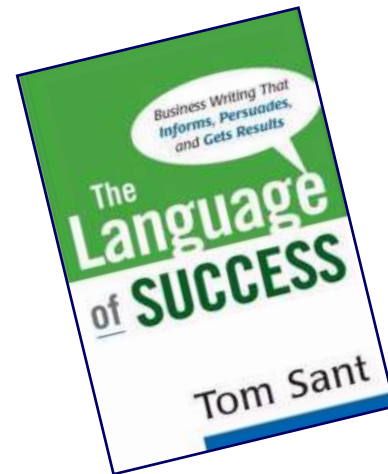

The Language of Success



Writing that Works

Dr. Tom Sant

Hyde Park Partners

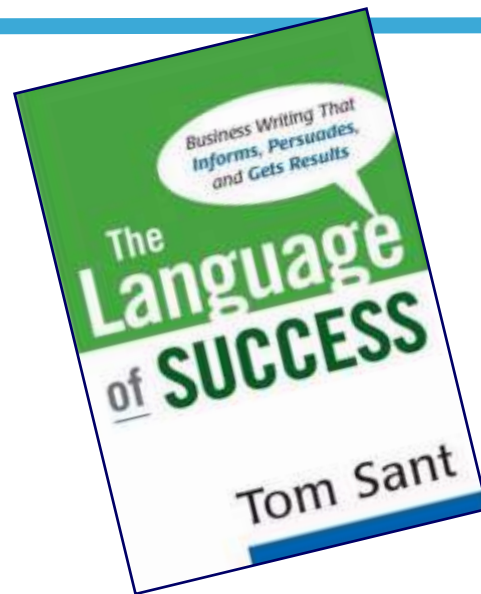
Your Presenter

- Dr. Tom Sant, founder of The Sant Corporation and Hyde Park Partners
- Author of:
 - **Persuasive Business Proposals**, the world's largest selling book on proposal writing (2nd edition, 2004)
 - **The Giants of Sales**, named one of the top 3 business books of 2006 by the Bloomberg network
 - **The Language of Success** (published January 31, 2008)
- “America’s foremost expert on proposal writing.”
(American Management Association)
- “One of world’s top ten sales trainers.”
(Selling Power Magazine)
- Creator of the world’s most widely used proposal automation system
- Over 25 years’ experience with Fortune 500 companies
- Over \$30 billion in winning proposals



Agenda

1. Does effective writing really matter?
2. Fluff, Guff, Geek and Weasel
3. The language of success
4. Moving on



Does Effective Writing Really Matter?

The Knowledge-Based Economy



The Knowledge-Based Economy runs on words.

- 65 billion e-mails a day
- 27,000 billion gigabytes of email by 2010



RESUME

Current Address
12 Gates Lane
Boulder, CO 21849
(303) 555-6145

Permanent Address
34 Apple Court
Glendale, CA, 91208
(714) 555-7145

E-mail Address and URL
hszoro@uwaterloo.ca
<http://www.uwaterloo.edu/~hszoro/>

OBJECTIVE

A position in software development.

EDUCATION

B.S. in Computer Science, expected May 1998
University of Colorado, Boulder, CO
Cumulative G.P.A. 3.66

WORK EXPERIENCE

Freelance Computer Consultant, September 1997-present
Create World Wide Web home pages and customize computer systems for clients in the Boulder, CO, area.

Intern, June-August 1997
Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA
Worked as software design engineer intern on SOCA Server 2.0. Implemented name-space providers (Windows 95/NT DLLs) written in C for a variety of network protocols, including TCP/IP, Netware IPX, Lanman, Banyan VINES, and AppleTalk.

Undergraduate Research Assistant, September 1996-May 1997
University of Colorado Laboratory for Computer Science
Worked with Professor Donald S. Fiedt in the parallel and distributed operating group. Ported UNIX applications to XDR, a prototype embedded implementation for the Intel i86.

Lab Assistant, September 1995-May 1996
Center for Academic Computing, University of Colorado
Maintain computer hardware and assist users on Windows 95 and Macintosh operating systems and various software packages.

Crew Leader, Summers 1993 and 1994
Nim's Madras, Glendale, CA
Supervised crew and managed bakery's daily operations.

