



Individual Coaching

CASE STUDY

EXECUTIVE BUSINESS WRITING COACHING

CHALLENGES

A very smart, fast-tracked senior executive at a Global 100 Technology company was advised by his CEO that his writing skills did not match his strong management and analytical skills.

He was disheartened by this assessment, and also frustrated with the time required to shape his major documents and manage email volume across his division.

He wanted “his writing to equal and reflect his leadership and analytical skills.” He didn’t want grammar or typos made in haste to impede his message. He wanted to spend less time on each document and stop “spinning” inefficiently when writing.

He was a very busy professional, with high writing volume and high visibility in his company. The coaching needed to be highly relevant and time efficient.

COACHING LOGISTICS

All coaching was conducted live via web meeting, which allowed for actual document review during coaching sessions. Goals, documents, and tasks were tracked in Instructional Solutions’ project management software, which also provided a repository of resources and notes.

GOALS

This client’s goals were:

- “Speed”
- “Improvements in grammar”
- “Be viewed as effective communicator”
- “Improvements in clarity, simplification, and consistency in writing”
- “Build a process to storyboard a message to get desired results”



“This was my best time and budget investment for my career.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A more effective business writing process. (20% of engagement)
Because this client needed to convey complex and interrelated information and value to multiple internal and client audiences, concept mapping in this process was stressed.

OUTCOME: Better organized documents, reduced writing time, and documents matched to objectives.

2. Needed to clarify client goals, current writing strengths and skill gaps, and define key documents that were valuable to client position and business objectives.

Once goals were clarified, skills were sequentially honed across this client's key documents: channel reports, reports to senior team, email to employees and clients, strategic vision statements, profitability reports, sales tracking reports. (50% of engagement)

OUTCOME: Accurate individual writing assessment. Needed skills were honed progressively across relevant documents. Client documents better achieved business objectives.

3. Provided specific instruction on client's particular language style and syntax issues and opportunities: format enhancements, active voice, clarity, word choice, stronger conclusions, eliminated jargon and business-speak. Grammar correction strategies applied as errors presented. (30% of engagement)

OUTCOME: Tighter, more interesting language that was grammatically correct and conveyed confidence.

4. Skill gaps and writing requirements defined coaching focus. This allowed a customized coaching focus on those skills most relevant to client writing and business objectives.

COACHING PLAN DEVELOPMENT

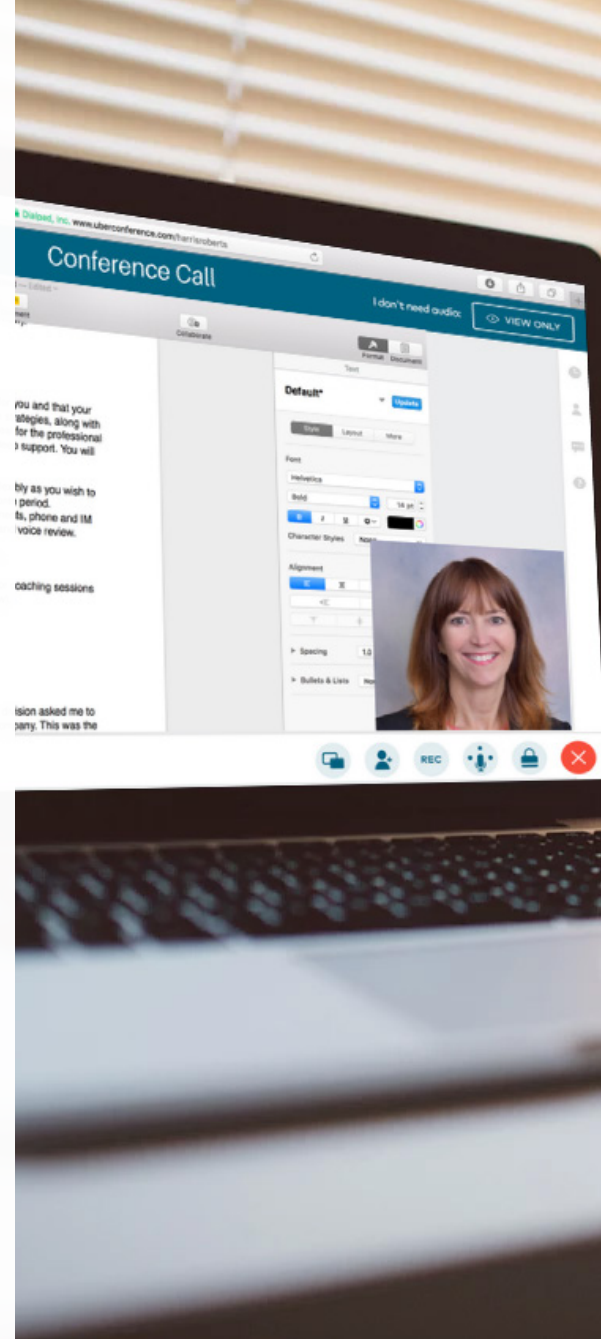
1. Defined client goals.

