

Model executive summary

Executive summary

Written output is a key to Acme Widgets' success, as reports are a major method of communicating its findings. Increasingly, analysts and researchers need to write these documents in English, which is fast becoming the 'official' Acme language.

Generally the standard of spoken English in Acme is high, as the company has already invested in English conversation training. However, the same cannot be said for written English, where no training has been offered to date.

As a result, written English is a major weakness within the Acme France team. Often this weakness is not obvious, as team members will go to great lengths to disguise their true abilities, such as extensive cutting and pasting from documents written by other authors. But this only exposes the team to the risk of damaging its reputation with inappropriate content, and it goes without saying that team members should understand what they are writing.

Our proposed solution

Here we present a proposed training programme to remedy this situation.

We will take a systematic approach, and provide full support throughout. First, we will quantify the learning needs of participants before training, using a unique method of writing analysis and displaying the results as a graph. We will then use this information to provide a focus for course development and training itself. A similar analysis after the initial course will measure improvement and identify outstanding learning needs, which we will use as the basis for short, one-to-one coaching sessions for each participant. We will deliver the initial training on site and the coaching sessions remotely.

All participants will benefit from a year's telephone and email support (for ad-hoc queries), and from receiving bi-monthly reminders of key learning points for a year after the initial training course.

Emphasis are the UK's leading specialist writing trainers and Acme UK's preferred supplier of business-writing training. We have been working with Acme in London for around five years. The programme described here will be delivered by consultants who have extensive experience both in business writing and in teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Persuade from the start: your executive summary may be longer than this one, but following a structure (based on a modification of the 4Ps) should yield results. Remember to include win themes here, as it's often the only section that decision-makers read.

Position

- Gives safe information
 - nothing contentious
- Brings everyone up to speed
- Reassures the client that you know their company

Problem

- Links to preceding paragraph
- Gives reasons why the status quo is not acceptable
- Makes it clear that action is essential – 'We need to do something.'

Proposal

- Follows same structure as detailed proposal
- Is logical and clear
- Mentions identified win themes wherever possible (in this case, systematic approach and ongoing support)

Reassurance/summary

- Having already impressed the client with your knowledge, reassures them that you're the people for the job
- Provides a reminder of win themes (in this case, experience in this area and a good track record); includes any unique selling points not already mentioned
- Puts the client first and you last