



CHUBB®

Write for Results



Write for Results

OUR PHILOSOPHY

ExecComm helps you communicate with greater impact by shifting your focus from yourself to others. This mindset allows you to connect more effectively, influence with intention, and lead with clarity and confidence.

For more than four decades, ExecComm has worked with professionals around the world to strengthen communication at every level, from emerging leaders to senior executives. Our approach is practical, personalized, and grounded in real work. Every experience is designed to help you think more clearly, deliver messages with purpose, and communicate with ease across presentations, meetings, and high-stakes conversations.

The following courses build on our core communication approach, using proven techniques and hands-on practice to help you strengthen your impact and presence.

Skill areas include:

Building Foundational Skills

- Business Writing
- Essential Communication Skills
- From Campus to Corporate

Expanding Your Presence

- Influencing for Success
- Leading with Executive Presence
- Personal Branding

Leading

- Coaching Toward Excellence
- Innovation Skills
- Management Essentials
- Motivating & Mentoring

Presenting

- Advanced Presentation Skills
- Crafting High Impact Presentations
- Presenting with Impact
- Storytelling with Data
- Train the Trainer

Business Development & Selling

- Consultative Selling Skills
- Negotiation Skills
- Selling Your Expertise

Interacting with the Media

- Community Dialoging
- Crisis Communication Skills
- Managing the Media

Meeting

- Communicating to Resolve Conflict
- Conducting Effective Interviews
- Dynamic Meeting Skills

Writing

- Hit Send with Confidence
- Write for Results

One-on-One Professional Development available across all skill areas

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UNCLEAR WRITING EXAMPLE

“Over a significant period of time, we have gained experience helping our clients improve operational performance and maximize both the efficiency of their human resources and the economical utilization of their capital. Ours is an integrated approach that both diagnoses and streamlines operating practices and procedures using lean maintenance and optimization tools, while at the same time implementing change-management techniques involving mind-sets and behaviors of those involved in managerial positions within a given organization.”

-Example from Harvard Business Review Guide to Better Business Writing

-Readability: 23.7

CLEAR WRITING EXAMPLE

“For many years, we have helped clients better use their resources and improve performance. How? We streamlined operations and changed managers’ mind-sets and behaviors.”

-Example from Harvard Business Review Guide to Better Business Writing

-Readability: 7.1

IMPACT READABILITY

Lower your readability score

- Choose simpler words
- Write shorter sentences

Check score in Microsoft 365 Word

1. Select the Home tab
2. On the right side, choose Editor
3. Under Insights, click on Document stats

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READABILITY SCALE AND PUBLICATIONS

| Reading ease | Reading level by grade | % of people who understand the writing | Publication |
|------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Difficult | 16 15 14 | 5% | No popular magazines |
| Fairly difficult | 13 12 11 | 25% | Scientific American The Economist |
| Average | 10 9 | 50% | Wall Street Journal* Vanity Fair |
| Fairly easy | 8 7 | 90% | J.K. Rowling** Tom Clancy |
| Easy | 6 | | Beach novels |

* WSJ adjusted readability down from 12 to 9 to build readership.

**From the first Harry Potter book to the last, the readability score went from 5 to 8, reflecting the audience's changing reading level.

| Notes |
|-------|
| |

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ELIMINATE ZERO WORDS

1. To keep and maintain your reader's attention,

it's really important that your message is written

in a way that's just as clear as your subject line.

To accomplish this effectively, you should try your

best to make sure the message is short in length

and also to the point. Your overall goal is to organize

and structure the information for your reader to fully

understand and absorb.

How many words remain after your edit?

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WRITE CONCISELY

| Longer phrases | Simple words |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| At this point in time | |
| On an everyday basis | |
| At the conclusion of | |
| Cognizant of | |
| Due to the fact that | |
| As previously mentioned | |

Common Writing Pitfalls

- Clichés
- Overly formal
- Vague

At the end of the day, it is imperative that we leverage our core competencies in order to facilitate impactful communication across all relevant stakeholders.

