



A CORPORATE WRITING METHODOLOGY

Corporate writing develops a corporate consensus on an issue, then communicates the essential information concerning that consensus in the form of writing to others.

The corporate consensus is developed as the group assembles its insights concerning a particular issue; uses these to stimulate further creative thinking, examines alternatives and records one of these in written form. The necessity of choosing one particular approach to the issue points the whole process of the group toward achieving the consensus that will make this possible. Here, context is the main question.

The second function, that of communicating the corporate insights, raises the question of writing style. To ground a statement in ones own experience requires that the statement be understood, that it be clear. But understandability is only one factor in communication. The art form methodology is based upon the assumption that communication has four levels -- identification of the realities being discussed, observation of the relationships between these realities, an assessment of the possible ways of relating to those realities and a decision as to which of those relationships to act upon. A written document which wishes to communicate in the full sense invites participation at each of these levels.

Identification of the realities can be accomplished through a clear description. Poetry can be a powerful tool for evoking images within the reader, and the skillful use of poetry can raise to consciousness images which point to the reality. However the cast of characters is laid out, the next step is to define their relationships either in space, in time, or both. Spatial relationships are linear, confrontational, diagramatic, direct. Relationships in time are curved, artistic, dramatic, a complex of emotions and interactions. The ~~linear~~ drama is the stretching of the three dimensional forces that create and affect human affairs over a fourth dimension of time. Similarly, assessment of possible relationships is spacial, or the drama of space plus time. The decision is an entering into the drama, a determination to channel the forces of interaction or to direct the human drama.

STEP 1.

STEP 1. DOCUMENT CATEGORIES: It is assumed that an initial structure is provided, whether this be a triangle, a four by four, or a series of categories. These are the realities for which the document will spell out the relationships in order to encourage a decision with respect to relating to these relationships.

STEP 2. RATIONALE REFINEMENT: To clearly distinguish each of the categories from each other, a series of characteristics across the categories is often helpful. The purpose is to define each category as separate and distinct from each other category.

STEP 3. RATIONAL SENTENCES: A sentence is written holding the thrust and uniqueness of each of the categories. Preparing an imaginal wall chart holding the essential data is helpful in preserving clean distinctions during later steps.

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STEP 4. BRAINSTORM CONTENT: The group wisdom as to the content of each of the categories is brought out through a brainstorm.

STEP 5. DRAFT 1: The brainstormed content is written up expanding upon the rational sentences.

STEP 6. RESEARCH READING: Books, articles, transcripts are combed using the document categories as a screen. 4X6" cards are useful for recording the data. A wall display with cards in their separate categories gives a visual image of where further research needs to be done to fill in gaps.

STEP 7: DATA SWIRLING: The data for each category is swirled, allowing 3 to 5 groupings to emerge under each.

STEP 8. DRAFT 2: The Draft 1 document is expanded, incorporating the insights from the data swirling. An alternative possibility is to use the swirls which emerge as ways of arranging the material under each of the original categories, and then feed the material from Draft 1 into this configuration.

STEP 9. POETRY & ILLUSTRATIONS: A list of poetic images, movies, books, biblical references, current or historical events are brainstormed for each of the categories.

STEP 10. DRAFT 3: The document is reviewed, possibly rewritten, in order to incorporate meaningful images or illustrations and reflect the increased clarity which grounding of the categories in concrete events creates.

STEP 11. CHARTING: The three drafts are assembled side by side for each of the categories in turn, and the one most closely approximating the final form chosen. This is charted. The chart is then modified to incorporate dramatic flow or insights inadvertently omitted. Material from all three drafts is coded as to its location in the modified chart. Perhaps initially all three drafts are charted. It is crucial that imagination and creativity be allowed to enter at this point. Teams of two or three work best here.

STEP 12. DRAFT 4: Draft The fourth draft is written from the modified chart using the best of the material. A process of cleaning and editing for a clear style and polishing complete the writing process.

This methodology for corporate writing has the advantage of incorporating the group wisdom, active research and poetic imagery. It uses an iron rationale as the basis for writing, but through the process of swirling the research data and charting the drafts, allows internal structure to emerge out of the dramatic requirements of presentation. The use of four drafts allows for the incorporation of different types of material, but also provides increased opportunity for creativity to emerge during the writing process itself.

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NB: This is a modified description of the methodology used by Guild 14 during the Summer '74 Global Research Assembly to write the document on Ontological Love.