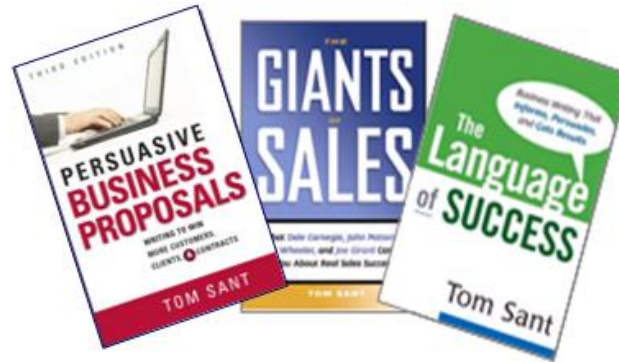


Effective Translation



How to Convert Product and Marketing Copy into Effective Proposal Text

Dr. Tom Sant
Hyde Park Partners



Your Presenter: Dr. Tom Sant

“One of the world’s top ten sales trainers.”

(Selling Power Magazine)

Author of *Persuasive Business Proposals*, the world’s # 1 best selling book on writing winning proposals (3rd edition, 2013)

“One of the 10 most important business books of all time.”

Geoffrey James, Inc. Magazine

“America’s foremost expert on persuasive writing.”

(American Management Association)

One of the first ever Fellows of APMP

Over \$30 billion in winning sales proposals



Defining the problem.



My Life and Welcome to It...

First Sentence of a Case Study:

Under the SafeHarbors contract, Amalgamated Technology provides system engineering, technical, program and project support for acoustic and non-acoustic measurement, evaluation, processing, acoustic signature, secure (information assurance [IA]) networking, analysis, fabrication, assembly, acoustic intelligence (ACINT), operations, and maintenance of a broad array of sensors, associated processing systems and Acoustic Acquisition System Design (COTS/NDI), development, and testing support.

✓ *56 words*

✓ *16 commas!*



My Life and Welcome to It...

Second Sentence:

Our efforts encompass system design review and interface specifications, which include acoustic performance; evaluation, and analysis of structural and dynamic anomalies; power requirements; radiated and self-noise evaluations; electromagnetic interference (EMI) with biological and structural elements; towed array handler interfaces; calibrations for baseline ACINT gathering; IA; certification and accreditation; acquisition planning; financial, budget, and milestone submits/presentations; and development/operational testing and evaluations.

✓ *60 words*

✓ *11 semicolons!*



My Life and Welcome to It...

The rest of Paragraph # 1:

Also we develop, build, operate, and maintain special test equipment including LTAS, MAPS, ADTAS, and ATTENDS. This extensive, long-term involvement with NSWCCD mission areas continues to be a significant contributor to the U.S. Navy's submarine, surface, and air intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) statutory requirements and Chief of Naval Operations' (CNO) vision of "SEAPOWER 21" initiatives.

And there were seven more pages of this!



Which brings up the question:

What is
wrong
with these people?



Why Do People Make These Mistakes?

It's the fallacy of the familiar.

	Information	Evaluation	Persuasion
Expert	Comfort Zone		
Highly informed			
Somewhat informed			
Lay			



Customers Need a Different Kind of Message

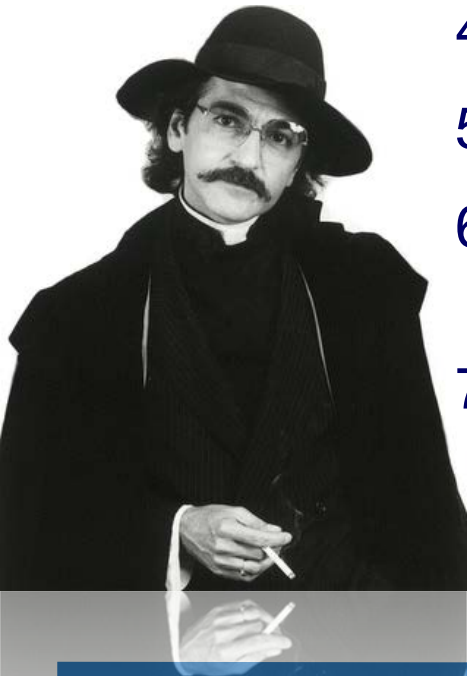
Peer-to-Peer * Outcome Oriented * Bottom-Line Focused

	Information	Evaluation	Persuasion
Expert	Comfort Zone		
Highly informed			
Somewhat informed			Persuasion Zone
Lay			



Seven “Deadly Sins” of Persuasion

1. Failure to focus on the client’s business issues and payoffs
2. No persuasive structure
3. Weak differentiation
4. Failure to offer a compelling value proposition
5. Key points are buried—no highlights, no graphics
6. Difficult to understand—overuse of jargon and acronyms, long sentences, too technical, too long
7. Credibility killers—misspellings, grammar errors, wrong client name, inconsistent formats, etc.



