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Adams Jette Marketing + Communications

www.adamsjette.com

Plus 3 “insider” secrets that
will help you *sell more*

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Clear, Clean and Concise: Making Words Work For You

Back to Basics

a, an

Is it *a* herb or *an* herb? Is it *an* historic moment or *a* historic moment? It depends. If you pronounce the *h*, use *a*. If you don't, use *an*. Now the question is, do you or don't you pronounce the *h* when you tell someone that you have *a* (*an*?) herb garden? Not even the dictionaries can agree. All you can do is use your best judgment and then aim for consistency.

and, but

Despite what your grammar-school teacher may have told you, there is no rule that forbids starting a sentence with *but* or *and*.

between, among

If there are two agents or objects involved, use *between*. *The chores are shared between Brian and Linda*. When there are more than two objects or agents, use *among*. *The treats were shared among all participants*.

Canadian spelling

Americans do one thing, the British do another. Canadians seem to be stuck somewhere in the middle. The tip here is to keep a good Canadian dictionary handy. Two we recommend are the *ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary* and the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*.

clichés

Avoid them like the, well, you know what we mean.

compared with, compared to

When comparing two items in a similar category, use *compared with*. *Sales are up 10 percent compared with last year*. When making an analogy, use *compared to*. *Life can be compared to a river making its way to the ocean*.

concerted effort

You cannot make a *concerted effort* by yourself. To work in concert means to work with someone else.

consistency

The English language is in a constant state of flux. For many issues, there simply are no hard rules. How do you punctuate a vertical list? (It depends.) Should you use a serial comma (that comma before the word *and* in a list of three or more items in a sentence)? (I don't but many do.) Should you use italics or quotation marks to set off a word? (It's up to you, but if you use quotation marks, make sure you don't use single quote marks unless used within a quote.)

The key is to determine what you are going to do and then *stick with it*. Inconsistencies turn readers off—even if they don't realize it.

decisions, decisions

Do you *take* decisions or *make* decisions? Most modern dictionaries allow the use of either. Do remember, however, that it is decision *making* not decision *taking*.

either or, neither nor

When you use *either*, use *or*. *I think we need either a candle or a lamp in that corner*. When you use *neither*, use *nor*. *I would welcome neither your assistance nor your money*.

fewer, less

Generally, *fewer* refers to a reduction in the number of individual items. *There were fewer apples.* *Less* refers to a reduction in the amount of a given entity. *There was less water to go around.*

gender, sex

According to *The Canadian Style* (Dundurn, 1997), when referring to biological categories or sexual behaviour, use the word *sex*. When referring to cultural or social categories, use *gender*.

jargon

Do not confuse jargon with technical terms adopted within a given discipline or sector. Jargon tends to confuse rather than clarify.

mind your modifiers

Here are three sentences with three very different meanings:

Only I want chocolate. (Nobody else does.)

I *only* want chocolate. (But I don't need it.)

I want *only* chocolate. (And nothing else.)

numbers

Generally, you should write out numbers 1 through 9 and use numerals after that. There are a number of exceptions, of course, so you should find a good style guide such as *The Canadian Style* (Dundurn, 1997) or *The Chicago Manual of Style* (University of Chicago Press, 1993) and keep it handy.

over exaggerate

You cannot *over exaggerate*. Once you exaggerate, you've already gone over the top. *Over exaggerate* is redundant.

overstatement

Unlike understatement, which can be a very powerful rhetorical device, overstatement tends to stem from weak ideas. Overstatement can also cause credibility problems.

plurals

A good dictionary is your best bet, but there are a few worth memorizing: alumni/alumna (alumnus); bacteria (bacterium); curricula (curriculum); memoranda (memorandum); analyses (analysis); crises (crisis); synopses (synopsis); theses (thesis); and media (medium).

priority

Claiming that customer satisfaction is a priority is no great claim as priorities can be ranked anywhere along the scale of importance. It is better to write that customer satisfaction is your *highest* priority.

redundancies

No need to write *sworn* affidavit because if it isn't sworn, it isn't an affidavit. Also avoid *totally unique* (as opposed to a *little bit* unique?), *possible choices* (*impossible* choices?), *preplanning* (when else would you plan?) and *forewarn* (as opposed to warning them after the fact?).

