Boost Your Professional Credentials

When looking to boost your professional visibility, writing for your profession should be high on your list of action items. Writing demonstrates your expertise, interest in key issues within the safety community, and ability to organize your ideas and express them effectively—skills that are all important to current (and prospective) employers.

Become a Sought-After Author

The following tips can help you get started on the path to becoming an effective and sought-after author:

• Study writing by reading books on writing and by reading good writers. Try to understand how they do it. Think about the good writing you read.

• Learn to revise and edit.

• Practice writing. Write every day. Most things take practice to do well.

• Consider sharing your writing in a workshop setting. Find others interested in writing and share your ideas, stories, insight and constructive feedback.

The Writing Process

Writing is really about sharing your point of view. SH&E professionals are all about sharing information. Professions get better by improving the quality of the debate about the future. The following tips will help you better communicate what you know, who you are and what you are offering with more clarity, authority and authenticity.

Now, Put It in Writing

• To make a powerful statement

• To evoke a change

• To share your passion about an issue

• To share your viewpoint (even if contrary to popular thought)

• To express your knowledge—specifically of research results

• To explain something of importance

And Finally, Why

• What is the point of the article?

• What can you uniquely add to the profession's body of knowledge?

• Who do YOU read?

• Who do YOU listen to?

Then Consider What

• An idea or point of view worth sharing

• A story or experience, especially of something that worked—or did not.

• Research results

Next Ask Yourself

• What is the point of the article?

• What can you uniquely add to the profession's body of knowledge?

And Finally, Why

• To share something of importance

• To evoke a change

• To make a political statement

Now, Put It in Writing

• Get the journal's guidelines (available at www.asse.org/professionalsafety/submit.php) and follow them when preparing the article—particularly with respect to formatting and referencing. Doing so improves immediate points with reviewers.

• Identify your audience. Consider their familiarity with your topic and education level.

• Free up what you mean to say. Handwrite notes, journal, diagram or create an outline for your project. Don’t worry at first about how it sounds, the organization or grammar. Start with 5 minutes, then move up to 30 minutes or more, depending on the extent of your project.

• Create a list of main points and key words or a detailed outline.

The Reviewer's Perspective

• A story or experience, especially of something that worked— or did not

• An idea or point of view sharing

Who is Your Audience?

• What is your audience?

• Who are YOU?

• How do YOU listen to the profession?

• How do YOU read?

• How do YOU think?

Who Is Your Audience?

• What is your audience?

• What can you uniquely add to the profession's body of knowledge?

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The Writing Process

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Some (Humorous) Rules to Write By

1) Avoid run-on sentences that are hard to read and contain more than one idea that confuses your reader when they lose the train of thought that you tried to convey carefully and efficiently.

2) No sentence fragments.

3) It behooves us to avoid archaicisms.

4) Also, avoid awkward, affected alliteration.

5) Don’t use no double negatives.

6) If I’ve told you once I’ve told you one-thousand times—avoid hyperbole.

7) Avoid commas, that are not necessary.

8) Verbs has to agree with their subjects.

9) Writing carefully, dangling participles should not be used.

10) Kill all exclamation points!!

11) Never use a fancy word when a diminutive one will do.

12) Proofread carefully and do not any words out.

13) Take the bull by the hand, throw your writing in the well to see who salutes, and do not mix metaphors.

14) Do not verbize nouns.

15) Never, ever, ever, use repetitive redundancies.

16) Last, but not least, avoid cliches like the plague.

Adapted from “How to Write Good” by William Safire, author, columnist and speechwriter