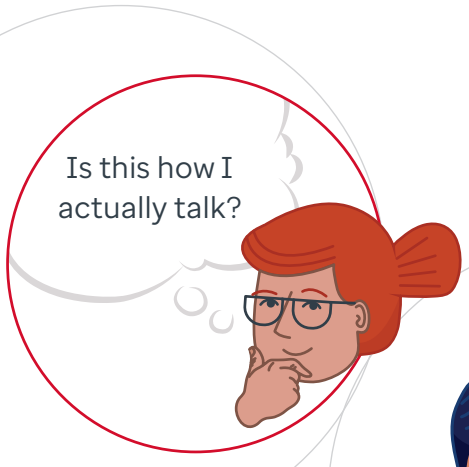
10 habits of highly effective writers

Get your message across

Are you creating a slide presentation? Writing a report? Asking for an increase in budget? Follow these 10 principles to ensure your audience understands your message, the logic behind it, and what you want them to do next.

Be clear, concise, and conversational.



Focus on the most critical issues.

Show that you did your research. Talk about what's most important—to you and to them.



Have an opinion.

Don't hide behind extra words. Be direct and share your opinion.



Put the research in context.

What is the issue? Why is it important? Put the topic in perspective, but keep the introduction short so your audience stays engaged.



Frame your argument.

Break the discussion into sections and use that framework to make your case.



Show results.

Hard data is the best evidence. Make sure they believe what you're saying.



Use real examples whenever possible.

Show that your idea is practical, not just theoretical.



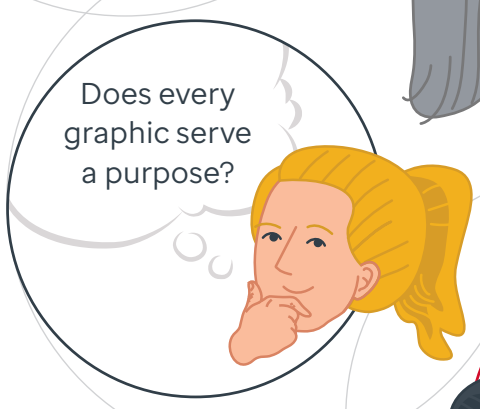
Make a document easy to scan.

Keep sentences and paragraphs short. Call out critical points with bullets, headers, highlighting, etc. Make your message easy to understand.



Illustrate main points with graphics.

Use tables, charts, and icons if they enhance your argument. Add visual interest—but only when it advances your argument.



Always provide a call to action.

What do you want your reader to do next? Make sure your next steps (or requests) are completely clear. Make your audience want to act.



This document does not constitute professional legal advice. Advisory Board does not endorse any companies, organizations or their products as identified or mentioned herein. Advisory Board strongly recommends consulting legal counsel before implementing any practices contained in this document or making any decisions regarding suppliers and providers.

Advisory Board

© 2020 Advisory Board • All rights reserved • WF24075511E