spacing between sentences

In the days when typewriters allotted similar spacing for each letter, writers typed two spaces following a sentence to make it easier for the eye to see the break. Now, because word processing programs make variable spacing automatic, one space is sufficient.

speak to your reader

Instead of “*the author* reminds the readers,” or “*one* would think,” try “*I* should remind you,” or “*you* would think.” Speaking *to* your reader is friendlier and presents the information in a way that is easier to process.

spelling, grammar checkers

These writing tools are useful, but don't bet the farm on them. For example, a spelling checker will not see the two mistakes in this sentence:
The spelling was the beast he had every seen.

tense

It is easy to switch tenses midstream. Decide on a tense before you start writing and be mindful of it as you write.

truncated words

While phone, TV, Net and lab might be easier to write than telephone, television, Internet and laboratory, using truncated words or too-casual phrasing can make for an unpleasant read.

with

You can visit people, consult people and meet people. You do not visit *with* people, consult *with* people or meet *with* people.

write it once

Avoid redundancies when writing acronyms or initialisms. For example, RCMP stands for Royal Canadian Mounted Police. If you write RCMP police, you've written "police" twice. Similarly, if you write PIN number, you've written "number" twice. For the same reason, avoid DVD disk, ATM machine and HIV virus.

Troublesome Words

absorb, absorption

The water has been *absorbed* and the sponge is *absorbing*, but the act itself is called *absorption*.

accede, exceed

If you are a safe driver, you rarely *exceed* the speed limit. To *accede* is to attain an important position, become a party to an international agreement or treaty, or give consent.

accept, except

Similar in sound, they are almost opposites in meaning. *Accept* means to take in while *except* means to exclude. *I will accept the fruit—except the bananas, as they are too ripe.*

adapt, adopt

When you *adapt* something, you are changing it to suit your purposes. When you *adopt* it, you are taking it as your own.

advice, advise

To *advise* (verb) someone, you give her *advice* (noun).

allude, elude

To *allude* to something means to refer to it. To *elude* something is to escape from it. *While I would like to allude to examples, they elude me.*

altar, alter

You would find an *altar* (noun) in a church, synagogue or temple. To *alter* (verb) something is to change it.

altogether, all together

All together means all in one place. *We are all together on this issue.* *Altogether* means all at once. *You can eliminate extra charges altogether by calling Adams Jette.*

ambivalent, indifferent

If someone says they are of two minds on an issue—that is, they are being pulled in two different directions—they are *ambivalent*. If they have no strong feelings one way or the other, they are *indifferent*.

appraise, apprise

When you *appraise* something, you estimate its value. To bring that *appraisal* to the owner's attention is to *apprise* him of it.

assent, ascent

Assent means agreement; *ascent* is the act of rising or going upward.

augur, auger

Augur means to foretell. *Their friendship augurs well for a successful business partnership.* An *auger* is a tool. *I rented an auger to dig the fence-post holes.*

aural, oral

Aural relates to things you hear. *Oral* relates to the mouth.

bazaar, bizarre

A *bazaar* is a marketplace. *Bizarre* means odd, strange or weird. Admittedly, some *bazaars* are *bizarre*.

bear, bare

There are three different words here. The first one—*bear*—can be found in the woods (and, sometimes, even in the suburbs). The second version—also spelled *bear*—is a verb that means, among other things, to carry, transport, produce or endure. Our third word—*bare*—means plain or without clothing.

blatant

There is nothing positive about the word *blatant*. To be *blatant* is to be obvious in an offensive or disagreeable way. It would be incorrect to write “he is blatantly charming” unless you meant that his charm was offensive.

buoyant

Despite its pronunciation, the *u* comes before the *o*.

canvass, canvas

To *canvass* is to solicit. *Canvas* is a type of cloth.

cement, concrete

Cement is one ingredient of *concrete*. If you mix *cement* powder, water, sand and gravel, you get *concrete*.

cite, sight, site

Three words, three meanings. To *cite* someone is to quote her. To use your *sight* is to use your eyes. A *site* is the location of something.

