

38 surefire ways to write better business documents

For almost two decades, **Proof Communications** has been helping businesses to win millions of dollars in new business. We're driven by seeing our clients achieve more revenue from their written words. We love the smiles on their faces when they win the tenders, proposals and awards we write for them. And we're delighted by the great results they achieve from the thought leadership, case studies, blogs, reports, brochures and websites we craft and perfect for them. We're business-to-business writers, editors and proofreaders. We're here to save you time and stress by writing, editing and proofreading your business-winning sales, marketing and stakeholder communications.



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1. Whatever you write online represents your brand, so make sure your company's social media pages look and sound as professional as your website.
2. Use humour sparingly and wisely.
3. Using contractions such as "you'll", "it's" and "we'll" reduces formality and puts your copy on a much more personal level.
4. A great headline zeroes in on one big idea; usually your most important benefit.
5. Watch out for overly long sentences. Break them up to make copy more readable.
6. Be specific. Stating that 157 businesses use your services is more powerful than saying that over 150 do.
7. Use sensory words to make your copy come alive and help your customer visualise owning it, e.g. A vibrant range of colours. Crisp cotton fabric. Whisper-quiet engine.
8. Never, ever begin a sentence with "Unfortunately" – this word has no place in your copy.
9. Headings signpost the topic you're about to discuss; don't bore your readers by constantly repeating the topic in the body of your text.
10. Bullet points are a great way to get your main ideas across quickly, clearly and they're easy on the eye.
11. Create memorable sound-bites that act like a slogan to embed your brand, e.g. "Everything you want. Every time you want it."
12. Avoid jargon at all costs or risk a potential customer losing interest.
13. Using overly complex words when simpler ones will do slows down delivery of your message.
14. Personalise copy by referring to people using "who" instead of "that".
15. Make it easy for people to find your business online by keeping web content SEO optimised.
16. Double check everything. Then check again.
17. Only ever use professionally produced, clearly tagged images to illustrate your product or service.
18. Successful proofreaders read documents aloud.
19. Headlines need to attract buyers as much as push away non-buyers; write headlines that pre-qualify the reader based on their needs and wants.
20. Don't overdo the adjectives unless you want to sound like you're selling real estate.
21. Professionally produced vlogs are a great way to demonstrate what you've got to offer.
22. Don't let any ideas go to waste. Save any content you cut into a new document; what doesn't work for one article will almost certainly work for another.
23. Everything you write must have some value for your customer; it's not about you.
24. Modify and refine what you've composed by taking time to step away from what you've written; review it the next day.

25. Use the 80/20 rule to ensure your writing strikes the right balance. No more than 20% should be written in first person (I, we, us), leaving the remaining 80% focused on the customer (you, your).
26. Critique your content by asking yourself: how does what I've written help my reader?
27. It's far better to be accurate than risk needing to print a retraction. Always take the time to check your facts.
28. Forbes Business Magazine says don't suggest your customers act; demand they do so by putting all your copy through the SLAP test to make your target audience: Stop, Look or listen, Act and Purchase.
29. Invest in yourself and your business by signing up for a copywriting course.
30. The fastest way to annoy your readers? Sloppy grammar, poor punctuation and lots of typos.
31. Practice honing your copywriting skills by re-writing someone else's copy.
32. Only use results-based testimonials that illustrate why it was the right choice to work with your business.
33. Include a solid promise. "Get your car professionally valeted in under an hour or receive a 20% discount" will win you far more business than "We're the fastest valet service in town!"
34. Place the focus of your writing squarely on the reader and how they'll benefit from working with you, not on how fantastic you are.
35. Use the linking phrase "which means" to turn a product feature into a real benefit for your customer, e.g. "Folds flat, which means it's easy to stack and store."
36. Use clear sub-headings to break up content and keep your reader interested.
37. Always have your contact details clearly displayed on every page.
38. Always begin with your strongest selling points, hooking the customer in so they'll want to read more.

