



What Plain Language is All About – and Why it Matters

Overview

The information age has matured beyond the point where simply making information available is enough. Now the focus is on whether information is understandable. Many believe receiving information in plain language is a fundamental right. More and more governments and regulators are requiring businesses and professionals to use plain language.

In this program we trace the history of the plain language movement and look at where the trend is headed globally. We discuss why plain language should matter to professionals and what's in it for them if they use plain language. And we take an in-depth look at the three pillars of plain language: style, organization, and layout.

You'll learn...

You'll learn techniques you can use to craft documents that are clear, well-organized, and useful to your audience – in other words, documents readers “get” and can act on. Through a combination of discussion and practical exercises, participants will be able to:

- Write in active voice using simple, straightforward words
- Craft useful vertical lists
- Organize documents in a reader-friendly manner
- Choose document designs and organization structures that aid in risk management

Program Details

The seminar covers the following topics:

- **Plain Language Benefits**
 - Saves readers time
 - Ensures readers understand and can act on the information
 - Helps writers clarify their thoughts, points, and arguments
 - Enhances writer's reputation
 - Satisfies regulatory requirements
- **Plain Language Style**
 - Word choice
 - Active voice
 - Jargon
 - Sentence structure and length

SEMINAR DETAILS

Length:	typically 1/2 day 8:30 a.m. – noon
Date:	to be determined
Location:	to be determined



- Plain Language Organization

- Putting the main point upfront
- Structuring the document
- Borrowing tools from storytelling
- Including aids to navigation

- Plain Language Layout

- Document layout and design as a risk management tool
- Elements of reader-friendly layout
- Headings and chart labels
- Bullet lists (and how to properly craft them)

Who Should Take This Seminar

This seminar is a must for professionals who write business information that clients, customers, regulators, and others need to understand.

Facilitator Profile

Ingrid Sapona is 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.

Ingrid's been making complex business information clear 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. It was while practicing law that she realized she has a special talent for making complicated, technical information understandable.

Ingrid works with professionals and business leaders, creating communications that satisfy strategic business and regulatory requirements. Using plain writing principles, she measures success by whether people understand the issue or idea the first time they read it because if they do, they're more likely to act on it.

She's a frequent speaker and lecturer on business writing. In addition, she writes a regular column called "Writer's Edge" in *The Business Valuator*, a quarterly publication of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Business Valuators, and she muses on business writing in her blog: *You don't say...*



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