collaborate, corroborate

To *collaborate* means to work together or share the labour. *We must collaborate if we want to get the job done on time.* To *corroborate* means to make more certain or to confirm. *The prosecutor had evidence that would corroborate the eyewitness account.*

complement, compliment

Complement means something that completes or brings to perfection. *That teapot complements your dinnerware.* (Remember: complement: complete.) A *compliment* is an expression of praise. *He gave her a compliment on her beautiful voice.* (Remember: Compliments are nice.)

comprise

The whole comprises the parts. For example, instead of “the software is comprised of several useful evaluation tools,” write “the software comprises several useful evaluation tools.”

comptroller

Yes, in this case, *mp* is pronounced *n* (don’t ask). Comptroller—a person who manages finances—is a variation of controller and is pronounced exactly the same way.

continuous, continual

Continuous means occurring without interruption. *The water ran continuously.* *Continual* means occurring steadily. *The tap was turned on and off continually.*

dependent, dependant

Dependant is the noun. *He had one dependant.* *Dependent* is the adjective. *The project was dependent on funding.*

discreet, discrete

To be *discreet* is to be prudent and tactful, perhaps even modest. *Discrete*, however, describes something that is separate or distinct.

dryer, drier

You use a clothes *dryer* to make clothes *drier*.

emigrate, immigrate

To *emigrate* (notice one *m*) is to leave the country.

To *immigrate* is to move into a new country.

empathy, sympathy

To feel *empathy* for someone is to share her feelings. If you feel sorry for someone, you are feeling *sympathy*.

farther, further

Farther refers to distance. *He went farther today than he did yesterday.* *Further* refers to all other extents or degrees. *Further planning was necessary.*

flaunt, flout

You *flaunt* your new necklace while you *flout* the rules.

flesh out, flush out

If you are trying to scare the duck out of hiding or cleanse something with a rapid flow of water or some other liquid, you are *flushing* it out. But if you are adding substance—or flesh—to an idea, you are *fleshing* it out.

for, fore, four

For is a common preposition. *Fore* is a prefix that means front as in foretell, foreword and forecast. *Four* is a number.

foreword, forward

A *foreword* is text that precedes the main text in a document. *Forward* is either a personality trait (forward versus shy) or a direction (forward versus backward).

gaffe, gaff

A *gaffe* is a tactless, indiscreet remark and should not be confused with a *gaff*, a strong hook used to pull fish from the water.

hear, here

If it involves the ear, it is *hear*. If you are referring to a position, you should write *here*. Did you *hear* that *here*?

heroin, heroine

Heroin is a highly addictive drug. A *heroine* is a woman noted or admired for her bravery or nobility.

immanent, imminent

Use *imminent* when you mean that something will happen soon. *The ruling is imminent*. Use *immanent* when you mean that something is inherent or existing only in the mind. *His is an immanent spirit*.

imply, infer

These words are not interchangeable. *Imply* means “to suggest strongly” while *infer* means “to deduce.” Therefore, if you are speaking, you can *imply* something. You can *infer* something only as a listener.

it's, its

It's is the contracted form of *it is*. *It's a good idea*. *Its* means belonging to it. *The radio has its own stand*.

judgment, judgement

Several dictionaries, including the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, state that either spelling is correct. Most agree, however, that *judgment* (no e) is preferred.

lead, led

Lead (rhymes with bed) is a soft, heavy, easily melted, bluish-grey metallic chemical element. When you show someone the way (present tense), you *lead* (rhymes with seed) her. When you've shown someone the way (past tense), you've *led* (rhymes with bed) him.

mischievous

It's easy to spell (and say) this word incorrectly. It's “MISS-chuh-vuss,” not “mis-CHEE-vee-uss.”

nonplussed

To be *nonplussed* is to be completely puzzled. *Nonplussed* does not mean calm or in control.

ordinance, ordnance

A law is an *ordinance*. *Ordnance* (no *i*) is a noun that means military weapons or equipment.

peak, peek, pique

His curiosity *piqued*, he looked out the window to *peek* at the mountain *peaks*.

personnel, personal

Personnel (emphasis on the last syllable) is a noun and is used to describe employees. *Personal* (emphasis on the first syllable) is usually an adjective (as in personal effects).

peruse

Remember, *peruse* means to examine thoroughly, not glance over quickly.

