



What is the cost of poor writing in real dollar terms?

Research on the state of writing in business has revealed that the quality of writing is in bad shape – and that it matters a lot!

Unreadable manuals help to sink a company... A once well-known computer manufacturer lost \$35 million in a single quarter when customers rushed to return its new line. The accompanying instruction manuals were unreadable. The firm went into a decline ending in bankruptcy.

What do you mean, we invented it twice? A world-class oil company spent hundreds of thousands of dollars developing a new pesticide. Then red-faced officials discovered that the formula had been worked out five years before -- by one of the company's own technicians! His report was so opaquely written no one had finished reading it.

Michael Egan: Total Quality Business Writing

The problem is that most organizations have no idea how much time and money they spend on writing.

Writing is also among the most expensive business activities.

A major industrial request for proposal might, for instance, cost several million dollars to prepare.

Ninety percent of the effort and money goes into the writing, the equivalent of hundreds and even thousands of hours of valuable non-productive hours.

What's more, if it's poorly done, which is not uncommon, the entire venture may be wasted.

According to one report, government evaluators who award Federal contracts say that incoming proposals are routinely rejected as technically non-compliant, when the real reason is unintelligible writing.



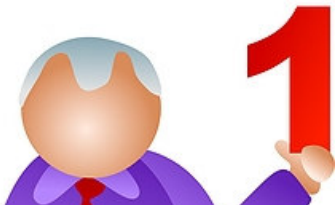
It is a mistake to think that the costs of poor writing are an unavoidable expense of doing business.



In short, poor writing results in costs organizations cannot afford to pay.

HOW IS YOUR COMPANY DOING?

SIGN 1



LACK OF BUSINESS WRITING SKILLS

- Employees and managers requesting writing classes
- Ongoing employee struggles with written communication
- Employees not promoted because of poor business writing skills

SIGN 2



BADLY WRITTEN DOCUMENTS

- Unprofessional email with obvious grammar and sentence construction errors
- Ambiguous, rambling reports
- Unsuccessful proposals
- Poorly structured and designed forms
- Difficult to understand manuals and specifications
- Vague performance appraisals

SIGN 3



WASTED RESOURCES

- Unnecessary support and explanatory calls and written requests caused by unclear messages
- Unread and unanswered reports caused by lengthy and long-winded writing
- Waste of time and loss of revenue caused by unpersuasive and error-ridden proposals that take too much time to write
- Clients becoming frustrated by miscommunication and misunderstanding caused by ineffective forms
- Incorrectly performed tasks caused by confusing and incomplete manuals, policies, procedures and specifications
- Ignored press releases and marketing material caused by uninteresting writing
- Large sums of money spent to rectify errors caused by poor written communication
- Staff having to reread internal correspondence twice or three times to understand poorly structured and unprofessional messages
- Leaders and managers becoming frustrated with poorly written internal and external documents that need extensive editing and rewriting
- Potential ideas begin thwarted due to the inability of staff to clearly articulate them in writing
- Loss of business due to impolite and negative writing

DETAILS

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