Webinar Agenda

- What is Language
- Language of Losing (LoL)
- What is the Language of Winning (L-o-W)
- 4 Aspects of L-o-W
- Speed Bumps the Impact the L-o-W
- How to Leverage L-o-W
- Summary
Words and Language DO Matter!

“...poor business writing costs businesses big dollars both in inefficiencies and lost sales...”

“You can have all the great ideas in the world and if you can’t communicate, nobody will hear them.”

“Treat the readers’ time as more valuable than your own.”

“...American workers spend nearly a quarter of their day reading. Much of that is wasted because the material is poorly written.”

“Clear writing means clear thinking.”

“People who think well, write well... Good writing is not a natural gift. You have to learn to write well.”
language  /ˈlaNGgwij/  

_Noun_

1. a body of words and the systems for their use common to a people who are of the same community or nation, the same geographical area, or the same cultural tradition: _the two languages of Belgium; the French language_

2. communication by voice in the distinctively human manner, using arbitrary sounds in conventional ways with conventional meanings

3. any set or system of signs, words, or symbols as used in a more or less uniform fashion by a number of people, who are thus enabled to communicate intelligibly with one another

4. any such system used or conceived as a means of communicating thought, emotion: _the language of mathematics; sign language; the language of winning_
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*The L-o-W helps persuade evaluators to select your solution*
Language of Losing (LoL)

- Bad grammar/Spelling errors
- Use of jargon
- Wordiness
- All about us
- Passive voice
- Run-on sentences or chunky paragraphs
- List features instead of benefits
- Too technical
Aspects of the Language of Winning

1. Body or system of words, signs, or symbols (that helps you win)

2. Communication in writing or by voice using words with conventional meaning (easy to understand)

3. Any set of such signs or symbols...enabling people to communicate intelligibly with one another (customer focused)

4. Any system of symbols, words, sounds, or gestures used as a means of communicating thought, emotion (persuasive)

The language of winning helps persuade to select your solution
Language of Winning

1. Helps You Win

Our proposal is a story

- Beginning that draws attention, interest, and credibility
- Easy to follow—well-organized
- Just enough detail to keep my interest
- An ending or summary that helps me decide or understand

- Our proposal is more than words—variety, complete, correct, concise
- Compliant—answers every requirement
- Responsive—addresses “hidden” issues and needs
Language of Winning

2. Is Easy to Understand

- The power of graphics and captions
- Emphasis techniques
  - White space
  - Lists
  - Headings
- Page design and layout
- Organization for ease of evaluation
- Sentence and paragraph length
- Familiar language (to the customer)
What do we mean by customer focused language?

- State the benefits before features
- Validate every claim
- Name customer first
- Name the customer more often
- Attribute hot buttons to key stakeholders
- Focus on discriminators
- Articulate their buying vision
Benefits before Features

Not this:

*Our CRM System is unique with the ability to be customized to your needs and industry.*

This:

*National Bank will increase customer engagement by 22% with our retail-oriented CRM system.*
Validate Every Claim

Not this:

*Our software adoption rate is 79 percent in the first 12 months of implementation.*

This:  

*As stated in Computing Magazine’s report, customer adoption rates of our software is 79 percent during the first 12 months of implementation.*
Not this:

*Vibrant software improves customer engagement with its AI feature.*

This:

*National Bank will improve customer engagement by implementing our AI features that are included in the standard version.*
Name the Customer More Often than Our Self

Not this (we are Vibrant):

*Vibrant has over 32 years’ experience. Vibrant is well-known in industry for its response time when problems arise. We will meet your expectations and requirements as we work together.*

This:

*National Bank (NB) will benefit from our 32 years of banking-specific experience. NB will achieve your 15-second response time with our tailored application that supports your vision.*
Attribute Hot Buttons to Key Stakeholders

Not this:

We will help National Bank achieve your objective of growing year-over-year revenue by 10 percent with our world-class software solution.

This:

Ms. Ruth Campbell, Bank CEO, stated in the annual report that National Bank intends to grow year-over-year revenue by 10 percent. Figure 2.3 below shows how other Vibrant clients have exceeded this same revenue target by implementing our solution.
The *Language of Winning* Focuses on Discriminators

A discriminator:

- Addresses a customer need or hot button (issue/motivator)
- Is unique to us
- Is equal to or better than the competitors’ solution (as perceived by the customer)
- Is valued by the customer
Articulate the Customer’s Buying Vision

National Bank’s stated objective for this solicitation:

*To help National Bank reduce customer acquisition costs and improve customer retention by 12 percent...*

State clearly that you understand this vision in your proposal.
Guidelines for persuasive writing

- Know what motivates your customer—what is motivating the to “buy”?
- Collaborate with the customer—if it’s their idea, they’re more likely to be persuaded
- Provide proof for every claim—doubt destroys persuasion
- Answer:
  - So what? How so? Can you prove it?
- Link your solution to the customer’s buying vision and hot buttons
Speed Bumps Negatively Influence the Language of Winning

- Lazy and careless proofreading
- Misuse of punctuation (commas)
- Overuse of hyphens
- Run on sentences
- Agreement between subject and verbs
- Wordy fluff
- Clichés
Proofreading: “But I Used Spell-Checker!”

Should have said:

“Over the past 8 years, we have enjoyed total success with our customers.”

