# Unit II: [Communicative Persona & Communication]

# 1. Communicative Persona: Semantics, Syntax, Phonetics, Para-Language and Body Language

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# 1. Communicative Persona: Semantics, Syntax, Phonetics, Para-Language and Body Language

Semantics

Semantics, or the study of relationships between words and how we construct meaning, sheds light on how we experience the world and how we understand others and ourselves.

# Definition of Semantics

Philosophers and linguists alike have long debated the intricacies of language, how we construct meaning, and how stationary those meanings really are. You've probably heard the line, 'That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.' Shakespeare asserts here then that a name doesn't matter - it's what that thing or concept really is. Even if we ceased to call a rose a rose, we could still smell its fragrance, feel its velvety petals, and be pricked by its thorns.

 Rose

You can see from the picture above the mental image I had when I read the word 'rose.' Human communication would become extremely tricky if we all associated completely different meanings with a given vocabulary word. If you said 'mango' when I saw a rose, and we were trying to describe the same thing, you can see where we'd have a problem.

**Semantics** means the meaning and interpretation of words, signs, and sentence structure. Semantics largely determine our reading comprehension, how we understand others, and even what decisions we make as a result of our interpretations. Semantics can also refer to the branch of study within linguistics that deals with language and how we understand meaning. This has been a particularly interesting field for philosophers as they debate the essence of meaning, how we build meaning, how we share meaning with others, and how meaning changes over time.

Semantics in ordinary language, the problem of understanding that comes down to word selection or connotation. That's a formal way of saying that we all assign our own ‘meaning' to words. That practice can really interfere with effective communication.

At a recent meeting of executives, we started by each assigning our own value to some commonly used terms like often and sometimes and occasionally and seldom. If something happens often, what percentage of the time do we think it occurred? It was interesting to hear the different interpretations of each word or term.

Ranges of interpretation varied. It turns out that in a group of seven executives, “often” means somewhere between 50 to 80 percent of the time. “Sometimes” could mean between 20 and 60 percent; “occasionally” could mean between 20 and 50 percent; and “seldom” could mean between 5 and 70 percent! Wow!! Some real variation in meaning!

So how important is this in our daily communication? Probably more important that we generally take the time to consider. Let's look at a simple sentence like “Success is seldom as easy as we think.”

* What is meant by the word success? Are we in agreement with what that looks like?
* Seldom? What percentage of the time is that?
* And how about easy? My easy may be your conundrum!

Communication remains a challenge. Are we speaking to each other in terms we both understand? Is the message received the same message that was conveyed? When we said “success is seldom easy” did we discourage our audience or inspire them?

Words are fun! They carry messages that keep us engaged with each other, sharing moments and moving forward together. But, if we don't pay attention to semantics, we may miss our communication goal completely. Good reason to pay close attention to what you are saying…and how it is heard.

# Syntax:

* + Parts of speech Phrase structure Grammar Sequences of words are highly structured, i.e., there are implicit rules about what can go with what.
	+ the way in which linguistic elements (such as words) are put together to form constituents (such as phrases or clauses)
	+ connected or orderly system**:** harmonious arrangement of parts or elements

In linguistics, **syntax** is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, specifically word order and punctuation. The term *syntax* is also used to refer to the study of such principles and processes. The goal of many syntacticians is to discover the syntactic rules common to all languages.

In mathematics, *syntax* refers to the rules governing the behavior of mathematical systems, such as formal languages used in logic.

Syntax is the grammar, structure, or order of the elements in a language statement. (Semantics is the meaning of these elements.) Syntax applies to computer languages as well as to natural languages. Usually, we think of syntax as "word order." However, syntax is also achieved in some languages such as Latin by inflectional case endings. In computer languages, syntax can be extremely rigid as in the case of most assembler languages or less rigid in languages that make use of "keyword" parameters that can be stated in any order.

*EXAMPLE*

 *“I saw that she a cookie ate” is an example of incorrect syntax.*

Phonetics

The system of speech sounds of a language or group of languages the study and systematic classification of the sounds made in spoken utterance the study of speech sounds. Phonetics is defined as the study of the sounds of human speech using the mouth, throat, nasal and sinus cavities, and lungs.

Analytical Areas of Phonetics

Auditory Phonetics: The study of speech perception and how the brain forms perceptual representations of the input it receives during the course of communication.

Articulatory Phonetics: The study of the positions and movements of the lips, tongue, vocal tract, and other speech organs.

Acoustic Phonetics: The study of the properties of the sound waves and how they are perceived by the inner ear.

"Phonetics is the study of speech. Traditionally, phoneticians have relied on their ears and eyes, and their awareness of their own vocal organs, to study pronunciation. Increasingly, however, they have been using instruments of various types to supplement the information they derive from their own sensations. *Experimental phonetics*, as the term is commonly used, includes any investigation of speech by means of instruments. It is understood here that the instruments are used to visualize some aspect of the speech event, and possibly also to provide a basis for measurements. For example, a tape recording for the purpose of repeated listening does not fall within the scope of experimental phonetics, but if the tape recording is fed into a computer and used to produce an acoustic analysis, the activity would be described as an experimental investigation."

**Para-Language**

Non-verbal means of communication, such as tone of voice, laughter, and, sometimes, gestures and facial expressions, that accompany speech and convey further meaning.

You may never have realized it, but you 'speak' paralanguage every day! Come learn more about this method of communication you already know so well and see some examples of how we use it all the time.

