

# Seminar Fact Sheet

## EFFECTIVE BUSINESS WRITING

*An intense training session on how to write clear, crisp, persuasive copy for letters, memos, proposals, reports, articles, papers, and other business documents.*



### ? Contents

Here is a partial listing of topics covered. Your seminar can cover all topics or just the ones that are most important to your business.

Module 1: Elements of Effective Business Writing

Module 2: Fundamentals of Grammar

Module 3: Principles of Composition

Module 4: Use of Words and Phrases

Module 5: Principles of Organization

Module 6: Principles of Communication and Persuasion

Module 7: Principles of Tone

Module 8: Special Concerns of the Corporate Writer

*(details continued on page 2)*



## Module 1: Elements of Effective Business Writing

- What is “business writing”?
- The 6 characteristics of good business writing
- Tasks of the business writer:
  - ◆ Letters
  - ◆ Memos
  - ◆ Proposals
  - ◆ Reports
  - ◆ Articles
  - ◆ Speeches
  - ◆ Audio-visual presentations

## Module 2: Fundamentals of Grammar

- Key grammatical rules for business writers
- Proper use of punctuation marks
- Guidelines for using abbreviations in business writing
- Guidelines for capitalization
- Basic spelling rules

## Module 3: Principles of Composition

- Use of active vs. passive voice
- Use of simple vs. complex language
- How to write more concisely
- Use of specific and concrete terms vs. vague, general language
- Making writing more powerful with visual description
- Rules for handling tenses
- Making writing more readable by keeping sections, paragraphs, and sentences short
- How to keep ideas parallel
- Informal vs. formal, corporate vs. conversational—which style is best?

## Module 4: Use of Words and Phrases

- Why you should substitute small words for big words
- How to eliminate wordy phrases and redundancy from your writing
- Why you should avoid clichés, corporatese, and overblown phrases
- Misused and troublesome words and phrases
- How to avoid sexist language
- How to achieve a contemporary style

## Module 5: Principles of Organization

- How to organize your material to suit the reader’s needs
- 9 ways to organize a business document for easy reading

- Use and misuse of executive summaries, leads, and warm-up paragraphs
- How to separate fact from opinion in your writing
- Use of headings and subheads to organize business documents

## Module 6: Principles of Communication and Persuasion

- 5 steps to more persuasive writing
- How to gain your reader’s attention in the first paragraph
- Use of facts, opinions, and statistics to prove your case
- How to determine when you are giving too much detail
- How to get the reader on your side
- How to get the reader to take the next step

## Module 7: Principles of Tone

- Why you should prefer informal to formal language
- The Conversational Test
- The Breath Test
- Use of positive vs. negative words
- How to change your reader’s behavior or attitude
- How to let your personality shine through in your writing
- Rules for using contractions in business writing

## Module 8: Special Concerns of the Corporate Writer

- How to quickly gain specialized background knowledge
- The collaboration between the writer and the client/expert—who does what?
- How to write effectively within the guidelines determined by your supervisor or corporate style guide
- What to do if the subject matter is too technical for you to understand
- What to do if managers you must work with or interview are uncooperative, arrogant, or poor communicators
- Tips for making a boring topic more exciting
- How to write for a specific audience

## Preparation and Customization

All clients must submit a completed questionnaire along with writing samples from students in advance of the seminar date. The seminar is tailored to your specific needs based on this information. Actual samples are used throughout the presentation as examples, for critiques, as exercises, and to illustrate and dramatize techniques presented in the classroom.

In addition, we further customize by going through the course agenda with you and having you tell us which items you want stressed and emphasized. There is no extra charge for this customization.

## Number of Students

Recommended number of students per session is 6 to 20; however, you may send up to 25 attendees for the base price.

## Terms

50% nonrefundable deposit authorizing CTC to begin preparation of your seminar and put a firm hold over the date. Balance due after presentation of seminar.

## Expenses

Client is billed at cost for all out-of-pocket expenses including long-distance telephone calls, fax transmissions, Federal Express, and messenger service.

Client provides prepaid hotel reservations and prepaid round-trip plane tickets from Newark Airport (Newark, NJ) for out-of-town engagements.

## Workbook

Each student should have a copy of our 50-page workbook *Effective Business Writing*. CTC provides a master of the workbook as a PDF which you can duplicate and distribute to your trainees at no charge. Or you may purchase print copies from us for \$29 each.

## Follow-Up Programs

To maximize the effectiveness of training you may want to consider one of these two follow-up programs.