What it really said:

“Over the past 8 years, we have enjoyed total success without customers.”
Misuse of Punctuation
Watch for Careless Punctuation

If you misuse a punctuation mark, you risk confusing your reader and appearing careless.

David, says Mallary, is a boring old fool.

David says Mallary is a boring old fool.
Overuse of Hyphens Distracts from the Language of Winning

A or B?

A. This is a one-of-a-kind coat.
B. This coat is one of a kind.

A or B?

A. This is a perfectly written executive summary.
B. This is a perfectly-written executive summary.
Run-on Sentences are Speedbumps

National Bank will achieve increased customer satisfaction and improved service ratings by implementing our world class software solution and training the tellers and others who interface with the customer on a regular basis either in person or via the drive through or kiosks.

Target 20 words or less per sentence for improved readability.
Match your Subject and Verb to Avoid a Speed Bump

A or B?

A. Every one of the networks are down.
B. Every one of the networks is down.

A or B?

A. Each of the calls takes about 7 minutes.
B. Each of the calls take about 7 minutes.
Avoid Wordy “Tossed Salad”

Before: "I utilized a multi-tined tool to process a starch resource."

After: "I used my fork to eat a potato."
Avoid or Limit Clichés

we are pleased to propose

raising the bar

think outside the box

enterprise level

best of breed
team player

paradigm shift in the loop

Industry-best
Where to Apply the Language of Winning

- Theme statements
- Graphics and captions
- Callouts
- Headings
- Lists
Customer-Focused Theme Statements

**FORMULA**

<Customer>  <Quantified Benefit>  <Specified Feature>  <Discriminator>  <Proof>
National Bank will reduce the cost of sales tracking and marketing campaigns by 35 percent by selecting Vibrant to implement our CRM system that includes global, in-country support to help achieve NB’s strategic growth plan.
Informative Headings Improve Readability
And Support the Language of Winning

1.0 Introduction
1.1 An Overview of Benefits to National Bank

2.0 Organization
2.1 A Flat Organizational Structure Reduces Overhead Cost

3.0 Design
3.1 The System is Uniquely Designed for Retail Market

4.0 Implementation
4.1 Continuous Support with a Three-Phase Implementation
Consistent Lists are Part of the Language of Winning

UGLY

1. Numbering isn’t always needed
2. Entries should be short, rather than complete sentences
3. Nested lists can confuse
   1. Unclear font variations
      - Mixed indicators
      - Not parallel
4. Inconsistent format

BETTER

My List

- Name the list
- Make items parallel
- Use bullets (unless order is important)
- Limit number of items
- Highlight with white space
The Language of Winning Includes *Signs* and *Symbols* (Graphics)

- Introduce visuals before they appear
- Orient visuals vertically
- Integrate visuals into the text
- Minimize text in visuals
- Understandable < 10 seconds
- Are relevant, not just decorative
Figure 2. Our system improves performance.
Figure 5. Golf ‘R Us Improves Lead Conversion and Revenue.

Golf ‘R Us needed a CRM system that included marketing automation tools. By implementing our CRM system, same store lead conversion doubled in the first eight months of implementation.
Action Caption Guidelines

Strong action captions:

- Draw the conclusion for the reader
- Are full sentences
- Contain three parts:
  - Figure number
  - Title
  - Supporting text

A Litmus Test for Captions

Does it:

- Link benefits to features
- Demonstrate succinct sentences
- Allow graphic to stand alone
- Appear below the graphic

Figure 3-2. Calls Per Hour. Team productivity is lower at the end of the week due to reduced demand for team services heading into the weekend.
Callouts Draw Attention to Key Benefits or Solutions

Callout boxes:
- Provide emphasis
- Help navigate and direct customer’s focus
- Help with information processing/understanding
- Support the text—can make proof points more visible

4.3 Transition Approach

Outdoor Sports Global (OSG) will have a flawless transition to a new customer relationship platform (CRM) platform by selecting Vibrant. Your dedicated account team, with three key positions located onsite at your headquarters, will maximize communication and minimize risk without affecting Q4 revenue.

4.3.1 Transition Methodology

To ensure a smooth transition to a new CRM platform, OSG can benefit from Vibrant’s unique account team approach to implementation. OSG’s core account team will be onsite at OSG’s headquarters to maximize project knowledge and availability. OSG’s dedicated account executive manages the transition directly as split roles and responsibilities may foster confusion, delays and additional costs. Account executives that aren’t intimately involved in every detail from contract signing to go live may miss early wins via process improvement.

Your dedicated onsite account team consists of Natasha Bevins and her team. Post CRM implementation, Ms. Bevins will transition into the role of Continuous Improvement Director and will remain dedicated to OSG.

Figure 6.3.1.1. OSG’s proposed account team structure. With only three direct reports and co-location with OSG, Ms. Natasha Bevins will focus exclusively on meeting OSG objectives.
# 4 Aspects of the Language of Winning

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Summary: The Language of Winning

- In proposals, language matters
- 4 aspects of the Language of Winning
  
  *It helps you win, is easy to understand, is customer focused, and persuasive*
- Watch for common speed bumps
- Leverage *prime real estate*
- Always think “customer first”
- **Customer focus** is the key
Questions and Discussion
What about the *Language of Winning* in Briefings

- **7% Verbal** *(the words used)*
- **38% Vocal** *(HOW words are said)*
- **55% Visual** *(gestures, movement, expression)*

*Nonverbal*
THANK YOU

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