phase, faze

Phase is a distinct stage of development. *He'll be fine; it's just a phase*. To *faze* is disrupt or drive away. *It didn't even faze me*.

port, starboard

Starboard is the right-hand side of a ship or airplane. *Port* is the left-hand side. The best way to remember which is which is to remember that both *port* and *left* have four letters.

pour, pore

You may want to *pour* yourself a cup of coffee before you *pore* over the document.

precede, proceed

Precede means to go before. *Proceed* means to go on. *I will let you precede me through the door and then I will proceed to follow you.*

principal, principle

Principal means first, highest or foremost in importance. *The principal reason he was selected was his attitude. A principle is a basic truth, law or rule.*

prostate, prostrate

The *prostate* is a gland found in male mammals. *Prostrate* means lying flat (usually with the face downward).

stationary, stationery

Stationary means remaining in one place. *Stationery* is what you would call writing paper. To keep them straight, remember that *stationery* includes envelopes.

they're, there

They're is the contracted form of *they are*. *They're coming with us to the mall*. If you are referring to a position, write *there*. *We are going there when we are done*.

toward, towards

Strictly speaking, there is nothing wrong with either term.

two, too, to

Two is a number—people rarely confuse this with the other two spellings. *Too* means also or in excess. *To* is the spelling for all other uses.

uninterested, disinterested

If someone is bored or has no interest in the issue, she is said to be *uninterested*. If that person is interested but remains neutral or objective, she is said to be *disinterested*.

until, till

Except at the beginning of a sentence where *until* is preferred, *till* and *until* can be used interchangeably. Bear in mind, however, that some readers still view *till* as too casual and will take exception to it.

vocation, avocation

If it's your *avocation*, it's your hobby. If it's your *vocation*, it's your job, especially if you are very good at it, or very well qualified.

who, that

Use *who* when speaking of humans (or entities that are afforded a similarly lofty status). *The man who was here just left.* Use *that* to denote non-human entities. *Companies that have happy employees are more efficient.*

who, whom

In formal English, *whom* is used when it is the objective pronoun. *Whom did he call?* In day-to-day English, *who* is widely accepted. *Who did she ask?* However, *whom* should be used when it follows a preposition. *To whom was she speaking?*

whose, who's

Whose is the possessive form of *who*. *A man whose time has come.* *Who's* is the contracted form of *who is*. *Who's going?*

Impress Your Friends

acronym vs. initialism

An *acronym* is a pronounceable word formed by using the initial letters or parts of other words. Examples include *PIN* (personal identification number) and *NATO* (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation). If you pronounce the letters individually—as in *CBC*, *HROC* and *CFL*—it is called an *initialism*.

antivenin, antivenom

The antiserum that contains antibodies against specific poisons in the venom of snakes, spiders, scorpions and the like, is often referred to as *antivenom*. While this is acceptable, the preferred spelling is *antivenin*.

e.g. versus i.e.

The abbreviation *i.e.* is Latin for *id est* and means *that is*. *e.g.* stands for the Latin phrase *exempli gratia* and means for example. To help you keep them straight, remember that *e.g.* can also stand for *example given*.

eager, anxious

Historically, *eager* described someone full of keen desire (positive) while *anxious* described someone who was worried or nervous (negative). Some now think—the editors of the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* among them—that *anxious* can be used to mean *eager*. Use it this way if you must but understand that it may cause your readers to stumble. And *that* is the bigger concern.

ie or ei?

The general rule is *i* before *e* except after *c* or when sounded like *a* as in *neighbour* and *weigh*. There are, however, exceptions to this rule. Examples include *either*, *foreign*, *forfeit*, *weird*, *heifer*, *height*, *leisure*, *neither*, *seize* and *sovereign*.

koala

Koalas are not bears, they are marsupials.

podium, lectern

A *podium* is a raised platform on which you stand to give a speech. The stand or piece of furniture you use to hold your notes is called a *lectern*.

proved, proven

Proved is the verb form of *to prove*. *The crown proved its case*. *Proven* is an adjective. *This is a proven recipe*.

restaurateur

Although *restauranteur* (with an “n”) is acceptable and used frequently, the preferred spelling is *restaurateur* (no “n”). (Bet you learned something today!)

split infinitives

The simplest explanation—and it’s not that simple—is that an infinitive is the *to be* form of a verb such as *to gripe*, *to smile*, *to run* and *to hide*.

