



THINKTHINK!

Avoiding the cliché crunch

In these gloomy economic times...
As the depression deepens...
In this challenging era...
As businesses tighten their belts...
In a cash-strapped economy...
Are you feeling the pinch...



Have you seen any of these expressions recently? And would you perhaps be pleased if you never saw any of them again? Like us, you may have spotted lately that every website, email and direct mail you receive contains at least one of these phrases and there are plenty more along similar lines. And aren't they tedious?

These 'gloomy economic times' unfortunately present an ideal opportunity for anyone to use the economy as a backdrop for whatever they want to say. Instead of acting as attention-grabbing openings, these clichés are more likely to have the opposite effect. So inured nowadays are we to doom-saying that we tend to filter it out, it has become the white noise of communication, an incessant buzz that is simply annoying. And that could easily mean that the message you are trying to get across is lost.

We are all for communication, whether it is an internal, team building interaction or an external push to potential clients, it's our job and we love it **but** one size does not fit all. And economic clichés are fast becoming the dumbing-down of effective communication.

Some communications agencies have been as guilty of this as the clients they serve. Instead of writing a punchy start to a press release or an email, there are those who are quick to resort to clichés. Not only is it lazy, we ThinkThink it is downright unprofessional. When businesses are at their most vulnerable they deserve the very best an agency can give. You, are well aware that these are 'troubled times', you're living through them. The last thing you need is someone with a degree in journalism or marketing spelling it out for you.

Yes, you want a good deal and you want your team and clients to be aware that you are offering the very best value but no one needs patronising. You want smart, tightly written pieces that get the message across. Now really is the time to be innovative and resourceful.

If you had a message you wanted to get across to your colleagues who would you ask to do the writing? Would it be the person in charge of marketing? Someone with a bit of free time in HR? Or you might even do it yourself, perhaps you've always fancied being a bit of a writer?

These might seem like good choices to make. After all if you do it then it's free, always an attractive option; you might think that the people in marketing/HR can write; they may do the health and safety booklets or company policies and perhaps you think there isn't much to writing, anyone can do it. It's only a question of stringing a few sentences together.

Well, actually I don't agree.

And, my friends at Clear Focus ThinkThink that good writing can make a massive difference to even the smallest campaign; whether it is an internal communication or a major advertising campaign. It is not just what you say that matters, it is the way you say it.

Closing music

Good communications is a skill, in fact it is even an art. If you ask your agency for a new design for your website they won't tell the copywriter or the accountant to get a sketchbook out. They will give the brief to the people who have a flair for design, who can see a concept in their mind and transfer it onto paper or onto your site. You have trusted them with your design and they will use the very best people for the job.

Exactly the same principles apply to writing. Whilst pretty much everyone can write, not everyone can write editorial or sales copy well. They are specific skills, ways of structuring text so that the target reader is smoothly led through the words to the message. Copywriters can package their text for any audience; in fact the target readership is absolutely critical. In the way that a journalist working for *The Sun* will adopt a different technique to his colleagues on the sister paper *The Times*, so the writer will adjust his style to fit the audience. Writers are trained not just to write in a way that is succinct and easy to understand but also to tailor their writing very specifically

And the time when it is easiest to write badly (and get away with it) is in the middle of a recession.

If you want to engage your team and colleagues with internal messages that will inspire or keep your clients coming back for more call my friends at Clear Focus on **0845 225 0325** – they really are the experts.

