

Writing persuasive reports

Full Day



Planning and structuring reports

In this session we provide several document structures. Each structure has a different purpose. Effective writers choose the *best* structure to achieve their objective.

- How to identify the *topic*, *objective* and *theme* of a report
- Clarifying when and where the report will be read
- How to organise different levels of information using *tree* and *triangle diagrams*
- How to reorganise the information to match the changing priorities of your audience
- The '5P' structure for writing logical reports
- How to turn a complex report into a short, sharp verbal presentation

Presenting a persuasive argument

- Adding impact to your main argument by moving details to the appendix
- Making your position on an issue clear to the reader
- Organising a typical argument:
 - The proposition
 - Evidence in favour
 - Evidence against
 - Conclusion and explanation
- Writing a separate summary of your argument
- Identifying the difference between the *features* and *benefits* of a recommendation
- How to use benefits to 'sell' a recommendation

Writing in plain English

- Using everyday terms for everyday ideas
- When *should* you use jargon and technical terms?
- Tailoring the language to the knowledge of the reader
- Turning bureaucratic language into a clear and professional style of writing



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Adding impact

- Adding 'life' to documents by structuring sentences in the *active voice*
- Structuring paragraphs using *lead* and *concluding* sentences
- Converting tedious nominalisations back into vigorous verbs
- Choosing visual words to make abstract ideas more concrete

Conveying the appropriate tone

- Guidelines for choosing the appropriate level of formality for a report
- How to present a strong argument without it sounding like a sales pitch
- The key to showing empathy without patronising people

Revising & editing

- What's the difference between drafting and editing?
- The golden rule for deciding what to keep and what to cut

Presenting facts & figures

- How to choose between: histograms, tables, line charts, pie charts
- The classic mistakes people make when presenting facts and figures
- How to simplify complex processes using flow charts and decision charts

Making your report look professional - video

An excellent Dawn French video outlines the rules for making reports more readable.

- Reducing clutter and creating space
- How to write descriptive headings
- Choosing the right font type, font size and line spacing
- Writing executive summaries, attributions, recommendations, appendices and bibliographies

Putting it into practice

Throughout the day participants complete exercises and case studies to practise the skills. Specific examples from the participants' work can also be incorporated into the course.



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