

Editing Sample: Predictions, Applications, and One Big Idea

Copy and line edit of a guest opinion column for a B2B technology trade publication. The goal was to make it clean and consistent with house style without losing the author's punchy, conversational voice that was well-known to the readership.

Piece	Guest column, "Five Predictions, Five Applications, and One Big Idea"
Publication	The Imaging Channel, January 2022
Length	About 1,200 words
Edits	About 200 tracked changes: copy edits, line edits, fact checks
Style	AP, plus house style

What I changed: capitalization and punctuation to AP style, run-on and fragmented sentences, overused exclamation points, a misspelled brand name, a sentence fragment, and one line that leaned on a stereotype.

What I protected: the author's jokes, rhetorical questions, direct reader address, and deliberate emphasis.

Excerpt 1: The opening

Before

2022: 5 Predictions, 5 Applications, and 1 Big Idea

"Trying to predict the future is like trying to drive down a country road at night with no lights while looking out the back window." These are words coined by Peter Drucker before the pandemic, before augmented Reality, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, 3D Printing, Computer Vision, Touchscreen and infinity displays, cloud computing, crowdfunding websites, Tik Tok, and Meta. I wonder what the good Dr. what think about trying to predict the future now!

After

Five Predictions, Five Applications, and One Big Idea

"Trying to predict the future is like trying to drive down a country road at night with no lights while looking out the back window." These are words coined by Peter Drucker before the pandemic, before augmented reality, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, 3D printing, computer vision, touchscreen and infinity displays, cloud computing,

crowdfunding websites, TikTok, and Meta. I wonder what the good doctor would think about trying to predict the future now.

What I did

- Spelled out numbers in the headline and dropped the redundant year
- Lowercased technology terms that aren't proper nouns, matching "cloud computing" later in the same list
- Added "the" before Internet of Things and corrected the brand name to TikTok
- Fixed the typo ("what" for "would") and swapped "Dr." for "doctor"
- Replaced the exclamation point with a period to let the line land on its own

Excerpt 2: Keeping the voice, fixing the mechanics

Before

Learn to lead well . How we learned to lead is based on a world that no longer exists. The “Command and Control” model is out the window, get over it. Your top reps are not coming back in the office every Monday morning for a rally. Why? Because they do not have to! Because they have realized it does not serve them. The same goes for your CFO, she does not need to be sitting in the office 9-5 (did she ever??). And guess what, try to make her and she is moving down the street to another employer who, “values her.” [...] Yeah, thought so. Want to lead well? Learn to coach and mentor. Learn to develop real relationships with your people. Relationships that prove you know their desires, their fears, hopes and dreams. Prove that you care about them.

After

Learn to Lead Well

How we learned to lead is based on a world that no longer exists. The “Command and Control” model is out the window — get over it. Your top reps are not coming back in the office every Monday morning for a rally. Why? Because they do not have to. Because they have realized it does not serve them. The same goes for your CFO; she does not need to be sitting in the office 9-5 (did she ever?). And guess what? Try to make her and she is moving down the street to another employer who “values her.” [...] Yeah, I thought so. Want to lead well? Learn to coach and mentor. Learn to develop real relationships with your people — relationships that prove you know their desires, their fears, hopes and dreams, and that you care about them.

What I did

- Turned the run-in lead (“Learn to lead well .”) into a subhead, giving each of the five applications a scannable heading

- Fixed two comma splices with an em dash and a semicolon, and split “guess what, try to” into a question and a new sentence
- Removed a stray comma before the quotation, a doubled question mark, and an exclamation point
- Joined a fragment to the sentence before it and folded “Prove that you care” into the same thought, so the list builds
- Left the attitude alone: “get over it,” “Why?” and “Yeah, I thought so” are the author’s voice

Excerpt 3: Fact-checking and judgment calls

Before

Why? For the same reason Carhart does not sell athletic footwear. Not to stereotype but, your average tradesperson is not an ultramarathon runner. Reminds me a bit of Duluth Trading offering women’s clothing. [...] Then again, maybe I am wrong. Maybe Duluth knocks it out of the park with women’s wear.

[...] As I am writing this another group of factories is on shut down due to increased Covid in. As I am writing this a major OEM is shifting away from chipped cartridges for supply reasons. Stop and think about that! You can bet that was a decision not treated lightly.

After

Why? For the same reason Carhartt, a company known for heavy-duty workwear, does not sell athletic footwear. [...] Maybe I’m wrong about Carhartt.

[...] As I am writing this another group of factories is on shutdown due to increased cases of COVID, and a major OEM is shifting away from chipped cartridges for supply reasons. Stop and think about that! You can bet that was a decision not made lightly.

What I did

- Corrected the brand name to Carhartt and added a short identifier, so readers outside the trades get the joke
- Cut the “Not to stereotype but” line and the Duluth Trading women’s clothing aside. Both undercut the point and risked alienating readers, and the argument works without them
- Repaired the fragment “increased Covid in” and applied AP style for COVID and “shutdown” (noun)
- Merged two sentences that both opened “As I am writing this”
- Fixed the idiom: decisions are “made,” not “treated,” lightly
- Kept “Stop and think about that!” —exclamation points should be used sparingly