

How to Give Your Business Writing a Twist of the Nose

By Doug C. Grant

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What happens when you twist someone's nose?

To begin with, you get their full attention. No distractions. No mind wandering.

That's why it's important to put a nose-twist into your own 'important' business communications.

HERE'S HOW NOSE-TWISTING WORKS

You have a brilliant idea for marketing a new product. Now it needs to be put into writing for consideration by other decision makers.

(Note: I'm not suggesting that only marketing people have this type of writing challenge. Anyone...including you...will one day have to distribute some important information, sell something [perhaps yourself], or encourage the adoption of an idea. Effective business writing is an important skill for any successful business person...no matter what career path you've chosen.)

Many people might start out their proposal something like this. 'Following is an idea I feel will be effective in helping to market the new Axtec product.' Now doesn't that get the blood pumping.

Instead of this kind of ho hum opening, try saying something provocative, such as: 'Six months after launch, our new Axtec product could capture a 20% market share by putting into action the following promotional idea.'

Or, you could ask a question like, 'What is the one feature about the new Axtec product that could catapult it above all competition?'

Naturally, you need to have some basis for your claims or questions. You don't want to be caught exaggerating. If people suspect you are trying to con them into reading something, your day on the stage is over.

Here are several other excellent ways of giving your imcoms a nose-twist in addition to the provocative statement or question:

1. Open with a story - The story might setup a problem your proposal would help solve. If you're

uncertain how this works, read a copy of Reader's Digest. Notice how most of their articles begin with a narration.

2. Provide a startling statistic - Just make certain it's startling. Conventional statistics seldom deliver much of a nose-twist.

(The following suggestions assume your imcom is being distributed as hard copy.)

3. Include a sample - If the subject of your imcom involves a product or product sample that is easily glued to a letter or first page of a proposal, this is an excellent attention getter. Products might include a new grade of sandpaper, stronger plastic, new fabric...etc.

4. Alter the paper - I have punched holes in letters, cut off corners, even burned the edges of an imcom in order to attract attention. Just make certain it ties in with your headline and subject.

None of these suggestions are considered standard business writing techniques. And that's the point. Being a little unconventional can make your imcom the standout business communication of the day. Just avoid being cute or clever. That almost never works.

Remember, developing your skills as a business writer will put you miles ahead of the crowd, no matter what your job or business. It should be as much a part of your work-a-day world as the language you speak. Even a small investment in developing these skills will bring huge returns in future success.

Doug C. Grant is the author of the new e-book, 'How to Move from Cubicle to Corner Office with THE SECRETS OF POWER WRITING'. A FREE preview plus details on receiving a FREE Blue Pencil Edit for one of your own imcoms is available by e-mailing: <mailto:edit@newbieclub.com>

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