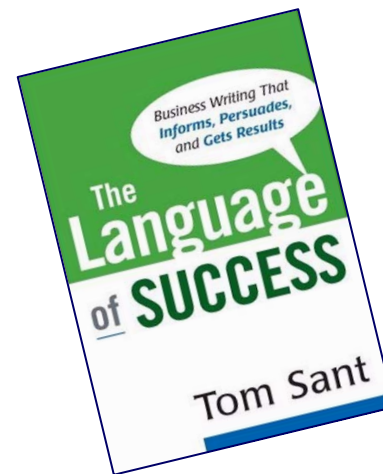

The Language of Success



Writing that Works

Dr. Tom Sant

Hyde Park Partners and The Sant Corporation

Your Presenter

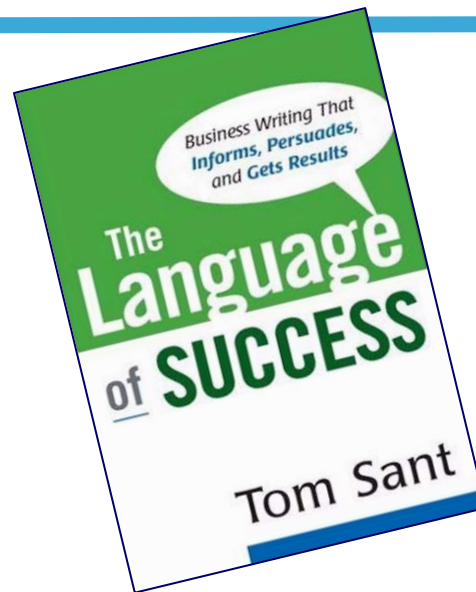
- Dr. Tom Sant, founder of The Sant Corporation and Hyde Park Partners
- Author of:
 - *Persuasive Business Proposals*, the world's largest selling book on proposal writing (2nd edition, 2004)
 - *The Giants of Sales*, named one of the top 3 business books of 2006 by the Bloomberg network
 - *The Language of Success* (published January 31, 2008)
- "America's foremost expert on proposal writing."
(American Management Association)
- "One of world's top ten sales trainers."
(Selling Power Magazine)
- Creator of the world's most widely used proposal automation system
- Over 25 years' experience with Fortune 500 companies
- Over \$30 billion in winning proposals



Agenda

1. Does effective writing really matter?
2. Fluff, Guff, Geek and Weasel
3. The language of success
4. Moving on





Does Effective Writing Really Matter?

The Knowledge-Based Economy



The Knowledge-Based Economy runs on words.

- 65 billion e-mails a day
- 27,000 billion gigabytes of email by 2010



Does It Matter?

To the company?



Does It Matter?

To the individual?



RESUME

Current Address
12 Gates Lane
Boulder, CO 21849
(504) 555-6145

Permanent Address
34 Apple Court
Glendale, CA, 91208
(714) 555-7145

E-mail Address and URL
horvov@ucoloro.edu
<http://www.ucoloro.edu/~horvov>

OBJECTIVE A position in software development.

EDUCATION B.S. in Computer Science, expected May 1998
University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
Cumulative G.P.A. 3.66

WORK EXPERIENCE

Freelance Computer Consultant, September 1997-present
Create World Wide Web home pages and customize computer systems for clients in the Boulder, CO, area.

Intern, June-August 1997
Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA
Worked as software design engineer intern on SNA Server 3.0. Implemented name-space providers (Windows 95/NT DLLs written in C) for a variety of network protocols, including TCPIP, Netware IPX, Lanman, Banyan VINES, and AppleTalk.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, September 1996-May 1997
University of Colorado Laboratory for Computer Science
Worked with Professor Daniel S. Patel in the parallel and distributed operating group. Ported UNIX applications to XDK, a prototype embedded implementation for the Intel x86.

Lab Attendant, September 1995-May 1996
Center for Academic Computing, University of Colorado
Maintain computer hardware and assist users on Windows 95 and Macintosh operating systems and various software packages.

