

Editing for Effect

Duration: 2 Days

Overview

Effective editing can transform writing that is long-winded and uninspiring into writing that is informative and engaging. Almost all of our written work will benefit from being effectively edited. Learning to do this efficiently is an essential and valuable business skill.

This two-day course will help you understand the multifaceted processes required to edit your written work effectively. What you learn can be applied to anything you write and will have ongoing benefits for your business communications. An editing course manual will be provided, containing comprehensive editing advice and checklists.

Is it right for me?

This course is suitable for anyone who feels their own writing lacks precision, fluency or authority, as well as anyone who is in a position where they need to improve the written work of others.

It is also suitable for people who write for a wider audience through vehicles such as newsletters or corporate journals.

What will I learn?

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

- Decide when a piece of writing requires heavy editing or needs rewriting
- Take a dispassionate stance in order to be in a better position to assess your or others' writing critically.
- Make confident judgements on specific improvements that need to be made
- Handle sensitivities around the editing of others' writing
- Keep a critical distance when editing something you have written yourself
- Take account of editorial differences in the approach to web and print copy
- Apply a method to pick up errors of different types at every level in diverse documents
- Liaise sensitively with a colleague or contributor whose writing you are editing
- Edit to produce consistently good introductory and concluding paragraphs, which strongly influence how a reader perceives the efficacy and quality of a document.

Pre-course activity

You will be asked to

- 1 Bring a piece of your own writing to edit (a longer piece may be useful in terms of being able to look at reworking elements such as structure).
- 2 Bring a poorly written piece by someone else (published or not; it will be kept anonymous!).

What will it cover?

Day 1 – this looks at the content of the written document and its impact.

Scope and Structure

- Ensuring the document covers everything it is meant to (applying the MECE – mutually exclusive collectively exhaustive – principle) and working in material seamlessly where it is missing
- Ensuring the document leads the reader through logically (so that it meets the pyramid principle criteria), adapting the structure where it does not. Sectioning up the material to improve readability

Readership

- Ensuring the style adopted is appropriate to the intended reader(s)
- Adjusting the tone so it is right for the reader(s) and consistent throughout
- Judging whether it is the right length and if (as is typically the case) it is too long, knowing how to cut

Day 2 – this focuses on the verbal detail, looking at the language in terms of its accuracy and readability.

Correcting

- Adjusting any verbal errors of meaning, or ambiguities
- Spotting grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors
- Correcting for house style

Cutting

- Eliminating superfluous words and phrases for a tighter, more efficient read
- Rewording or removing any legally or politically sensitive material

Proofing

- Proofing essentials

Both days will incorporate advice on editing others' writing as well as on the recognised difficulty of self-editing.