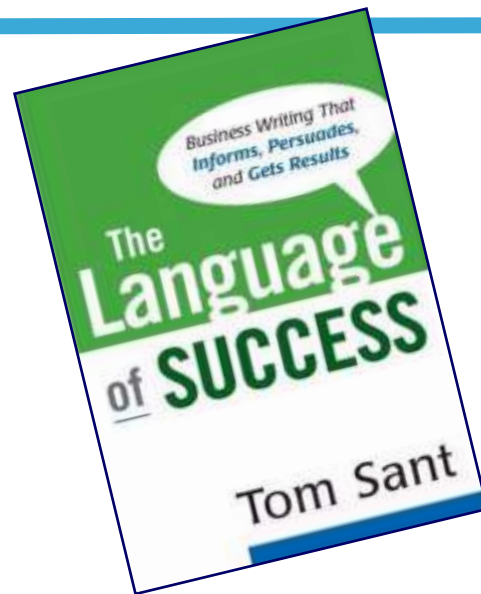
COMPUTER SKILLS

Languages and Software
C, C++, Java, LaTeX, HTML, Word, WordPerfect.

Operating Systems
UNIX (Linux, Ultra, SunOS), Windows 95, Macintosh.

Writing proposals? RFP answers?





Fluff, Guff, Geek and Weasel





Fluff:

1. Grandiose claims
2. Vague generalities
3. Clichés
4. No substantiation

Forget the Fluff!

Here are a few examples....

Anything look familiar?

Best of breed

World class

Leading edge

State of the art

Quality focused

Uniquely qualified

Innovative

High performance

Synergy

User friendly

Proven

Partnership

Seamless

Robust



Thank you for allowing us to submit our response to your RFP.

As you may know, Wilcox DataFlex is uniquely qualified to deliver world-class results for every customer. We offer best-of-breed products and customer-focused service to produce seamless, high availability solutions. Our commitment to partnering with our customers produces innovative yet user-friendly applications.

I look forward to discussing our applications with you to see if there's a good fit. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to call.

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I look forward to discussing our applications with you to see if there's a good fit. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Guff.




Guff.



Guff:

1. Long sentences
2. Too many big words
3. Too much passive voice

The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that choices will have to be made to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a leveraging of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, will be needed to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.



The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that choices will have to be made to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a leveraging of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, will be needed to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.

– Average sentence length: 32 words

The **dimensionality** of **expected** project problems coupled with the **limited** time **available** for **preparation** means that choices will have to be made to assure **viability** of the most **critical analytical processes**. Thus, a **leveraging** of problem **similarities** and process **relationships** to allow for sharing of **resources** and **solutions**, will be needed to contain cost and staff **expenditures** and assure **maximum** payoff from **effected solutions**.

- Average sentence length: 32 words
- Words with three syllables or more: 18

The dimensionality of expected project problems coupled with the limited time available for preparation means that **choices will have to be made** to assure viability of the most critical analytical processes. Thus, a **leveraging** of problem similarities and process relationships to allow for sharing of resources and solutions, **will be needed** to contain cost and staff expenditures and assure maximum payoff from effected solutions.


- Average sentence length: 32 words
- Words with three syllables or more: 18
- Passive voice: both sentences





Geek:

1. Disregard for the audience
2. Overuse of jargon and acronyms
3. A focus on technical details instead of functions or differentiators



To address the requirements stated in the RFP, the TechBubble Inc. Team proposes a system based upon a FAS3170 Metrocluster with 450GB 15k rpm FC discs and included 512GB SSD secondary read cache per controller.

The TechBubble unified storage architecture provides the most flexible and scalable storage platform in the industry and includes fabric-attached storage (FAS) systems offering simultaneous support for Fibre Channel SAN, IP SAN and network-attached storage (NAS).