2. Outlined key documents for position and business objectives:

- Email (daily as well as quarterly business partner updates)
- Weekly sales and project status reports to senior management
- Quarterly PowerPoint revenue & achievements summary to senior management, internal reports
- Idea summaries to articulate vision and goals for division

3. Coach assessed key documents written recently for skill gaps and strengths.

4. Coach developed coaching plan, which was approved by client. Checked in on goal mastery three times during coaching engagement.





“Mary is a true business writing expert. She has an amazing ability to hone skills and documents at the same time.”

COACHING SEQUENCE

(Note: This was sequence for this client. Sequence varies, depending fully on client goals, skill gaps, and writing requirements.)

Session One: Process

- a. 6-Step Business Writing Process for efficiency
- b. How to best target audience
- c. Best allocation of writing time

Session Two: Concept Mapping

- a. How to best plan documents and convey ideas – major focus to organize complex information
- b. Best tools for concept mapping
- c. How to deliver bad news
- d. Mapped document together based on scenario

Session Three: Prewriting Strategies for Efficiency

- a. Concept mapping continued, including mobile apps for meetings and strategy sessions
- b. Other prewriting techniques to increase speed
- c. Mapped client email sent quarterly to all business partners

Session Four: Process Fully Applied to Key Documents

- a. Mapped weekly status report and annual division report. Client received feedback from management that new format greatly enhanced what they needed to know from report.
- b. Developed new templates for these two key reporting documents
- c. Client confirmed he was now confident conveying and organizing any ideas for his documents and organization. Time on each document was reducing.

Session Five: Email

- a. Email productivity enhancements
- b. Current issues and recommendations for writing downward to team to accurately convey client's vision and confidence
- c. Current issues and recommendations for writing upward to executive team to accurately convey achievements and goals

COACHING SEQUENCE CONTINUED

Session Six: Clarity Start

- a. Techniques to hone clarity
- b. Word choice
- c. Clarity applied to annual division report and selected emails

Session Seven: Honing Clarity and Eliminating Bloat

- a. Verb use to enhance clarity and voice
- b. Power of short words
- c. Eliminate business-speak and jargon
- d. Apply clarity to selected email messages
- e. Eliminate deadwood exercise in selected emails

Session Eight: Style and Leadership Voice

- a. Style guides
- b. Individual review for voice
- c. Rhetorical techniques to convey confident tone
- d. Authenticity, voice, and caution about trends
- e. Style applied to quarterly email to partners

Session Nine: Individual Grammar Error Tendency Corrections

- a. Grammar errors identified
- b. Correction plan and resources
- c. Individual grammar error tendencies corrected in selected emails and status report

Session Ten: Wrap Up and Ongoing Resources

- a. Defined focus as this client concluded coaching
 - i. Continue to lean on process, even when busy. When client has to choose between speed and accuracy, always opt for accuracy. In his position, unclear messages derail progress and perception.
 - ii. Continue to watch conclusions and ensure they explicitly state document goal
 - iii. Let voice, direction, and his style shine through all documents
 - iv. Final correction of minor entrenched grammar issues
 - v. Ongoing resources presented



“My writing skills now match my leadership role in my company.”



“I’m far more efficient. I can summarize my vision for my division confidently. I’m confident that what I write will be professional and well received.”

[**Click here for full evaluation.**](#)

Click here to schedule a complimentary writing review to determine if coaching would help your career.