

More FAQs about Write to Influence!

1. Do you think writing this book was easier for you based on your emotional ties to the intended audience (i.e. the military)?

In a word, “Yes.” As a lieutenant colonel in 1994, I commanded 480 Air Force officer and enlisted troops in the 324th Intelligence Squadron. Among many other things, I was responsible for their training and helping to promote those deserving.

I saw how a supervisor’s inability to write well inadvertently impeded the careers of deserving subordinates and negatively impacted their families’ finances.

It was for them I developed my 10 Word Sculpting techniques, composed my 18-page handbook, and transformed it into a one-hour workshop.

This was a significant and life changing call to action for me. Those troops were my catalyst ... the proverbial wind in my sails. I’m still in touch with many to this day. Were it not for them, *Write to Influence!* wouldn’t exist.

2. What kind of research did you do, and how long did you spend researching before beginning this project?

I did **no** research for the **substance** of the book. The writing techniques and strategies were within me. Essentially, this is an autobiography of how I do what I do ... and how and why it propels people and businesses to success.

Researching HOW TO write, publish, and market a book ... completely different story. That is most intense learning curve I’ve ever encountered!

3. What makes *Write to Influence!* different from other similar works?

I searched book shelves extensively and found nothing similar. This assessment is echoed in numerous laudatory reviews.

You’ll find scores of functional, topic-specific books on grammar, resumes, grants, college essays, web sites, marketing, etc.

My approach is completely different -- it cuts horizontally, teaching **how to write powerfully** so people can then successfully compose a multitude of products and leverage the written word to their benefit.

To be sure, several books identify a few of what I call my Word Sculpting techniques, such as trimming useless words and using exciting verbs. *But, they only spend 3-4 paragraphs and perhaps one or two examples* advising the reader on these points.

Write to Influence! is unique in that it provides a deep dive on each writing technique with 100 examples in the format of Before/After/Analysis. It then follows with 200 exercises in that same format to enable the reader to practice the teaching points.

I found no single book that combines the how-to of writing powerfully (my Part 1) with the strategies and logic of assembling information to build powerful cases (my Part 2).

The tone is also different. I speak to the reader conversationally, as though we were sitting side by side. It's informal, light-hearted, and fun.

4. What suggestions do you have to help your audience change writing habits? (Steps to use the information in your book)

Like any skill, improvement comes with practice. Become familiar with the Word Sculpting techniques, work the exercises, then apply the techniques as you write. Review your draft with these techniques in mind, then revise.

When you are building a case to persuade the reader, anticipate and answer all of the reader's questions. Add facts and details to make it resonate. Check questions posed in *Write to Influence!* to ensure you've addressed the relevant points.

When reading others' work during the course of a business day, think of the techniques and determine how these products might be improved. Too wordy? Too convoluted? Redundant? It's all about awareness evolving to second nature.

Critically review your final draft with one question in mind ... Did you take the reader by the hand and successfully lead him/her to the conclusion of your message?

5. Why did you decide to write your book in this format

The basic format is based on the class I developed and taught to Air Force members for 15 years.

I found the format of Before/After, followed by the analysis was very effective to demonstrate the teaching points ... literally, show & tell. Then, I would pitch Before examples and challenge the students to fix them – an intellectual scavenger hunt. Loved seeing the light bulbs illuminate in the “Ahhh Hahhh, I get it!” moments.

Regarding the overall format of the book, itself ... since a powerful sentence is core to writing well, I open with the 10 Word Sculpting techniques. Section 2 builds upon that, addressing strategies of assembling information to constitute compelling messages.

Again using the show & tell approach, Section 3 places everything in the context of real world application: resumes, email, and presentations. Thinking that practice makes perfect, I conclude with many more exercises – build those writing muscles!

6. Who do you feel will benefit the most from reading this book and putting it into practice?(from your targeted audience).

My gosh, the audience is huge! Students (high school thru graduate school), individuals wanting to get ahead professionally, private business owners, corporations, NGOs, academia, government ...

Years ago, I was stunned at the tremendous demand for my original, little handbook– it literally went worldwide, copied by the thousands (no exaggeration) and disseminated to places I'd never be assigned.

That vacuum need has become more pronounced with the advent of email, tweeting, and other means of communication that have eroded our collective ability to write effectively.

7. Are there any plans for additional self-help/resource guides beneficial to your targeted audience?

I would like to take this to the junior high school level. I've developed a workshop for them; would like to follow with a work book. Right now, however, all effort is focused on promulgating *Write to Influence!* and several corresponding workshops to the various audiences.

8. Your book has great information for effective writing. If you had to limit this book to your top Three Simple Rules of Write to Influence what would they be?

1. **Useless Words.** Identify and delete them. Why does this make my Top 3? Two reasons: First, it is essential for concise, crisp writing that conveys your message ... before you lose the reader's attention. Second, many actions (e.g., annual personal reviews, college essays, applications for competitive positions) require information within specific space constraints, such as word count or actual, allocated physical space. In these instances, each word matters ... you can't afford the luxury of sloppy writing if you hope to deliver a persuasive message.

2. **Cart before the Horse.** Don't bury the golden nugget. Get to the point -- up front -- then elaborate with additional information, as necessary. Don't bury key information under lots of precursor text. This admonition applies at many levels: Critical words buried at the end of a lengthy sentence, central thought placed at the end of a cumbersome paragraph, and similarly, main paragraph following several laden with background information. Readers are busy--respect their time ... and attention span.

3. **Verbs.** Wield them courageously. They invigorate your writing and help retain the reader's attention. Used incorrectly, your product has the pizzazz of a piece of soggy toast. 1) Avoid overused, boring verbs such as "assist" that obfuscate what really happened and beg the question, "How?" 2) Shine the light on hidden verbs -- Beyond being ineffective, they waste space. ("sent us an inquiry" = "inquired" and "made a reservation" = "reserved") 3) Don't default to "official," bureaucratic writing 4) With a little thought, that action conveyed in 2 or more words can be said with a single, concise verb ("asked for" = "requested").

9. Is there any information omitted from this book you wish could be added or stated differently?

I omitted nothing from this book. I poured into it every ounce of my know-how, experience, and expertise. Just like taking care of my Air Force troops all those years ago, in *Write to Influence!* I strive to do the same for my reading public. It's all about helping people help themselves.