Crew Leader, Summers 1993 and 1994
Mini's Mallards, Glendale, CA
Supervised crew and managed bakery's daily operations.

COMPUTER SKILLS

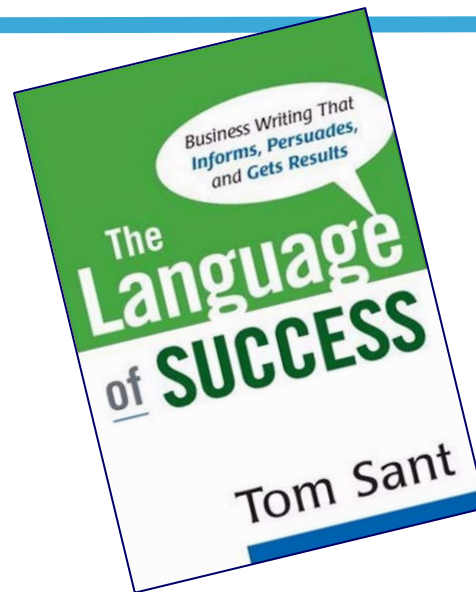
Languages and Software
C, C++, Java, LaTeX, HTML, Word, WordPerfect.

Operating Systems
UNIX (Linux, Ultra, SunOS), Windows 95, Macintosh.



Writing proposals? RFP answers?





Fluff, Guff, Geek and Weasel





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.



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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.



Guff.





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.



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– 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



Anderson Consulting's management approach starts with our principles (Exhibit D-1) for doing business under the Enterprise Acquisition Gateway for Leading Edge Solutions (EAGLE) program. In engineering this approach, we've coupled strategic and tactical management levels with cost control and mission-driven technical performance, and interwoven all into a knowledge layer that provides efficient, effective *and real-time, ubiquitous* communication. We bring about results by first assigning work to portfolio managers who analyze SOWs and develop detailed WBS and performance objectives and *plan the work in concert with customer-driven mission priorities.*



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.







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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hyde park partners



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hyde park partners

high def?

plasma?

DLP?

RPT?

cable card?



HDTV Ready?

LCD?

ETV?

DTV?

6x9 vs. 4x3?

convergence?



Simpson Security will furnish and install the Access Control Systems at your office building in New York City. The Software House CCure 800 Access Control Head End Hardware and Software will be the heart of the system. The panel for this location will connect to the new software head end located within your facility. In the event that you decide to connect remote sites to your location, the system will be designed for easy access into your existing network. In the initial design we have assumed that the host computer will be located Security Console. Simpson will install access control panels, card readers, and alarm contacts for granting or denying access into the existing three doors in your facility. In addition Simpson will install Card Readers on the existing sliding gates and turnstiles. Each of the access points will have a card reader and contact for access into the facility as well as door status. The purpose of the system is to determine who is allowed into the facility at any given time and to keep accurate records of all access or alarm activity. The host system will be located in the Security, with additional workstations located at the front desk and loading dock. The owner will be responsible for providing IP addresses at each of the workstation locations.



Simpson Security will furnish and install the **Access Control Systems** at your office building in New York City. The **Software House CCure 800 Access Control Head End Hardware and Software** will be the heart of the system. The panel for this location will connect to the new **software head end** located within your facility. In the event that you decide to connect remote sites to your location, the system will be designed for easy access into your existing network. In the initial design we have assumed that the host computer **will be located Security Console**. Simpson will install access **control panels, card readers, and alarm contacts** for granting or denying access into the existing three doors in your facility. In addition Simpson will install Card Readers on the existing sliding gates and turnstiles. Each of the access points will have a card reader and contact for access into the facility as well as **door status**. The purpose of the system is to determine who is allowed into the facility at any given time and to keep accurate records of all access or alarm activity. The host system will be located **in the Security**, with additional workstations located at the front desk and loading dock. The owner will be responsible for providing IP addresses at each of the workstation locations.



Reading acronyms...

