



Lunch and Learn

September 22, 2004

Proofreading the Capstrat way

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See accompanying pdf: editmarks.pdf	

This white paper is a part of our employee-led Lunch and Learn training program. Employees that lead Lunch and Learn sessions are experts on their topics. The topics vary from beginner to expert level.

For more information on our Lunch and Learn program or a specific topic, please contact Capstrat and mention the topic of interest.

lunchandlearn@capstrat.com

We've all seen it before...typos can ruin the message

Come see the largest collection of CD's, DVD's and Video's. Fine dining at it's best!!!!

A little punctuation makes all the difference

A woman, without her man, is nothing.
A woman: without her, man is nothing.

Capstrat Process

Proofreading is quality control.
We're only as smart as we look on paper.
That's why we have a process.

It's in the book...the Capstrat Client Engagement Handbook Printed materials, advertising and white papers

Four sets of eyes, including at least one person unfamiliar with the project

Press releases

Three sets of eyes, including at least one person unfamiliar with the project

Proposals, conference reports

Two sets of eyes

Letters, emails

Two sets of eyes

Any communication containing sensitive or confidential information must be proofread by an account director or managing partner.

Capstrat Client Engagement Handbook, pp. 22-23.

Different Levels of Proofing

- General proofing for typos, obvious errors or inconsistencies
- Proofing for a particular style or a particular subject
- Proofing for design elements
- Editing for content, style and flow

Know your place

You're the proofer, not the writer.
Make yourself useful. How can you make this better?
Your job is to question. You can always be overruled.

Know what you're proofing

Rules are different for ads than for press releases or annual reports.

And the rules are the same.

Know the rules

Get familiar with a style guide.
Brush up on your grammar and punctuation.
Pay attention when someone else proofs your writing.
Those who know the rules can break the rules.

What's the point?

Keep it clear.
Keep it correct.
Keep it in context.
Keep it consistent.

Tips for proofers and writers

Ask someone else to proof your copy. But proof it yourself.
Spell check — it's the least you can do.
Schedule enough time.
Concentrate.
Proof twice — once for technical accuracy, once for sense.
Do whatever you need to slow down.
Proof against documentation.
Make your edits easy to find and easy to read.
If more than one person is proofing, make it clear.
Identify versions.
Proofread with a partner.
Do the math.
Check numbering.
Check paired items.

Proofing Exercise – Test Your Proofing Skills

Example 1

Last year one of our executives cold called a real estate company in Philadelphia about property tax work. Their CFO said he was not interested. But after describing several problems he was having with operations he asked if we would bid on their audit. Our firm was a latecomer to the audit race, we eventually lost in the RFP process.

The CFO is a huge Philadelphia Eagles fan and he knew the executive was from Dallas. A couple of weeks after Dallas beat Philly, the executive sent the CFO an email that said, 'How 'bout them Cowboys!' The CFO called immediately - in good humor - and asked if we wanted not only to bid on property tax, but also on a systems implementation.

Answer: Example 1

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em dashes

apostrophe

#####

Example 2

A good IT architecture helps ensure that all of the diverse pieces fit together – now, and in the future. It creates alignment between processes, systems, data, and infrastructure. It provides a standard platform and tools to get new systems up and running quickly. And it's scalable and flexible to adapt to an agencies changing needs.

Get everyone on the same page—by adapting common terminology for discussing information and technology related issues. Use the same definitions for abstract concepts (e.g. IT architecture, software lifecycle, data modeling) and apply standard performance measures which allow an apples to apples comparison across projects and organizations.

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#####

Example 3

We understand that the client would like to refresh it's image and positioning in the marketplace to make it more modern and consistant, while still retaining it's history.

Capstrat wants to be more than a vendor, we want to be a strategic partner. Through immersion, we will review your past marketing activities, competition, customers and prospects to get the "big picture" of where you were, where you are and where you're headed.

To assure that your communications resonate with your audience, is will be crucial to test and refine your messaging. Capstrat recommends nation-wide focus groups to validate the messaging before developing a comperhensive communications plan.

Answer: Example 3

it — We understand that the client would like to refresh ^git's image and positioning in the marketplace to make it more modern and consistant, while still retaining it's history.

you — Capstrat wants to be more than a vendor, ^gwe want to be a strategic partner. Through immersion, we will review your past marketing activities, competition, customers and prospects to get the "big picture" of where you were, where you are and where you're headed.

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del #

PROOFREADING CHEAT SHEET

It's – contraction of It is

Its – possessive pronoun

It's Friday!

