

## Spring Cleaning

Say hello to spring, a good time to clean house and get back to basics. In this issue of *KB CommEntary*, we look at some fundamental principles for organizing the content of your documents so that readers will find them clear and understandable.

## What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including communications to employees from the CEO and executive leadership team, customer presentations and letters, product marketing brochures and data sheets, and training materials
- Formatting and revising manufacturing standard operating procedures, work instructions, forms, logbooks, and batch records for a pharmaceutical company
- Creating content-rich model documents for CMC modules for a pharmaceutical company
- Drafting CMC modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of a pharmaceutical company
- Reviewing and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of pharmaceutical companies

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

## Tips and Tales

### Let's Get Organized

When we ask folks what makes writing usable and effective, we often hear such sentiments as "it needs to be clear and concise" and "it should use simple language."

Well, yeah, those are important, but how do you make something clear? What is your approach for doing so?

The first thing to consider is always the audience. Who are they, what is their command of English, how much do they already know about the subject, and how will they use the document? The answers to these questions determine the level of detail you will include, your choice of language, and, most importantly for our lesson today, your organizational strategy for the document.

After you have carefully considered the needs of your audience, it's time to get organized. What you need is a set of basic principles to guide you as you construct the framework of your latest opus. In our experience, when a document does not communicate effectively, poor organization is often the culprit. So don't even think about writing until you have spent some quality time considering how your document will be structured.

While you can certainly go back to Composition 101 for some clues to effective organization (introduction, body, conclusion anyone?), let's look at it from another, more elemental angle. Think of it as telling a story. All good stories share a couple of fundamental characteristics:

- They move from the general to the specific
- They move from the simple to the complex

Yes, there is the literary device of dropping your audience into the middle of the action like an asteroid from outer space, but that's what we writers call a *hook*. Once we get you all excited and confused, we generally regroup and start from the beginning. Unless we're James Joyce, of course.

So you want to start with the general and move to the specific. If you're having a potluck dinner, you would begin your invitation with a statement explaining that you're having this event and you would like the invitees to attend. Then you would mention when and where, and finally include a list of things people should bring. Logical, right?

Similarly, you first describe simple concepts, ideas, or tasks, and then drill down to the more complicated stuff. When creating instructions for using the copier, you wouldn't want to begin with how to make black-and-white double-sided copies from color single-sided originals. Unless you're James Joyce, of course.

General to specific and simple to complex—basic, logical concepts to guide the structure and organization of your documents. Don't leave home without them!

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

*Kathy*

Kathy Breuninger

**KB COMM**

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