How can we improve this sentence?

Avoid Cliches

| Clichés | Simple options |
|---------------------------|--|
| Having said that | Anyway |
| Plays out | Let's see what happens next |
| Due to the fact that | Because, since |
| In order to | To |
| At the end of the day | All things considered |
| When push comes to shove | As a last resort |
| Technically and Literally | (Leave out) |
| As mentioned | (Leave out or summarize issue briefly) |

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AVOID STANDARD CONFUSERS

Jargon or technical terms

i.e. and e.g.

Slashes: ___/___

Parenthesis in mid-sentence: _____ () _____

SKIP QUALIFIERS

"I'm just writing to tell you..."

"I have a quick question."

"I'm sorry, but..."

"Hope this makes sense!"

"I wasn't sure if someone..."

"I just wanted to let you know..."

Notes

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WRITE SIMPLY AND CONCISELY

Words
Remaining

1. To ensure that we are aligned on expectations moving forward, it might be prudent for us to circle back and revisit the initial objectives that were outlined at the onset of this initiative.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

2. I would recommend we prioritize initiatives that deliver the greatest value relative to the effort required, thereby ensuring optimal allocation of time and resources.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

3. It would be advantageous for us to consider how best to leverage existing resources to maximize efficiencies across multiple workstreams.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

4. Given the evolving nature of market dynamics at this point in time, it is essential that we remain agile and responsive in order to capitalize on opportunities as they arise.

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

5. We want to ensure alignment across all relevant stakeholders before proceeding with the proposed solution to mitigate potential downstream impacts.

| | |
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| | |
|--|--|

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LEVERAGE AI TOOLS

How would you prompt AI to write more concisely?

“Revise this sample for conciseness. Keep it warm and professional. Eliminate all words that do not add meaning, cliches, overly formal words, and vague language.”

AVOID NOUNISMS

Challenge words ending in: -tion, -ment, -able, -ing

| Example | What could you write instead? |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Offer a recommendation | |
| Finish the deliverable | |
| Make investments | |
| Spend time analyzing | |

ACTIVATE THE NOUN

| Example | What could you write instead? |
|--|-------------------------------|
| The analyst made improvements to the revenue model. | |
| We will provide implementation of the strategy. | |
| The associate engaged in evaluating the performance metrics. | |

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WEAK VERBS SUPPORT NOUNISMS

have, has, had, make, made, do, did, doing, provides, conducts, results in

| Example | What could you write instead? |
|--|-------------------------------|
| The paralegal provides information to in-house counsel on legal claims and disputes. | |
| It seems that a request for more money was made by the IT department last quarter. | |

WEAK VERBS SUPPORT NOUNISMS – TO BE

is, are, was, were, am, be, seems to be, been

| Example | What could you write instead? |
|---|-------------------------------|
| There seems to be a significant increase in disputes this quarter. | |
| There is a method of explanation that results in her giving a satisfactory understanding of the incident. | |

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WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE – USE DYNAMIC VERBS

1. Although a significant reduction in the budget was achieved by the standardization of the reporting system, the business still succumbed to failure.

2. The improvement in the fund's overall performance is the result of an increase in share value of its tech sector holdings.

3. The firm established goal setting and accountability measures, enabling strong performance and ongoing improvement.

4. A final decision will be made following further evaluation and review of the documents.

5. It is anticipated that revenue performance across the portfolio may be impacted by shifting consumer preferences, and a comprehensive evaluation of strategic initiatives is being considered to address these effects.

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LEVERAGE AI TOOLS

How would you prompt AI to use dynamic verbs?

“Revise for weak verbs. Keep it professional and warm. Eliminate nouns with -tion, -ment, -able, -ing.

WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE – USE UPFRONT ACTORS

Upfront Actor (Actor – Action)

Accountability and clear action

- The **account manager** **completed** the project ahead of schedule.

Absent Actor (Action – No actor)

Less accountability and more authority

- The project **was completed** ahead of schedule.

