

# Getting Back to Square #1: Clear Letter Writing

by Mike Marchev



than with your writing.

If you have had the pleasure of reading a college student's hand-written paper recently, you might agree that what you are reading is less than impressive. This very experience prompted me to ask the obvious question, "What has happened to our ability to communicate in writing?" If you are to become the exception, there probably is no better place to start

**1. Purpose** — Why write? Why not call? Why not stop by? You need to have a clear purpose for attempting to grab the attention of your desired audience in the first place. And it better be good. And your purpose better have me as the focal point of your mission. To introduce me to you or an idea ... to remind me of something important to me ... to educate me ... to thank me. Keep your purpose simple and clear.

**2. Message** — Attention spans are short these days and it is easy to confuse audiences by trying to deliver multiple messages. Think O-M-O ... one message only.

There is a natural tendency to try to load up letters, postcards, emails, speeches and presentations with as much material as time allows. As a speaker, I know this to be a fact and I also have come to realize that it is perhaps my largest problem.

You are not writing for you. You are writing for me. So be kind. Be clear. Be easy. And stick to one message at a time. My chances of "getting" your message will be so much greater and I will appreciate your thoughtfulness in keeping your communication to the subject at hand.

**3. Brevity** — As a professional salesman, the first things you learn in training are the three B's. Be Bright. Be Brief. Be Gone.

This is good advice for the written communicator as well. Hit me with your message. Salt in a little personality while asking for some action. And say bye-bye before you overdo your stay.

**4. Vehicle** — You have many options to deliver your written word. All work at times, and all will fail you at times.

Letters — Letter writing is a lost art and is the primary cause of "writer's block." This simply shouldn't be the

case. I'll show you an easy three-paragraph format that will have you sending more letters to interested candidates while being read at the same time.

You can think of it as the (2-5-2 +) formula. Three short paragraphs plus a well written PS is all it takes.

Paragraph one consists of just two sentences. It is paragraph one where you introduce yourself and clearly state your purpose for writing.

*Dear Mr. Smith,*

*Mike Marchev here and I promise to be brief. I have contacted you today to .....*

That's it. Simple stuff.

Paragraph two consists of 3-5 sentences. It is here

where you add a little personality to your idea and perhaps give it some credibility.

*The reason why I thought of you is .....* *You and your group make ideal candidates for this idea because .....* *I have three reasons why this makes such good sense.*

The third and final paragraph completes your message in two sentences. A thank you is in order here along with a request for action.

Always ask your reader to do some-

thing, to show a sign, to indicate an interest, or take a stance.

*The next time you are in town, please stop in my office so I can explain in greater detail exactly what this project entails and how it will benefit your organization. Thanks for taking the time to read this letter. I am looking forward to meeting you.*

It is also my firm belief that you should always include a PS. Why? Because they are always read. ALWAYS.

*P.S. I almost forgot. When you stop by my office, I will have a copy of my latest book waiting for you. Chapter 6 is especially apropos to what it is your company is trying to accomplish.*

Letters accomplish many objectives. They are ideal for thanking people, following up, seeking help and generating interest in ideas. If there is any one area of marketing that I feel works better than others, it involves the writing of clear, concise, personalized business letters.

Remember the (2-5-2 +) formula. ♦

**If at all possible lick a stamp. Stamp machines scream mass mailing.**

**Hand-written addressed envelopes are preferred if the handwriting is clear, sharp and legible. Machine-printed envelopes are next, followed by labels.**

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