

A refreshing resource
to help you develop
better business writing

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Resource Library: Insight

7 shocking examples of poor business writing practice



Image: Catalin Petolea/Shutterstock

7 shocking examples of poor business writing practice

A tour of everything from hideous corporate jargon to terrible typos

Some are embarrassing, some are awkward, some are amusing (but perhaps not for the company concerned). Others are just plain appalling...

Unfortunately, it's not particularly difficult to find all sorts of examples of poor business writing practice.

The seven examples shown in this resource span the whole gamut of spelling, grammar, punctuation, presentation and effective communication errors.

Collectively, what they serve to demonstrate is that *how* you say something is invariably just as important as *what* you say.

Learn from the mistakes of others

Take a close look at these funny/stupid/sloppy/cringeworthy *[delete as you feel is appropriate]* snippets – and enjoy them.

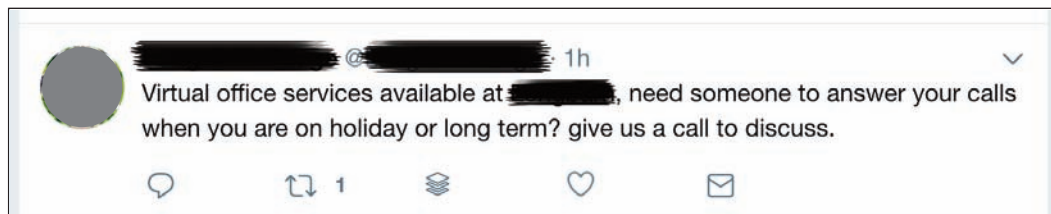
But also consider how you can use them as triggers to develop and enhance areas of *your own* business writing.

Read on for enlightenment – and, in some cases, not insignificant amusement!



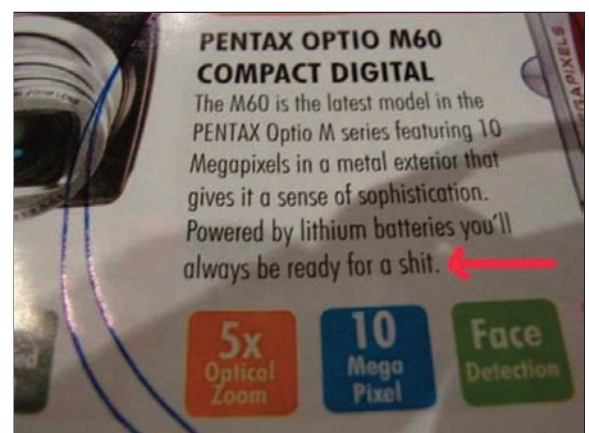
1. Short form shouldn't mean shortcuts

Because this announcement was posted via Twitter, it seems the organisation responsible felt that it didn't need to bother with punctuation. Perhaps the poster simply didn't know better or was really rushed for time. Either way, the resulting look and feel will leave a question about the service's credibility in many people's minds.



2. A bit too snap-happy

This piece of promotional copy in a brochure could do with a little punctuation. But it's the proofreading that really lets it down. It makes you appreciate just how important it is to always be aware of the potential impact of the tiniest of typos!



3. Good spelling is just the start of effective communication...

This particular example takes typos to the extreme. It might be quite an unusually awful ad, but you can imagine the reputational damage it wreaked. If someone can't spell (or can't be trusted to spend a couple of minutes checking the content they plan to publish), they're probably not best suited to take charge of recruitment! The lesson here? If you have 'basic knowledge' of English (or French culinary terms), ask a colleague to do – or at least check – the business writing for you.



4. It's readable, but it's not right

Maybe the catering and hospitality industries supply more bad business writing examples than many others – we've all seen poorly presented menu items and promotional boards. And everyone has their own particular area of expertise, right? But when Microsoft Word highlights most problem areas for you, there really isn't an excuse for poor spelling and grammar – even in everyday sentence scenarios.

The pub has a beer garden at the rear with a childrens play area. Outside seating is also at the side and front of the pub. Their is a function room upstairs which is used for entertainment and dining.

5. It's all about *us* – and we're quite dull too

This brochure excerpt is a great example of not focusing on the customer benefits. When you read it (yawn!), those benefits *are* in there, but they're buried underneath the company's approach and its credentials. Not only is this quite dull to read from an interest point of view, but that task is also made more challenging by the lack of some strategic punctuation, which would really help the poor reader.

Our success has been built on having the best people with direct marketplace knowledge and experience allowing us to fully understand and support your needs and to deliver proven solutions that meet the extensive legislative and regulatory requirements of the industry.

Our dedicated implementation team are here to support the customers needs, working in partnership with the customer ahead, during and post implementation switchover.

Our Commercial and Product management are trained to assist you in the appropriate product selection and to advise you of new industry related process and product developments.

The release said: "In her new role, Lan will be responsible for connecting consumer insights with brand needs with the right product solution to optimise value of Return on Experience back to clients."

6. Jargon-tastic!

This example is stuffed full of corporate jargon – to the point of complete non-comprehension. WTF, you say? Well, yes. Exactly.

7. Just wrong, on so many levels...

Saving the 'best' bad business writing until last, this was the appallingly presented reply I received from the customer service team of a company that had let me down badly. And no, before you ask, I didn't actually offer them any 'patients'!

Hello there
i would like to confirm that the full refund of £119.99 has been refunded back to your card that you paid on.
the transaction ID number is 4855241893
thank you for your patients and i really do apologise for the delay.
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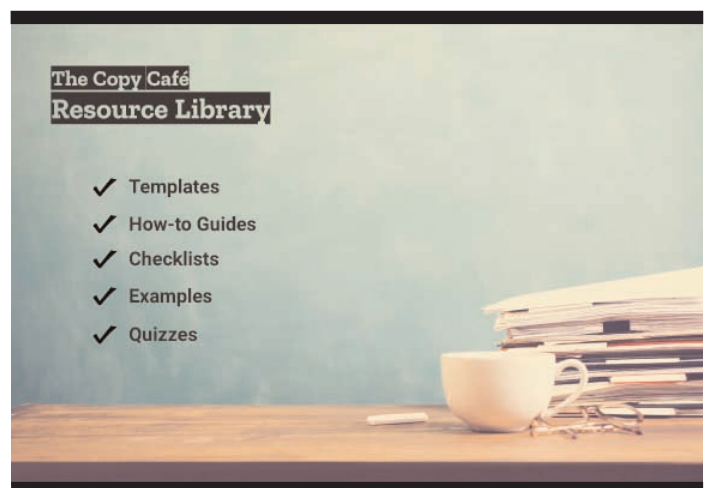
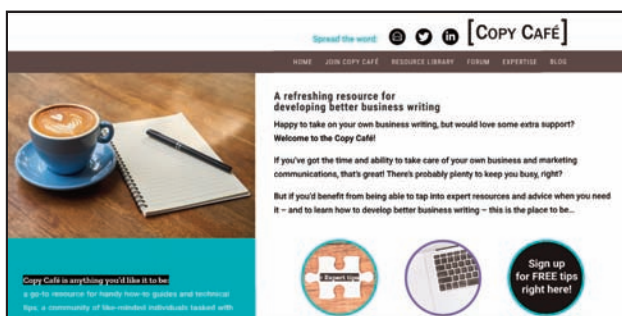
Kind Regards
Sophia (Resolutions Team)

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