The organization wrote its mission.

There – adverb indicating location

Their – plural possessive pronoun

They're – contraction of They are

There are the senators.

Their jobs are secure.

They're waiting for the governor.

You're – contraction of You are

Your – possessive pronoun

You're a credit to the profession.

Your ideas were a hit with the client.

Stationery – letterhead

Stationary – not moving

We designed new stationery.

The server should be stationary.

Complimentary – free

OR giving praise

Complementary – go well together

The drinks were complimentary.

The client was complimentary of our work.

She designed a complementary folder for the brochure.

Less – for nouns you can't count

Fewer – for nouns you can count

Exception: numerical expressions

We had less concern after the vote.

We had fewer votes in that county.

We drove less than 20 miles today.

Yea – hooray

Yeah – yes, okay

Yea! It's time for Summer Fridays!

Yeah, I'll print that out again.

Underway – nautical

Under way – in progress

The ship was underway when it sank.

The campaign is now under way.

Y'all – Contraction of You all

Y'all need to do your timesheets.

Who – pronoun for people

That – pronoun for things

The clients who matter are mine.

The work that matters is mine.

That – for essential clauses

WITHOUT COMMAS

Which – for nonessential clauses

WITH COMMAS

The estimates that she requested are in the email.

The estimates, which she requested, are higher than expected.

Principle – guideline, tenet

Principal – primary, main

OR leader of a school

The Capstrat Principles guide our interactions.

Our principal goal is to improve sales.

The principal is your pal.

Affect – VERB influence The referendum will affect the future of all students.
Effect – NOUN result The effect of the hurricane was disastrous.
Exception: effect a change The campaign effected a total reversal of policy.

e.g. – literally, for example We have many audiences to reach, e.g., teen girls.
i.e. – literally, that is We have one primary target, i.e., the city council.
Both are always lowercase and followed by a comma.

only – place it near the word or phrase it modifies
Capstrat offers only the best ideas.
NOT: Capstrat only offers the best ideas.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Subject separated from verb:

One of the many reporters **is asking** a follow-up question.
The main reason he will succeed **is** his university connections.
There **are** dozens of good conferences to choose from.

Collective noun:

A group of senators **is calling** for an investigation.

Either/or, Neither/nor [verb agrees with the closer subject]:

Either the avid supporters or the good press **is helping** to get the word out.

Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement

Each of the clients brought **his** own notebook.
The company is rethinking **its** mission.

THE PROBLEM WITH PUNCTUATION

Commas

Serial comma – leave it out if not needed for clarity:

We will provide marketing, Internet strategy and advertising services.

They have started market intelligence, media analysis, and research and development.

If commas are already being used within a series, use semicolons to separate them:

Trade shows will be in Dallas, Texas; Baltimore, Maryland; and Seattle, Washington.

Introductory comma – use after longer phrases and all clauses:

Before summer we will conduct three focus groups.

Before the campaign is over, we will reach three million people.

Joining two clauses with a conjunction:

The target audience is young women 18-34, and the secondary audience is older women 35-54.

We recommend two press conferences, but they may need to be simultaneous.

BUT use a semicolon when there is no conjunction:

We recommend two press conferences; however, they may need to be simultaneous.

BUT no comma needed if there are not two clauses:

We recommend two press conferences and will supply full plans in the next report.

Use a comma if a phrase or clause is not essential to the meaning of the sentence [see That/Which]:

The start-up company, founded by a former client, is now bankrupt.

The start-up company, which a former client founded, is now bankrupt.

The start-up company that a former client founded is now interested in working with us.

Colons

Use to introduce a list or example [but avoid using a colon in a subhead].

This campaign includes three approaches: marketing, advertising and direct mail.

Use to introduce a related sentence [cap the first letter of a sentence after a colon].

We do promise this: Your qualified leads will increase by 10 percent.

Apostrophes

Use in contractions. It takes the place of the character(s) removed.

isn't

hold 'em

rock 'n' roll

the '60s [BUT the 1960s]

Use to show possession. In general, start with the noun, either singular or plural, then make it possessive. The most common way is to add 's for singular and just ' for plural.

Singular

Capstrat's story

A reporter's coverage

Steve Jones' business

the witness's testimony

Plural

our clients' stories

The reporters' coverage

The Joneses' business

the witnesses' testimony

Exceptions:

Agnes' office

One person's vote

The people's voice

Henry and Sue's clients [they have the same clients]

Henry's and Sylvia's clients [they have separate clients]

Possessive pronouns do not take an apostrophe: his, hers, its, yours, theirs, ours.

