

Writing for Engineers

Purpose and Background

Today's engineers need to have a broader base of business and communication skills to support their technical competence. In recognition of this requirement, ASCE's On-Site Training seminar, Writing for Engineers, provides hands-on practice in the most essential of communication skills—business and technical writing.

The ability to write logically, concisely and with impact benefits both the company and the individual engineer. Strong writing is a basic tool of business and part of every engineer's professional package. Proposals, reports, letters, and instructions must be logically structured, well laid out, and clear in order to achieve the desired results. Many engineers and technologists regard writing as the more onerous part of their job. The problem is that few receive training to write effective documents—nor do organizations always present employees with good models.

Poor writing costs time, money, and lost business opportunities. In the USA, an estimated 30% of all business writing is to clarify, or seek clarification to something that has already been written. Many reports are relegated to the bottom of a pile or remain unread because they appear difficult to read.

Writing for Engineers is a two-day seminar that offers simple strategies, techniques and guidelines for making professional writing easier and more effective and will also help to reduce the time spend writing. Good

Seminar Instructor

Sally-Ann Moore, as Principal Consultant in Management development and training for ASCE, Sally-Ann designs and facilitates custom workshops and seminars for executives and engineers. A great believer in participative and hands-on learning, she enjoys facilitating workshops and courses to solve business problems. Her main focus is written communications – she teaches engineers and executives effective business writing for results. Sally-Ann Moore is a BSC graduate from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. After which she attended INSEAD and completed a masters in Strategic Planning.

Ms. Moore worked on strategic techno-economic planning programs for six years at the prestigious Battelle European research institute, during which time she became interested in executive skills development. She went on to become head of Learning and development of Digital equipment corporation EMEA, and became a leading world expert on eLearning and competence management. She has published several papers on these topics and is a well-known international keynote speaker. Since becoming a management consultant, Ms. Moore has developed and delivered numerous management seminars and workshops for clients across Europe, Middle East, Asia and the USA. Recent clients where she has taught “Effective Business Writing” and “Effective Writing for Engineers” include Caterpillar, HSBC Private banking, Airbus (EADS Group) Phillip Morris International, Sunoco Oil, The British Embassy Trade Commission, Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), New York DEP, and US Army Corps of Engineers.

- For group training, contact John Wyrick (JWyrick@asce.org) or Stephanie Tomlinson (STomlinson@asce.org)

Seminar Benefits

A Systematic Approach: This seminar presents the key elements of effective writing in an easy-to-remember, systematic way. The logical structure it offers can be applied to most types of business and professional writing. Attendees are encouraged to make their own computer template of this structure, which will remain as an organizer for their initial draft material. A common sense 4-Stage Writing Strategy will simplify the thinking, writing, editing process and prevent time-wasting “writer’s block.”

Reader-Oriented Writing: The purpose of business and professional writing is to communicate, to instruct, to inform, to sell products or ideas—not to display learning. By changing the focus from the writer to the reader, attendees will learn the value of:

- An enticing layout
- Meaningful tables and figures
- Clear, concise writing
- A logically developed argument
- Simple, concrete language
- Detailed information in annexes
- Informative headings and subheadings

Positive Tone: A positive tone sells the writer, the organization and the message. Attendees will learn how to add impact to their writing through layout, logic and language.

Who Should Attend

This seminar is designed for engineers who wish to upgrade or improve their writing competence. Understand principles of effective written communication

Learn and practice writing effective:

- Reports
- Proposals
- Technical Instructions
- Internal Memos
- Business Letters

CEUs/PDHs: ASCE has been approved as an Authorized Provider by the International Association for Continuing Education and Training (IACET), 1760 Old Meadow Road, Suite 500, McLean, VA 22102. In addition, ASCE follows NCEES guidelines on continuing professional competency. Since continuing education requirements for P.E. license renewal vary from state to state, ASCE strongly recommends that individuals regularly check with their state registration board(s) on their specific continuing education requirements that affect P.E. licensure and the ability to renew licensure. For details on your state’s requirements, please go to: http://www.ncees.org/licensure/licensing_boards/.

Summary Outline

Why Some Documents Communicate Better Than Others: Principles Of Effective Written Communication Reader-Oriented Writing.

A 4-Stage Strategy For Good Business Writing

- Selecting material for aim and audience
- Planning a logical structure and enticing layout
- Writing for the audience—readability, style, and tone
- Editing to shape and sharpen

Techniques and Guidelines

- The KISS principle
- Common errors of language
- Suitable style and tone
- Tips for adding impact to writing
- Measuring readability—The Fog Index

Report Writing

- What the reader/client needs to know
- What the reader/client does not need to know
- Structured arguments, clear layout and concise language
- Integrated tables and charts
- Clearly stated conclusions and recommendations
- Informative summaries

Professional Proposals

- Determining who the readers will be
- What to include and how
- Logic, layout and language

Effective Business Letters

- Gaining attention and getting results
- Promoting business and company image

Technical Instructions

- Writing easy-to-follow instructions
- Avoiding ambiguity
- Thinking as the user

This interactive seminar focuses on the writing needs of engineers. It is punctuated by examples, exercises, and “Do’s and Don’ts”, plus writing practice and evaluation sessions.

ASCE seminars are available for On-Site Training. For details regarding On-Site Training and/or needs-based training opportunities, please contact:

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