

Boost Your Brand with First Class Web Writing Skills

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2020
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PRESENTER
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Disclosures

- Consultant for WebMD
- Owner, No Nonsense Nutrition, LLC
- Medical Advisory Board, Nutrition4Kids
- Sabra Wellness & Nutrition Advisory Board
- Bayer Leaders Engaged in Advancing Dialogue on Agriculture

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Learning Objectives

- 1**
Learn how to write effectively for the online communications and choose words that resonate with consumers both emotionally and intellectually.
- 2**
Understand the impact of scientific integrity in reporting over the last decade.
- 3**
Describe the differences between personal opinion and feamongering, and scientific evidence.

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Navigating Today's Digital Age

RDs have a tremendous amount to gain by leveraging social media and improving their communication skills:

- Communications and marketing is essential in this competitive landscape: Backbone of Success.
- It's one of the best ways to promote yourself.
- Customizing social media will allow you to share your passion, differentiate yourself and clear up confusion.

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Challenges in Journalism

- Adapting to advances in technology
- Blurring lines between editorial and advertising
- Social networks and influencers bypassing traditional media
- Personal safety or security issues in this line of work
- Ongoing conversation on "fake news"

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Unlock Your Potential

- Writing Strategy
- Optimization
- Audience

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Upping Your Game

- Brush up on the basics** – do you have a style guide for correct use of grammar? Grammar Girl
- Practice makes perfect** – write regularly, it helps you develop a unique style and avoid the blank page
- Read often** – especially authors you admire; pay attention to sentence structure, word choice, and flow
- Imitate writers you admire** – what about humor? Pop culture? Entertaining? Practical?
- Start with an outline** – first drafts
- Become your own harshest critic** – edit ruthlessly and find a good editor
- Less is more** – eliminate unnecessary words; shorter sentences can have a greater impact; share relevant content, concisely

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Be a Better Communicator

Communication skills are the backbone of success:

- Listen with an open mind
- Change your perspective
- Clarity of message is how it FLOWS

Condense, translate science to news you can use:

- Cut through the clutter to the bottom line
- Analyze it, CONTEXT
- Identify your personal opinion
- Be the authority but don't overpromise
- Overstating your case undercuts your credibility

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Social Currency: Great Headlines

- The headline engages, determines if people are likely to click, share, comment
- It can make or break an article (and SEO) – a compelling headline is always part of the equation
- Numbers, new angle, trends, keywords
- Keep it Real
 - Don't oversimplify – avoid click bait – be accurate
 - Don't forsake accuracy to move quickly on trending topics

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Powerful Opening

- **Structure** your content in the correct order
- **Lead** with your most grabbing data
- **Content flows** from one piece to the next
- **Insert** videos, pictures, and infographics to enhance the message, not distract from it
- **Break up** content with sub-headings
- **Avoid** the wall of text > small chunks, sub-heads

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Close With a Call to Action

- **Lead** the reader where to navigate next
- **Sign up** for an e-mail
- **Purchase** an item or service
- **Link** to another page on the website
- **Have call to action** buttons in the right spot

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Catchy Headlines and Visuals




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Beyond Bylines

- Where are you losing readers?
- Where are you going too deep?
- How can you be more creative? Tell interesting stories:
 - Best stories have good vs. evil
- Nutrition journalists need to find ways to write NEW stories
- Can you create that epiphany moment?



