

WRITE AND THEY WILL LISTEN!

It's all very well writing an article for a magazine, but how can you find out whether your message is engaging the right people and having the desired impact? Executive communications specialist Mindy Gibbins-Klein tells us the essential steps to successful communication.



A business colleague said something astounding the other day. He said that he would rather speak to an audience of ten people than write for an audience of a thousand. I thought that sounded a bit strange, so I challenged him over it. It turned out that he had written an article for a magazine with a good circulation, but he hadn't had any feedback from it. He felt that no one appreciated it and if his message had been delivered in person, he could have seen the response from people immediately.

It's true, what my colleague said, so how can we justify putting time into writing when we don't get feedback? That, my friend, is the nature of writing. Sometimes you get to find out what your readers think of your material, and many times you don't. It's my view that we have to be 'OK' with the fact that writing is one-way until we get a response, and we must continue to put good material onto the market. Here are my favourite guidelines for one-way communication:

1. Keep your outcome in mind at all times

Hone your message according to what you have to say as well as what your reader needs to hear and decide what

kind of information you are imparting. For example, if you need to teach people with your writing, you may choose a different style from writing which aims to influence or persuade.

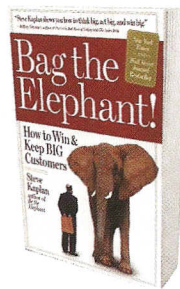
2. Deliver your message as passionately and authentically as if you were speaking

I prefer to see writing as an extension of speaking, and in fact, for people who will not get the opportunity to hear you in person or even on the phone, your writing must do the same job. It has become very trendy to write conversationally, spurred on by the advent of blogging and newsletters. That style can be used effectively in books and articles as well. It's no secret that one of my favourite authors is marketing guru, Seth Godin. I love the in-your-face, direct style he uses. It feels like he's in my living room, talking only to me. And it happens to be the way I prefer to write, in case you hadn't noticed!

3. Get feedback

That may sound like it contradicts what I said earlier. Actually, there are some clever mechanisms to get people interacting with you, even though you are not there. You can get them to go to a web page and complete a survey – with or without an incentive. You can put an email address at the bottom of the piece, asking for comments – again, with or without an incentive. This can work equally well for books. I get a lot of clients excitedly planning to include CDs with their books, until I show them how they can still give away free CDs and capture peoples contact details and feedback at the same time. Never include bonuses with your book, when you could engage with readers and get some indication of how many people read it and liked it at the same time. That's plenty for you to be getting on with. If you know your subject and deliver your message well, write powerfully and authentically, they will listen and respond.

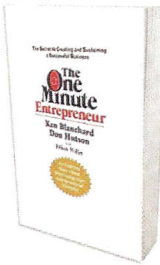
BAG THE ELEPHANT! STEVE KAPLAN



Businessman Steve Kaplan has produced the no-nonsense guide to securing the big customers with his book *Bag that Elephant!* Despite referring to big clients as elephants, it's a fairly straight forward 'how to' guide. The step-by-step methods to grow rapidly and strengthen any business flavour the

book with actionable advice. Kaplan claims to have been in the position that the readers of this book are currently in and thus looks back on real-life situations to win and deal with the big clients. The book is split into five easy to read parts to securing your client as part one begins with advising you on how to look for your 'elephant'.

THE ONE MINUTE ENTREPRENEUR KEN BLANCHARD, DON HUTSON AND ETHAN WILLIS



Many business books are more or less the same either 'how to' or 'what not to do' and at times when your not looking for a 'how to' they can get relatively tiresome. However, this book is by far one of the most interesting business tips books that we at SYB have read! The book

follows the story of Jud McCarley and his wife Terri as they grow and struggle with the problems of starting up a business. The narrative unravels all the secrets to becoming a successful entrepreneur. It's an easy read and touches on interesting business topics. The One Minute Entrepreneur is a unique way of offering advice, insights and guidance that really work.

BUSINESS NIGHTMARES – WHEN ENTREPRENEURS HIT CRISIS POINT RACHEL ELNAUGH



After Rachel's very public fall from grace, the soul survivor was not afraid to tell her story and thus, 'Business Nightmares' appeared. It is a book that uncovers the moments when she and various other UK entrepreneurs hit crisis point and what they did to overcome their obstacles. It holds

Rachel's most truthful account. Written in a series of revealing interviews, unfolding the dark past's of of the most affluent business personalities, it not only exposes how the mightiest businesses were once the meekest, but proves that all businesses can face tough times and still prevail.