# Our Second Language: Paralanguage Defined

Have you ever heard an infant start crying after hearing someone speak in a gruff tone, or perhaps seen a toddler shy away from his mother's disapproving glance? This often happens because we begin understanding **paralanguage** long before we know what words actually mean. Before we can ever comprehend word definitions and usages, we rely on these **non-lexical**, meaning not a word, features of spoken language that aid in conveying meaning to help us understand what is said to us. Animals, especially highly trained animals such as service dogs, are remarkably adept at interpreting human paralanguage.

While interest in the field of paralinguistics has been around for a long time - the great Roman orator and rhetoric teacher Quinitilian was interested in non-verbal communication back in 95 A.D. - it wasn't until the late 1950s that linguist **George L. Trager** decided to differentiate between spoken words and the meanings that they convey, i.e., language, and the other communicative features of human speech. And so, the formal study of **paralanguage**, or the language beside, was born.

Trager identified several different **forms of paralanguage** and concluded that we often use many of them with no conscious effort. Apparently, we are so hard-wired to understand how these elements function in a given context that we don't even necessarily have to think about how to use them.

For instance, you know what a sarcastic tone sounds like and wouldn't need a moment's thought to use it in answering a silly question. What's more, the person you answered would probably also know that you were being sarcastic just by hearing your voice, even if he or she didn't know what all the words you used meant.

Among the **forms of paralanguage**, we find physical elements like facial expressions or gestures. There are also many vocal features that contribute to our interpretation of spoken language, such as voiced pauses or intonation. Some, like respiration, are even a combination of physical and vocal components. Let's take a closer look at these forms of paralanguage and see if we can't identify some familiar examples of each.

# Examples of Paralanguage

Is my friend angry or sad? Is the teacher asking a question or making a statement? This most basic understanding of what's said to you can most often be provided by a person's use of **intonation**, or the pitch and volume of spoken words. For instance, if the volume of your friend's speech is decidedly low, then there's a good chance he's sad over something. Likewise, if your teacher ends a sentence with a raise in **pitch**, or an upward inflection, then she's most likely asking a question. Unless, of course, your teacher happens to be a Valley Girl.

# What is Body Language?

Body language is nonverbal communication that involves body movement. “Gesturing” can also be termed as body language which is absolutely non-verbal means of communication. People in the workplace can convey a great deal of information without even speaking; through nonverbal communication. Not all of our values, beliefs, thoughts and intentions are communicated verbally. In an ongoing communication, most of those are communicated non-verbally. In Non-verbal communication, our human body expresses our feelings and intentions through conscious and unconscious movements and postures, accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, eye contacts and touch. This collectively forms a separate language of the body within the ongoing communication. This is called Body Language.

 **Types of Body Language**

What types of body language can be distinguished? Body language is usually grouped along two lines.

1. Parts of the body
2. Intent

So, what types can be found in each group?

 Parts of the body

From head to toe, here are the groups when grouped for body parts:

* + **The Head** - Movement and placement of the head, back to front, left to right, side to side, including the shaking of hair.
	+ **Facial Expressions** - The face has many muscles (anywhere between 54 and 98, depending on who you ask) that move several areas of the face. Each combination of movements of the following face elements communicates a state of mind:
		- Eyebrows - Up, down, frowning.
		- Eyes - Left, right, up, down, blinking, eye dilatation.
		- Nose - Wrinkle (at the top), flaring of the nostrils.
		- Lips - Smiling, snarling, puckered, kissing, opened, closed, tight.
		- Tongue - In, out, rolled, tip up or down, licking of lips.
		- Jaw - Open, closed, clinched, lower jaw left or right.

**Body Posture** - The way you place your body and arms and legs, in relation to each other, and in relation to other people:

* + - Body proximity - How far or close to other people.

 Shoulder movements - Up, down, hanging, hunched. Arm placement - up, down, crossed, straight.

* + - Leg and feet placement - straight, crossed, weight placement, feet towards speaking partner or pointing elsewhere, dangling of shoes.

**Hand and finger gestures** - How you hold and move your hands and fingers are particularly insightful in reading people.

Handling and placement of **objects** (eg. pens, papers, etc). - The odd one out... technically not a body part, but objects do play a big role in reading body language.

 Intent

Another way to group types of body language is along **Intent:**

* + **Voluntary/Intentional movements** - Usually called "Gestures". These are movements you intended to make, like shaking a hand, giving the finger, blinking with one eye...
	+ **Involuntary movements** - Usually called "tells", but "ticks" also fall into this category. Any body movement you have no cotrol over falls in this category. While technically not a body movement, sweating also applies.

 So where is Tone of Voice?

While usually seen as body language, **tone of voice** and **intonation** are a separate group from body language.

For completeness sake, these are the groups that are found in tone of voice:

* + **Pitch of voice** - high voice, low voice, intonation.
	+ **Loudness** - Everything from shouting to whispering.
	+ **Breathing** - Slow, fast breathing, shaky voice.

# \*Interpersonal Communication

' **Interpersonal communication** just means the exchange of information between two or more people. As long as you are communicating with another person, you're involved in interpersonal communication.

Great. So that's it right? Well, not quite. How we communicate is one of the most fundamental aspects of our lives. So interpersonal communication is a pretty major area of study. Come on, we'll talk about it.

