

Words of Wisdom from The Words Workshop

Wordsworth says ... *Are you going through a bad spell?*

While some can be very minor and easily overlooked, others are glaringly obvious and can ruin any company's credibility when made in important marketing material. What are they? Typographical errors, or typos to you and me.

The sad thing is most typos are made not because the person writing can't spell or use grammar, but because they haven't bothered to check. This flippant approach to their own company's marketing material sends out a message to potential clients: 'We can't be bothered to get the detail right for our own company, so what makes you think we'll give a flying frog about yours?'

Okay, so that might sound a little over the top; we all make mistakes. But I recently heard someone say that a typo is not a small detail if it's the only thing that people see. No matter how good your business, how compelling the sales pitch on your flyer, how poetic the introduction on your website, if there is an obvious typo sticking out like a sore thumb then you may as well not have bothered.



Every day I come across more people who agree that mistakes on a company's website, flyer or in its brochure can mean they decide to take their business elsewhere. My advice is to slow down a little. Is the e-mail, flyer or brochure that urgent that you can't take a minute to check it before it wings its way out into the big wide world? If you're not sure about what you have written, get someone else to look over it. Don't just think 'that'll do' - because most of the time it won't.

Ask Wordsworth ... *When should I use italics?*

Italics are those slanted words you sometimes see in amongst normal typed text. They are used to distinguish certain words within a text. Underlining is also used for the same purpose however italics are becoming more accepted.

Italics have three main uses:

To put emphasis on a word:

"I would *never* do that."

"I really don't care what *you* think."

To indicate the title of a book, play, poem, newspaper, magazine, film, ship, aircraft or train:

"I went to see *Grease* in the West End."

"*Captain Corelli's Mandolin* is my favourite book."

To differentiate between the spoken language and a foreign language:

"We went to say *bon voyage*."

"Do this *tout de suite*."



Wordsworth's management speech to avoid

People often use complicated jargon and management speak to make themselves appear as though they know what they are talking about. A good example of this is the phrase 'bring to the table'. Why use something so contrived when something far simpler will do? In this case why not just say 'provide' or 'offer'?

Wordsworth's quote of the month ...

"I'm all in favour of free speech, provided it's kept under strict control."

Alan Bennett

You may notice that Wordsworth is looking a little squidgy around the middle after the festive period. Let's just say he may have indulged in a few too many servings of Christmas pudding and more than the odd glass of brandy. All the same, Wordsworth would like to wish all his subscribers a very happy and healthy New Year.

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