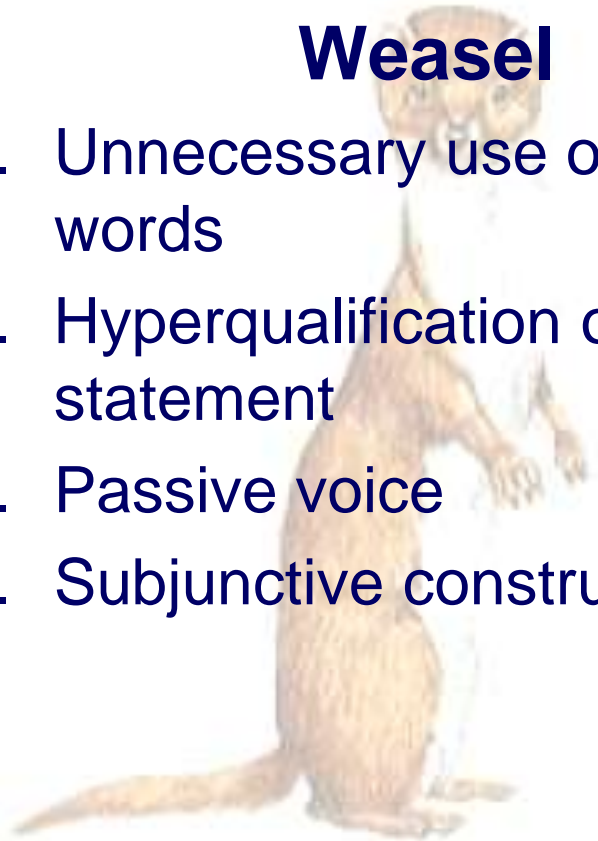


Weasel

Watch the Weasel!

Weasel

1. Unnecessary use of weasel words
2. Hyperqualification of every statement
3. Passive voice
4. Subjunctive constructions



Watch the Weasel!



Weasel words:

“can be”

“might”

“helps”

“could”

“may be”

“enable”

“allow”

“up to”

“like”

“virtually”

“significantly”

Subjunctive Junk

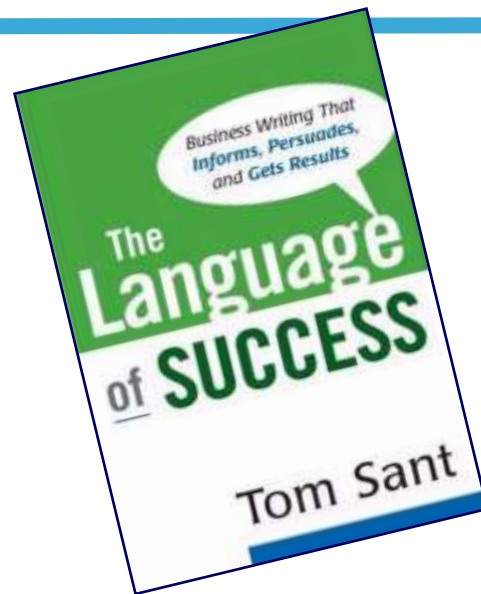
“We **would** like to thank you for allowing us to submit this proposal...”

“This process **would allow** one person to perform research and **significantly** increase productivity...”

“You **can be assured** that it **should be possible** to achieve the requested timelines for this project.”

“We **believe** that we have proposed an effective solution, based on the information we have **at this time.**”





The Language of Success

The first principle of successful writing:

Be clear.

Live by the “first time right” rule.





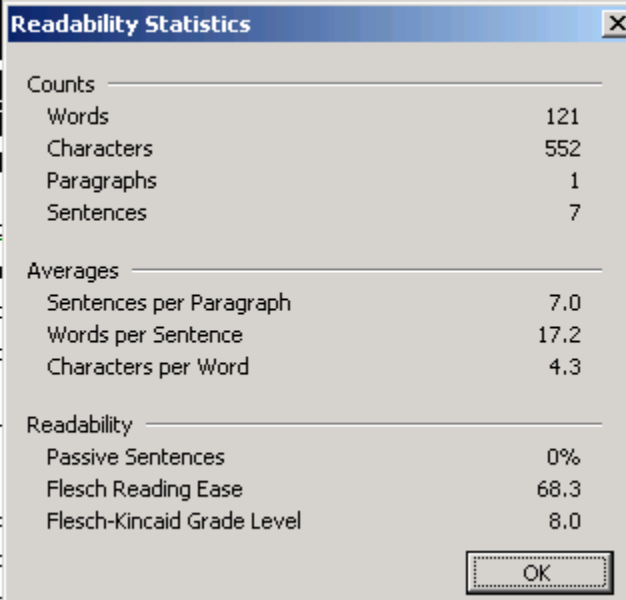
Five ways to achieve clarity:



Five ways to achieve clarity:

1. Short sentences
2. Short words
3. Active voice
4. Avoid long, dependent clauses up front
5. Keep the total readability score below 12