# Characteristics

* + - We communicate a lot of things throughout our lives, but researchers who study communication have identified a few common characteristics. For one, interpersonal communication involves **independent individuals**. This may seem obvious, but really what this means is that each person has their own motivations, expectations, and interpretations of communication.
		- The other fundamental characteristic of interpersonal communication is that it is **inherently rational**. In short, it's meant to be understood. Whatever we communicate, however we communicate it, we do so because we are intelligent beings capable of expressing and communicating our thoughts and feelings. And when we communicate, we do so because we expect something to be communicated.
		- See how interpersonal communication can quickly become an interesting field of study? Beyond the fact that humans communicate rationally, researchers also characterize communication as being **inescapable**. What this means is that you are always communicating, always presenting information about yourself and interpreting information from other people. By saying something, you are communicating. But by refusing to say something, you also communicate something.
		- Communication is constant. But it also **involves personal choice**. That's the fourth main characteristic of interpersonal communication. You can choose how you communicate information because you are a rational individual. See that? The characteristics are all connected.

# Interpersonal Communication Barriers

Surprisingly, even this relatively simple form of interpersonal communication barrers (compared to what is going on in groups anyway) is fraught with many types of barriers. A short list includes:

* Encoding problems on both the sender side
* Decoding biases the receiver side
* Choose the wrong interpersonal communication medium,
* Bad timing
* Ambience
* Fail to understand situation
* Baised feedback, and so on.

# Types of Interpersonal communication

* 1. **Verbal communication.**

Speaking – and listening to our interlocutor – is a vital form of interpersonal communication. Verbal communication is made up not only of the words we speak and their meaning, but also our tone of voice (calm, gentle, excited, etc.). We can communicate verbally in various contexts; two examples are face to face and on the phone.

# Written communication.

We can communicate with our friends and colleagues – either formally or informally – in writing. We can interact with others using text messages in a spontaneous and informal context, or we can sit down and write a long and much-edited letter to them. Whatever suits the context!

# Communicating with gestures.

Our gestures and our body language can enable us to communicate with others (whether we want to or not) without us having to say or to write a single word.

# Lip reading.

If you can read people's lips, you will be able to interact with them without sound. You will even be able to decipher what they are saying during a noisy party when the hubbub makes it difficult for other people to communicate verbally.

# Dancing.

Whether you are dancing for fun with friends or whether you are professional dancer who interprets complex emotions through bodily movements, there is no denying that dancing is a positive, physical way to interact with others.

# Giving gifts.

Giving someone a gift is a superb way of showing that you care about them, and communicating in a way that can often be more powerful than words. If you give a gift of flowers, moreover, you can use the so called ‘language of flowers' (the idea that each flower has a specific meaning) to communicate to friends and loved ones. A thoughtful gift is a brilliant, wordless, way to communicate so many different positive emotions.

# Subtle signs.

Sometimes all that is needed is a slightly raised eyebrow or a pursed mouth and we can communicate volumes. Facial expressions, slight gestures and other very subtle signs are all ways of communicating with others that humans use very often. These subtle signs are often used alongside other forms of communication, such as speech, dance or gift giving.

# Intercultural Communication

So, we need to learn how to communicate all over again, just like when we were children. And just like when we were children, this requires learning language as well as learning behavioral norms for good communication. However, this will be a bit different since we're adults learning how to communicate in someone else's culture, not our own.

Intercultural communication is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. Basically, 'inter-' is a prefix that means 'between' and cultural means… well, from a culture, so intercultural communication is the communication between cultures. Sometimes, this is used to describe a single person trying to interact in a foreign environment but more often, it is a two-way street, where people from both cultures are trying to improve their communication.

Now, if you want to learn about intercultural communication, it's important to understand what this is. But it's also important to understand what it isn't. Intercultural communication is targeted at allowing for positive and productive interaction. You are not joining this culture, you are not becoming a member of another society, you are not abandoning your own culture. That would be assimilation and that's not what we're after.

Intercultural communication is also not simply a language proficiency. Yes, communication requires the ability to understand language, but just think about how much of your communication with even your own friends is nonverbal: our body language, our attitudes, the rituals from hand-shaking to the stink eye. Some researchers estimate that up to 93% of all human communication is nonverbal, although according to recent studies, it's actually closer to 60%.

Still, that means that more than half of communication is never spoken. So, intercultural communication is going to take a lot more than just learning a language.





 

 

 **Resume Writing Skills**

**HOW TO WRITE A RESUME**

Your resume (sometimes called your "CV") is your most important tool when applying for a job. It doesn't matter how qualified you are, or how much experience you have - if your resume is poorly presented or badly written, you're going to have trouble getting the job you want - or even an interview.

Taking the time to work on your resume is really important. The information on this page offers some tips and advice on how to make your resume the best it can be.

The purpose of a resume

Your resume is a marketing tool. It needs to demonstrate:

* That you are employable
* How you meet the job and the organisation's requirements
* That you have the right qualifications and education
* That you have the right experience and skills
* That you have the right level of professionalism for the job

**How long should my resume be?**

There is no set length for a resume. A resume varies in length depending on your experience and education. If you haven't worked much before, one or two pages is best, but three pages is okay if you've got a lot of study and work behind you.

Make sure you don't pad out your resume. If your resume is only one page, as long as it's well-presented it might get better results than a two-page resume full of unnecessary information.