To split an infinitive is to insert a word (or words) between *to* and *the verb*. *To go* is an infinitive; *to boldly go* is a *split* infinitive. Traditionalists argue that split infinitives are simply poor grammar. Others, including the editors of the *Chicago*

Manual of Style and the writers at Adams Jette, take a less formal approach. We think that the judicious use of split infinitives best serves the clarity and naturalness of expression. But it’s your call.

windfall

Despite Henry VIII’s penchant for chopping, English nobles were forbidden from chopping down trees because the Royal Navy had dibs on the wood. Trees blown over in a storm—a windfall—were exempt from this decree.

Punctuation Peculiarities

ampersand (&)

Use an ampersand only when it forms part of a corporate name as in Macfarlane Walter & Ross. You should not use it as a substitute for *and* in writing.

comma

Nothing generates more editorial discussion than the comma, perhaps the most common punctuation mark in the English language. According to *Editing Canadian English, 2nd edition* (MW&R, 2000), “although it is obligatory in a small number of grammatical constructions, more often its use is a matter of judgment.” As a general guide, use a comma whenever a speaker would pause or when there is a logical shift in your sentence.

commas, dates

When your date identifies a specific day, use a comma: *We set out on March 14, 1998.* Do not use a comma after the month when no specific day is identified: *We had wrapped it up by July 2002.*

em dash

So called because it is the width of the letter *m*, this is the punctuation-mark dash. You can use an em dash to tack an extra thought onto the end of a sentence—but it has to relate to its predecessor, of course. You can also use em dashes—but not too often—on both ends of a related thought in the middle of a sentence.

en dash

So called because it is the width of the letter *n*, this is the dash that is used to indicate a range. Examples include 12–14 kilograms, 18–25 years of age and 2004–2011. The en dash can also be used to denote pairs of equal-weight words that form an adjective such as the Toronto–Newark route or the Canada–U.S. border.

exclamation mark

These are the most overused punctuation marks in the English language. When overused, they can detract from, rather than add to, the excitement of your writing. Use sparingly!

hyphen

This may be the most commonly misused punctuation mark. Here is one tip: If two words constitute a single adjective, use a hyphen. Examples include tractor-pull event and grammar-school teacher. Hyphens should be used, as well, to avoid confusion. For example, “Star player resigns” and “Star player re-signs” mean two very different things.

quotation marks

Use these curly little fellas when quoting someone. They should not be used to emphasize a word. Try *italics* instead.

semicolon

This punctuation mark connects two closely related sentences. A semicolon should be used only when the second sentence would stand as a full sentence on its own; use a comma or an em dash if the second sentence is a fragment.

spelling in the eWorld

Is Internet capitalized or not? Should email have a hyphen? Is website one word or two? According to the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (2nd ed.), they should be spelled this way:

Internet (capitalized)

website (one word, no hyphen or caps)

email (one word, no hyphen)

Let Them Breathe: Leaving Ample White Space and Other Design Tips

beauty is in the eye of the customer

Good graphics support and enhance your message. They need to make your text more readable and they need to be appropriate for your target audience—your customer—whether it's tweens, teenagers, 20-somethings, middle-aged women or seniors.

Your ultimate goal should be for the words and visuals to come together to reinforce and support your overall objective.

At Adams Jette, our focus—always—is on creating **effective** communications products. More than just pretty pictures, they need to persuade, inspire, and most importantly, **move people to action**.

colour

Never underestimate the power of colour. Some colours inspire passion while others can be calming. Colours also mean different things to different professions. For example, yellow can denote something of importance in the financial sector while to engineers, it indicates a warning or caution. Work with a professional designer to choose the colour palette that's right for your brand.

does it bleed?

Not nearly as grisly as it sounds, when your printer asks “Does it bleed?” he wants to know if the colour goes all the way to the edge of the paper (no white margin). A design that bleeds means the paper has to be trimmed, to cut away the white edge.