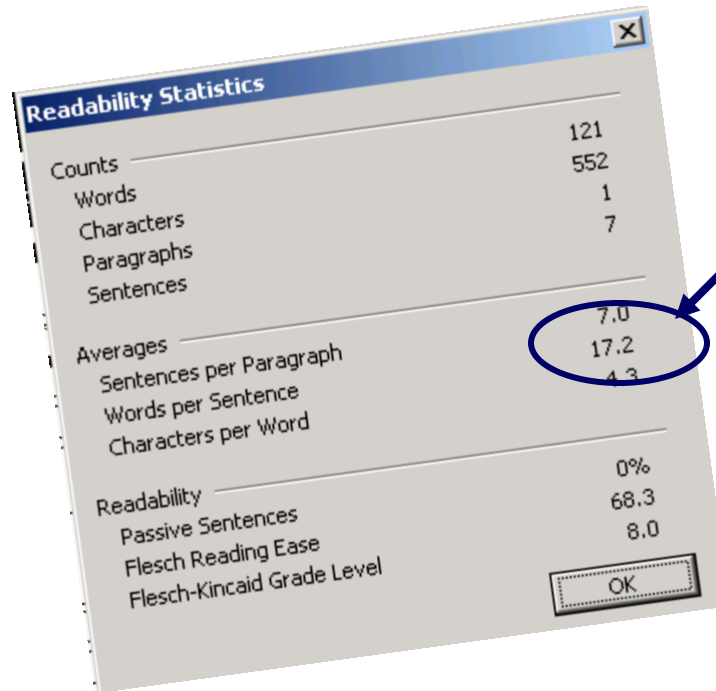
Let your word processor do the work.



The image shows a screenshot of a 'Readability Statistics' dialog box. The dialog box has a title bar with the text 'Readability Statistics' and a close button (X). The content is organized into three sections: 'Counts', 'Averages', and 'Readability'. Each section is separated by a horizontal line. The 'Counts' section lists 'Words' (121), 'Characters' (552), 'Paragraphs' (1), and 'Sentences' (7). The 'Averages' section lists 'Sentences per Paragraph' (7.0), 'Words per Sentence' (17.2), and 'Characters per Word' (4.3). The 'Readability' section lists 'Passive Sentences' (0%), 'Flesch Reading Ease' (68.3), and 'Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level' (8.0). An 'OK' button is located at the bottom right of the dialog box.

Counts	
Words	121
Characters	552
Paragraphs	1
Sentences	7
Averages	
Sentences per Paragraph	7.0
Words per Sentence	17.2
Characters per Word	4.3
Readability	
Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	68.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

Let your word processor do the work.



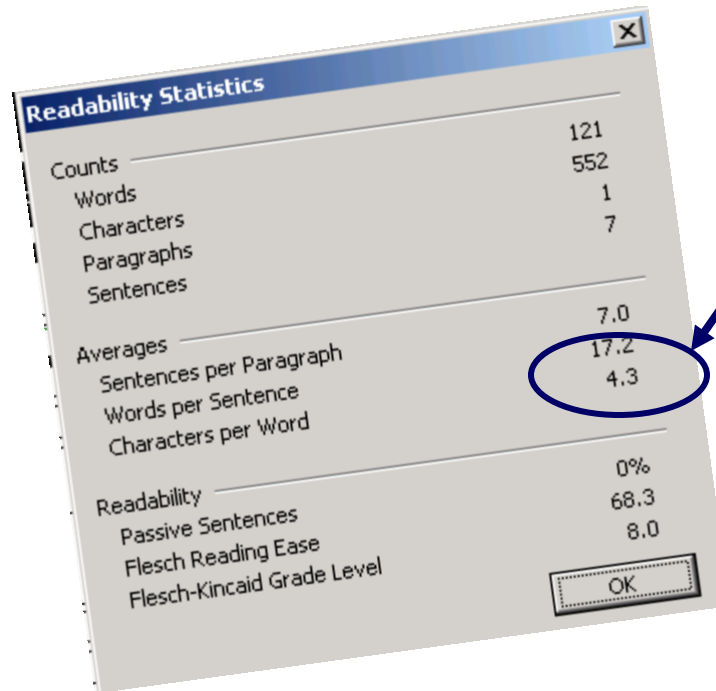
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Passive Sentences	0%
Flesch Reading Ease	68.3
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	8.0

Average sentence length

15 to 17 words per sentence is a good average sentence length.

