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10 Tips to Give Your Writing an Instant BOOST

1. **Keep it simple.** If you're writing for the adult general public, use words suitable for a student in Grade 7 to 9.
2. **It pays to be clear.** Royal Insurance of Canada had a 38% increase in sales when plain language was used in homeowners' insurance. *Report: News about Plain Language, #19, 1996*
3. **Use a larger font.** Businesses take note: Major book publishers are now including large-print versions designed to appeal to squinting boomers. Choose a 10pt-12pt font size for general writing purposes.
4. **There's no such thing as *it's*'.** There are only two choices: *it's* (a contraction for *it is*) and *its* (the possessive form of *it*).
5. **Formatting matters.** Using bullet lists and subheads helps to improve clarity. Use of white space—generous side margins, spaces between paragraphs—provides a resting space for the eyes which makes a document more readable. Graphs and charts can help simplify difficult information.
6. **Choose words wisely.** There are times when negative words—*unfortunately, never, neglected*—are necessary. Most of the time, your business correspondence will benefit through the use of positive words.
7. **Make sure you've covered the basics.** Most communication is improved by including information about *who, what, where, why, when* and *how* as early as possible. Email requests and voice messages are prime communications tools that benefit from this approach.
8. **Keep LOL at home.** Abbreviations made popular by Instant Messaging are best left for personal communication. The voice of choice for business is professional.
9. **Am I *me* or *myself*?** Let's clear up this split personality! Use *myself* when doing something for or by yourself. A common mistake, "Please contact myself for further information." is correctly written "Please contact me for further information."
10. **Reduce or eliminate jargon.** Readers complain about jargon more than any other writing fault. Readers typically skip over jargon hoping to get meaning from the rest of the sentence. Use jargon, foreign words and abbreviations cautiously: match your language to the readers' needs.