Keys to the Effective Proposal Text

1. Persuasive, not informative
2. High primacy
3. Low dissonance
4. Immediate relevance
5. Minimal cognitive overload



1. *Persuasive, not informative.*

HOW TO OBTAIN



A Better Looking Nose

Improve Your Personal Appearance
My free book tells you how I guarantee to improve the shape of your nose by remodeling the cartilage and fleshy parts, quickly, safely, and painlessly, or refund your money. The very fine, precise adjustments which only my new patented Model 25 Nose Shaper possesses, make results satisfactory and lasting. Worn night or day. Over 100,000 users. Send for free book to

M. TRILETY, Pioneer Noseshaping Specialist, Dept. 193, Binghamton, N. Y.



Consciousness is Intentional

It's a matter of recognizing
the neurolinguistic structure
of the brain.



In a B2B or B2G Environment...

Customers want

answers

to

three questions

when they are making a buying decision:

- 1. Are we getting what we need?***
- 2. Is it worth doing?***
- 3. Can they really deliver?***



Informative Writing



The Structure of Information: The Funnel



1. Start with most important (most general) fact
2. Second most important fact next, etc.
3. Continue to drill down
4. Simply quit at the end
5. Emphasis on accuracy, conciseness



Opening Paragraph—Information Dump

Shale gas in North America is reviving the petrochemical industry while at the same time lowering energy prices and helping improve overall refinery margins for North American refiners. Shale gas, specifically the associated cost advantaged methane and natural gas liquids (NGLs), provides refiners with opportunities for diversification of both feedstock and product and to capitalize on the associated financial benefits of the operating flexibility this diversification brings through market cycles. Shale gas also introduces new potential business models for projects such as joint-ventures between refining and petrochemical companies by leveraging the unique skill sets of each or joint-ventures between regional independent refiners. In this proposal we identify shale gas monetization options for ArgentOil, focusing primarily on methane, propane, and butane.



Another Opening Paragraph...

The Internet provides an inexpensive and ubiquitous platform for dramatically advancing online government services, enabling both government-to-business and government-to-citizen exchange of services and information. The advantages of using the Internet for public sector electronic commerce include cost reduction, extended reach, and competitive advantage for the Commonwealth against other states. In this “faceless” environment, however, there must be methods of achieving the degree of trust required to engage in critical online government activities.



The Structure of Persuasion

- **Needs:** The customer's issues, pains, or opportunities.
- **Outcomes:** The benefits of those needs: *the motivation*.
- **Solution:** A recommendation that will solve the problem.
- **Evidence:** Proof of your differentiators.



- **Problems:** The customer's problems, pains, or opportunities: *the deal*.
- **Outcomes:** The benefits of those needs: *the motivation*.
- **Solution:** A recommendation that will solve the problem.
- **Evidence:** Proof of your differentiators: *the motivation*.



The NOSE Pattern Answers the Three Questions

Needs: Demonstrate an understanding of the customer's key business needs or issues

Outcomes: Identify meaningful outcomes or results from meeting those needs

Solution: Recommend a specific solution

Evidence: Build credibility by providing substantiating details

Are we getting what we need?
(relevance)

Is it worth doing?
(motivation)

Can they really do it?
(rationality)



NOSE Structure for ArgentOil Proposal

ArgentOil recognizes that shale gas provides major opportunities for growth and revenue generation. By exploiting your supplies of shale gas, you have the opportunity to:

1. Utilize a lower-priced feedstock in gasoline and diesel production
2. Diversify your product mix
3. Reduce U.S. dependence on foreign supplies of oil

These are important opportunities. By addressing them, ArgentOil can achieve a number of bottom line benefits:

1. Improve margins in your refineries

We calculate that the use of shale oil will deliver a 2.5% margin improvement, generating \$1.7 billion additional revenue annually.

2. Diversify your product mix

In addition to gasoline and diesel, you will be able to generate paraxylene.



Revising the Opening ...

The State of Massachusetts has launched an exciting new program that allows small businesses to pay payroll and sales taxes over the Internet. In other locales, similar programs have been proven to increase compliance with tax laws and to accelerate collections. You have estimated that the new system can increase working capital in the State by \$1.7 billion a year.

The challenge you face is providing a Web-based vehicle that business owners will trust. With all of the headlines about hacking and identity theft, business owners will naturally be anxious about the safety and security of the State's online system. To achieve a high level of acceptance, your system must address the four factors that create a secure environment:



A PURE WHITE FILTER
IS ONLY THE BEGINNING
OF A **WINSTON**

**It's what's
up front
that counts!**

The big difference is
FILTER-BLEND
clear, rich tobaccos
specially processed for
filter smoking!

There's nothing wishy-washy
about Winston. For up front of
its modern, pure white filter is
FILTER-BLEND. That's what
gives Winston its famous fla-
vor. (And after all, that's the
whole *idea* of smoking!)

