



Lunch and Learn

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Reading

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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.

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You can't be a good writer if you're not a consumer of good writing.

Learning to write well is a passion at Capstrat, and everyone — not just copywriters or account directors — should be able to write clearly and concisely.

Ernest Hemingway: "Write like you talk, only better."

Here's what was on my nightstand recently:

News & Observer

Charlotte Observer

Wall Street Journal

New York Times

Business Week

Fortune

PR Week

Fast Company — You never know what you'll find in your reading.

I read a story about futuristic office furniture. Asked our space consultants about it. They hadn't heard of it but did some research. We ended up outfitting the Capstrat office with that very furniture.

New Yorker

Atlantic Monthly

Boating magazine

Wilmington Business Journal

North Carolina magazine

Living to Tell The Tale by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The Message — Bible translation by Eugene Peterson

Tips on reading

1) Pay attention while you read. Do you notice what you're reading? Is it clear or garbled? What makes you stop to reread something?

2) Read for fun. Reading relieves stress and takes you to another world, if only for a short while. Be sure to mix fiction with nonfiction.

3) Read to stay a step ahead. Reading keeps us current on trends in our society, where our culture is going. No time to read? Sleep is overrated! But remember, you don't have to read every word. Look for top-level information that informs you enough to decide what to read in depth. For example,

read the *Wall Street Journal* but use the What's News section on the front page and Marketplace to determine what you want to read later.

4) Help your colleagues stay a step ahead. None of us has the time to read everything, but we can help each other stay abreast of the latest developments. Don't assume that an account director has seen every word about his/her client. You could be seeing a story from a different angle.

5) Read to know. Feed your curiosity. It's a sign of an active mind. Reading is the best way to get curious or satisfy a habit of curiosity.

What we are reading at Capstrat:

The Sparrow by Mary Doria Russell ["a fantasy/science fiction"]

John Hope Franklin's biography ["My friend gave me the honor of reading the galleys!"]

Crimes Against Logic by Jamie Whyte ["Tells you how to spot and skewer poorly constructed arguments, in topics ranging from advertising to religion."]

Eats Shoots and Leaves by Lynne Truss ["A delightful look at grammar and punctuation. Loved the chapter on commas."]

A People's History of the United States: 1492-Present by Howard Zinn

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell by Susanna Clarke ["Harry Potter for adults"]

The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century by Thomas L. Friedman

Dancing After Hours by Andre Dubus

The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers

Don't Think of an Elephant: Know Your Values and Frame the Debate—The Essential Guide for Progressives by George Lakoff ["An enlightening and VERY SHORT book on how conservatives and liberals see the world differently, and how you can adjust your language and arguments to win them over."]

Nemesis: The True Story of Aristotle Onassis, Jackie O, and the Love Triangle That Brought Down the Kennedys by Peter Evans

The Culting of Brands: When Customers Become True Believers by Douglas Atkins

Thank You for Smoking by Christopher Buckley ["Advertising and PR without wit is like grits without butter — painful to even think about. This funny novel about lobbyists and flacks will make you approach what you do with a smile.]

Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

1776 by David McCullough ["Interesting reading while I was in Philadelphia for BIO 2005.]

New York Times Sunday edition ["The smartest and best comprehensive source of world news."]

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference by Malcolm Gladwell

The Corrections: A Novel by Jonathan Franzen

Sleuthing the Alamo: Davy Crockett's Last Stand and Other Mysteries of the Texas Revolution by Jim E. Crisp ["He's a local writer/historian.]

Mornings on Horseback: The Story of an Extraordinary Family, a Vanished Way of Life and the Unique Child Who Became Theodore Roosevelt by David McCullough

Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story by Timothy B. Tyson ["My July book club selection."]

Living History by Hillary Rodham Clinton

The Economist

Yoga Journal

It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want To Be: The World's Best Selling Book by Paul Arden

Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies by Jim Collins, Jerry I. Porras

Absinthe: History in a Bottle by Barnaby Conrad

The Winning Attitude: Your Pathway to Personal Success by John C. Maxwell

The Heartache No One Sees by Sheila Walsh

White Teeth by Zadie Smith

InStyle ["I indulge in celebrity gossip! Shhh...."]

Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America by James Webb

Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking by Malcolm Gladwell

Les Miserables by Victor Hugo

I Am Charlotte Simmons by Tom Wolfe

Gone for Soldiers: A Novel of the Mexican War by Jeffrey Shaara

The Secret Life of Bees by Sue Kidd

Pawley's Island by Dorothea Benton Frank

Bridges by Doug Marlette

The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner

My Losing Season by Pat Conroy

Tough Calls: AT&T and the Hard Lessons Learned from the Telecom Wars by Dick Martin [“History of the company’s PR during a turbulent time in the industry.”]

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Newsweek

Consumer Reports

Time

Just Say No! by Omar Tyree

Breathing Out by Peggy Lipton

Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind by Al Ries and Jack Trout

Madam Secretary: A Memoir by Madeleine Albright

Life of Pi by Yann Martel

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini [“So depressing, but an interesting insight into current affairs in Afghanistan.”]

The Time Traveler's Wife by Audrey Niffenegger

Schismatrix by Bruce Sterling

What we've learned:

Audiobooks received a rousing endorsement for making it easier to fit reading into our busy lives. A great source is audible.com. Capstrat is looking into setting up a lending library for audiobooks.

Technology can help us carve time out for something we like to do — and need to do.

Our research for clients has shown us that Americans are losing their ability to read, because of technology and timeframes.