

How to Write Like A Pro

By Burt Dubin

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Start by having something to write about. Something that is targeted at a particular audience. Something this audience longs to know about. Something that adds value to their lives, their career. Something that empowers the members of your target audience. Something your target audience yearns for. Something that guides them to get somewhere they want to get. Something that gives them hope.

Continue by being in love with words. By delighting in using your thesaurus and your dictionary to find the right word to convey your meaning. It doesn't hurt to have a copy of Strunk and White's "The Elements of Style" handy. And Theodore M. Bernstein's "The Careful Writer." Throw in William Zinsser's "On Writing Well."

Next, have a passion for your topic or issue—whatever you're to write about. And, more than your passion, know what you're writing about. Know it inside out, upside down, backward and forward. Then, with that as your starting point, do your homework. Research your subject. Research your subject exhaustively. Invest in every book, every recorded program by every expert you can find. Read the journals, magazines and newsletters that treat any aspect of your subject.

Make yourself a hungry, restless, greedy seeker after data, knowledge, wisdom and truth regarding your subject.

Now, get to know the experts in the field. Call them. Write them. Meet with them at conferences and conventions, trade shows, every convocation where they gather. Create peerships.

I almost forgot—live your subject. Get out of your aerie into the street. Get your hands dirty, your face besmirched. Make a few hundred blunders and suffer as many pratfalls in the process. Get embarrassed and hurt, red-faced, eyes stinging with your held-back tears—all on your way to mastership.

After a few years of all of the above, you're ready to write.

Almost.

Ask yourself, now, what value you have to offer in this piece you're about to write, fingers trembling over the keys. What benefits are you ready to confer on your reader? What joys and pleasures are to ensue for your reader as a result of reading and then acting on the hard-won wisdom you're about to share? What pain and torment is your reader to avoid by abiding by your guidance? What

suffering is your reader to evade by doing as you say?

Now you're ready to write.

Tell the truth. Tell your perceived truth. You're unique, one-of-a-kind. You see the world outside you through your eyes. You see life and conditions outside you through the prism of your perceptions and through the prism of your misperceptions. Don't deny it. We all have misperceptions. John F. Kennedy misperceived matters and created the Bay of Pigs fiasco, circa 1961. A few years later Richard M Nixon misperceived matters and brought his presidency down, disgracing himself in the process. Both cases were sad. If presidents can misperceive, so can you! Your truth is yours. Be proud of it. Share it simply. Plainly. Directly. Share it with your head high.

Write like you talk! People prefer vernacular. Give it to 'em. Forget English 101. You're writing to communicate your ideas and feelings on stuff that matters with readers who care. Do it!

Minimize modifiers: Avoid adjectives and adverbs as if they carry communicable diseases. Cause your nouns and verbs to carry your message.

Cut down commas: Every comma slows your readers down. You don't want that. The rule here is simple. If in doubt, leave it out. Review what you write a few hours later. Better yet review the next morning. Mercilessly rip out every comma that isn't crucial to your meaning.

Your readers gotta be sold on the value of reading the fruit of your mind. In your opening paragraphs paint vivid pictures of the rapture and sweetness, the thrills and exultation, the excitement and delight, the bliss, the euphoria, the paradise, the joy and the love; not to mention financial success, acceptance and recognition, fame and maybe even...maybe even...maybe even...dare I write it...immortality; all of which await the reader who absorbs and then acts on your message. And, in addition, it's your responsibility to paint black images of the tortures and torment, the punishment and agony, the misery and wretchedness, the distress and adversity, the tribulation and anguish that await those who choose to ignore your words.

With your reader panting and throbbing with wild desire, conditioned and ready to soak up every word, now deliver substance. Solid value. And, not just information dryly delivered. No, please, not that!

Start with a survey, a summary of what is here for your reader. Phrase your summary as benefits to be made available in this piece of prose. Folks, professionals in particular, are interested in benefits to be harvested when they read your words.

Continue with your presentation of facts, data, information, and wisdom, seasoned by a story, maybe several illustrations and metaphors. Short sentences. Simple sentences. Avoid compound sentences. One and two syllable words for the most part. "Tell it to the Sweeneys and the Stuyvesants will understand." The front page of the Wall Street Journal and all of USA Today are edited for the 8th grade level. Go thou and do likewise.

Conclude with an Action Plan, a series of steps to take now in order to enjoy the benefits you outlined.

One final word: When you're through, stop.

Burt Dubin, a 20 year veteran of the business of speaking, coaches and mentors speakers and wanna-be's world-wide. Burt works with people who want to be speakers and with speakers who

want to be masters. The words of his clients, the admiration and respect expressed for his work by some of the world's most successful speakers, testify to the values he delivers. For samples of his wisdom, simply go to his web-site, <http://www.SpeakingBizSuccess.com> or e-mail Burt at burt@SpeakingBizSuccess.com. Down-load some of the 20 FREE articles and 26 FREE newsletters.

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