FILTER-BLEND means fine,
mild tobaccos *specially pro-
cessed for filter smoking*. It's
the real difference between
Winston and all other filter
cigarettes.

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.,
WINSTON-SALEM, N. C.



Winston tastes good
like a cigarette should!

2. *The Primacy Principle*



2. High Primacy

The Primacy Principle



The Principle of First Impressions



What First Impression Are You Making?



“Don’t waste my time with a bunch of boilerplate!”

- Title— “Proposal,” “Recommendation for...,”
- First focus?
- Your name or the client’s?
- Are you describing a product or proposing a solution?
- Price or value?



Avoid Canned Messages—They Sound Self Serving



While 4A-type zeolites are the industry standard for natural gas dehydration service, AmeriChem developed a groundbreaking product, its AC-85 adsorbent, as our premium offering for improved dehydration performance under challenging operating conditions.



First Things First...

You need to remove water and other contaminants from your supply of natural gas, sometimes under very challenging circumstances. The answer is AC-85 adsorbent from AmeriChem. Unlike traditional adsorbents, that use 4A-type zeolites to bind impurities, AC-85 uses an innovative formulation that is proven to work faster and produce less clumping.



3. *Low Dissonance*



Cognitive Dissonance Is Natural



Low dissonance reduces the audience's sense of risk.



What Creates Cognitive Dissonance in Proposals?

Language	Undefined acronyms and jargon Fluff, Guff, Geek and Weasel Business clichés Referring to the customer as “it” or “they”
Graphics	Clip art Self-centered imagery
Value claims	Marketing fluff vs. quantified value proposition
Specificity to the client	“Personas” vs. real people
Orientation	Internal, self-centered vs. customer-centered



Undefined Jargon and Acronyms

Investment into Bell Telecom's NextGen Network (NGN) will offer many new capabilities to ABC Company as you develop and deliver new services to your clients. It is built on core/distribution/access layered design that aligns with best practice network design standards for high traffic volume applications such as video conferencing and VoIP technologies. Our design will provide bandwidth in excess of requirements with easy bandwidth upgrades to 1 Gbps. Depending on design outcomes this can come with no change in Customer Premise Equipment (CPE). It has built-in redundancy in core network components and transport to enhance network survivability.



Undefined Jargon and Acronyms

Investment into Bell Telecom's **NextGen Network (NGN)** will offer many new capabilities to ABC Company as you develop and deliver new services to your clients. It is built on **core/distribution/access layered design** that aligns with best practice network design standards for high traffic volume applications such as video conferencing and **VoIP** technologies. Our design will provide bandwidth in excess of requirements with easy bandwidth upgrades to 1 **Gbps**. Depending on design outcomes this can come with no change in **Customer Premise Equipment (CPE)**. It has **built-in redundancy in core network components and transport** to enhance **network survivability**.





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Fluff:

1. Grandiose claims
2. Vague generalities
3. Clichés
4. No substantiation



Forget the Fluff!

Here are a few examples....

Anything look familiar?

Best of breed
World class
Leading edge
State of the art
Quality focused
Uniquely qualified
Innovative

High performance
Synergy
User friendly
Proven
Partnership
Seamless
Robust



Thank you for allowing us to submit our response to your RFP.

As you may know, Wilcox DataFlex is uniquely qualified to deliver world-class results for every customer. We offer best-of-breed products and customer-focused service to produce seamless, high availability solutions. Our commitment to partnering with our customers produces innovative yet user-friendly applications.

I look forward to discussing our applications with you to see if there's a good fit. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to call.



Thank you for allowing us to submit our response to your RFP.

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Guff.



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Guff.

Guff:

1. Long sentences
2. Too many big words
3. Too much passive voice



The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that choices will have to be made to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a leveraging of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, will be needed to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.



The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that choices will have to be made to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a leveraging of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, will be needed to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.

– Average sentence length: 32 words



The **dimensionality** of **expected** project problems coupled with the **limited** time **available** for **preparation** means that choices will have to be made to assure **viability** of the most **critical analytical processes**. Thus, a **leveraging** of problem **similarities** and process **relationships** to allow for sharing of **resources** and **solutions**, will be needed to contain cost and staff **expenditures** and assure **maximum** payoff from **effected solutions**.

- Average sentence length: 32 words
- Words with three syllables or more: 18



The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that **choices will have to be made** to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a **leveraging** of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, **will be needed** to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.

- Average sentence length: 32 words
- Words with three syllables or more: 18
- Passive voice: both sentences



NITD coalesces the capabilities of multiple corporate technology solutions providers that specialize in systems integration, client/server development, Internet/Intranet information systems, and information security.





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Geek:

1. Disregard for the audience
2. Overuse of jargon and acronyms
3. A focus on technical details instead of functions or differentiators





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Geek!

