

June 2011 Newsletter

Writing: Planning the "Walk-Away" Message

In our continuing series on tips to improve your writing, this month we're discussing the "walk-away" message; that is, the importance of figuring out what you wish to achieve via the document BEFORE beginning to write. The "walk-away" message is, of course, the primary idea that you wish to convey in your document, but it's more than that: it's also related to the action you want your readers to take after reading.

When we talk about "action," we're not necessarily referring to physical action, as in using the document to understand how to do something (although this could, in fact, be the action we want our readers to take). We're also talking about intellectual action; specifically, how we want our readers to think and feel after reading our document. For instance, if I'm writing a report for a manager about a job I'm working on or have completed, one walk-away is that I want that manager to feel and understand that I'm doing, or have done, a thorough job; that I'm competent; and that the job is headed in the right direction and/or was done correctly. If, as the writer, I understand and plan for this "walk-away" before I begin to write, I can create planning strategies to better ensure this intellectual action.

In sum, as writers we need to ensure that we plan, on paper, the intellectual action we want our reader to take; if we fail to plan, the reader may wind up thinking about us, our documents, and ultimately, the job we're doing in a way we didn't plan for and/or anticipate. Planning can help us control our writing, and therefore our documents, so that we get the outcome we anticipate and desire. Before beginning to write, write down the walk-away message and the action, be it physical or intellectual, you want your reader to take. Doing so can go a long way toward helping you get the results you desire!

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Hurley Write has been awarded "Top 300 Businesses in the South" by Business Leader Magazine.

Error in May's newsletter. Thanks to our alert readers who noticed the two typos in May's newsletter. Unfortunately, that newsletter was in "edit" mode when the system released it anyway.

Online Corporate Training! If you have multiple people within your organization who need online writing training, you're in luck! Hurley Write is now licensing its [online courses!](#) [Contact us](#) for more information

Just for Fun! Thanks to Bob Isakson for sending us this obvious typo on a webpage: "Theories as to why Rome fell include political weakness and corruption, immorality, Christian pacifism, racial mixing, class conflict, environmental problems, a divided capital (Rome/Constantinople), plagues, and mass migrations of wild Germanic people. Another theory is that water supplied by lead pipes caused widespread health problems including brain damage and impaired intelligence. Some

scholars speculate that Rome never fell, it just adapted to a changing world.”
<http://facts.randomhistory.com>.

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