For example, an 8.5” x 11” page that “bleeds” has to be printed on paper that exceeds that size and then trimmed. This can make it more expensive than “non-bleed” designs. The trade-off is that bleed is part of what makes “professional” printing look professional.

know your pixels

Need to check whether the resolution of a photo is good enough for print? Image resolution is measured in dots per inch (dpi). The higher the dpi, the better the resolution (sharpness and clarity) of the image. Acceptable resolution can range from 72 dpi for the Internet to 300 dpi for professional printing.

You can find out a photo’s resolution by using Microsoft Photo Editor, an application that comes bundled with Windows software.

Simply open the photo in Photo Editor and go to File --> Properties. A window will open showing you the height and width of the image, and the

resolution of the file at that size. Changing the resolution up or down changes the dimensions of the image so you can see if it's suitable for printing at the size you want it to appear. For example, a 5" x 7" photo with a resolution of 150 dpi will lose resolution if you make the photo larger, and gain resolution if you make it smaller.

let the professionals do their jobs

Remember: you hired professionals—let them work. To paraphrase marketer David Ogilvy, there is no sense buying a dog if you plan to do the barking yourself. Whether it's a communications strategist, professional writer or graphic designer, remember that they are trained to give you the best possible

product. Let them do their job and you will get their appreciation—and their best work.

logo design

When designing a logo, go for a simple, rather than a complex, design. Simple designs lend themselves more easily to a variety of large and small applications from stationery, brochures and websites to signage, banners and hot air balloons (you never know!).

paper sizes

Before deciding on the size, cut, fold or final look of a document, speak with your printer. Extra cuts and off-size paper stock can add unnecessarily to the costs.

pressed into print

Here are some explanations of different types of printing:

offset printing — This is a common type of printing where the image is transferred from a plate, first to a rubber blanket, then to the printing surface. Until recently, most printers transferred the image first to film and then to plate. Today, however, the technology is largely

direct-to-plate, with no film stage. Although the printing itself is relatively inexpensive, the set-up charges (front-end costs) are the same regardless of quantity. As a result, the price for a small print run (under 1,000) will be more expensive on a per-unit basis than larger quantities.

digital output — Unlike offset printing, digital output is essentially high-quality laser printing. The colour can vary greatly from machine to machine. This is a good option for very small quantities, or when exact colour reproduction is not important.

sheet-fed offset press — As the name suggests, sheet-fed printing presses print onto large sheets of paper that can range from very thin

to very thick cardboard-type paper. This is the most common type of printing for medium- to high-volume print runs.

web press — No, this has nothing to do with the Internet. A web press is used for very high-volume printing (tens of thousands of copies). The paper tends to be thinner than that used for a sheet-fed press and is loaded onto the press in huge rolls. Large-circulation newspapers and magazines are printed on web presses.

reducing the cost of AAs

Author's alterations, also known as AAs, are those extra charges that can derail your budget and cause your purchasing department to see red

because the final amount owing doesn't match the contract. AAs are the costs that accrue when changes are requested after the approved text has been laid out in a document such as an annual report.

Some changes during the layout stage are inevitable—particularly if the document has not been professionally edited or proofread—mainly because errors become more noticeable in a layout than in the raw text.

One way to reduce these charges is to make sure you gather together as many of the changes as possible into one batch and mark them clearly on a hard copy so they are easier (and faster) for the designer to find.

An even better way is to **eliminate these charges** all together by calling Adams Jette—we don't charge extra for minor, post-layout changes. It's all part of our commitment to make your experience with us as easy and worry-free as possible.

the other PMS

Printing inks are classified using the Pantone Matching System, or PMS, an industry standard that assigns a unique number to a particular colour and shade of ink.

PMS colours come in different varieties. The most common types are “coated” and “uncoated,” which refers to the type of paper the ink will be applied to. (Although they are essentially the

same shade of blue, 282C will look brighter and more vibrant than 282U. This is because coated paper causes inks to “stand up,” whereas ink applied to uncoated stock will absorb into the paper, giving it a flatter appearance.)

A “one-colour,” “two-colour” or “three-colour” offset print job means that the design calls for only one, two or three different PMS-identified inks.

On the other hand, “process” colour, also known as four-colour or full-colour printing, uses only four standard inks: cyan (blue), magenta, yellow and black (CMYK). Together they can be combined to approximate any colour.

website design

Whether you are designing your own website or having it designed by a professional, insist that it be easy to find, easy to read, easy to navigate and quick to download. This will make it better—and more effective—than 95 percent of existing sites.

what colour art thou?