This organization has been privileged to partner with the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) Directorate for Information Management and Chief Information Officer (DS) and the Joint Intelligence Task Force Combating Terrorism (JITF-CT) in the establishment of an information technology (IT) infrastructure that meets Department of Defense Intelligence Information Systems (DoDIIS) enterprise objectives and JITF-CT mission requirements.

Over the past five years we have had the opportunity to establish mission critical IT programs for JITF-CT, including the Combating Terrorism Knowledge Base (CTKB and CTKB-S), which provides a secure, accredited system to disseminate CT-related threat and warning, finished intelligence, and operational support information for Department of Defense (DoD) organizations, the Virtual Intelligence Production Enterprise Repository (VIPER), which supports JITF-CT business process automation and analytic research through the integration of advanced technologies, and the expansion of the Combined Theatre – Analyst Vetted Relational System (CT-AVRS) to support Combatant Command (COCOM) and JITF-CT analytic and visualization needs.



Reading acronyms...like chewing on thumbtacks

This organization has been privileged to partner with the Defense Intelligence Agency (**DIA**) Directorate for Information Management and Chief Information Officer (**DS**) and the Joint Intelligence Task Force Combating Terrorism (**JITF-CT**) in the establishment of an information technology (**IT**) infrastructure that meets Department of Defense Intelligence Information Systems (**DoDIIS**) enterprise objectives and **JITF-CT** mission requirements.

Over the past five years we have had the opportunity to establish mission critical **IT** programs for **JITF-CT**, including the Combating Terrorism Knowledge Base (**CTKB** and **CTKB-S**), which provides a secure, accredited system to disseminate CT-related threat and warning, finished intelligence, and operational support information for Department of Defense (**DoD**) organizations, the Virtual Intelligence Production Enterprise Repository (**VIPER**), which supports **JITF-CT** business process automation and analytic research through the integration of advanced technologies, and the expansion of the Combined Theatre – Analyst Vetted Relational System (**CT-AVRS**) to support Combatant Command (**COCOM**) and **JITF-CT** analytic and visualization needs.

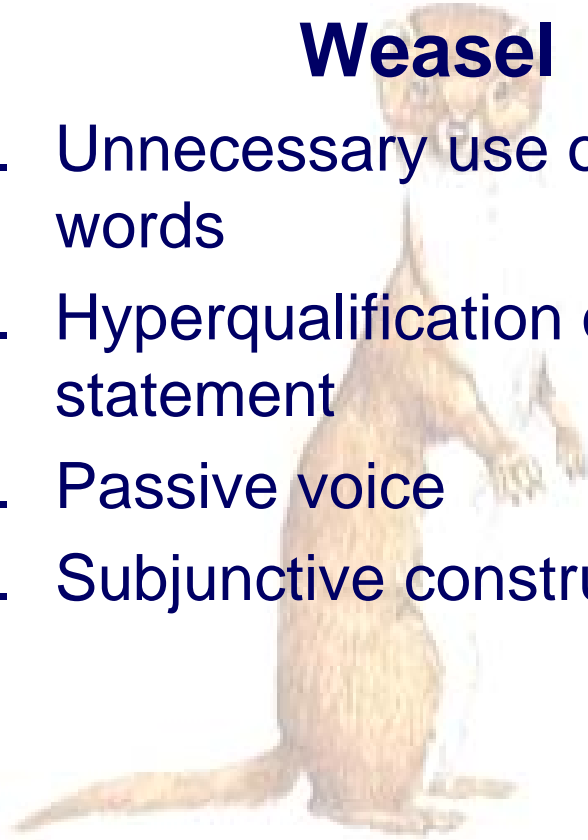




Watch the Weasel!

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.**”



During the proposal evaluation period, I would like you to know that Simpson Technologies is committed to exceeding the highest customer satisfaction standards. As a company, we are aware of your ambitious efforts and want to assure you that we are, and will continue to be, positioned to stand, as "One Company/One Team" in support of your organization. Through the implementation of our National Account Coordinator team, we are confident that we can meet and exceed your expectations for the installations and implement a service program to meet all of your requirements as well.



