



# Improving Your Business Writing

## Overview

In this competitive world, people who can express themselves clearly in writing are at a distinct advantage over co-workers and competitors. Having worked with hundreds of professionals, it's clear that even some of the brightest, most educated people have difficulty putting their thoughts and ideas in writing. The good news is that writing is a skill you can hone. And, like all skills, working with a writing coach is one of the best ways of improving your writing.

## Why Coaching Works

Busy professionals are results-driven and are not interested in a broad study of grammar rules, which is usually how generic business writing seminars or course are structured. Instead, they want to know how to improve their writing to advance their career. That's what we focus on in our coaching.

Our one-on-one approach is highly effective because we know that when it comes to writing, most people have strengths, weaknesses, and some bad habits. We help you understand your writing weaknesses and we teach you concrete ways of improving.

## Our Method

We begin by learning about the types of things you write – whether it's internal memos, reports, or information for clients. We then objectively assess your writing samples, as well as any feedback you may have received on your writing. We pinpoint specific things you can do to improve, and we create a personalized program to help you improve.

The number and timing of our coaching sessions depends on how much – and how often – you write. We schedule meetings to give you enough time to practice applying the methods and techniques we cover after each meeting.

In each session we focus on one or two problem areas. We help you understand the rules you are misapplying and, using exercises, you learn how to apply them correctly. But, knowing how to fix a problem is only useful if you can spot situations when the problem might arise. So, we have designed exercises to help you learn to do this.

Throughout the coaching process we provide feedback on your writing. Typically, after every other session you submit new samples. We assess these samples to monitor your progress. From these we can see what techniques you've mastered and what you might still need help on.

## TYPICAL COACHING PROGRAM

A coaching program typically runs from three – five months.

We provide coaching services based on a flat fee or an hourly rate.

The flat fee includes our initial review of your writing, establishing the coaching plan, five to six one-on-one meetings, and "on call" support.

## We're "On Call" for You

During the coaching period we are "on call" – ready to answer questions you may have about your writing on a real-time basis. Clients often find this support especially useful if they need help applying principles and concepts to something they're working on. Immediate, practical feedback helps reinforce concepts and boost confidence, both of which are crucial to becoming a better writer.

## Who Can Benefit from Coaching

Coaching is beneficial for anyone who wants to improve their business writing. Many clients work with us because they want to increase their confidence or to take their writing to a new level. Others work with us because their employer has recommended they get writing help. Regardless of the specific reason for seeking our help, all our coaching clients have one thing in common: the belief that improving their writing will help them get ahead in their career.

## Coach's Profile

Ingrid Sapona is the owner of Good with Words, a consulting firm specializing in clear communication of business information. Good with Words' motto sums up Ingrid's philosophy and mission: Clearly written ... easily understood.

Her interest in coaching professionals to help them improve their business writing grew from her years of experience editing others' writing. Through her work as a consultant, she's come to realize that most poor writers can improve greatly by focusing on a few critical skills. Indeed, most of the writing mistakes people make are surprisingly straightforward to correct – the problem is most of the time they don't understand what they're doing wrong. This is where one-on-one coaching is ideal. By analyzing various writing samples, Ingrid is able to pinpoint a writer's main weaknesses. She then teaches the writer strategies for spotting their particular problems and what to do to correct them.

Having worked in large firms, Ingrid understands the pressure professionals are under and the scrutiny they are subject to from employers and peers. She realizes that most clients come to her for coaching because they feel (or their employer feels) their writing is holding them back professionally. Ingrid's gentle, up-beat, encouraging nature and her enthusiasm for helping people communicate clearly puts clients at ease so they can focus on the task at hand: improving their skills and confidence.

Ingrid has been helping professionals communicate complex business information since 1997. She has a journalism degree from Northwestern University and a law degree from Case Western Reserve University. She is a member of the New York and Ontario bars.



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