When creating digital products such as websites, remember that colours reproduce differently depending on the quality of the user's computer monitor. Unlike print, where colour can be reproduced more or less exactly as you expect, digital colour that looks great on paper can look dark and muddy on screen.

The traditional web-safe colour palette limits designers to a maximum of 216 colours.

white space

When designing or laying out documents, good designers leave ample white space around the text and graphic images, even increasing the page count if necessary. This gives readers room to breathe so they can focus on what's important. Documents that are text-heavy or that have too little white space are overwhelming to readers and can leave them confused and stressed rather than informed and inspired.

3 “Insider” Secrets That Will Help You Sell More

Whether we are helping our clients sell products, services, programs or ideas, we adhere to three basic rules: Sell benefits, not features; be empathetic; and be different. We thought we would pass on why.

Sell Benefits, not Features

People are less interested in what a product or service does than they are in what it does for them. For example, don't tell me that new two-seater sport coupe has lots of chrome, leather and horsepower. Instead, tell me that I'll be cool, comfortable and fast and that I'll turn heads everywhere I go. Sell benefits and not features and you'll leave the competition behind.

Here's another example. Instead of “The Brick Company—We sell bricks in all kinds of colours and sizes,” try “The Brick Company—We'll keep you cool in the summer and warm in the winter—and we'll make you the envy of all your neighbours.” Tell the customers what's in it for them.

Be Empathetic

This is a fancy way of saying “know your audience.” Who wouldn’t do that, right? Why is it so hard, then, to find a life jacket fitted for women? Have manufacturers not noticed that women are built a little differently than men?

Know your audience.

Here is another, astoundingly glaring example. Women buy in context—how will it fit into my life? How will it make my life easier? How will it save me time? For the most part, they have no interest in torque, horsepower, or whether or not it has electronic fuel injection. Knowing that and knowing that upwards of 85 percent of all new car purchases are either made directly by women or influenced by women, why do car manufacturers insist on selling torque, horsepower and electronic fuel injection?

Know your audience.

Be Different

Competition has never been tougher. You need to be different and trumpet those differences. Do you offer a **no-risk** guarantee? Do you offer **convenient**, at-home service? Do you offer a customized product that allows clients to **feel special**? Several **handy** locations? Tell people about them! And never forget to mention the benefit (outlined here in bold).

Also, let's assume you offer a benefit that is pretty well standard in the industry. If you are the only one to mention it...

Here's an example. We have an optician client who also has a medical doctor on the premises. The convenience factor alone is worth its weight in gold. "Get diagnosed *and* treated—right now." No second appointments, no trying to find an eye doctor. To be honest, that's not an unusual practice. But if he is the only optician to mention it...

So, if you want to sell more, just remember these three little secrets: Sell benefits, not features; be empathetic; and be different.

READING LIST

At **Adams Jette Marketing + Communications**, a number of our reference books get used occasionally, while some we rarely crack. Then there are the books we always keep within reach. In no particular order, here are a few of our favourites.

Chicago Manual of Style, 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Cragg, Catherine, et al. *Editing Canadian English*, 2nd Edition. Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 2000.

The Canadian Style: A Guide to Writing and Editing. Toronto: Dundurn Press in cooperation with Public Works and Government Services Canada Translation Bureau, 1997.

ITP Nelson Canadian Dictionary of the English Language: An Encyclopedic Reference. Scarborough, ON; Albany, NY: ITP Nelson, 1997.

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary. Edited by Katherine Barber. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2001. ISBN 0195417313

McFarlane, J.A. and Warren Clements. *The Globe and Mail Style Book: A Guide to Language and Usage*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1998.

The Cambridge Biographical Encyclopedia, 2nd ed. Edited by David Crystal. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

The New Oxford Thesaurus of English, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Gordon, Karen Elizabeth. *The Deluxe Transitive Vampire: The Ultimate Handbook of Grammar for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1993.

Gordon, Karen Elizabeth. *The New Well-Tempered Sentence: A Punctuation Handbook for the Innocent, the Eager, and the Doomed*. New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1993.

Stilman, Anne. *Grammatically Correct: The Writer's Essential Guide to Punctuation, Spelling, Style, Usage and Grammar*. Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 1997.