During the proposal evaluation period, I **would like** you to know that Simpson Technologies **is committed** to exceeding the highest customer satisfaction standards. As a company, we **are aware** of your ambitious efforts and **want to assure you** that we are, and will continue to be, **positioned to stand**, as "One Company/One Team" in support of your organization. Through the implementation of our National Account Coordinator team, **we are confident that we can** meet and exceed your expectations for the installations and implement a service program to meet all of your requirements as well.

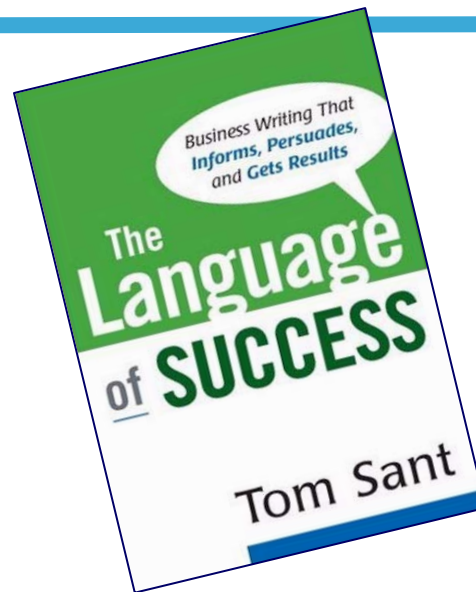


Subjunctive

Warning!

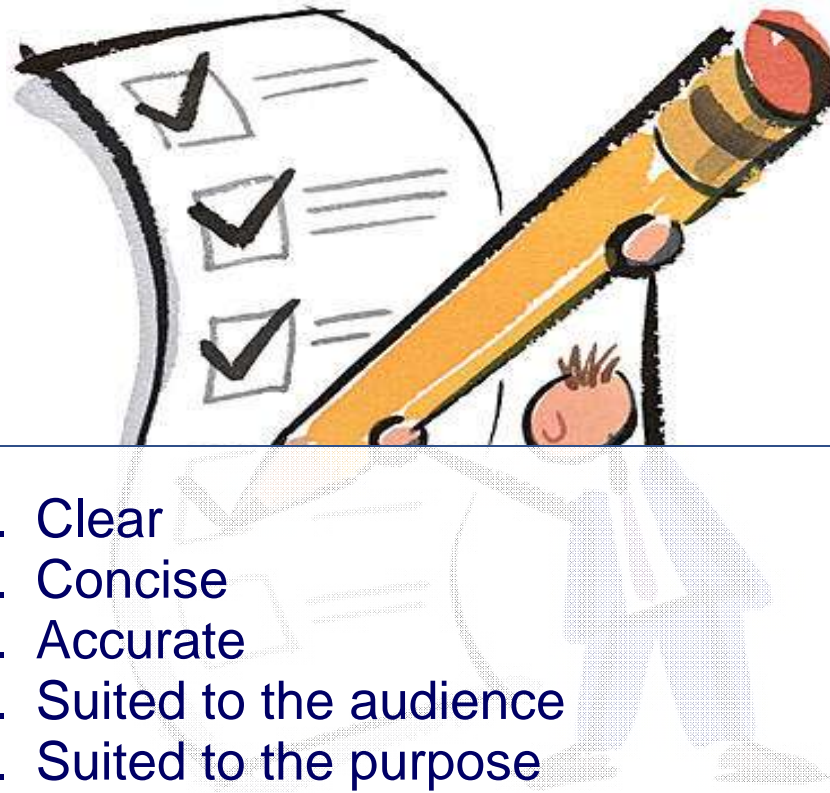
1. Writing in the subjunctive makes every assertion hypothetical.
2. Using the subjunctive is like crack cocaine—it quickly becomes an addiction.





The Language of Success

Five Simple Principles for Success



1. Clear
2. Concise
3. Accurate
4. Suited to the audience
5. Suited to the purpose

Five Simple Principles for Success



- 1. Clear**
2. Concise
3. Accurate
4. Suited to the audience
- 5. Suited to the purpose**

The first principle of successful writing:

Be clear.

Live by the “first time right” rule.





