

Plain Talk Writing Tip #2

How to Identify a Good Plain Talk Project

Revenue has been practicing Plain Talk for over six years and many documents have already fallen under the pen of clear communication advocates.

But trust me. There are others just waiting to be improved.

How do you identify a good Plain Talk project? It may take a little leg work.

Try these tips:

#1 Identify problems or questions that your customers frequently have

Check with those in your division who have the most contact with your customers. Ask your call center staff: What kind of questions are coming in? Ask your field reps: In what areas do customers not understand their responsibilities? Then develop a top 10 list of issues you want to tackle, identify the documents that address those issues and take it from there.

#2 Review older documents

Your division Plain Talk team has been creating an inventory of your division's documents. Check some of the older documents to see if they can be improved.

#3 Look for areas with low compliance

Identify the areas in which your division has the lowest voluntary compliance. Review the documents that inform customers about that issue. Are the instructions unclear – or essentially invisible – to customers? If so, rewriting the information may help.

#4 Take advantage of system upgrades

Do you know of a program that is planning to upgrade the system it uses to produce its form letters or bills? That's a good opportunity chance to pitch for plain language. They will be programming those documents into the new system anyway.

#5 Align projects to strategic plan goals

Revenue will be rolling out a new strategic plan soon. Read through it and see if you can find a plain talk project that will fit right into an agency goal, such as improved customer service or less red tape.

Plain Talk is not just an exercise in clear communication. It is a tool that can make us more effective as an agency. Employ Plain Talk and watch as our jobs become more proactive and less reactive.

Look for another Plain Talk tip coming soon. And work on those contest entries.

Happy Plain Talking!