We filter all incoming and outgoing payments against “black lists” and every known sanction and embargo list from around the world, including both debarred and banned parties, such as OFAC, UK HMT, EU, UN, OSFI, FATF and the Australian DFAT list.





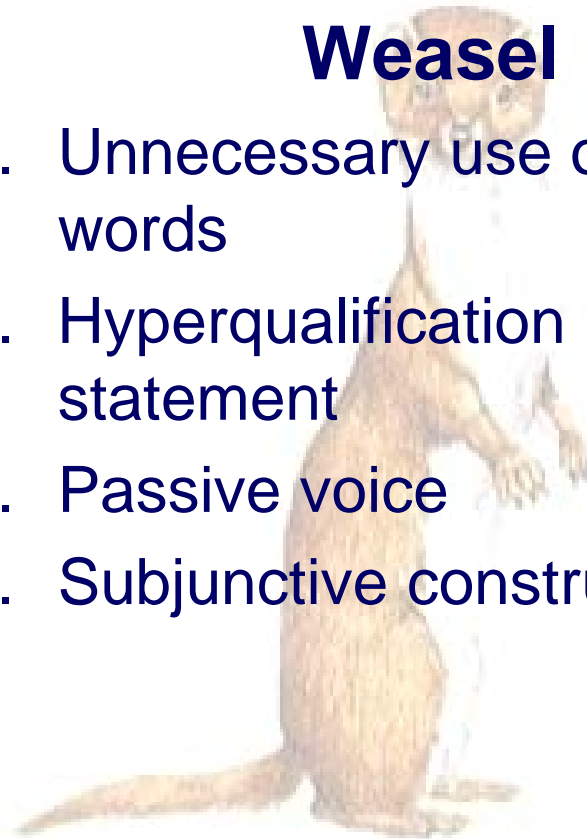
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Watch the Weasel!

Weasel

1. Unnecessary use of weasel words
2. Hyperqualification of every statement
3. Passive voice
4. Subjunctive constructions



Watch the Weasel!



Weasel words:

“can be”

“might”

“helps”

“could”

“may be”

“enable”

“allow”

“up to”

“like”

“virtually”

“significantly”



Subjunctive Junk

“We **would** like to thank you for allowing us to submit this proposal...”

“This process **would allow** one person to perform research and **significantly** increase productivity...”

“You **can be assured** that it **should be possible** to achieve the requested timelines for this project.”

“We **believe** that we have proposed an effective solution, based on the information we have **at this time.**”



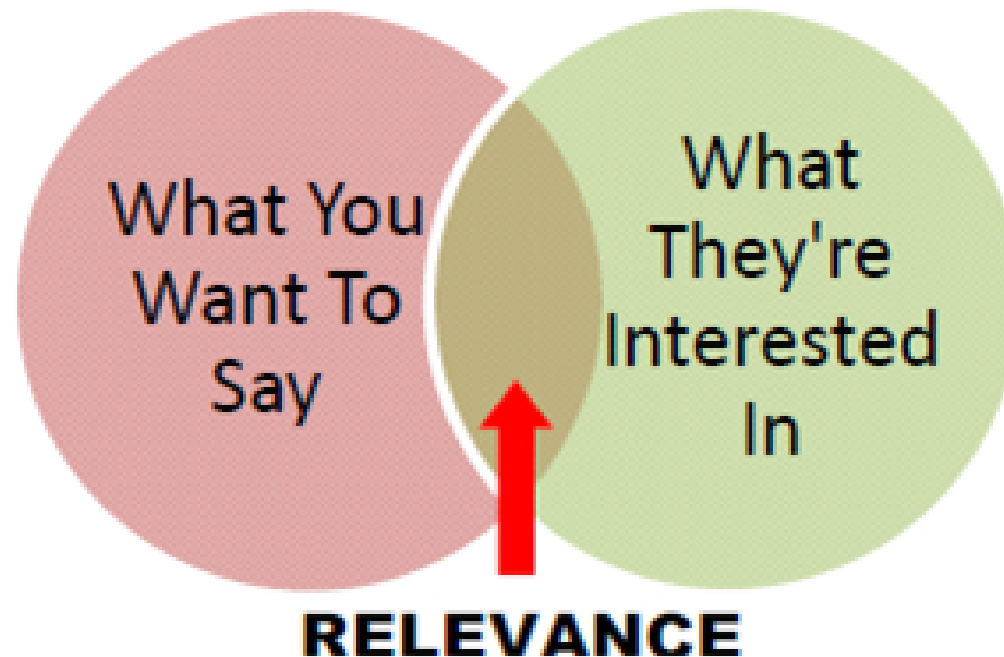
Subjunctive and Conditional Assertions

Warning!

1. Writing in Weasel makes every assertion hypothetical.
2. Using Weasel is like crack cocaine—it quickly becomes an addiction.



4. *Immediate Relevance*



A Recent Email...