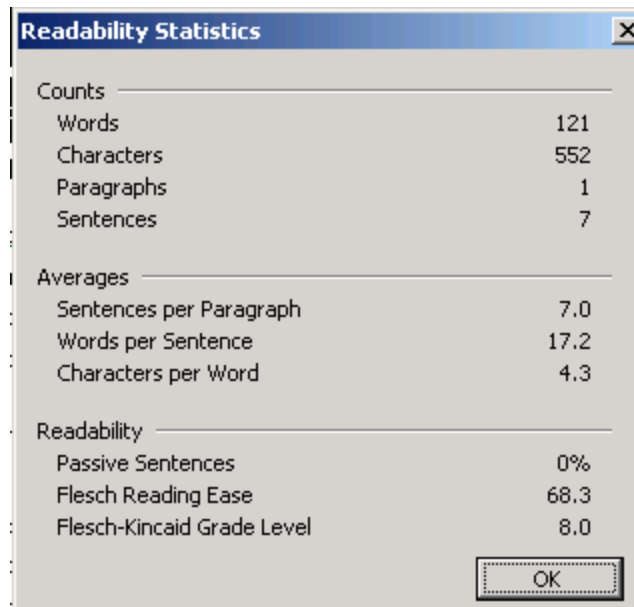
Five ways to achieve clarity:



Five ways to achieve clarity:

1. Short sentences
2. Short words
3. Active voice
4. Avoid long, dependent clauses up front
5. Start each paragraph with the key idea

Let your word processor do the work.



Readability Statistics	
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	

Let your word processor do the work.

Readability Statistics	
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	68.3
Flesch Reading Ease	8.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Average sentence length

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

Let your word processor do the work.

Readability Statistics	
Counts	121
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Characters per Word	
Readability	0%
Passive Sentences	68.3
Flesch Reading Ease	8.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Average word length in characters

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

Let your word processor do the work.

Readability Statistics	
Counts	121
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Characters	1
Paragraphs	7
Sentences	
Averages	7.0
Sentences per Paragraph	17.2
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Characters per Word	
Readability	0%
Passive Sentences	66.3
Flesch Reading Ease	8.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Percentage of passive voice

Keep passive voice below 10%.

Active voice:

- The sales team presented our recommendations to the client last week in Pittsburgh.

Passive voice:

- Our recommendations were presented to the client in Pittsburgh last week by our sales team.

Imperative voice:

- Present our recommendations to the client in Pittsburgh.



Let your word processor do the work.

Readability Statistics	
Counts	121
Words	552
Characters	1
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Sentences per Paragraph	17.2
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Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Readability scores

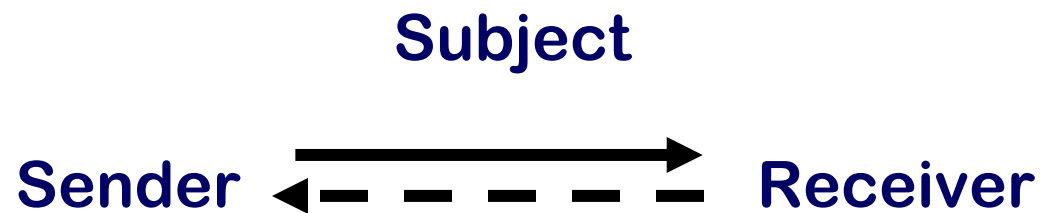
Aim for a Grade Level index of 10 or less.