**E-Mail Hotline:** E-mail consultation is available for \$350 per hour. However, the seminar fee provides for up to 4 hours of FREE e-mail consultation (a \$1,400 value) for seminar attendees within 30 days of the session. Students get specific advice and information on how to solve writing problems; however, CTC does not write or rewrite copy for you under this arrangement.

**Clinics:** Some clients request a follow-up clinic at one or more locations. The clinics typically have 6 to 15 attendees and provide hands-on analysis and problem-solving for specific projects in progress. Fee and length are the same as for the full-day training seminar.

## Clients *(A PARTIAL LIST) \**

Airco  
Associated Distribution Logistics  
Atech Software  
Brooklyn Union Gas  
Cambridge Scientific Abstracts  
Chemical Bank  
The Conference Board  
Convergent Solutions  
Core States Financial Corporation  
Creative Group, Inc.  
Crest Ultrasonics  
Dow Chemical  
Drake Beam Morin  
EBI Medical Systems  
Executive Enterprises  
Fala Direct Marketing  
Fielder's Choice  
Foxboro  
Grey Advertising  
Howard Lanin Productions  
IBM  
IEEE  
ITT  
International Tile Exposition  
The Institute of Management  
Accountants  
JMW Consultants  
J. Walter Thompson  
Leviton Manufacturing  
Metrum Instruments  
Midlantic

M&T Chemicals  
On-Line Software  
Optical Data Corporation  
Prentice Hall  
PSE&G  
Read Travel Group  
Sony  
Siemens  
Specialty Steel & Forge  
Thompson Professional Publishing  
Timeplex  
Union Camp  
Value Rent-a-Car  
Wallace & Tiernan  
Wolfram Research  
And many, many others...

*\* The firms and associations listed here have retained the seminar, training, writing, or consulting services of CTC or Bob Bly.*

## WHAT CLIENTS AND ATTENDEES SAY ABOUT CTC SEMINARS AND SERVICES...

"Thanks for the seminar. Besides clarifying technical points, you gave me insight into my position, and my abilities as a writer. And observing you in action was excellent training."

—Mike Goldscheitler, technical writer  
Loveland Controls

"Thanks again for joining us in Atlantic City. I and the entire group found your thoughts insightful and right on target."

—Edward H. Moore, editor  
communications briefings

"Your presentation for our seminar was sparkling, enthusiastic, and informative. The audience response was wonderful to see and hear. Our group benefited greatly and were quite vocal in their praise of you."

—Wendy Ward, program chair  
Women in Communications

"The first issue of the spinal newsletter is enclosed. The sales force was very receptive to the newsletter and its contents. Thank you for helping us launch this important project."

—Mary Ellen Coleman, product manager  
EBI Medical Systems

"I just wanted to thank you personally for the energy and effort you put into your two days with us. We are now far better equipped to do direct mail for our clients and ourselves that will have a greater impact and get measurable results."

—Greta Bolger, account executive  
Sefton Associates Inc.

"I just finished reading the copy for our CERTIN-COAT system brochure and I was very happy with it. You did an excellent job of editing a large amount of information, much of it extraneous, into a strong, cohesive selling message."

—La Lavenda, advertising manager  
MST Chemicals Inc.

"I found the seminar helpful and noticed a definite greater awareness of style afterwards. Your presentation was lively, and kept the participants' attention well into the afternoon and longer than I had expected beforehand."

—J.E. Koschei, editorial director  
Thompson Professional Publishing

## ABOUT CTC'S DIRECTOR

Bob Bly, director of the Center for Technical Communication, has been a technical writer and technical writing instructor full-time since 1979.

He taught technical writing at New York University and has presented training sessions to such groups as the American Chemical Society, the American Marketing Association, and the American Institute of Chemical Engineers.

Mr. Bly is the author of 25 books including *Technical Writing: Structure, Standards, and Style* (McGraw-Hill), *The Copywriter's Handbook* (Henry Holt), and *The Elements of Business Writing* (Macmillan).

Bob Bly has worked as a staff technical writer for the Westinghouse Electric Corporation and also as an independent technical writer handling projects for dozens of firms including Brooklyn Union Gas, Crest Ultrasonics, On-Line Software, and M&T Chemicals.

Mr. Bly holds a B.S. in engineering from the University of Rochester. He is a member of the Society for Technical Communication, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, and the American Society for Training and Development.

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## The Next Step

For more information on any of the services described in this brochure, or to discuss scheduling a business writing seminar for your organization, call CTC at (201) 505-9451. Or write us today.

THE CENTER FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION  
590 Delcina Drive  
River Vale, NJ 07675  
PHONE (201) 505-9451  
FAX (201) 573-4094