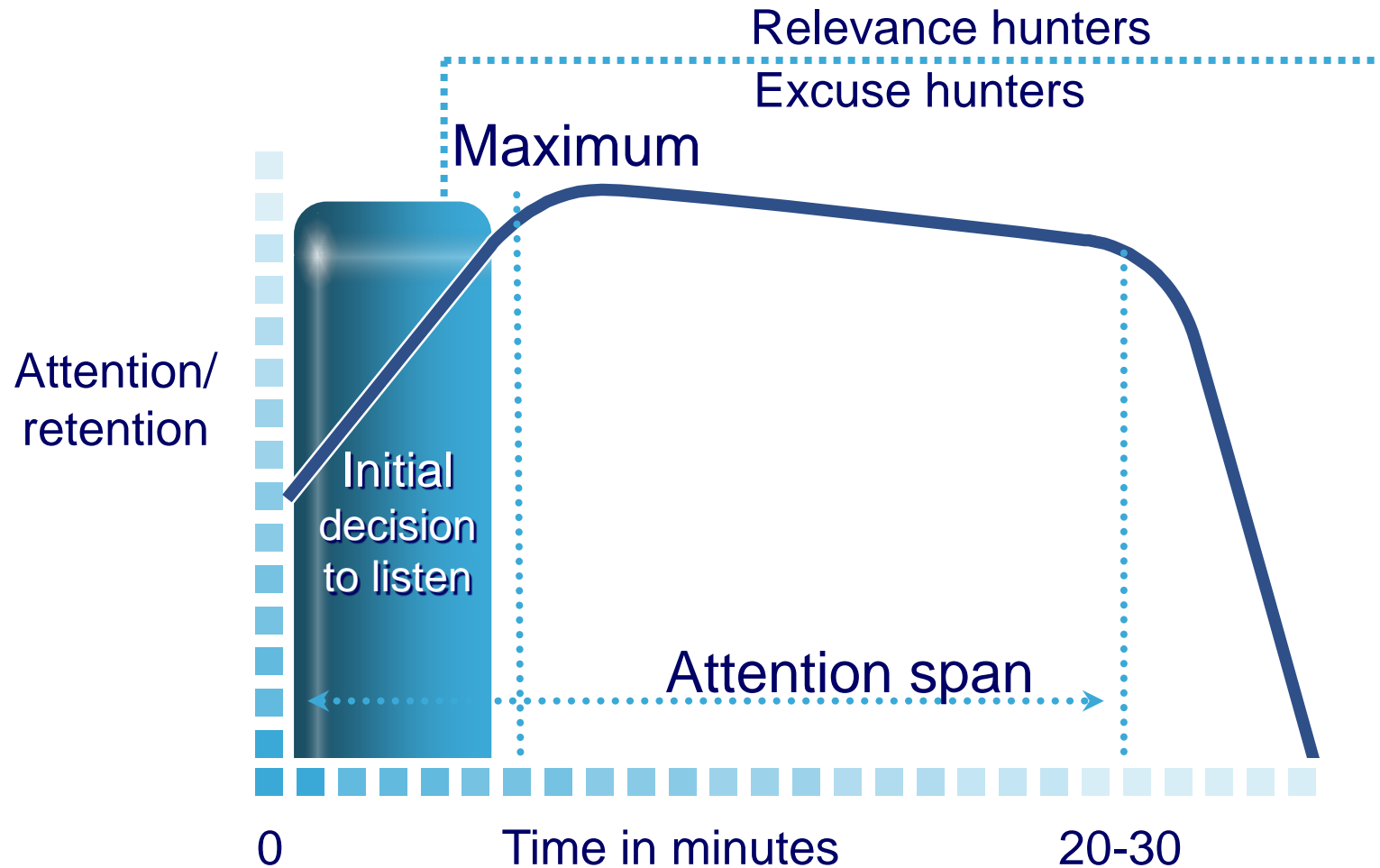
Dear Tom,

My name is Mary Jones and I am with LogorRhea. Our LogorRhea Services Division has been planning, designing, implementing, activating and supporting ICM solutions for the past 17 years. As you are preparing to execute your 2015 Incentive Compensation Strategy, please keep LogorRhea in mind as an additional resource for you.

Our Services team can step-in from Day 1 to augment your team and evaluate or execute your defined ICM strategy with...



We Need to Establish Relevance Quickly



Here's the Grim Reality...

You have

7 minutes

to make a positive first impression in a document.

You have

4 minutes

to establish contact face-to-face.

You have

> 1 minute

for Web-based presentations, emails and phone calls.



Whether you operate from a single location, multiple sites nationwide or offices around the world, we can assist you in preserving and managing cash flow. We'll help you capitalize on your liquid assets, by combining up-to-date technology and integrated operations for fast, powerful, flexible solutions. Our locally-based Relationship Managers (supported by teams of product specialists) will tailor global treasury management services to your unique needs.