Suited to the Purpose



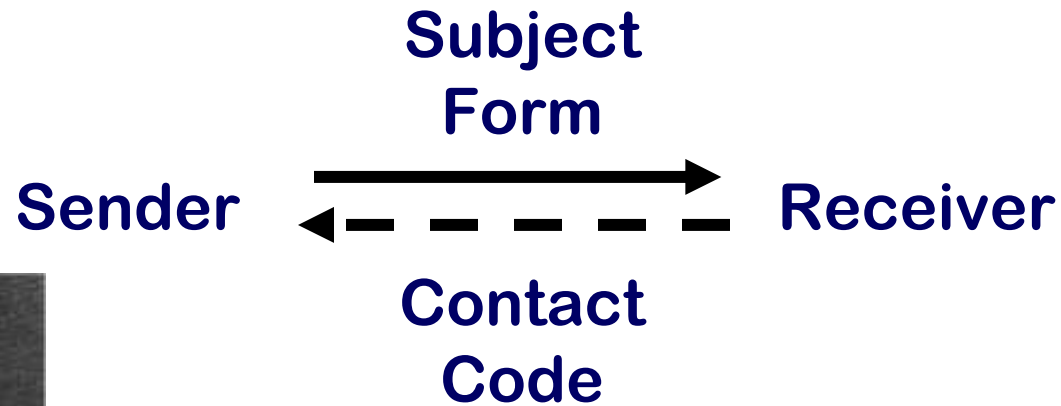
The Aristotelian Triad

Understanding Purpose

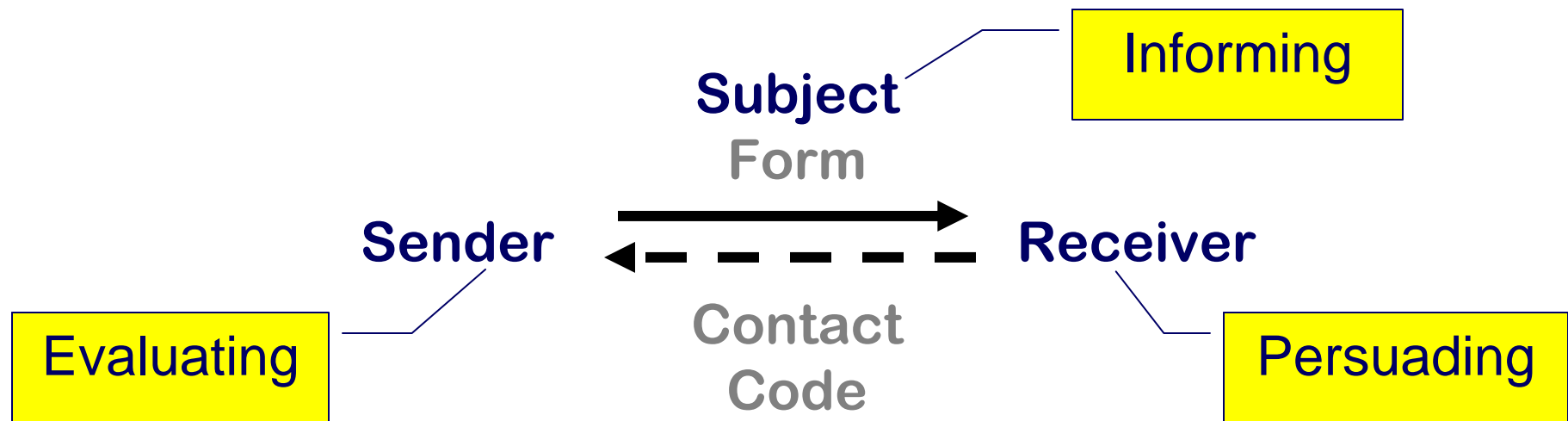


Roman Jakobson's Six Communication Functions

Understanding Purpose



Understanding Purpose



The fallacy of the familiar

	Information	Evaluation	Persuasion
Expert	Comfort Zone		
Highly informed			
Somewhat informed			
Lay			

