‘Writing 101’ for Member Support Team representatives

By Cheryl Krajna



Member Support Teams typically communicate with customers over the phone. However, sometimes the conversation carries over to email, which means that the representatives must be able to provide clear, concise and accurate information.

Strong writing skills are essential.

That’s where I stepped in to help.

When the manager noticed some lengthy and unclear emails being sent by her team, she asked me if I’d share some tips with them to improve their email writing skills. I designed a three-week series of presentations, each about 45 minutes.

Writing 101 for the Member Support Team



- **Week One: Keep it Short and Simple (KISS)**
  - Discussed “plain language” using team-specific examples
  - Think like a reporter – Answer the 5 Ws
  - Avoid jargon and unclear abbreviations
  - Simple formatting tips to make a lengthy email easier to read
  - The One-Sentence Rule



- **Week Two: Tone and Voice**
  - Know your audience
  - Formal versus informal
  - Company style guidelines
  - How you sound in your writing
  - Active voice vs. passive voice



- **Week Three: Nuts and Bolts**
  - Grammar and spelling
  - Punctuation
  - Commonly misused words (e.g. affect/effect)
  - Possessive vs. plural
  - Proofreading tips

Those sessions were received so well that a few weeks later, I presented a “Beyond the Basics” session to the analysts on the team. These are people who review claims, looking for specific information and documentation. If the member doesn’t understand the process, exchanges can get heated.

“Beyond the Basics” for Team Analysts

- Writing clear instructions
- Think like a “technical writer”
- What does the customer need to know/do
- More detailed formatting tips
- Sentence structure

Why was this training important? Every email reflects the company. Effective writing builds trust, reduces unnecessary back-and-forth, and protects the company’s reputation.

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