

The Value of Concise Communications

(Updated: June 16, 2017)

The more concise you can be with your written and verbal communications, the more successful you will be.

Everyone is busy. Everyone needs to make the best use of their time. This is especially true of potential investors, who typically have more opportunities than time.

It may be hard to make all of your key points with a concise *economy of expression*. But that's your goal.

"If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter."

Marcus Cicero, Greek Philosopher

"The more you say, the less people remember."

Francois Fenelon, French theologian

The more you say, the less people will remember. Communicate your key points in an economy of expression.

One of the most helpful written communication tools you can develop is a simple three-slide presentation.

- 1) Slide 1: Concept - providing a concise statement of your premise (or possibly what you're going to ask for), your key value proposition (or why what you're going to ask for "makes sense"), and the upside of your proposition.
- 2) Slide 2: Key Questions - stating each of the key issues you're going to address and resolve to demonstrate the viability of the business concept you're proposing.
- 3) Slide 3: Support Required / Next Steps - indicating the different types of support (networking contacts, information, investment funds, etc.) you're going to need, and the next steps you're intending to take.

Concise Three-Slide Format

Slide 1: Concept - premise, value proposition, upside

Slide 2: Key Questions - issues to be resolved to demonstrate the viability of the business concept

Slide 3: Support Required / Next Steps

A concise presentation featuring these three slides will be sufficient to provide key stakeholders with enough useful information to determine whether they intend to support your venture . . . and *then* ask for more details.

Three reminders for effective writing:

- 1) **Headlines and conclusions first!** This is the most common mistake writers make. Place your key points at the beginning of your document. Summarize your critical conclusions / recommendations *up front*. If you're asking for funds, start by indicating the amount of funding you are seeking and the benefits to the prospective investor. *Make sure your reader immediately understands why he / she is reading your document.*
- 2) **Make your documents "inviting to read."** Use concise sentences. Make sure no paragraph is longer than nine lines long. Use open space between paragraphs and bullet points (don't "smash" bullet points together).
- 3) **Proofread and edit.** The most important trait of effective writers is that they are effective self-editors. When you finish the first draft of a document put it aside for a few moments . . . **and then come back to edit any errors you find and cut text, cut text, cut text.**

You can also review the Regional Micro-Enterprise Credential *Four Rules for Effective Writing resource* to practice your writing skills.