5. *Minimal Cognitive Overload*



Complex Writing Implies a Complex Solution

Avoid complexity.

Working memory is finite.



Do Your Slides Look Like This?

The screenshot displays the Oracle Data Miner interface with several windows open:

- Navigator:** Shows a project tree with folders for Mining Actions (Anomaly, Association Rules, Attribute Importance, Classification, Clustering, Feature Extraction, Regression) and Data Sources (CBERGER, Views, Tables).
- Result Viewer: "DM4JSCD_BUYER19890_TM"**: Displays an ROC curve chart. The Y-axis is True Positive Rate (0.0 to 1.0) and the X-axis is False Positive Rate (0.0 to 1.0). A red vertical line indicates the threshold at approximately 0.1. The Area Under the Curve is 0.874251...

	Others	1
Others	816	87
1	107	186

True Positive Rate: 0.6348122866
False Positive Rate: 0.0963455149
Avg Accuracy: 0.7892333859
Overall Accuracy: 0.8377926421
Cost: 194
Probability Threshold: 0.4705882353
- Result Viewer: CD_BUYERS20881_DT**: Shows a decision tree structure with nodes and their associated rules and statistics.

Node ID	Predicate	Predicted V...	Confidence	Cases	Support
0	true	0	0.7600	1,804	1.0000
1	RELATIONSHIP is in { Husband ...	0	0.5440	818	0.4534
2	PAYROLL_DEDUCTION <= 97.5	0	0.7852	298	0.1652
13	PAYROLL_DEDUCTION <= 69.5	0	0.9204	113	0.0626
14	PAYROLL_DEDUCTION > 69.5	0	0.7027	185	0.1025
3	PAYROLL_DEDUCTION > 97.5	1	0.5942	520	0.2882
4	AVE_CHECKING_BALANCE <= ...	0	0.6746	126	0.0698
15	CAPITAL_GAIN <= 5715.5	0	0.7328	116	0.0643
16	CAPITAL_GAIN > 5715.5	1	1.0000	10	0.0055
5	AVE_CHECKING_BALANCE > 1...	1	0.6802	394	0.2184
6	OCCUPATION is in { ? Cleric, Cr...	0	0.5337	193	0.1070
18	CAPITAL_GAIN <= 5463.0	0	0.5294	170	0.0942
19	CAPITAL_GAIN > 5463.0	1	1.0000	23	0.0127
7	OCCUPATION is in { Armed-F Ex...	1	0.8209	201	0.1114
- Histogram for selected attribute:** A histogram for the attribute AGE. The X-axis is Bin Count (0 to 700) and the Y-axis is Bin Range. The distribution is roughly bell-shaped, centered around 300-400.

Group	Value(s)	Bin Count	% of Total
0	< 24.3	518	17.27
1	24.3 - 31.6	527	17.57
2	31.6 - 38.9	573	19.1
3	38.9 - 46.2	585	19.5
4	46.2 - 53.5	368	12.27

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Does Your Writing Sound Like This?

As the alpha of the fund is driven by exploitation of a diversity of behavioral anomalies found in markets, individual strategies complement each other by targeting performance over different time periods, thus achieving a more robust level of performance across different market conditions.



KISS: Keep It Short and Simple

The first principle of persuasive writing:

Be clear.

Live by the “first time right” rule.



Tip:

Keep your writing at the same level of complexity as *The Wall Street Journal*.



Taking a Closer Look at Clarity

Five ways to achieve clarity:



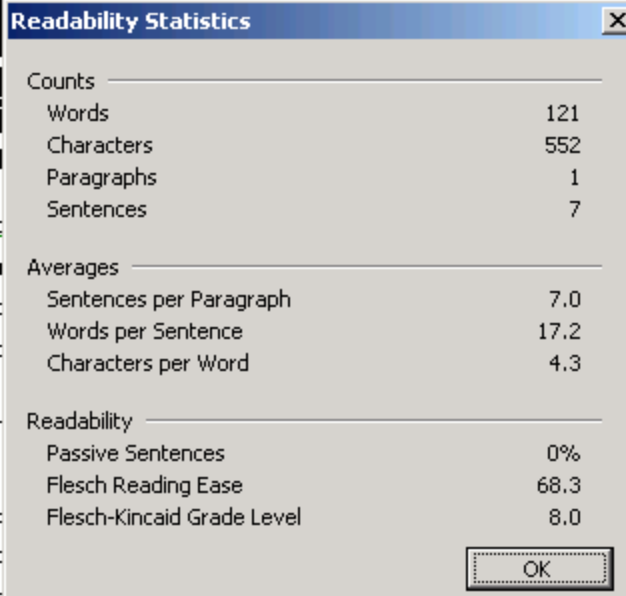


Five ways to achieve clarity:

1. Short sentences
2. Short words
3. Passive voice $\leq 10\%$
4. Readability index ≤ 10
5. Minimal jargon and acronyms



Let Your Word Processor Do the Work



A screenshot of a 'Readability Statistics' dialog box. The dialog box has a title bar with a close button (X). It is divided into three sections: 'Counts', 'Averages', and 'Readability'. Each section contains a list of metrics and their corresponding values. An 'OK' button is located at the bottom right of the dialog box.

