



# Writing Skills for Marketing Professionals

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**Nancy R. Willis, Vice President of Marketing**

**St. Alexius Medical Center**

**Northland Healthcare Alliance Marketing Committee**

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# Writing Tips

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## Common Grammar Tips

### ✦ Active vs Passive Voice

- ◆ The dog **bit** the boy.
- ◆ The dog **was bitten** by the boy.

### ✦ Subjunctive – a wish..

- ◆ **If I were** smart, I'd pass the test.
- ◆ **I wish I knew** that answer.



# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Quotation Marks

- ◆ **Commas and periods should be within quotation marks.**
- ◆ **Colons and semicolons should be outside of quotation marks.**
- ◆ **Questions marks and exclamation points should be within unless the quotation is within a sentence. Ex. Does he say, “go get them”? vs He said, “Go get them!”**

# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Present Perfect Verbs

- ◆ I have gone to that play every year. (not went)

## ✦ Past Perfect Verbs

- ◆ I had eaten dinner before she came. (not ate)

## ✦ Other helping Verbs

- ◆ He could have/would have gone. (not went)



# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Parallel Structure

- ◆ Using the same pattern of words to show that two or more ideas have the same level of importance.
- ◆ Ex. Mary likes hiking, swimming and bicycling.
- ◆ Ex. Mary likes to hike, swim and ride.
- ◆ Ex. He was asked to write quickly, accurately and in depth. (change “and in depth” to thoroughly.)

# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Subject-Verb Agreement

- ✦ If the subject has two or more nouns or pronouns and are connected by **and**, use a plural verb. Ex. Andy **and** his friends **are** at the fair.
- ✦ If two or more singular nouns are connected by **or** or **nor**, the verb is singular. Ex. The book **or** the pen **is** in the drawer.



# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Subject-Verb Agreement (cont)

- ◆ When a subject contains both a singular and plural noun or pronoun joined by **or** or **nor**, the verb should agree with the subject closest to the verb. Ex. The boy or his friends **run** every day. His friends or the **boy runs** every day.
- ◆ The subject should agree with the verb, even with a phrase in between. Ex. **One** of the boxes **is** open. **The captain**, as well as his players, **is** anxious.

# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Case

- ✦ Where there are two pronouns or a noun and a pronoun, drop the other noun in your mind to make sure you have the right case.
- ✦ Ex. Would you say “Bob and me travel a good deal”? NO. If you drop Bob, you can see that it should be, “I travel a good deal.”
- ✦ Ex. “He gave the flowers to Jane and I.” NO. If you drop Jane, you can see that it should be, “He gave the flowers to me.”



# Writing Tips

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## ✦ Adverbs and Adjectives

- ◆ Adverbs modify verbs.

Ex. He ran quickly. (not quick)

- ◆ Adjectives modify nouns.

Ex. He was a quick runner.

## ✦ Adverbs describe how something is done.

- ◆ He is breathing **normal** again. NO. He is breathing **normally** again.

# Writing Tips

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## ✦ A or An?

- ◆ A is used before words with consonants, except before words beginning with h.
- ◆ An is used before words with vowels, unless the word begins with a u and makes the same sound as a y (Ex. union).

## ✦ Numbers

- ◆ Usually numbers smaller than 10 are written out. Always spell out the number at the beginning of a sentence.



# Writing a Press Release

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- ✦ **Information should be factual**
- ✦ **Information should be complete**
- ✦ **Who, What, When, Where and Why**
- ✦ **Most important information should be in the lead paragraph and other information in descending order from most to least important.**

# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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- ✦ **Who - who is sending the release, who is involved in the activity.**
- ✦ **What - what is it? Anniversary? Grand Opening? New Service? New Doctor?**
- ✦ **When - when is the event happening or when did it happen?**
- ✦ **Where - Use specific address - not just at St. John's, but at St. John's, 223 West 5<sup>th</sup> St (add city and state if sending to non-local media) and internal location.**



# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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- ✦ **Why - why is the event newsworthy?  
Why is it important to your  
organization or the community?**

# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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- ✦ **Type the news release on letterhead or paper containing your organization's logo, name, address and phone number. Also include an e-mail address if you have one.**
- ✦ **Develop a template so your news releases are immediately identifiable to media.**
- ✦ **Always include a contact name, phone number or e-mail address for more information.**



# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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## Template

(Organization logo or letterhead)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE**

Type the headline here.

The body copy should be here.

Use “more” or “continued” if there is a second page.

Use “#” or “-30-” or “End” to show end.

(For more information contact)

(Any other information like special times; specific people available for interview or directions)

# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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- ✦ **Headlines should summarize information. Be short and punchy. Use active verbs. Make reader want to know more.**
- ✦ **Body copy should have most important information first. Try to keep to one page. Should be active and creative and have a call to action.**



# Writing a Press Release (cont)

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- ✦ **Don't send sooner than two weeks in advance.**
- ✦ **Send to a specific person.**
- ✦ **Follow-up to ensure receipt.**
- ✦ **Exclusives or scoops? Up to you, but once you do it, other media won't use.**
- ✦ **You can provide own video and photos if media are willing to use and good quality.**

# Writing Radio Copy

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## ✦ :30 or :60 Seconds

- ✦ Radio station will do for free...so you decide.
- ✦ Rule of thumb is 15 lines, double-spaced times out at :30 and 30 lines double-spaced times out at :60.
- ✦ Provide pronunciations and spell out numbers. (Except for contact numbers.)  
Write copy in all caps.
- ✦ Always leave time for contact number or call to action. Ideal is to repeat more than once.



# Writing Radio Copy (cont)

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**(Name of organization)**

**:30 Mardi Gras**

**BODY TYPE HERE ALL CAPS, DOUBLE SPACED. COME CELEBRATE OUR MARDI GRAS (MAR'-DEE GRAW) OPEN HOUSE ON THE TWENTY-FIFTH OF FEBRUARY.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 530-2245. THAT'S 530-2245.**

# Writing For Other Marketing Purposes

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- ✦ **Develop your own templates and policies.**
- ✦ **Use good grammar, active verbs, colorful words. Keep things short and to the point.**
- ✦ **Whatever you write should be selling your image, services, event or activity.**
- ✦ **Remember to use type faces, type sizes and color combinations that make it easy for your audience to read.**
- ✦ **Make sure your photos have good resolution.**
- ✦ **Don't cut corners – always insist on quality.**



# QUESTIONS?

