



# Two, quick, small changes to transform everything

By Andy Bounds

When you communicate, you absolutely *must* start well. A boring introduction, and people might stop reading. A boring title, and they might not start.

But two, quick, small changes can transform everything. The best way to explain is with a simple example. Imagine receiving a document that contained the following:

#### **Our experience**

*We have unrivalled experience in this area. This includes X and Y.*

This is, I guess, fairly typical of what you see every day:

- A title that *describes* the content, but triggers zero excitement (other common ones include: update, FYI, about us, miscellaneous, Q2 overview, agenda, summary, review, etc); and
- An introduction that sets the scene, but doesn't set pulses racing

The two, quick, small changes are:

1. In the title, add why the reader will care about/benefit from reading it. A simple approach that often works: add the word "how" before your current title, and the benefit after it
2. Improve the introduction by using the 2Ws – What the reader wants and Why they want it

So, revisiting the previous example, but this time assuming that you – the reader – want to impress your boss, to maximise

the chances she'll select you for the new VP job. Using the two steps, the document to you now reads as:

#### **How our experience will help you impress your boss**

*Your boss is currently considering who will fill the new VP role. As we agreed, it is essential you impress her more than ever, to maximise your chances of being front-of-mind. We can help. We have unrivalled experience in this area. This includes X and Y.*

See how it works? It's much more interesting now. And all I did was change the title and throw in a couple of new, reader-friendly sentences at the top. The next paragraph was very similar to what I was writing anyway.

These two quick, simple changes transform your communications' first impression. Do this with every section of every communication that you ever create, and it will transform everything.

But, even if you don't have time for that, do it with the main titles and introductions to your important communications. The quicker people engage with your content, the more likely they are to see it's in their interest, and keep reading.

Finally, a great bonus about doing this: people are impressed, but don't notice what you've done. So, they engage early, without realising how it's happened. It's worked on you already this morning. Have another look at the title and opening paragraph of this Tip...

#### **Action point**

I imagine that, within one minute of closing this Tip, you'll be communicating with someone.

Think how you can apply these two quick, small changes to how you start, so people instantly engage...

...and, when it works, keep doing it!

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#### **About the Author**

Andy Bounds is an expert at helping companies communicate and sell better. Author of two best-selling books and winner of the title Britain's Sales Trainer of the Year, Andy has shared his expertise with some of the world's largest companies, helping every one of them have more success. Marketing legend Drayton Bird said Andy had taught him '... more about effective communicating than a lady who'd taught two American Presidents'.

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