Counts	
Words	121
Characters	552
Paragraphs	1
Sentences	7

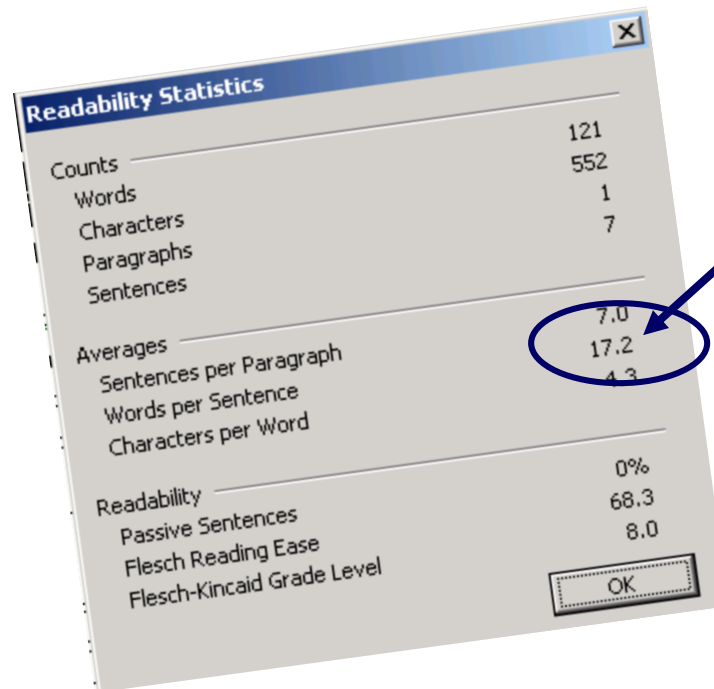
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	7.0
Words per Sentence	17.2
Characters per Word	4.3

Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	68.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

OK



1. Short sentences



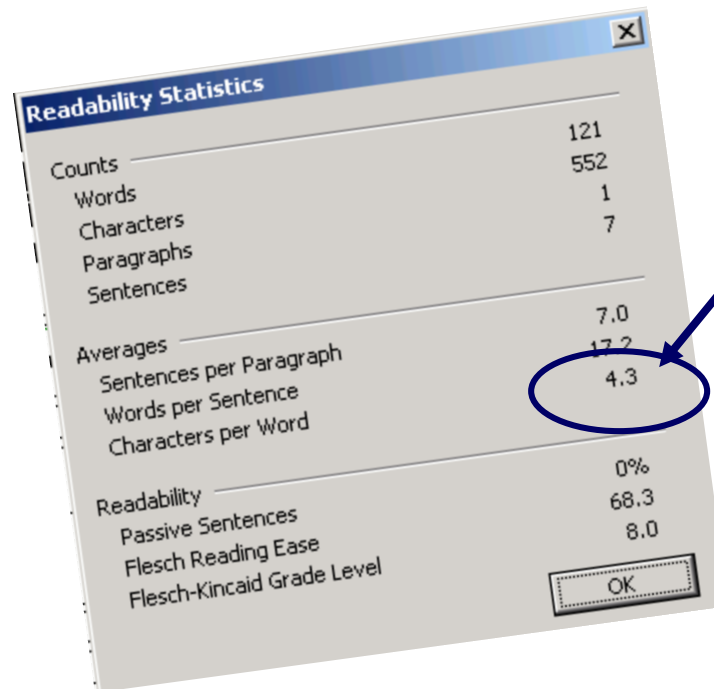
Readability Statistics	
Counts	121
Words	552
Characters	1
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Words per Sentence	17.2
Characters per Word	4.3
Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	68.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

Average sentence length

15 to 17 words per sentence is a good average sentence length.



