

READ ME

Sojourners through this Information Age have become extraordinarily adept at visual discernment. In a New York nanosecond, they survey a panoply of blogs and blurbs, bench signs and billboards, and read just that tiny sliver that whispers of relevance or entertainment value. How, then, do you get your targeted readers to attend to your message -- on your web page, in your press release or white paper -- *and* take action (e.g., purchase, hire, subscribe, invest or reconsider)?

The initial grab is all about smart graphics, timing and placement (what isn't about location, location, location?). The rest is trickier. Say you have lured your readers to the table with your catchy title and awesome artwork. Even so, their attention is wavering before they reach the second line of your masterpiece. In this age of 24-hour verbal smorgasbords, they will remain at *your* table only if your content is truly

FRESH

What makes writing fresh?

Humor has been defined as “the juxtaposition of incongruities” – putting familiar things together in unlikely ways, based on commonalities that were... well, just never really noticed before. Fresh writing to teach, guide, persuade or motivate is based on this same concept of realigning familiar concepts or images. But instead of shooting for belly laughs, it need only nip at the imagination enough to keep the cubicle lights on past 4:59 to be successful.

Whether your audience is The Society of Aristotelian Cosmologists or The Yeehaw Junction Road Hogs, if you can create content that it is just the slightest bit *startling* in its imagery and word selection, your readers will read on.

Connect...Connect...Connect!

So you are *BEING READ!* Half the battle is won. Your next challenge is to make your message memorable. Keep in mind that writing which is merely clear and informative is as effervescent as the bottle of tonic water in the back of your fridge, and will be treated with the same neglect.

We learn best when new information connects with that area deep in the brain where our strongest instincts and emotions reside. If you can remind your reader of how she felt at her firstborn's kindergarten performance as a dancing carrot, or even the agony of clinging

despairingly to the bottom knots of the climbing rope in 7th grade gym class (what they do to war criminals when waterboarding fails), you have applied the principle well. Aim for the heart.

Simply stated, know thy audience! Your writing should say “I *get* you, and I like you enough to want to share this with you, lucky reader!”. To connect, provoke a *personal* response. That makes your message memorable. Being memorable, in turn, triggers action, which is 99% of why anyone bothers to lecture, argue, plead, broadcast, debate... and most certainly write.

We tend to spend our resources getting in the faces of potential customers and trying to hook them with our pitches. Good writing draws in rather than chases its readers. When they knock at your door, simply invite them in for tea and let the relationship blossom!

Be Fresh and **Be Read**

Connect and **Be Remembered**