More information about the length of your resume can be found on each of the resume templates on our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

**How should I order my resume?**

Generally it's always good to present the information on your resume in this order:

1. Contact details
2. Opening statement
3. List of key skills
4. List of technical/software skills
5. Personal attributes/career overview
6. Educational qualifications
7. Employment history/volunteering/work placements
8. References/referees

Not everything in this list must appear on your resume every time, and the order can change from application to application. For more information about each of these sections, check out "What Your Resume Should Include", below.

The most important thing is to get the most useful information across first. For example, if your education history is not specifically related to the job, put it toward the end of your resume, behind the information that is related to the job.

Check out the resume templates on our Sample resumes and cover letters page for examples of how you might want to order the information on your resume.

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**Do I need to change my resume for each application?**

You need to tailor your resume to every job application so that it responds to the specific requirements of the job you're applying for.

You might not need to change much, but you do need to make sure your opening statement, your key skills and your personal attributes all respond to the needs of the role, based on the job ad (if there was one) and the research you've done into the job.

You should also tailor your resume to show how your work experience specifically meets the needs of the job you're applying for.

How to tailor your resume

Ways that you can tailor your resume include:

* Using your opening statement to link your experience and education to the organisation and the requirements of the job
* Listing your most relevant key skills first
* Including examples of achievements that meet the advertised requirements of the job
* Including specifically relevant key words and phrases throughout your resume (see "Keywords" in "What Your Resume Should Include", below)

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**What your resume should include.**

There are a number of things that every resume should have on it. Check out the resume templates on our Sample resumes and cover letters page to get an idea of what each of these sections should look like.

**Contact details**

Make sure you include your name, email address and a contact phone number on your resume. You don't have to include your home address, although there might be some situations when doing so would be a good idea.

Don't include your contact details in the header of your resume. Recruitment software sometimes has difficulty reading information in headers or footers, so it's a good idea to avoid headers altogether.

You can put your contact details in the footer of your resume, but if you do, you must make sure they're also in the main body of the document.

**Opening statement**

An opening statement is a summary of who you are, where you've studied and/or worked, and what you bring to the job. It should be about six lines long and written in first person without the personal reference (i.e., don't say "I did this" - say “Did this" instead).

Your opening statement should start with one sentence about who you are and what you bring to the job, then describe the skills and attributes you have that suit you to the job.

For some examples of opening statements, check out our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

**Key skills & strengths**

Your resume should include a list of between 10 and 15 skills that link your experience to the job you're applying for.

If the job you're applying for was advertised, either the ad or the position description may provide a list of skills and experiences that are essential for doing the job. It may also provide a list of "desirable" skills and experience. Your list of key skills & strengths needs to respond to all of the items on the "essential" list and as many items as possible on the "desirable" list.

When putting together this list, think of things you've done or learned to do as part of:

* Jobs you've had
* Your studies
* Any work placements you've done
* Any volunteering you've done

For examples of the kinds of skills you might list, check out our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

**Technical/software skills**

This is a short list of the names of software or technology you know how to use. Examples might include:

* Word processing or spreadsheet software
* Programming languages
* Tools (e.g., cash registers, EFTPOS) Personal attributes

If you haven't got much work experience, a list of personal attributes can be another way to demonstrate

that you're the right person for the job.

Things you could include in this section might include ways you can demonstrate that you are reliable, honest, trustworthy or quick to learn new things. Check out our Employability skills page to see a few of the things that employers are commonly looking for.

You can include between three to five personal attributes, but make sure you don't include them instead of your key skills.

**Educational history**

Your Educational History only needs to show your highest level of education. You don't need to include your results, unless showing them proves how well you're suited to the job.

If you can, you should also include a few bullet points listing your academic achievements (e.g., school or class captaincies, awards you've won, or groups you've been part of).

**Employment history**

When providing your employment history, start with the your most recent job and go backwards from there. Give the position title and the dates you worked there.

If you haven't had a job before, you can use other things to demonstrate your experience, including:

* Work experience you've done through school
* Work placements or internships that you've done through university or TAFE
* Volunteer work you've done

For each job provide a list of the things that you achieved while in that job, and the significant contributions you made to the organisation. Make sure that these achievements and contributions match the key skills and strengths listed earlier on your resume.

For examples of how you can do this, check out our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

**References/referees**

Your resume should list two people who can positively recommend you as an employee. Ideally your references will be people that you have worked with before. Provide their name, their position title, and a way that they can be contacted.

For more about references, check out our Who can be my referee? page.

**Testimonials**

A testimonial is another good way to prove that your skill and experience is what the employer is looking for.

Getting a testimonial can be as easy as asking a colleague, teacher or previous employer to write a couple of sentences about you. Ideally the people you get testimonials from should also be included in your references.

You can include any testimonials you get as part of your educational history or your employment/volunteering/work placement history.

Usually it's enough to include one or two testimonials in your resume. Any more than two is probably too many.

For examples of testimonials, check out our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

**Keywords**

A lot of recruitment agencies use software that scans applications for key words and phrases. Applications that don't use the right keywords tend to be automatically rejected.

Key words and phrases that this software looks for can include the names of:

* Skills
* Jobs
* Activities
* Qualifications
* Software
* Tools

To make sure your resume has the right key words and phrases, check out the job ad and make a list of the words and phrases it uses. If you don't have a written job ad to refer to, you can use a job search engine to find other ads for similar jobs and see what kind of keywords those ads use.