Moving to the persuasion zone

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

Three Patterns of Discourse: Informing

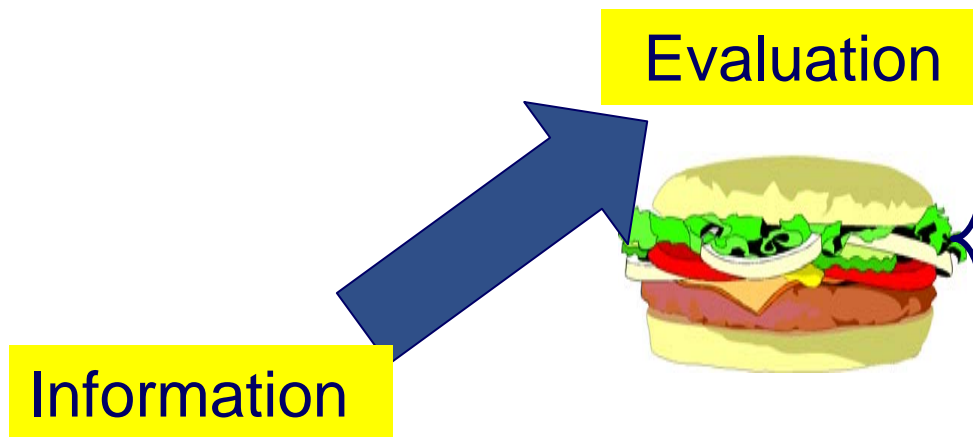
Information

- Factual orientation—no opinions, nothing subjective
- Emphasis on accuracy, completeness
- Structural metaphor: the Funnel
 - Lead with most important fact
 - All subsequent facts in order of priority



Three Patterns of Discourse: **Evaluating**

- Focus on expertise, opinion
- Emphasis on process of analyzing evidence and reaching conclusions