Note this use of the apostrophe: 10 years' experience [10 years of experience], two weeks' notice

Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphen - used to join words

Dash — used to separate words or phrases [don't use double hyphens for dashes]

En dash – used between spans such as years: 1990–2001 [and sometimes preferred in place of the em dash]

Em dash — used between phrases

Typically there is no space before or after a dash, although that's the typesetter's choice.

Whichever style is used, use it consistently.

To hyphenate or not?

Hyphenate:

Fractions — one-fourth, three-quarters

Compound adjectives before a noun — a 24-page brochure, a six-color press

Do not hyphenate:

Adverb + adjective — highly motivated team, wholly owned subsidiary

Often usage dictates hyphens:

As verb: Check out CNN tonight for our client's interview.

As an adjective: The check-out counter is to your left.

As an adjective before the noun: An up-to-date report is on the F drive.

As an adjective after the noun: Her personnel file is up to date.

Prefixes

antifreeze

deregulation

multimillion

cyberterrorism

BUT:

co-worker

anti-equality

bio-entity

Other tricky words to remember:
everyday [but only as an adjective!]
high-tech
in-house
ongoing
twofold
toll-free

Periods and commas always go inside quotation marks. All other punctuation depends on context.

“I don’t care what the deadline is,” she said.

“What is the client’s definition of success?”

Who said, “Stay a step ahead of the client”?

I loved “Truth Happens”; however, the latest Red Hat video was even better.

If the parenthetical thought is within a sentence, the end punctuation goes outside the parenthesis:

We will revise our project estimate based on the new print quantity (now up to 5000).

If the parenthetical thought stands on its own, the end punctuation goes inside the parenthesis:

We will revise our project estimate based on the new print quantity. (The client now requests 5000.)

PROOFING CHECKLIST

Preliminary Questions

- What type of writing is this?
- When is it due?
- What stage is it in?
- Who has the final say?
- How should I give comments? [in writing? post-its? pdf comments? Track changes?]
- Does client have a particular style?

Spelling [don't rely completely on spell check]

- When in doubt, look it up!

Grammar

- Agreement: subject-verb, pronoun-antecedent
- Complete sentences [or fragments for effect]
- No run-on sentences

Punctuation

- No missing periods, commas
- Commas in right places
- Apostrophes
- Hyphens
- Dashes
- Quotation marks
- No tick marks for apostrophes and quotes

Legal Documentation

- Trademarks [™, ®, SM and verbiage. If using another company's trademarks, note it]
- Product and company names
- Right placement? [generally first usage; once every page for longer documents]
- Copyright? [Copyright or ©, not both; the year and the copyright owner: © 2004 Red Hat]

Mechanics

- Page numbers
- Table of contents
- Captions match pictures
- Phone numbers, addresses, URLs, email addresses
- Footnotes, asterisks match notes
- Abbreviations defined on first reference [if needed]

Design Issues

- Headline/subhead consistency
- Font/size
- Spacing/indents
- Rag/justification
- One space after periods

PROOFREADING TIPS FOR PROOFERS AND WRITERS

- If you wrote the copy, get someone else to proofread it. You should proofread it yourself first and last, but don't trust yourself to be the only one who sees it.
- Spell check is always the least you can do — and it's never enough.
- Schedule enough time for proofreading. It takes more than a few minutes.
- Proofreading takes concentration. Go somewhere else if you have to, but find a way to block out noise and interruptions.
- Proof at least twice — once for technical accuracy, once for sense.
- Do whatever you need to slow down, so your eye doesn't skim over the words. Read the copy out loud. Read sentences backwards. Use a sheet of paper as a marker, so you read only one line at a time.
- Proof against documentation. Are there product lists the client provided? Emails that list changes? Original versions with edits marked up? Provide these to the proofreader.
- Make your edits easy to find and easy to read. Use standard proofreading marks. Use a contrasting color so your corrections stand out for the person making the changes. Mark every page that has an error so they don't get missed.
- If more than one person is proofing the same document, use different colors. If you write in a question or comment, put your name or initials in case the author needs to come back to you.
- Identify versions, so you don't proof an out-of-date version. You may need to use date/time.
- For long tables and lists, proofread with a partner. One calls out the text from the original while the other checks the copy.
- Do the math. Check sums, differences and percentages. If you don't have the information you need, question the author.
- Check numbering (pagination, bullets, points, etc.) to make sure it's sequential.
- Check paired items such as parentheses and quotation marks. For example, if there's an open quote, make sure the close quote is in the right place.