Once you have a list to work from, start adding those words and phrases to your resume. Good places to add keywords include:

* Your opening statement
* Your list of key skills
* Your educational history
* Your employment history

For examples of how to use keywords on your resume, check out our Sample resumes and cover letters page.

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**What NOT to put on your resume**

Here are a few things not to include on your resume. Note that there may be circumstances when including some of the following information shows that you're a good fit for the job. If that's the case, including that information would be a good idea.

**Private information**

You don't have to provide any personal or private information on your resume. There's no benefit to be gained from providing information that could be used to generalize about you as a potential employee.

Your resume doesn't have to include:

* Your birthdate
* Your gender
* Your address
* Any ailments or disabilities
* Your health status

A possible exception to this might be when providing this information would give your application an advantage (e.g., if the employer is looking for someone young, or a female applicant). In these situations, consider including such information if you think it would strengthen your application.

**Typos or factual errors**

Submitting a resume or cover letter with spelling mistakes will guarantee you don't get an interview. You should spellcheck your resume before you send it, but you should also get someone else to read it as well and check for mistakes you might have missed.

Double-check everything that you include in your resume. If you mention the company's name, make sure you get it right. If you mention the name of places, you've worked before, make sure you get that right. Mistakes on resumes are worse than typos.

You should also consider getting your resume looked at by someone professional. Check out "Reviewing your resume", below.

**Images and graphics**

Don't include images or photos on your resume. Not only are images disliked by recruiters and HR professionals, they can also create problems with recruitment software.

**Content in headers**

Many resumes only feature the applicant's name and contact details in the header of the document. Some recruitment software is unable to read information in headers and footers. If you do include information in the header and footer of your resume, make sure you include it in the body of the document too.

**Fancy formatting**

Stick to easy-to-read fonts and formats. This makes it easier for recruiters to review your resume. It also means any recruitment software that reviews your resume can easily read the information. Good fonts to use include:

* Verdana
* Arial
* Century gothic
* Calibri

Don't use large headers to break up the sections of your resume. Use a 10- or 11-point font for your main content and a 12- or 14-point maximum for headers.

Information in tables

Some resume templates present information in tables to help with layout, but some recruitment software is unable to read tables. Your resume should only be formatted using line breaks and simple formatting (like setting multiple columns across the page).

PDF versions of your resume

Some recruitment software can't read pdfs. Unless a job ad specifically says to provide your resume as a. pdf, you should always only submit your resume in word format (.doc or .docx).

 **Reviewing your resume**

Having someone else review your resume is extremely important. Make sure you use someone who will actually tell you if they think something isn't right. People you could ask include:

* Co-workers
* Former employers
* Teachers
* Career guidance counsellors
* Your parents or guardians

The Career Development Association of Australia has a list of professional organisations (new window) that can review your resume for a fee. They have also developed a resume review checklist that can help you to make sure that you check over everything on your resume and get it right the first time.

**Web Writing Guidelines for Content Contributors**



Enable content contributors to write for your website.

As web professionals, we owe a lot to our content contributors. Your college website has tons of content, and no one person can do it all. The more you enable content contributors to write for your site (supported, of course, by a thorough editorial process), the closer you will be to your shared goal of creating great content. Here are some web writing guidelines to help make that happen.

# Keep your audience in mind.

Consider who will be reading and using your web content. Prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff? What are they looking for, and what do they need? Be sure the tone, language and organization of content is appropriate for your audience.

# Be concise.

Web writing should be clear and direct. Keep sentences short. Remove words or descriptions that don't add value to the content. As content strategist Margot Bloomstein says, "Thoreau instructed ‘simplify, simplify.' You can do him one better. Here's to snappy writing that gets to the point and knows when to stop!"

# Make content scannable.

Readers scan web pages before they read. If they don't recognize useful, relevant content, they often move on. Elements that enhance scanning include headers, links, highlighted text, bulleted lists, graphics, captions and pull-quotes. However, be careful not to overemphasize content and confuse the visual and editorial hierarchy of information. There's a reason the blink tag is deprecated by the W3C.

# Write meaningful headers.

Readers rely on headers to navigate on-page content. Choose words for headers and subheaders that clearly describe the content they introduce. Boring, useful words are better than clever, obtuse words.

# Limit paragraphs to 70 words.

I've seen numerous recommended word counts, but I've found a 70-word limit to be a practical and effective number in most cases. Of course, less is better.

# Use bulleted lists whenever possible.

Bulleted lists are easier to scan and read than full paragraphs. If you are listing three or more items, consider using a bulleted list. For instructions or long lists like this one, consider using numbered lists for easy reference.

# Use active voice.

Writing in the active voice is more clear, conversational and engaging than the passive voice. Just ask Strunk and White: "The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive." Also, "when a sentence is made stronger, it usually becomes shorter. Thus, brevity is a by-product of vigor" (*The Elements of Style, Third Edition*, pages 18-19).

# Use common language.

It's essential for findability and SEO (search engine optimization) to use the same words and phrases your readers do. When creating page titles, headers, list items and links, choose keywords carefully. Additionally, be sure to use keywords consistently when creating web content. When used appropriately, this practice reinforces keyword relevancy for search engines, such as Google and your own internal search, thereby improving findability.

# Be professional *and* human.

Think like a publisher and less like a marketer. Use a more conversational tone. Avoid jargon and buzzwords like "cutting-edge" or "leverage." Users are turned off by content that talks at them instead of with them. Consider how you would communicate with someone standing in front of you instead of via a traditional TV or radio advertisement.