Strunk, W., Jr. and E.B. White. *The Elements of Style*, 4th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999.

Judd, Karen. *Copyediting, a Practical Guide*, 3rd ed. Menlo Park, CA: Crisp Learning, 2001.

Cook, Claire Kehrwald. *Line by Line: How to Improve Your Own Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

ABOUT US

AdamsJette

marketing + communications

Compelling ideas. Exceptional results.

How it Began

Adams Jette Marketing + Communications began its journey in June 1995 as Tristan Creative, a company of writers, founded by writer, broadcaster and veteran communications expert, Ron Jette.

After running a highly successful freelance-writing business for over a decade, he was having lunch one day with his client and friend, Brenda Adams, herself a veteran marketing professional with an

envious record of achievement in the communications business. As they chatted over Thai food, suddenly, like a bolt of lightning, Ron stood up and said, perhaps even a little too loudly, “excuse me...may I have another beer, please?”

“Certainly, sir,” came the reply. Ron sat down and continued chatting. That having nothing to do with the story, we shall continue...

During the main course—pad Thai and curry chicken, if the rumours are true—the idea was born. Together, Adams and Jette could bring the same level of customer care to a new agency that their clients had been enjoying for years, but with a wider and more comprehensive array of marketing and communication services.

“But what would we call the company?”
asked Brenda.

“Good question,” replied Ron. “It has to be simple, it has to reflect our values and give clients a sense that they are dealing with real professionals who look beyond the superficial for answers. It has to tell potential clients, in a word or two, the benefits we offer and how we differentiate ourselves—and it has to roll around on the tongue like a good port,” he continued.

“Or we could just call it Adams Jette,” Brenda offered.

“Good idea,” Jette said enthusiastically.
“It’s done, then. Adams Jette it is.”

And off they went.

What We Do

Some people think that because we are in the marketing and communications business, like others in this business, we sell writing and design. While those may be our products, what we really sell is an ability for you to *achieve greater success*.

While other writers may search for a witty phrase, our writers search for a witty phrase that *moves people to action*.

While other graphic designers turn out striking, attention-getting creative, our designers come up with striking, attention-getting designs that *persuade people to buy—or buy in*.

While others are telling people about you and your product or service, we are telling them *what your product or service can do for them*. Because *that's* what interests them. And *that's* what gets them excited about doing business with you.

So no matter what you are selling—and *you are selling something*—we can help you sell more of it, faster and with less trouble.

So why use our services? Well, for starters, here are...

The Top Five Benefits of Working with Adams Jette

1. Writing that sells

Most marketing companies want to tell your customers about *you*. We want to tell your customers what's in it for *them*. That's what they want to know—and *that's* what will make them get on board with your product, service, idea or vision. We offer text that is inspiring and delivered in a way that *moves people to action*.

2. Up-front pricing

No hourly rates, no author's alterations, no surprises. *Ever*. Each quote includes a final price so you know in advance *exactly* what you get and at what cost.

3. Quality

Everything is peer-reviewed, polished and checked for quality, understandability and, more than anything else, its ability to sell before it goes out the door.

4. 24/7 Availability

You will get the cellular telephone number of your account executive and the cellular and home telephone numbers of the owners. When you are working, so are we.

5. Experience

Need a website? An annual report? A speech? Direct mail? Our talented and experienced team can deliver what you need, when you need it.

And if that's not enough, these benefits are pretty unique, too:

6. Knowledge

Our culture of lifelong learning enables us to bring you the very latest in everything from sales approaches and marketing knowledge to design and message delivery.

7. Understanding

Our broad range of experience has given us the ability to climb the learning curve quickly and confidently.

8. Simplicity

Our single point of contact and our formally adopted first-call resolution policy ensure that getting answers is fast and easy.

9. Capacity

Because we have a host of suppliers who help our in-house talent meet the most excruciating deadlines, we can get it done. *Now.*

CONTACT US

OK, you figured us out.

While the first edition of this book has proven to be an extremely popular reference book that has met with rave reviews from our current clients, the *real* reason we put it together was so that we'd get a chance to tell you about us and to ask you to give us the opportunity to work with you.

If it worked, please contact us now at

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