



CONSULTING GROUPSM
the people side of business strategy

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TiDings

LETTER FROM TDCG

What's the latest at TD Consulting Group? New clients, new services, same dedication to quality and long-term relationships with our valued clients. Visit us at www.tdgroupusa.com to see what's new—consultation in talent management, succession planning, team development—and what's improved—presentation skills, customer service, and writing!



Laura Winterroth
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Like the new look? We hope the spanking new **TiDings** will interest, instruct, and inspire you. Our aim has always been to become "an extension of our client's staff" in addressing the challenges of today's organizations. This newsletter will tell you about us, about what's going on in the world of work, and about the hot topics we think will appeal to you. We look forward to hearing from you. □



Karen Robilotta
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Follow Our Lead

By William Buckley, Senior Consultant

Get your hands on a generous supply of \$100 bills. Begin stacking them one on top of another, with Ben Franklin's face gazing upward. Keep at it until you've built a stack about two-thirds of a mile high. Now strike a match and set the whole thing on fire. Poof! You've just torched \$1 billion—the amount lost by U.S. insurance companies every year because their claims-department employees are such poor writers.

Why share this information? Two good reasons.

First, to give you an example of how to craft a compelling lead, or beginning, to a piece of writing—an introduction that will get people to read your words even when the underlying information may not be especially sexy. Your aim in the lead-writing process is to make the opening remarks interesting to your reading audience by incorporating details (as was done here) that are active, personal, concrete, thought-provoking, and graphic—meaning visible to the mind's eye.

This takes some thought and ingenuity. But the effort is worth it because no matter how vital your words might be, there's a fair chance they may be overlooked if they're not written so that others will want to read them—that is, if they are not written effectively.

“Poof! You've just torched \$1 billion.”

Which brings up reason-number-two for sharing this information: To demonstrate that large financial costs incurred by businesses through their employees' poor writing performance are not abstractions. They are both tangible and measurable.

Nor are these costs exaggerations. For example, the expert who generated the \$1 billion loss figure mentioned earlier, used conservative numbers when talking about the writing lapses of claims department employees.

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TiDbits

Hear Ye, Hear Ye! A message to senior executives . . . Don't miss our June 14 Preview of *Dynamic Presentations*[®] in New York City. Sign up today! Call Anne Vasile at 914 948-8065, ext. 13.



Time's running out. . . . Book *Dynamic Writing*[®] before July 1, 2006, and save your company 10%!

Interested in learning more about DiSC[®]—one of the most widely used behavioral assessments? *Save the date*—October 20, 2006. Meet renowned DiSC[®] expert, Pamela Cole. Keep an eye out for preview details... □

Is Learning a big deal for Corporate America?

"[Learning] is the number one factor right after basic compensation in terms of what people are looking for," writes Tamara Erickson in *Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent*. The 35-and-under crowd "... values it highly and is particularly sensitive to look for job environments where learning is a big opportunity." (Harvard Business School Press 2006) □

Object, you're Honour ...

Philadelphia, PA: A federal judge in Philadelphia reduced a lawyer's fees by half (\$31,000) because the lawyer's writing was filled with typographical errors and was "vague, ambiguous, unintelligible, verbose, and repetitive..." (New York Times). Counselor, perhaps it's time for TDCG's *Dynamic Writing*? □



TDCG develops E-Mail Standards at Ginsburg Development Companies

Like many organizations, the real estate leader was looking for a way to manage an overwhelming volume of e-mail, along with content and distribution concerns. In early 2006, working closely with GDC's project team, TDCG customized and delivered a program that set standards for e-mail usage and provided techniques to manage it. GDC's staff welcomed the guidance and senior executives report decreased e-mail volume and increased effectiveness. □

Follow Our Lead

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Not that insurance-claims people are different from other workers in American business. Human resources experts generally agree that the biggest single failing of new-hires everywhere is their abysmal inability to write so that others can understand them.

There is one bright spot in this gloomy landscape, however. It is the understanding that a writer's deficiencies can be readily corrected by professionals in writing-skills remediation.

This means that adults who *never learned* to write effectively can be taught to do so. And adults

who *did learn* to write, but learned to write badly, can be shown how to write well. □

Source: *Poor Writing Skills: The Insurance Industry's Billion-Dollar Headache*, 2005.



Bill Buckley is a Senior Writing Consultant at TDCG. You can reach him via email at bbuckley@tdgroupusa.com.

Spotlight

Rockefeller Brothers Fund

Problem: Senior executives want to hone the report-writing skills of a highly-valued staff member.

Solution: TDCG's senior writing coach Bill Buckley provides one-on-one coaching over a 4-month period.

Result: "We were impressed with the accuracy and effectiveness with which TD Consulting Group's coach was able to identify the areas where our staff member needed support—based entirely on an evaluation of the individual's written work samples. The TDCG specialist crafted a highly individual, outcome-focused coaching plan that produced immediate improvement in our writer's work. At the same time, coach and writer enjoyed a good working relationship that allowed them to deal easily with any logistical details. In the end, we realized a great return on investment for both the organization and a highly valued employee. We will look to TDCG for writer coaching in the future."

Jacqueline Basile
Director, Human Resources



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