



ActionWords

**Creating compelling writing
with every email
you send – 17 tips**

Collins & Co NFP Conference
15 March 2018

Frank Chamberlin

#1: Know your purpose

Before you type anything into a new email, you must be able to explicitly answer these two questions:

1. Why am I writing this?
2. What action or result do I want?



#2: Make it human

- Be natural... be yourself.
- Never say anything in writing that you wouldn't comfortably say in conversation.
- When they sit down to write an important email, most people try to commit an act of literature.
- Usually, the 'person' who emerges on paper is much stiffer than the person who sat down to write.

#3: Use plain English

- Your wonderful vocab does not impress
- Simple words are better –
construct, peruse, regarding, converse, observe
- Avoid overused words:

Awesome	Absolutely
Journey	Cheers
Literally	Trending
Learnings	Unique
Moving forward	



#4: Subject lines – succinct and pointed

Must cover the main point

Types of subject lines

1. Ask a question
2. Start with “How to”
3. Give important news
4. Offer a benefit
5. Highlight a deadline



#5:

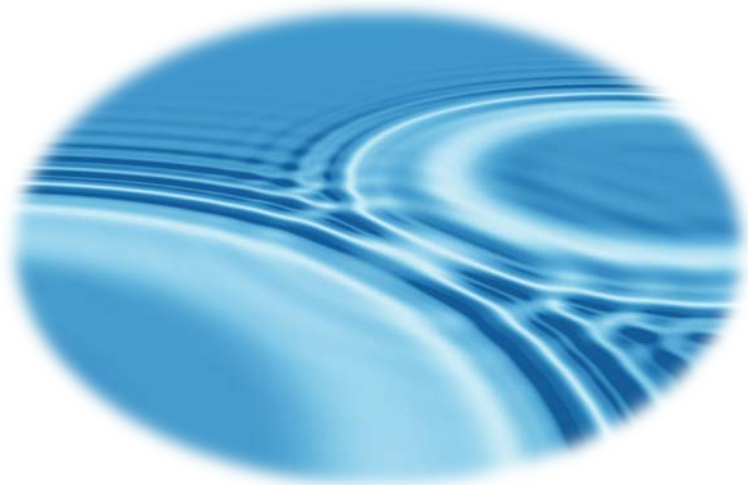
For long emails use sub-heads as well

- When people are scanning, sub headings create stopping points for the eyes.



#6: The first sentence

- Pack critical information into the first sentence
- When your reader finishes the first sentence she should know if this email is for her
- The best way to get people to read on, is a compelling first sentence



#7: Be specific

Your writing is always more interesting when it is specific.

#8: Allocate time and space

“I’m sorry this letter is so long. I didn’t have time to write a shorter one.”

George Bernard Shaw

If you are rushing, you will ramble.

If distracted or uncomfortable, you will not empathise with your reader.

Give your task the time and space it deserves.

#9: Make sure it is clear

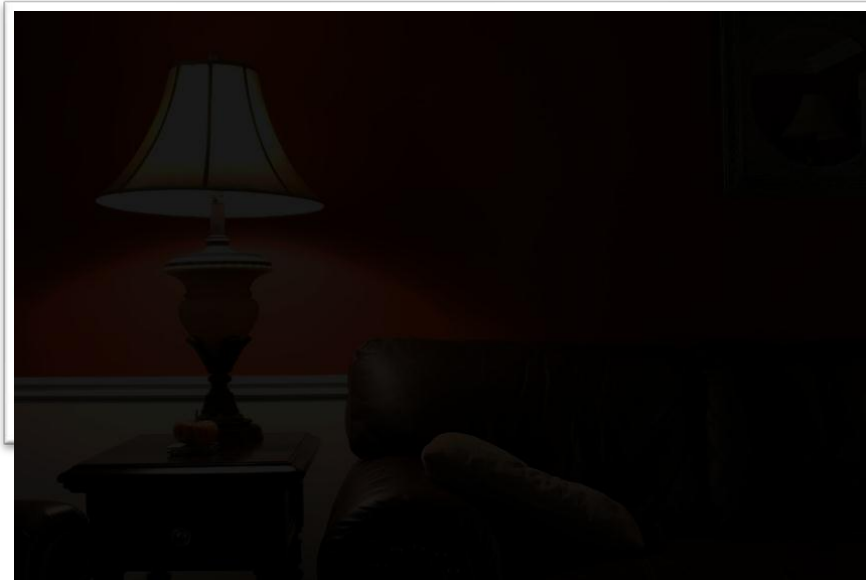
- If it isn't clear you might as well not write it. You might as well stay in bed.
- Clarity is the goal in writing – the main prize.
- It's surprisingly hard to achieve because so many sentences, as they're first written, tend to come out just a little wrong.



Illumination is required to be
extinguished on these premises
after nightfall.



Lights out after dark.



#10: Keep it simple

- Clutter:
 - the crippling disease in writing today
 - it's the main enemy
- We're a society drowning in:
 - unnecessary words
 - meaningless jargon
 - pompous frills
- No one wants to receive an email that's full of fluff



My thinking has evolved to the significant point where a concept has emerged.



