

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career.

facebook.com/
thedailystar.nextstep
Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2015

e-mail: nextstep@thedailystar.net

NEXT STEP

WRITING FOR BUSINESS

FOLLOW THESE SIMPLE STEPS TO WRITE THE RIGHT MESSAGE, EVERY TIME



We write all the time. It has been and is an inseparable part of human civilisation. When it comes to business organisations, the impact of writing only enhances. Here writing comes in the form of proposals, sales pitches, solutions, presentations, assignments, emails, texts, and blogs and so on. But it takes no less than an expert to make sure that writing conveys the message the way intended. Fortunately, being an expert in business writing isn't a god gifted skill and can be developed by anyone with just a bit of willpower. Below are a few tips that can come really handy.



READ BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

None of these tips may come to no end if you don't read it yourself prior to handing it over to another. Reading your own writing makes one aware of the mistakes he or she is repeating. Yes, at times it may seem too boring to go over the same piece of writing a second time. In such cases, take a break and then start again. Asking a fellow colleague or friend to go through the write-up is also welcome.

PRACTICE

Writing is like weightlifting. You cannot lift the heaviest weight on your first day at the gym. You have to build up your writing muscles little by little (sorry, no shortcut here). Reading literature, business journals or analysing writings of well-known business authors are great ways of honing expertise.

BE DIRECT

Time is money. So, don't waste too many words before you deliver the message. Be brief at first and then go on to elaborate. By all means, the intended message should be stated within the first sentence. In case an introduction is really really important, opt for a second sentence. Go beyond that and you're risking the reader's attention.



DEFINE 'MESSAGE'

The writing process starts way before we sit with pen and paper or rest hands on the keyboard. It starts with outlining the message we need to convey. Don't be surprised if this defining phase takes several hours, days or involves elaborate discussion and/or in-depth research. It's all part of preparation. And don't even panic if the 'message' doesn't go beyond one sentence, that's how it should be in most cases. Only in the rarest circumstances are more than 2-3 sentences needed to define your key message.

SHORT SENTENCES

Short sentences are an important tool for holding the reader's focus. Short sentences with incremental

JARGON IS YES OR NO

Many find it less taxing to use jargon or technical terminologies in writing. However for readers, this is often accompanied by mixed feelings. Use of jargon is alright only if you're sure that readers are well acquainted with the term i.e. using engineering terms with engineers. Rule of thumb: if you're even a little bit concerned about how readers may react to jargon it's better to lay off them completely, if not mention it in brackets, footnote or appendix.



information keeps readers intrigued. It also helps reader understand the writer's perspective better.

KILL YOUR DARLINGS

This is another way of saying 'leave out unnecessary words.' Sometimes we prefer to use more than one

synonym when the basic word itself does the job perfectly. Use of extra adjectives is a practice that we often opt for to amplify or emphasise something. In such cases, use of the first one is permissible, any more and it sounds redundant. Like everything else, writing too

has evolved. Do a casual survey and you'll find people who prefer a keyboard (few may even say mobile phone) over pen and paper. But this is only context; much change has come into style, forms and tempo of writing too. In spite of these changes in format, writing has not only persisted, but has intensified in significance. So next time you sit down to write a wind-changing business proposal, stick to the tips above and you'll be sure to convey the right message the first time, the second time, and every time onwards.

IBRAHIM H RIZWAN

The writer works for the Supply Chain Department of Square Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

The creative battle

Robi presents AD Maker Bangladesh '15 coloured by Elite Paints

In collaboration with Robi and Elite Paints, NSU YES! initiated AD Maker Bangladesh 2015, the largest inter-university marketing competition, this May. The requirement of the competition was to build a 360 degree integrated marketing campaign, which incorporates ATL and BTL tools, budgeting, advertising strategy, etc.