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Focused Content

- Niche subject matter – one specific aspect
- This allows you to find interesting, little-known tidbits of relevant data that you can include in your content, furthering your status as an expert in the field
- Consider a series that brings the user back
- Insight gained can be shared with others

“Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.”
— Benjamin Franklin




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Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

- **Achieving premium search results** for specific search terms can have a huge impact on your brand
- **Content** – do your webpages provide answers to questions?
- **Keywords** – help users discover your content:
 - Find the words and phrases being searched and incorporate into the title
 - Many analytic tools - many free - that can help; consider hiring an expert
- **Technical** – is your site set up in a way that allows its pages to be crawled and indexed by search engines?
- **Pitch guest posts** to outlets with highly-engaged audiences



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Power of the Right Word

- Communicate so people understand:
 - Translate science into meaningful messages
 - Executive summary
- 6th-8th grade reading level
- Choose words that resonate to inspire, empower and motivate
- Write short, simple sentences – ‘snack-able’

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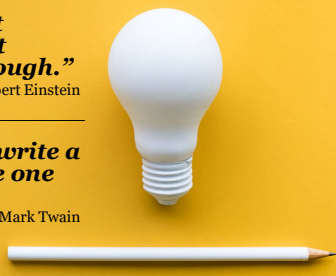
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“If you can’t explain it simply, then you don’t understand it well enough.”
– Albert Einstein

“I didn’t have time to write a short letter, so I wrote one long one instead.”
– Mark Twain



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Less is More Online

- Write to empower, not to impress; use half the words
- “Read 25% slower, only 20% of page”
- Lots of white space
- Hyperlinks and “share” to engage
- Bullets, easy reading, short, above the fold
- Don’t regurgitate – write in a spicier way

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Mastering the @BCs

- Bite sized information
- Surprising
- Strategic – is it memorable?
- Seductive
- Simple – positive- actionable
- Sustainable
- Spicier – write it spicier
- Ask a question
- Describe healthful food with deliciousness



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Communicate Persuasively

- Show your personality
 - Confidence, controlled passion and a well-organized delivery
- Tell the whole story- both sides
- Become comfortable talking about controversial topics from a neutral POV
- Bring it back to FOOD, dietary patterns
- Practical application, key take aways



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Connect Emotionally

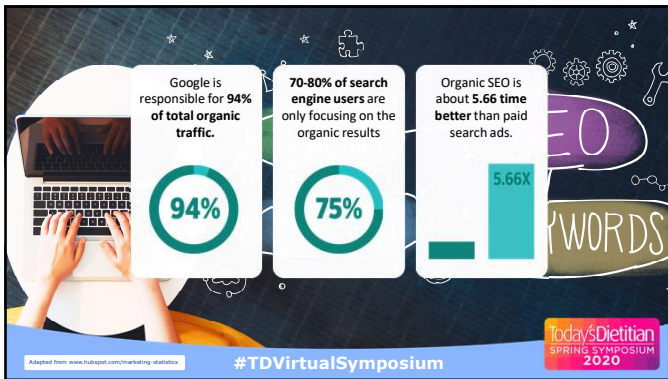
- Frame the argument
- Seek interesting (not extreme) disagreement – this helps avoid bias
- What are the facts and where is there room for debate?
- Be engaging – consider yours and readers emotions
- Some want the details whereas others want a simple narrative
- Bloggers can share opinions, journalists cannot.



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Authoritative Links

- Always include them in your work
- Better to hyperlink using a descriptor than "click here"
- Seek out related sites willing to share your links
- Consider video posted on YouTube:
 - 2nd most popular search engine
 - Better shot of ranking for specific keywords
- Google gives priority in search to companies with the greatest number of relevant backlinks

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Audiences Rule: Help Dispel Confusion

- Even in best cases, it is hard to know who you are talking to
 - No 1 on 1
- Generally low literacy on science
- Psychology of readers:
 - Simple resonates best usually but some want depth
 - Huge focus on NEW information – obsession with newness

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What Inspires Consumers?


- **Experts** they can relate to - no preaching
- **Clear, concise information**
 - Pictures, videos, interactive platforms ON DEMAND
- **JUICY NUGGETS**
 - Want to be entertained; interesting and relevant
- **Real time analysis**, context, and commentary

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Lights, Camera, Action



"Livestreams make viewers feel 'in the moment.' Facebook audiences viewing 3x more live video vs. non-live"



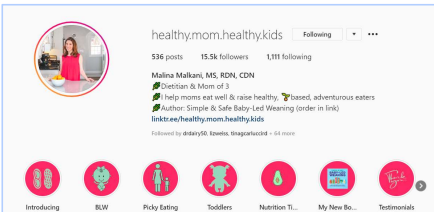
"Videos that are less produced, more realistic, and less polished productions – but not too long!"