# Include valuable links.

If additional useful, relevant and appropriate content exists elsewhere—on or off your website—link to it. Instead of repeating information that already exists on your site, link to this content as well. Consider what content elsewhere might add value to yours and improve usability. When possible, include links within your page copy to make them contextually relevant.

Readers rely on headers to navigate on-page content. Choose words for headers and subheaders that clearly describe the content they introduce. Boring, useful words are better than clever, obtuse words.

# 11.Limit paragraphs to 70 words.

I've seen numerous recommended word counts, but I've found a 70-word limit to be a practical and effective number in most cases. Of course, less is better.

# 12. Use bulleted lists whenever possible.

Bulleted lists are easier to scan and read than full paragraphs. If you are listing three or more items, consider using a bulleted list. For instructions or long lists like this one, consider using numbered lists for easy reference.

# Use active voice.

Writing in the active voice is more clear, conversational and engaging than the passive voice. Just ask Strunk and White: "The active voice is usually more direct and vigorous than the passive." Also, "when a sentence is made stronger, it usually becomes shorter. Thus, brevity is a by-product of vigor" (*The Elements of Style, Third Edition*, pages 18-19).

# Use common language.

It's essential for findability and SEO (search engine optimization) to use the same words and phrases your readers do. When creating page titles, headers, list items and links, choose keywords carefully. Additionally, be sure to use keywords consistently when creating web content. When used appropriately, this practice reinforces keyword relevancy for search engines, such as Google and your own internal search, thereby improving findability.

# Be professional *and* human.

Think like a publisher and less like a marketer. Use a more conversational tone. Avoid jargon and buzzwords like "cutting-edge" or "leverage." Users are turned off by content that talks at them instead of with them. Consider how you would communicate with someone standing in front of you instead of via a traditional TV or radio advertisement.

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# Personality Development for Media Entrepreneurs –

1. **Do what you enjoy.**

What you get out of your business in the form of personal satisfaction, financial gain, stability and enjoyment will be the sum of what you put into your business. So if you don't enjoy what you're doing, in all likelihood it's safe to assume that will be reflected in the success of your business--or subsequent lack of success. In fact, if you don't enjoy what you're doing, chances are you won't succeed.

1. **Take what you do seriously.**

You cannot expect to be effective and successful in business unless you truly believe in your business and in the goods and services that you sell. Far too many home business owners fail to take their own businesses seriously enough, getting easily sidetracked and not staying motivated and keeping their noses to the grindstone. They also fall prey to naysayers who don't take them seriously because they don't work from an office building, office park, storefront, or factory. Little do these skeptics, who rain on the home business owner's parade, know is that the number of people working from home, and making very good annual incomes, has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years.

1. **Plan everything.**

Planning every aspect of your home business is not only a must, but also builds habits that every home business owner should develop, implement, and maintain. The act of business planning is so important because it requires you to analyze each business situation, research and compile data, and make conclusions based mainly on the facts as revealed through the research. A business plan also serves a second function, which is having your goals and how you will achieve them, on paper. You can use the plan that you create both as map to take you from point A to Z and as a yardstick to measure the success of each individual plan or segment within the plan.

1. **Manage money wisely.**

The lifeblood of any business enterprise is cash flow. You need it to buy inventory, pay for services, promote and market your business, repair and replace tools and equipment, and pay yourself so that you can continue to work. Therefore, all home business owners must become wise money managers to ensure that the cash keeps flowing and the bills get paid. There are two aspects to wise money management.

1. The money you receive from clients in exchange for your goods and services you provide (income)
2. The money you spend on inventory, supplies, wages and other items required to keep your business operating. (expenses)
3. **Ask for the sale.**

A home business entrepreneur must always remember that marketing, advertising, or promotional activities are completely worthless, regardless of how clever, expensive, or perfectly targeted they are, unless one simple thing is accomplished--ask for the sale. This is not to say that being a great salesperson, advertising copywriting whiz or a public relations specialist isn't a tremendous asset to your business. However, all of these skills will be for naught if you do not actively ask people to buy what you are selling.

1. **Remember it's all about the customer.**

Your home business is not about the products or services that you sell. Your home business is not about the prices that you charge for your goods and services. Your home business is not about your competition and how to beat them. Your business is all about your customers, or clients, period. After all, your customers are the people that will ultimately decide if your business goes boom or bust. Everything you do in business must be customer focused, including your policies, warranties, payment options, operating hours, presentations, advertising and promotional c0ampaigns and website. In addition, you must know who your customers are inside out and upside down.

**Related: Keeping Your Customers Satisfied -- It's All in the Details**

1. **Become a shameless self-promoter (without becoming obnoxious).**

One of the greatest myths about personal or business success is that eventually your business, personal abilities, products or services will get discovered and be embraced by the masses that will beat a path to your door to buy what you are selling. But how can this happen if no one knows who you are, what you sell and why they should be buying?

Self-promotion is one of the most beneficial, yet most underutilized, marketing tools that the majority of home business owners have at their immediate disposal.

1. **Project a positive business image.**

You have but a passing moment to make a positive and memorable impression on people with whom you intend to do business. Home business owners must go out of their way and make a conscious effort to always project the most professional business image possible. The majority of home business owners do not have the advantage of elaborate offices or elegant storefronts and showrooms to wow prospects and impress customers. Instead, they must rely on imagination, creativity and attention to the smallest detail when creating and maintaining a professional image for their home business.