This year's AD Maker kicked off with an inter-university workshop on May 30. After four weeks of

H.I.G.I.A.M

First runners-up, Team H.I.G.I.A.M aka How I Got into AD Maker, hail from North South University. What really set them apart was their unwavering confidence in the face of intense pressure. The design of their slides was at once simple and different to that of any other competitor's. Their amazing TVC was testimony to the fact that they'd done their market research. **SUPER KARMA**



creative battle, the top three teams were announced at the Grand Finale on June 16 at North South University. In the finale, the top 12 teams had to create their own music videos using Robi's cricket anthem.

TEAM CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Champions, Team Challenge Accepted hail from the Institution of Business Administration, University of Dhaka. With the perfect combination of creativity and professionalism, Team Challenge Accepted held the audience captive with their skilful presentation.

Second runners-up, Team Super Karma also hail from North South University. Confident all throughout, Super Karma surprised the audience with their fun yet professional integrated marketing campaign. Judges were impressed with the team's succinct and effective presentation skills.

For the first time in AD Maker Bangladesh history, one extraordinary team was awarded the Social Media Award for getting more than 5,000 likes and a reach of 4,500 on Facebook within a week. Team Dexters was awarded with BDT 50,000 by Robi for their exceptional work.

Did you know?

Thinking about your ancestors can boost your mental performance

Why do people spend decades tracing their lineages? Thinking about one's ancestors provides comfort, improves one's ability to deal with challenges and actually boosts cognitive performance, new research shows.

In the research, people who had recently thought about their ancestors actually did better on cognitive tests of intelligence than people who had been made to think of other things.

Researchers from the universities of Craz, Berlin, and Munich found that thinking about one's ancestors increases our sense of control over everyday activities. So the next time someone asks you to solve a puzzle or tackle a difficult test, spend a moment thinking about your great-grandmother first!



Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

3 ways to get more done without panicking

Time isn't particularly favourable to you when you've got deadlines to meet. Time is something we lose when we are having fun or clicking like on an Instagram photo of a puppy browsing Facebook. Beating that system is something quite achievable. Take it from a procrastinator like me who has mostly beaten the system.

Plan your day

Start each day with a plan. Spend at least five minutes to chalk in at least 3 'doables'. Those are tasks that you should set upon throughout the day. You decide whether to assign each doable to home, work or personal growth. If you're a night owl like me you will set it up the night before like I will after typing this article. Or as a morning person you could sip your beverage of choice and plan the day ahead.

Spending a little time planning out activities mean you get to visualise a result. Visualising makes your subconscious mind repeat the action you would want to perform. What you see impacts your habits and actions. Pham and Taylor (1999) studies have shown a positive connection between repetitive thought and resulting action.

Divide and conquer

But before you plan, you need to formulate a list of things important to your goals and career success. But a to-do list can get lengthy. Divide it into things that you need to do for personal reason and those that need to be done for work. Buying a new stove versus getting the bills readied to be paid out to your (or my) fledgling photographers. And then break each down to an appointment set at a date and time. Head out to the market to check stove prices after work. Write out the bills and hand them over to accounts by 11:30. Setting things to a specified time make them more achievable.

Block social media

The biggest time waster is our social life or what passes for it these days. I once sat through an hour watching one of my sub-editors work at his PC preparing content for a layout. He replied to messages that blinked and scrolled through



suddenly attractive pictures of a girl, car or a cat posing with a girl in a car. Each time he would spend an average of 4 minutes checking, replying, hitting like. In an hour he easily lost more than 30 minutes.

When you need to get work done, avoid socialising. Avoid Facebook, Twitter and email unless social media is your business like it is mine. Even then, there are plenty of other tasks that need to be done without the distraction of cat and dog pictures. Apps like Facebook Limiter or AppCap allow you to schedule times when you will NOT be allowed to use Facebook and the like.

You can't get everything done, but stay true to these basic activities and you will get a lot done each day. That in the end is a massive mental boost that helps you repeat.

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATION:
EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

Writer is Editor of the career, tech and automobile publications of The Daily Star. He is also an entrepreneur of a baby clothing business and previously worked in advertising as a Senior Copywriter