2. Short words



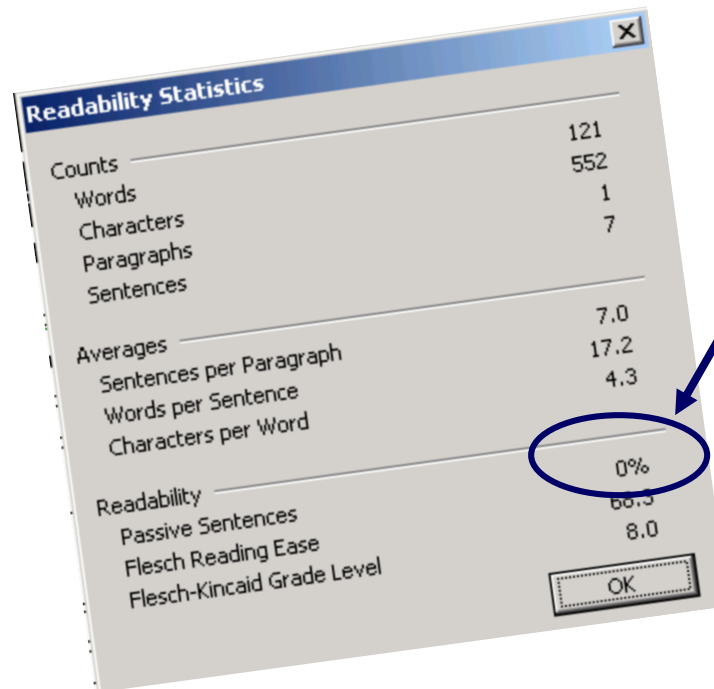
Readability Statistics	
Counts	
Words	121
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Sentences per Paragraph	7.0
Words per Sentence	17.2
Characters per Word	4.3
Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	68.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

Average word length in characters

5 characters or less means your words probably aren't too long.



3. Passive voice \leq 10%



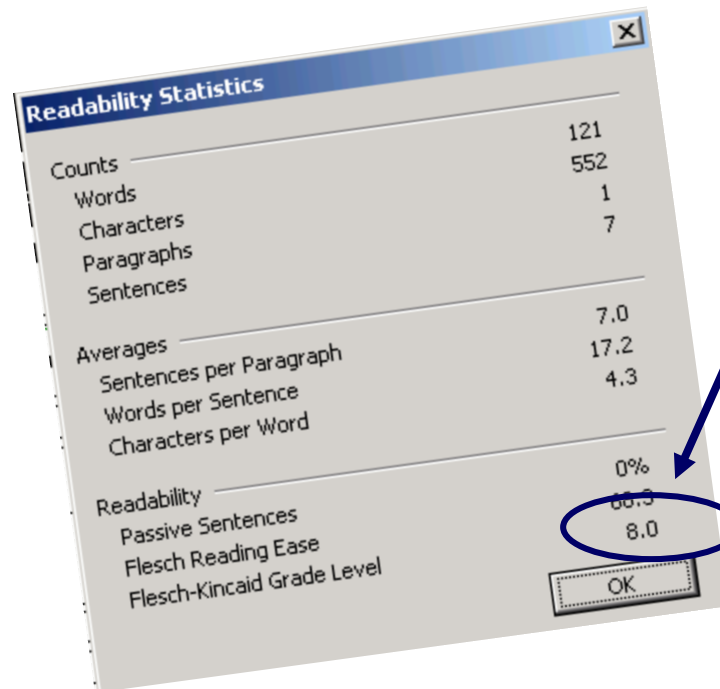
Readability Statistics	
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Words per Sentence	17.2
Characters per Word	4.3
Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	66.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

Percentage of passive voice

Keep passive voice below 10%.



4. Readability level ≤ 10



Category	Value
Counts	121
Words	552
Characters	1
Paragraphs	7
Sentences	
Averages	7.0
Sentences per Paragraph	17.2
Words per Sentence	4.3
Characters per Word	
Readability	0%
Passive Sentences	88.3
Flesch Reading Ease	8.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Readability scores

Aim for a Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level index of 10 or less.



5. Minimal Jargon and Acronyms



Ask your mother.

In Summary...

Effective Translation

✓ 1
Persuasive structure

✓ 2
High primacy

✓ 3
Low dissonance

✓ 4
Immediate relevance

✓ 5
Clear





Would you like to receive a tip on persuasion each month?

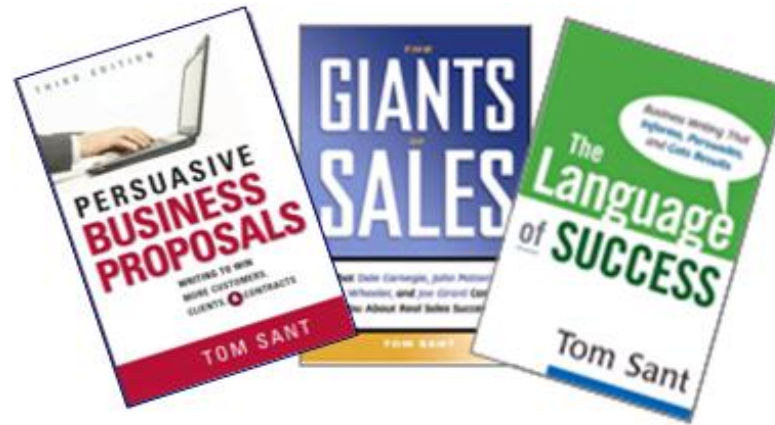
Sign up for Dr Tom's Tips:

Dr. Tom Sant

tsant@hydeparkpartnerscal.com



And good luck...
in translating text into
persuasive proposal copy!



Dr. Tom Sant

tsant@hydeparkpartnerscal.com