Delayed Actor (Action – Actor)

Passive and wordier

- The project **was completed** ahead of schedule by the **account manager**.

When do Absent and Delayed Actors work well?

Emphasize the action or result

- The agreement was terminated due to breach of contract.

Maintain an objective, diplomatic tone

- Errors were identified in the report.

Actor is unknown

- The documents were uploaded to the cloud.

ABSENT AND DELAYED ACTORS CREATE WEAK VERBS

| Example | What would you write instead? |
|--|-------------------------------|
| The policy was updated last quarter by HR. | |
| The decision was made to extend the deadline by one day. | |

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WRITE IN THE ACTIVE VOICE – USE UPFRONT ACTORS

1. The decision was made to delay the launch until additional testing could be completed.

2. The issue was identified during late-stage testing by our engineers, preventing a potential outage.

3. The report was completed ahead of schedule to meet client expectations.

4. The content of the proposal was drafted in accordance with company policy but was not approved by management.

5. The forecast was prepared by the analyst ahead of schedule to guide managers in pricing decisions.

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LEVERAGE AI TOOLS

How would you prompt AI to include upfront actors?

“Revise for passive voice, eliminate the “to be” and “to have” verbs. Keep it concise and approachable.”

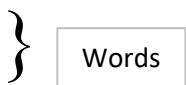
WORDS – SUMMARY

Write Concisely

- Use simple words.
- Eliminate zero words.
- Avoid cliches, overly formal, or vague words.
- Avoid standard confusers.
 - jargon
 - former/later
 - and/or
 - ____ / ____
 - () in mid-sentence

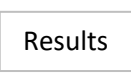
Use Dynamic Verbs

- Eliminate or challenge nounisms:
 - tion
 - ment
 - able
 - ing
- Replace weak verbs:
 - appear, appears to be
 - be, become, are, is
 - seem, seems to be
- Question these weak verbs:
 - obtain, conduct, provide
 - results in
 - it is
 - there is, there are
 - was or were
 - have or has
 - do or does
 - make



Make the actor responsible and upfront

- Upfront actors give you:
 - the active voice
 - dynamic verbs
 - clear action
- Delayed or absent actors give you:
 - the passive voice
 - weak verbs
 - vague action



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STRUCTURE YOUR CONTENT

Analyze Your Reader

- Who are they? Role(s)?
- What are their priorities? Concerns?
- How do they feel about the topic?
- How do they prefer to receive information?

Determine Your Purpose

- Inform
- Persuade

FRAMEWORK TO INFORM

1. State purpose
2. Summarize key findings
3. Share insights
4. Propose next steps

FRAMEWORK TO PERSUADE

1. State main message
2. Give background
3. Describe impact
4. Call to action

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LEVERAGE AI TOOLS

How would you prompt AI to structure your content?

“Revise this sample for structure. Keep the tone concise and approachable. Follow this framework: State purpose and scope, Share key findings, Summarize insights, Propose next steps.”

FOCUS ON DESIGN AND TONE

Make it Easy to Scroll

- Create white space
- Add headings
- Write short paragraphs
- Bullet key data

Enhance Your Tone

Consider reader's communication style

- Details vs. bottom line
- Tasks vs. relationship

Change negative words to neutral words

- Say what you can do
- Use “and” instead of “but”

Offer something and say thank you

Tone Example:

Sorry, but I've changed roles and am not involved with that process.

OR

Glad you asked. Sara took over the review process last month and can help.

@Sara, would you send Jon the latest monthly review deck?

Thanks for your help!

LEVERAGE AI TOOLS

How would you prompt AI to revise your tone?