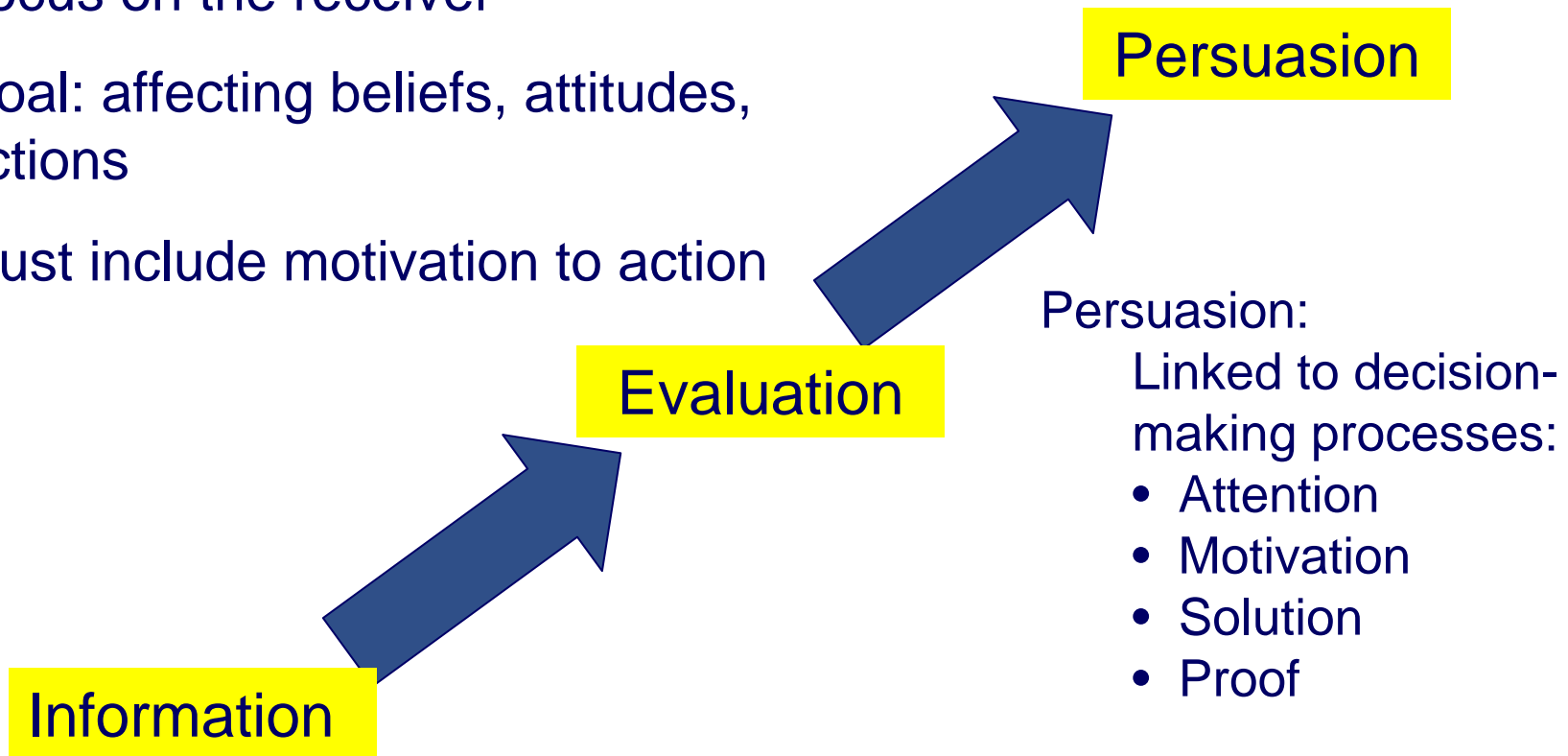


Structural metaphor:
the “Burger”

- Opening: subject, relevance, and criteria of judgment
- Middle = meat; specific observations
- Closing: opinion, next steps

Three Patterns of Discourse: Persuading

- Focus on the receiver
- Goal: affecting beliefs, attitudes, actions
- Must include motivation to action



The Persuasive Paradigm:

The Psychology of Persuasive Communication



**Hitting it
on the
N-O-S-E**

Needs: Demonstrate 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

Subcategories of Persuasive Structure

RFP Answers

1. Acknowledge
2. Validate
3. Persuade



Two Ways of Saying the Same Thing

Question: What information appears on the Explanation of Benefits? Can EOB information be customized by the client? Please provide a sample EOB.

[Answer #1:]

See the enclosed EOB.

Generally all EOB messages are predefined for all clients to meet readability, accuracy and legal requirements. Limited customization is available, including the addition of logos and personalized remarks in the remarks area.



Two Ways of Saying the Same Thing

Question: What information appears on the Explanation of Benefits? Can EOB information be customized by the client? Please provide a sample EOB.

[Answer #1:]

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[Answer #2:]

Plan members need to understand how their benefits are determined. Clear communications reduces support costs and increases member satisfaction. For that reason, the Explanation of Benefits is an important tool in our overall efforts to communicate well and to avoid confusion or misunderstanding when plan members file a claim.

We have designed and written our EOB forms for maximum readability and accuracy. Also, our forms' layout and content address certain legal requirements. However, within that framework, we can provide some customization, such as adding your logo or providing personalized information in the remarks area of the form.

The enclosed EOB is a sample of what we will provide to your members.



Case Studies and Past Performance Quals: *Create Credibility, Minimize Risk*

Great Success Stories are P-A-R for the course!

Problem

Action

Results



In Summary...

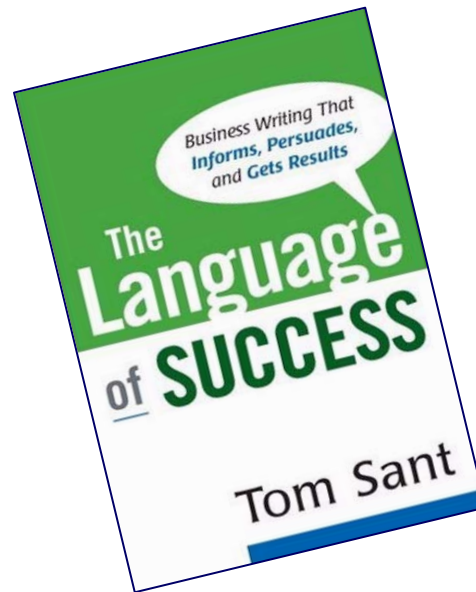
1. Avoid the pseudo-languages: Fluff, Guff, Geek, and Weasel
2. Write in your own voice
3. Simplify to maximize clarity
4. Use the right pattern to achieve your purpose



Good luck... in developing winning proposals!



Dr. Tom Sant
tsant@hydeparkpartnerscal.com



www.hydeparkpartnerscal.com