1. **Get to know your customers.**

One of the biggest features and often the most significant competitive edge the home based entrepreneur has over the larger competitors is the he can offer personalized attention. Call it high-tech backlash if you will, but customers are sick and tired of hearing that their information is somewhere in the computer and must be retrieved, or told to push a dozen digits to finally get to the right department only to end up with voice mail--from which they never receive a return phone call.

The home business owner can actually answer phone calls, get to know customers, provide personal attention and win over repeat business by doing so. It's a researched fact that most business (80 percent)

will come from repeat customers rather than new customers. Therefore, along with trying to draw newcomers, the more you can do to woo your regular customers, the better off you will be in the long run and personalized attention is very much appreciated and remembered in the modern high tech world.

**Related: Why You Should Never Prejudge a Sales Prospect**

1. **Level the playing field with technology.**

You should avoid getting overly caught up in the high-tech world, but you should also know how to take advantage of using it. One of the most amazing aspects of the internet is that a one- or two-person business operating from a basement can have a superior website to a $50 million company, and nobody knows the difference. Make sure you're keeping up with the high-tech world as it suits your needs. The best technology is that which helps you, not that which impresses your neighbors.

1. **Build a top-notch business team.**

No one person can build a successful business alone. It's a task that requires a team that is as committed as you to the business and its success. Your business team may include family members, friends, suppliers, business alliances, employees, sub-contractors, industry and business associations, local government and the community. Of course, the most important team members will be your customers or clients. Any or all may have a say in how your business will function and a stake in your business future.

**Related: Why Teamwork Should Be Your No. 1 Sales Tool**

1. **Become known as an expert.**

When you have a problem that needs to be solved, do you seek just anyone's advice or do you seek an expert in the field to help solve your particular problem? Obviously, you want the most accurate information and assistance that you can get. You naturally seek an expert to help solve your problem. You call a plumber when the hot water tank leaks, a real estate agent when it's time to sell your home or a dentist when you have a toothache. Therefore, it only stands to reason that the more you become known for your expertise in your business, the more people will seek you out to tap into your expertise, creating more selling and referral opportunities. In effect, becoming known as an expert is another style of prospecting for new business, just in reverse. Instead of finding new and qualified people to sell to, these people seek you out for your expertise.

1. **Create a competitive advantage.**

A home business must have a clearly defined unique selling proposition. This is nothing more than a fancy way of asking the vital question, "Why will people choose to do business with you or purchase your product or service instead of doing business with a competitor and buying his product or service?" In other words, what one aspect or combination of aspects is going to separate your business from your competition? Will it be better service, a longer warranty, better selection, longer business hours, more flexible payment options, lowest price, personalized service, better customer service, better return and exchange policies or a combination of several of these?

1. **Invest in yourself.**

Top entrepreneurs buy and read business and marketing books, magazines, reports, journals, newsletters, websites and industry publications, knowing that these resources will improve their understanding of business and marketing functions and skills. They join business associations and clubs, and they network with other skilled business people to learn their secrets of success and help define their own goals and objectives. Top entrepreneurs attend business and marketing seminars, workshops and training courses, even if they have already mastered the subject matter of the event. They do this because they know that education is an ongoing process. There are usually ways to do things better, in less time, with less effort. In short, top entrepreneurs never stop investing in the most powerful, effective and best business and marketing tool at their immediate disposal--themselves.

1. **Be accessible.**

We're living in a time when we all expect our fast-food lunch at the drive-thru window to be ready in mere minutes, our dry cleaning to be ready for pick-up on the same day, our money to be available at the cash machine and our pizza delivered in 30 minutes or it's free. You see the pattern developing--you must.

You must remain cognizant of the fact that few people will work hard, go out of their way, or be inconvenienced just for the privilege of giving you their hard-earned money. The shoe is always on the other foot. Making it easy for people to do business with you means that you must be accessible and knowledgeable about your products and services. You must be able to provide customers with what they want, when they want it.

1. **Build a rock-solid reputation.**

A good reputation is unquestionably one of the home business owner's most tangible and marketable assets. You can't simply buy a good reputation; it's something that you earn by honoring your promises. If you promise to have the merchandise in the customer's hands by Wednesday, you have no excuse not to have it there. If you offer to repair something, you need to make good on your offer. Consistency in what you offer is the other key factor. If you cannot come through with the same level of service (and products) for clients on a regular basis, they have no reason to trust you and without trust, you won't have a good reputation.

1. **Sell benefits.**

Pushing product features is for inexperienced or wannabe entrepreneurs. Selling the benefits associated with owning and using the products and services you carry is what sales professionals worldwide focus on to create buying excitement and to sell, sell more, and sell more frequently to their customers. Your advertising, sales presentations, printed marketing materials, product packaging, website, newsletters, trade show exhibit and signage are vital. Every time and every medium used to communicate with your target audience must always be selling the benefits associated with owning your product or using your service.

1. **Get involved.**

Always go out of your way to get involved in the community that supports your business. You can do this in many ways, such as pitching in to help local charities or the food bank, becoming involved in organizing community events, and getting involved in local politics. You can join associations and clubs that concentrate on programs and policies designed to improve the local community. It's a fact that people like to do business with people they know, like and respect, and with people who do things to help them as members of the community.

