

Different Hats: Adapting Your Writing Style to Your Audience

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Styles That Medical Writers Use

- Scientific
- News/journalistic
- Consumer health
- Sales training/sales communication
- Promotional
- Web site
- Slides, posters
- Scripts (video and audio)

Be aware of the elements that define your style

- Vocabulary
- Content
- Tone (formal, informal)
- Format
- Sentence structure
- Paragraph structure
- Overall manuscript structure

Styles That Medical Writers Use

- Scientific
- News/journalistic
- Sales training, sales force communication
- Consumer health
- Study reports, regulatory submissions, journal articles, scientific posters, CME
- Post-meeting newsletters, press releases
- Sales training modules, backgrounders, bulletins
- Patient education, patient newsletters, sales training
- Web sites
- Slides, posters
- Scripts (video and audio)
- Promotion
- Consumer and professional web sites
- Slide-lecture kits, speaker slides, scientific posters
- Audio and video scripts

- Sales aids, journal ads, direct mail

Our Mistakes Show Where We Came From

- Perspective
- Choice of words
- Understanding of the objectives
- Appreciation of the audience's knowledge level
- Issues to Consider When Writing in Scientific Style
- Tone: Passive voice? First person?
- Cautious language vs. assertions
- Citations: How many? Sources?
- Rigid, formal format
- Use of brand names or bullets
- Audience sophistication, specialized knowledge
- Key message/news *
- New to the Specialty?

Newsletters: Lighten Up for News Style

- Invert the pyramid
- Use snappy leads: direct quotes, questions
- Keep paragraphs short
- Keep sentences short, simple, and varied
- Use active voice
- Keep it moving with active headlines
- No-nos: occurs, thus, however, footnotes, semicolons, parentheses, references

Sales Training Incorporates Instructional Design Concepts

- List learning objectives
- Use more than one avenue (pictures, audio, text, interactive)
- Provide reviews
- Summarize key points at the ends of chapters
- Provide frequent self-tests
- Match test questions to the learning objectives
- Cite useful references

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- Audience sophistication, specialized knowledge
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Consumer Style Is Easy to Read

- Use short sentences, short paragraphs
- Choose short words, avoid jargon
- Use active voice
- Match audience level
- Start with a catchy lead
- Consider viewpoint & frame of reference

Promotional Writing Says It Fast

- Gets attention
- Targets a specific audience
- Uses heads, subheads, and bullets
- Makes promises (claims)
- Works in tandem with visual images
- Tells the reader what to do

Web Sites

- Short bytes
- Easy to grasp
- Consistent wording and format
- Self-contained screens
- Explanatory titles & captions
- Easy transportation to elsewhere in the site
- Highlighting of key marketing messages