

Writing With Clarity and Purpose

Duration: 1 Day

OVERVIEW

Using tried-and-trusted thinking and planning models, this course gives delegates ways to see their path clearly through constructing a purposeful document, making the writing not only easier but clearer.

Although most of us do it routinely, writing a clear document is not the easiest task. Ironically, this is often because the writer is focusing too much on the writing. It is the prior thinking and planning that is the key, making it easier in the event to write the document clearly and concisely, and to stay on task and faithful to your ideas.

IS IT RIGHT FOR ME?

This course is for those who are used to producing a range of documents at work, but would benefit from learning techniques to enhance their confidence and their ability to put cogent documents together in a variety of ways.

WHAT WILL I LEARN?

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- Use mind-mapping and pyramid principle techniques to test out and crystallise your thoughts, and identify the best structure for expressing them.
- Break down your thinking so you are better able to manage and express it throughout the writing process.
- Apply techniques to help you identify the questions that need answering in your document.
- Encapsulate your thoughts so that your words can serve them, dissociating your thinking from the routine business vocabulary around you, so that your ideas remain uncluttered and clear.
- Summarise ideas in simple language or diagrams before you start writing so you can write in plain English, enabling your thoughts to be more clearly exposed.
- Structure your document to preserve the integrity of the ideas and give you a ready route into the writing.
- Maintain a critical distance from your writing so that you can adapt the structure as you go or readily edit what you have written after any draft.
- Take a cluttered and unclear piece of writing, perhaps by a colleague or associate, and shape it into a lucid and coherent one.
- Eliminate superfluous material and streamline what you have written, making the reading of the document easier and more efficient.

PRE-COURSE ACTIVITY

You will be asked to

- 1 Identify a piece of woolly writing that you can bring to improve.
- 2 Identify an idea you would like to write about and can start work on.

WHAT WILL IT COVER?

Capturing Your Thoughts

- Defining the scope of the document using mind-mapping to isolate the thinking you want to capture
- Applying techniques, such as the pyramid principle, to encase this thinking in a logical structure
- Identifying the narrative in the structure so that the route through writing about it is clear and draws the reader in, keeping them (and you!) focused

Structuring and Vertical Logic

- Identifying the governing thought and from it the questions that your document needs to address
- Developing a hierarchical structure that gives you the core narrative and the reasoning on which it rests - a compelling combination that will carry the reader with you
- Breaking the thinking and resulting structure down into the building blocks of a convincing case, which can be applied to any document
- Understanding the patterns of argument and explanation needed to lay out your thoughts in a compelling way, using both inductive and deductive logic
- Supporting the core structure with relevant material that best engages the reader, selecting facts that strengthen but don't clutter your argument
- Knowing how to capture this visually so it is easy to keep in mind as you write and if necessary to explain to others

Editing

- How to maintain a critical distance from your writing so that you can deconstruct and reconstruct it where necessary as you work on a draft.
- Ensuring strong and positive language is used to convey clarity and confidence in the thinking
- Acquiring the discipline and confidence to change and adapt what you have written to preserve its critical purpose
- Stripping text of distracting and unhelpful abstractions and keeping the language active
- Keeping sentences and paragraphs short so the writing is optimally accessible and the thinking clear
- Copy-editing to 'clean' the prose so that verbal distractions are minimised and the ideas come through as transparently as possible