1. **Grab attention.**

Small-business owners cannot waste time, money and energy on promotional activities aimed at building awareness solely through long-term, repeated exposure. If you do, chances are you will go broke long before this goal is accomplished. Instead, every promotional activity you engage in, must put money back in your pocket so that you can continue to grab more attention and grow your business.

1. **Master the art of negotiations.**

The ability to negotiate effectively is unquestionably a skill that every home business owner must make every effort to master. It's perhaps second in importance only to asking for the sale in terms of home business musts. In business, negotiation skills are used daily. Always remember that mastering the art of negotiation means that your skills are so finely tuned that you can always orchestrate a win-win situation. These win-win arrangements mean that everyone involved feels they have won, which is really the basis for building long-term and profitable business relationships.

1. **Design Your workspace for success.**

Carefully plan and design your home office workspace to ensure maximum personal performance and productivity and, if necessary, to project professionalism for visiting clients. If at all possible, resist the temptation to turn a corner of the living room or your bedroom into your office. Ideally, you'll want a separate room with a door that closes to keep business activities in and family members out, at least during prime business and revenue generating hours of the day. A den, spare bedroom, basement or converted garage are all ideal candidates for your new home office. If this is not possible, you'll have to find a means of converting a room with a partition or simply find hours to do the bulk of your work when nobody else is home.

1. **Get and stay organized.**

The key to staying organized is not about which type of file you have or whether you keep a stack or two of papers on your desk, but it's about managing your business. It's about having systems in place to do things. Therefore, you want to establish a routine by which you can accomplish as much as possible in a given workday, whether that's three hours for a part-time business or seven or nine hours as a full-timer. In fact, you should develop systems and routines for just about every single business activity. Small things such as creating a to-do list at the end of each business day, or for the week, will help keep you on top of important tasks to tackle. Creating a single calendar to work from, not multiple sets for individual tasks or jobs, will also ensure that jobs are completed on schedule and appointments kept. Incorporating family and personal activities into your work calendar is also critical so that you work and plan from a single calendar.

1. **Take time off.**

The temptation to work around the clock is very real for some home business owners. After all, you don't have a manager telling you it's time to go home because they can't afford the overtime pay. Every person working from home must take time to establish a regular work schedule that includes time to stretch your legs and take lunch breaks, plus some days off and scheduled vacations. Create the schedule as soon as you have made the commitment to start a home business. Of course, your schedule will have to be flexible. You should, therefore, not fill every possible hour in the day. Give yourself a backup hour or two. All work and no play make you burn out very fast and grumpy customer service is not what people want.

1. **Limit the number of hats you wear.**

It's difficult for most business owners not to take a hands-on approach. They try to do as much as possible and tackle as many tasks as possible in their business. The ability to multitask, in fact, is a common trait shared by successful entrepreneurs. However, once in a while you have to stand back and look beyond today to determine what's in the best interest of your business and yourself over the long run. Most highly successful entrepreneurs will tell you that from the time they started out, they knew what they were good at and what tasks to delegate to others.

1. **Follow-up constantly.**

Constant contact, follow-up, and follow-through with customers, prospects, and business alliances should be the mantra of every home business owner, new or established. Constant and consistent follow-up enables you to turn prospects into customers, increase the value of each sale and buying frequency from existing customers, and build stronger business relationships with suppliers and your core business team. Follow-up is especially important with your existing customer base, as the real work begins after the sale. It's easy to sell one product or service, but it takes work to retain customers and keep them coming back.

# Professional skills for media ownership-

**Build entrepreneurial momentum:** Momentum is a great exaggerator and the only factor that will separate mediocrity in entrepreneurial success from excellence. The momentum you generate during the fellowship program will be mined in times to come.

**Hone your learning; Convert knowledge into skill:** The fellowship program helps you in doing a trial run of all principles learned in the classroom with the clients and prospects understanding that you are still in a student mode, as you navigate across the length and breadth of possibilities.

**Build Implementation Skills:** ICBI equips you with the complete knowhow and work instructions for every market intervention with a singular objective, ‘Go Nail It'! Focus your efforts only on creating a superlative customer experience and the rest will follow.

**Develop Micro-Marketing Capability:** Learn to identify and research your target market; discover the size and the most effective way to market to this group. Develop your overall marketing strategy for business success. Determine the best methods of promoting your business; measure the success of your promotional efforts; develop a promotional message that works for your business.

**Receive ongoing Coaching:** Explore real-world possibilities, Get answers to your tough questions from our experienced facilitators and instructors, analyze a problem/situation; think critically and identify and define the requirements appropriate to its solution.

**Effective Business Communication:** Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing and email to a variety of clients and markets by constructing an effective proposal and marketing/sales pitch.

**Develop a Network:** Your fellowship program will help you develop business contacts who can connect you ahead with their contacts, act as references or seek your services for their own requirement.

**Building Persistence with Rejection Management capability:** Entrepreneurs flourish when they learn to operate outside their comfort zone. The fellowship program will structure this zoning out for you, while equipping you with emotional resilience to manage persuasion and rejection equally well.

**Peer Learning:** The cafe days at ICBI will bring budding entrepreneurs together where experience sharing and peer and experiential learning will become the corner-stone for personal growth and entrepreneur skills development. Living out of other's experiences will help you fail-safe your efforts and maximize results.

**Build Your Brand:** Express effectively on Social media, Develop an elevator pitch and also employ the art of small talk effectively to impact favourably at every available opportunity. Develop an effective PR and Social media strategy for self (own organization)