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Maximize Social Media





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Boost Engagement with Visuals


- **A picture** is worth a thousand words
 - Some people grasp concepts better with visuals
- **Infographics**, how-to videos
- **Benefits:** break up blocks of text, catch a reader's eye, improve SEO
- **Plenty** of free picture resources, check copyrights


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Free Image Resources

- Pixabay** – free to use for any purpose
- Unsplash** – Beautiful high-resolution
- New Old Stock** – An internet repository of vintage photographs
- FoodiesFeed** – food-oriented site
- Life of Pix** – high-res photos of landscapes, people, and more
- Gratisography** – quirky images, don't look like basic stock photos
- MorgueFile** – one of the oldest repositories of free photos
- Stockvault** – highly searchable database, free and premium stock
- Clippy** – animated gif clipart



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Photos Tell Stories



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Finding the Hottest Online Topics

What's Trending:

- BuzzFeed provides a wealth of social news and entertainment.
- Buzz Sumo – find hot topics and key influencers across channels \$\$
- Reddit
- Sprout Social – real time monitoring, reports, analytics \$\$
- Pinterest monthly trending reports
- You Tube



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Mastermind Groups

- We all need a trusted mentor to confide in
- Helpful when overwhelmed or need guidance
- Explaining your idea to another person can help you rediscover your story from your audience's perspective
- Invite constructive criticism, we all need it for professional growth
- The point of all writing is to communicate well with your reader
- Everything – including your pride – is secondary



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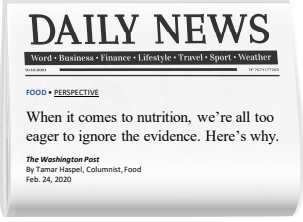
Ethics and Evidence

- We are governed by **The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Code of Ethics** in everything we communicate
- Sometimes opinions vary; not everyone agrees with the science:
 - Identify your personal opinion – put into context
 - Avoid wordsmithing/phrasing to twist interpretation
 - Stay within the boundaries of the weight of the evidence
- Words matter:
 - Cause and effect is not the same as an association
 - Correlation is not the same as causation
 - Hazard vs risk (exposure that determines risk of the hazard)

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Stay Within Boundaries: Interpreting Evidence



The Washington Post
By Tamar Hasegal, Columnist, Food
Feb. 24, 2020


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Nutrition is More Complicated Than Astrophysics

- 3 simple things to look for in a study:
 - Humans: the more the better – thousands
 - Time: the longer the better
 - Studies: the more the better
- FTC and FCC full disclosure
- Bring it back to FOOD, dietary pattern
 - Find common ground before the facts which are not persuasive
 - Practical application, key take aways



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Your Personal Reputation is Everything

- Practice by the ethical code
- Garner integrity, credibility, and trust
- What you say impacts you and RDNs in general
- If you call yourself an expert, you must behave as one
- Your currency is credibility

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Stand Out Among the Competition

- What distinguishes you?
- Training, job experiences, foreign languages, skill set, degrees
- Increasingly competitive marketplace with lots of self-described experts
- Communication skills can give you the competitive edge



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Key Take Aways

- **Confidence**, controlled passion, and well-organized delivery of content will influence others and help build followers, clients
- **Engage your audience** and translate science into "news you can use"
- **Up your social IQ and writing style** – it will help advance your career more than your education, experience, and industry knowledge
- **Be careful with your personal opinion** – it can fly in the face of ethics
- **Stay up to date**, use SEO
- **The secret to success** is YOU! Enjoy the journey



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Questions?

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