

Write Like Your Career Depends on It (It Does)



By Filomena Fanelli, CEO/Founder, Impact PR & Communications, Ltd.

Writing has always been a desirable business skill, something that bolstered resumes, opened doors and sealed deals. However, in this technology-driven world where email is a primary line of communication and tools like [Slack](#) are office staples, the bar has been raised. Sharp writing is no longer a nicety; it's a must.

I'm sure there are plenty of published statistics on the matter. I won't bore you with those. I will, however, share with you some comments I've received from the journalists and [public relations](#) professionals who have shared their insights candidly over coffee. *If there's too much jargon or a press release is poorly written, I move on. I don't have time to fix poorly written releases. Oh, I'm judging you. And this one: If my name is spelled wrong in an email, I delete it.*

These comments, blunt as they are, drive home the notion that you only get one chance to make a first impression. These days, that foot in the door is often an email. A well-composed, tightly edited and, yes, proofread note sets the tone for the contact that is to follow (or not!). When communicating with members of the media, each interaction lets the recipient in on your writing skills. The extra time taken between drafting a note and clicking "send" can mean the difference between a news story being published or a pitch

letter landing in the e-mail trash bin, never to be seen or read again.

Writing matters at every point in your career, not just when you've landed the job or are already working with clients. I make internship decisions based on the quality of the first note I receive from a student and the attention to detail shown in the resume. I once brought on an intern based on how much her introductory email knocked my socks off. I wasn't even looking for a summer helper, but the note was so compelling, so beautiful in flow and form that I simply could not ignore it. Her writing led to an in-person meeting, a summer gig and a letter of recommendation from me for her study abroad application.

On the flip side, an unintelligible email from a prospective client or business lead leaves just as much of a mark. It can cause you to ponder or judge the sender's intelligence and level of professionalism. I am pretty sure we've all come across a business brochure with typos in it or a restaurant menu with spelling errors. Sometimes they can be funny, but after the laugh is through, the memory lingers. I'll still never forget the medical practice in my community with a poorly crafted examination room pamphlet – it made me want to grab my heart for all the wrong reasons – or the menu that accidentally introduced me to stylish legumes, also known as “chickpeas.” Both of these are real examples and each communicates something the business owner did not intend to share: they did not invest in professional communications.

For those who own their own businesses, writing can be a powerful marketing tool that drives traffic and leads. A website, blog, proposal, correspondence and even thank you notes written with care will stand out from the crowd and clear a path among today's communication clutter.

Writing touches upon every aspect of transacting business. If a document will live on, I urge you pause and proof. If you

don't have the skill set, I encourage you to hire to it. In business writing, what you put forth becomes your brand's voice and a message that is heard, loud and clear.

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