- Use to be more or less direct
- Cannot replace your unique voice

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REVISE YOUR WRITING

Editing Checklist

Words

- Use simple words
- Reduce zero words
- Avoid cliches, overly formal, and vague language
- Avoid standard confusers
- Challenge nounisms
- Replace weak verbs
- Use upfront actors

Structure

- Determine purpose
- Follow a framework
 - Informative
 - Persuasive

Design and Tone

- Create white space
- Add headings
- Write short paragraphs
- Bullet key data
- Focus on reader
- Change negative words to neutral words
- Offer something and say thank you

- Check Readability
- Leverage AI tools

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REVISING – EXERCISE (BEFORE)

To: Tom, Team Lead
From: Allison, Manager

Subject: Follow up

I reviewed the summary you sent, it looks good and captures everything that was elaborated on during our discussion. Can you review the updated client proposal and highlight anything that needs our attention and the client's approval? Also, we need to have a conversation with finance on whether we'll be able to provide interim reports to corporate, given our adoption of the new expense management system. Also, remember that we need to schedule a meeting with the CFO by June 30 and discuss whether or not we should include other team members. Depending on when that meeting gets scheduled (and who attends) will drive whether or not we need to have a separate call to discuss the recent hiring announcements that will affect this year's financial projections. Finally, let me know the status of the expense reports, and include the list of advisors who still need to review their numbers for final submission.

Thanks,
Allison

Words: 153

Readability: 13

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REVISING – EXERCISE

What changes could you make?

Write Simply and Concisely (shorten long phrases, reduce zero words, avoid stuffy and vague language, check standard confusers)

Write in the Active Voice (challenge nounisms, use dynamic verbs, use upfront actors)

Structure Your Content (analyze reader, know purpose, choose a framework)

Enhance the Design and Tone (make it easy to scroll, skip qualifiers)

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SKILLS CHECKLIST

Words

- Use simple words
- Reduce zero words
- Avoid cliches, overly formal, and vague language
- Avoid standard confusers
- Challenge nounisms
- Replace weak verbs
 - appear, appears to be
 - be, become, are, is
 - seem, seems to be
- Use upfront actors

Structure

- Analyze your audience and identify your purpose
- Identify your main message
- Choose a framework
 - Informative: State purpose, summarize key findings, share insights, propose next steps
 - Persuasive: State main message, give background, describe impact, call to action

Design and Tone

- Create white space
- Add headings
- Write short paragraphs
- Bullet key data
- Focus on reader
- Change negative words to neutral words
- Offer something and say thank you

Writing Tools

- Check Readability
- Leverage AI tools

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REVISING – EXERCISE (AFTER)

Subject: Summary – next steps

Hi Tom,

Great job on the summary! Let's discuss next steps on the board memo, CFO meeting, and our next FY budget:

1. Review board memo and follow-up on:
 - Board approvals
 - Finance's view on new expense management system and interim reporting
2. Arrange a meeting with the CFO by June 12
 - Include team members who can discuss how new hiring may affect this year's annual statement.
3. Check on the next FY budget
 - Which managers still need to review their numbers?

Let's check in midweek.

Regards,
Allison

Words: 84

Readability: 3.6

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REINFORCEMENT TOOLS

ECLearn – Online Course Content

ECLearn, Exec|Comm's online learning and reinforcement tool, provides content and resources to reinforce your skills.

To register, use the following link and course ID. After registering, you will receive an email with login instructions and access for 60 days.

<http://www2.exec-comm.com/Register>
Course ID:cgic-85a47385



About Exec|Comm

For almost 40 years, Exec|Comm has helped Fortune 500 leaders and their teams communicate, influence, and lead with more impact. We deliver group programs and one-on-one coaching leveraging our local trainers around the world. In every Exec|Comm program, you learn practical skills you can immediately use. Visit our [website](#) to access articles and videos to further your learning.

If you have any questions about the program or general questions about communicating or leading more effectively, reach out to **Sean Romanoff**, at sromanoff@exec-comm.com. You can also connect with **Sean** on LinkedIn using this link or QR code:
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/seanromanoff>



WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Thank you for attending!

We hope that you found value in the workshop. We take growth and improvement seriously and we can't do that without your feedback. Please take a moment to complete an evaluation of your experience.

Scan the QR code below with your mobile device to complete a brief survey (<2 min). Please complete the survey within 48 hours, while the experience is fresh in your mind.