I have an idea.



#11: Keep it brief

- Saying things in the most economical way, not giving the reader anything she or he doesn't need.
- Writing is like a good watch. It should function smoothly and have no extra parts to get in the way.
- Short is better than long.



#12: Write shorter sentences



Sentence length

No. of Words	Level of Comprehension
8 or less	Very easy
9 – 11	Easy
12 – 14	Fairly easy
15 – 17	Standard
18 – 21	Fairly difficult
22 – 25	Difficult
26 – 30	Very difficult
Beyond 30	Don't go there!

#13: Vary the length of your sentences

Your email is immediately more interesting if the length of your sentences varies.

Include a very short sentence if possible.

It is acceptable today to shorten sentences by using sentence fragments - partial sentences.

“All the crusading doesn't reassure the public. Just the opposite.”

#14: Get to the point

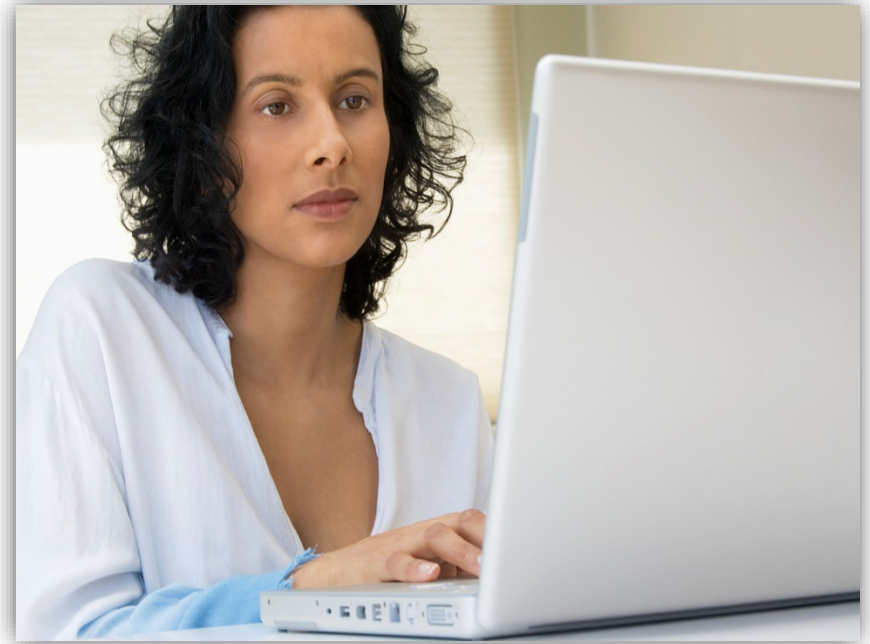
- People are scanning – not studying
- They are stressed, stretched and multi-tasking
- The fluff-abrupt continuum



#15: Get the time right

Getting the send-time right will vary from audience to audience.

That's another good reason for spending time getting to know your audience.



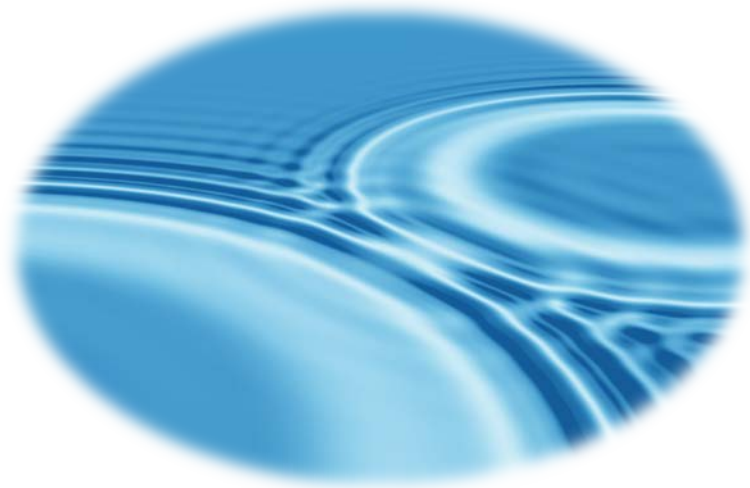
#16: Get the hygiene items right (Herzberg)

1. Don't be too casual
2. No text shorthand plz
3. Always use a signature block
4. Proofread every email you send
5. Avoid "reply all"

#17: Remember the visual

All writing is visual

- Use white space
- Take advantage of dot points
- Choose your font carefully



#18: One for the road

For every important email, try
the Facebook test:

**If it's not a word you see on
Facebook, don't use it.**



Thank you

At Action Words:

- ✓ *we can write for you, or*
- ✓ *we can train your people to be better writers, or*
- ✓ *we can do both.*

Frank Chamberlin

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Readability Statistics

- Flesch Kincaid – helpful
 - **Readability** – the higher the better
 - **Grade score** – the lower the better
- In Word, go to File, Options, Proofing
- Turn on “Show Readability Statistics”
- Use it under ‘Review’ after “Spelling & Grammar”