
~THE PORRO PASSAROUND - TIPS FOR COMMUNICATORS~

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A NEW TREND AND SOME SELF HELP

Blogs are getting all the hype, but we tell you about another form of e-communication that may be even more important for some clients. Plus, some tips on how you can put your inner critic to work making your writing better.

- [1] B2B Writing: Podcasts made easy
- [2] Press Releases and OpEds: Be a Top-Loader
- [3] Speeches: Take Aim at Your Own Work

1. B2B Writing: Join the Pod people

Trying to get a white paper out to the right people? You might try podcasts.

Podcasting is a relatively new way of distributing information using the Internet. You just turn that info into an audio file users can download onto their computers or digital audio players - like the iPod.

One of the latest B2B marketing tactics uses podcasting to offer prospective customers just a taste of a larger, more detailed white paper. What the user gets is an easy-to-digest, minutes-long audio summary of the white paper, written in a conversational style akin to a short, public radio news feature. The user also gets the option to download the full report.

It seems to be working. Some early professionally produced podcasts garnered as much as a 30 percent response to offers to download the full reports.

While response can depend on topic and timing, podcasts provide an easy and relatively inexpensive way to reach customers. All you need is a good writer and a decent white paper to work from.

Tip: Just keep your script short, simple and to the point. If you do a good job on the first one, your clients will come back for more. To learn what it's all about, try browsing www.freshpodcasts.com.

Porro Associates LLC helps corporations and nonprofits improve the written and spoken materials they use to reach key audiences.
<http://www.porrollc.com/results.html>

2. Press Releases and OpEds: Be a Top-Loader

One crusty old journalism professor we knew used to say that news style was created so editors could teach any bum who fell off a boxcar to be a reporter.

But the truth is that news style has a lot more to do with the reader than the writer.

News style is lean, functional, and to the point. It loads the most important details - and a big chunk of the informational value -- into the top of the story. That's why if two people leaf through a newspaper -one in two minutes, and one in 10 minutes - they both get a good sense of what was in the paper.

In today's time-driven, info-intensive world, "top-loading" improves almost any written product, from press releases to op-eds to speeches.

How to judge when enough is enough? Try this: when you finish writing, imagine you have lost everything but the first few paragraphs of your work. Then ask yourself: Is the most important information still there? Does your point still come across? Will your readers or listeners still "get" it?

Of course, you can't put absolutely everything in the first few paragraphs. But top-loading gives your audience a quick fix on what you're going to say and where you intend to go with it. And sometimes that's just enough.

3. Speeches: Take Aim at Your Own Work

How many presentations have you been at where some guy slouching in the back row -- usually a slob with his tie loosened and his shirt tail out - finally raises his hand and freezes the speaker in his tracks by asking the zinger question of the day?

You know the scenario: A light snaps on over the audience's head in the same moment of revelation, they nod thoughtfully, and all heads turn back to the speaker to hear the sputtering response.

The key to avoiding those moments, as any good debater knows - is to play devil's advocate long before you finish a speech.

No matter what you write, you will end up with a more seamless product if you take a few minutes to sit back and take potshots at your own work. With even a minimal amount of effort, you usually can turn up at least a few holes in your arguments that can be easily mended now to save you embarrassment later.