



CONSULTING GROUPSM
the people side of business strategy

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TiDings

LETTER FROM TDCG

Never underestimate the value of a well-turned phrase.

That's the message of today's senior leaders and hiring managers looking for quality talent.

In a 2004 survey of business leaders, researchers found that a full two-thirds of America's salaried employees write on the job and half of all companies take writing into account when deciding whom to promote.

Our specialty in writing skill development – training programs, executive coaching, policy manual development – is just one of TD's five key practice areas; yet, it's proven to be a crucial service in elevating the communication skills every professional needs!



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Putting Results in Writing



by
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Author Nancy Schuman (*Long Island Press*, July 26) reports some alarming statistics on the state of writing skills in the American workplace: While “communication skills have ranked at the top of the list for the last eight years” as a job seeker’s most important trait, today’s workers face serious deficiencies in “memo writing, correspondence, and technical reporting.”* This translates into big costs, according to Schuman, as “American Corporations spend up to \$3.1 billion annually”† to remedy writing deficiencies among their employees.

Of course, none of these facts come as a surprise to us at TD. We have firsthand knowledge of the tri-

als and tribulations facing American businesses in bringing writing skills up to snuff. We’ve worked at building writing proficiency with individuals and training groups at client companies since 1995 — and have ourselves grappled with making sense

“I’ve seen a decline in the quality of writing especially with our summer interns. The public school system doesn’t demand enough of them.”

– Senior Manager, Non-Profit

out of RFPs, reports, and e-mails that reach us daily. So for the first time, we decided this year to launch a grammar-skills survey of our own — which brought us some fascinating (if unscientific) results both in terms of response and scores.

In June of 2007, we sent a survey on grammar skills to a sample group of individuals on our database. This 10-question multiple choice quiz, known as the *TD Grammar Challenge*, wound its way around the Internet to people across the United States and around the

* *Job Outlook 2007* Survey. † National Commission on Writing Study.

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TiDbits

Exciting news! TD Consulting Group is MOVING on December 1! We’re expanding our office to bigger and better space to keep up with our continued growth. Look for details on our upcoming postcard. □

Welcome NEW Clients! Among our latest . . . Chico’s, GIA, Lowe’s, Macquarie Bank, NYCEDC, Sanctuary for Families, Strauss Paper. Thank you! □

Karen Robilotta Named to Board . . . TD’s Karen Robilotta has been elected to the Board of Back-to-School Clothes for Kids. For information on the non-profit, go to www.backtoschoolclothes.org. □

TiDbits on Writing®

Take the opportunity to sign up for our *TiDbits on Writing*®. It's FREE! Get a host of writing tips and techniques by registering for our monthly e-articles.



Go to our Web site for these back issues:

- ◆ Active Voice (Part 1)
- ◆ Who vs. Whom (Part 2)
- ◆ Commas, Please (Part 3)
- ◆ Compelling Lead (Part 4)

Don't forget: enter our quarterly contest for TD's latest publication – *Editor's Secrets*®. You could be a winner! □

TD Consulting Group

TD offers consulting services in organizational development, performance improvement, and training. Clients come to us for help in five key practice areas:

- Writing Skills
- Presentation Skills
- Customer Service
- Leadership Development
- Strategy Implementation

So whether it's Executive Coaching, or one of our popular program series like *Dynamic Writing*® and *Dynamic Presentations*®, or help in getting a new initiative up and running, TD is just a phone call or e-mail away.

Questions? Contact Karen Robilotta at 914 948-8065, ext. 11, or krobilotta@tdgroupusa.com. □

Putting Results in Writing

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world. The survey addressed common and fundamental aspects of grammar: e.g., when to use *I* vs. *me*, *his* vs. *their*; *who* vs. *whom*. To take a stab at the quiz, go to www.tdgroupusa.com.

As of this publication, we have received and tallied 488 responses. The average score? 60 percent. (For more details, see the *Update: TD Grammar Challenge* box below.) We also provided survey-takers with the answer key — the *TD Grammar Challenge EXPLAINED* — upon completion of the test and the opportunity to sign up for a complimentary e-mail subscription to *TiDbits on Writing*®.

“The good news,” comments Bill Buckley, Director of Editorial

Services and TD's executive writing coach, “is that grammar is something that we can teach — and that people can learn. Once we help them get those skills under their belts, we then can concentrate on elements of style and components of structure or organization. It's a proven process.”

We have a slogan we like to use to show our commitment to coaching today's business executives and staff to write well: At TD, we're out to change the world . . . one pronoun at a time! □



Bill Buckley
Director of Editorial Services

Update: TD Grammar Challenge

When we published the results of the *TD Grammar Challenge* in July 2007, we had 130 respondents. By October, that number had risen to 488. Interestingly, the statistical results for both totals were virtually the same.

Number of Respondents	Average Score	Number scoring 60% or below	Number scoring better than 60%	Number scoring 100%
130	61%	75 (58%)	55 (42%)	8 (6%)
488	60.4%	280 (57%)	205 (42%)	26 (5%)

The two most frequently incorrect answers also remained the same: the lack of agreement between a possessive and a gerund — as in the sentence “I object to *your* [not *you*] making those remarks” — and misuse of the phrase “more importantly” instead of the proper phrase “more important.” The most commonly correct answers? 78% chose “between you and *me*” (over the incorrect “between you and I”) and 76% knew that “We hope” beats out the often misused “Hopefully.”



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