

Ever Expounded on a Bar Stool? Try It for Your Marketing Message!

In my senior high school English class, our writing had to be ship-shape. Our English teacher, Sister Mary Richards (an Anglophile and English language devotee) made sure of that with her bright red pen.

Thankfully, in most marketing writing, you can loosen up and write in a conversational tone.

Let's Get One Thing Clear ...

Writing conversationally isn't like how you talk. You'll leave out all the verbal pauses that drag down a real-life conversation (the "ahhhs" and "uhhhs"), not to mention sentences that trail ... now where was I?

As copywriter Robert Warren says, "[Writing conversationally] is new-and-improved natural speech, polished to a shine and missing all the embarrassing parts."

A Few Tips for a Conversational Tone

Tip #1 -- Don't ignore basic grammar rules.

Ignoring grammar rules like punctuation and capitalization just makes comprehension difficult. However, I do regularly break two rules:

- Starting a sentence with a conjunction (like "and" or "but"). And you know what? No one's complained yet.
- Writing fragment sentences. Like this. Why? Because it works. (Just don't overuse it.)

A grammar rule that actually encourages a relaxed "voice" is contractions. Instead of "How is that for a benefit?" try "How's that for a benefit?"

Tip #2 -- Know your market and industry.

Some industries are more accepting of a conversational tone. But even if you're writing for attorneys, you can still strive for clear, simple language.

I've noticed that in general, business-to-consumer marketing copy can be looser than business-to-business marketing copy.

Tip #3 - The "Barstool Test"

An AWAI* copywriting course teaches that your writing should sound like you're sitting on a barstool, talking with a friend – not lecturing her. (Conversations with friends on barstools after you've excessively imbibed should not be used as a yardstick!)

*AWAI is the American Writers and Artists Institute.

Let's Rewrite Something Stuffy

BEFORE – 69 Words	AFTER – 59 Words
"This type of collaborative technology is not typical for most construction companies. But for us, it is a natural extension of our longstanding insistence on excellent communication and a deep respect for each client's needs, aspirations, functional requirements, and constraints. We're most enthusiastic about the potential of this project and believe that it will allow us to continue to increase the quality service we can provide to our clients."	"Not many construction companies are using technology to improve how employees and clients work together. But this is the way we've always worked. We respect what our clients want to achieve, so we insist on excellent communication. Even though we're excited about the possibilities of this new tool, we know that our clients will benefit from even better service."

I hope you found this helpful ... and interesting. If so, please send it on to one friend or colleague who you think would enjoy it.

Regards,



Mary

[Five Star Writing, Inc.](#)

"Clear and concise writing for the software and manufacturing industries."

If you have a writing project coming up, I'd love to talk to you about it. Please contact me for a complimentary 30-minute consultation.

678-697-2555 ★★★★★ maryms@5starwriting.com