bit. We play with it, readjust it and take a bit more off.

Finally, we strip out the adverbs, fling off the adjectives - and now we've got something our audience will pay attention to. If you want to be read, you're going to have to do a bit of stripping yourself.

Let's face it, in our time-poor, information-overloaded world, most people won't bother wading through convoluted prose to get your point. So here are some ways to make your writing sizzle:

Short is sweet: Use short sentences with one thought to a sentence. Cut long, rambling sentences into two or three short, punchy sentences.

Looking good: Keep paragraphs short to avoid big slabs of text on the page, especially if your work will appear in columns.

Stay active: Lose the passive voice. Look for 'by' in your sentences and rework them. Have people doing things, rather than having things being done *by* people.

Vamp it up: Turn nouns into verbs. For example, 'provision of' (noun) becomes 'will provide' (verb).

Keep it simple: Use fewer words to get your message across. For example, 'in close proximity to' becomes *near*, 'are in agreement with' becomes *agree*, 'despite the fact that' becomes *although*.

What the...? Avoid tautology or stating the obvious – new innovation, future potential, mutual cooperation. And clichés – cutting edge, world beating, revolutionary, and the deadly 'moving forward'.

Leave mother at home: Yes, we're talking about motherhood statements – those bland, sweeping statements and generalisations that are beyond meaningless. If you must say you deliver excellence and innovation to your clients, explain how you do it and give real examples. That's if your reader is still around...

Call for backup: Moving on from motherhood statements, back up any generalisations with examples or facts and figures. You wouldn't tell your mining client you'll be producing 'lots of coal' for them, you'd give them the weight per annum. Apply this to your writing, without going overboard on the stats (it's all about balance).

At school, we all knew how to impress the teachers. Use big words and expand one or two ideas into 300 words. In the business world, we lose marks for being complicated and long winded. The key is to **Keep It Simple for Success**.

Now, where did we leave our feather boas?

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