No higher than 20!

Let your word processor do the work.

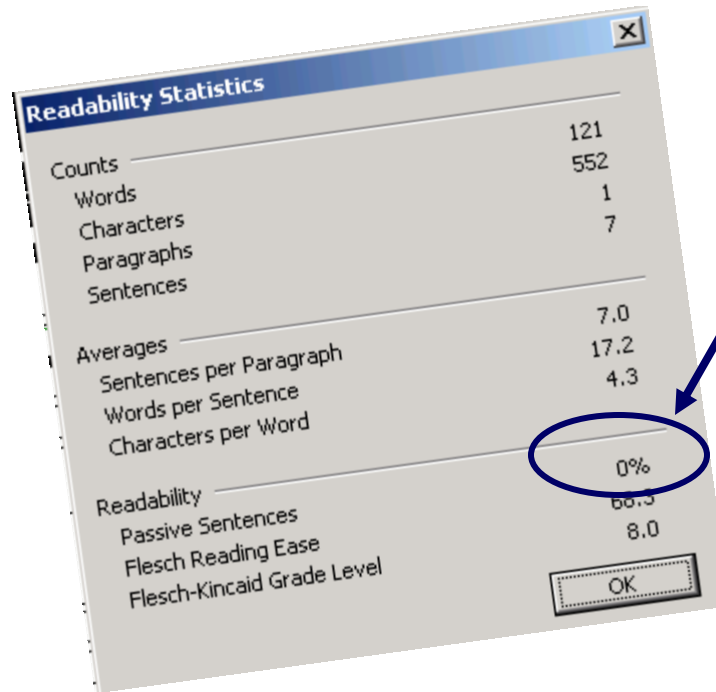


Readability Statistics	
Counts	121
Words	552
Characters	1
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Averages	7.0
Sentences per Paragraph	17.2
Words per Sentence	4.3
Characters per Word	
Readability	0%
Passive Sentences	68.3
Flesch Reading Ease	8.0
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	

Average word length in characters

5 characters or less means your words probably aren't too long.

Let your word processor do the work.



Percentage of passive voice

Keep passive voice below 10%.

Active voice:

- The sales team presented our recommendations to the client last week in Pittsburgh.

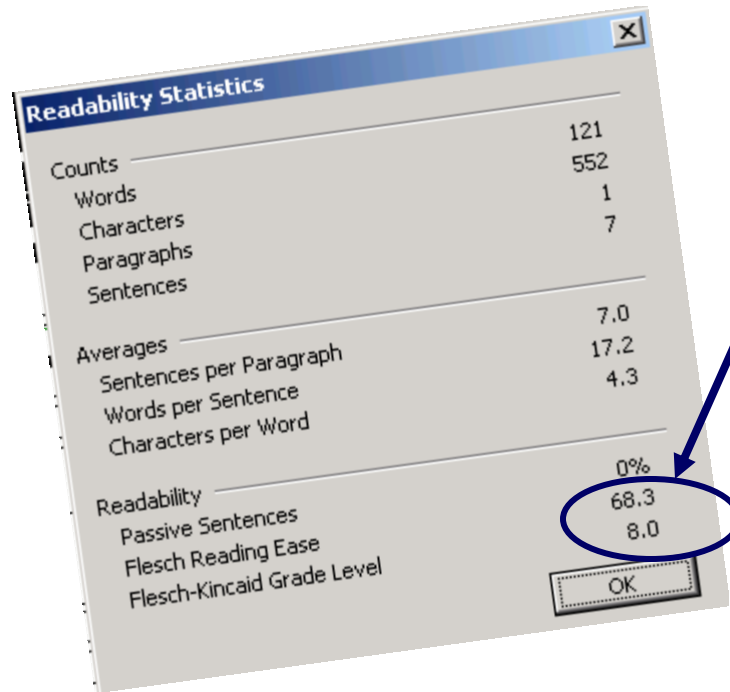
Passive voice:

- Our recommendations were presented to the client in Pittsburgh last week by our sales team.

Imperative voice:

- Present our recommendations to the client in Pittsburgh.

Let your word processor do the work.



Readability scores

Aim for a Grade Level index of 10 or less.

Never higher than 12!

Winning Proposals Must Be...

Suited to the Audience
and to the Purpose



Suited to the Purpose

- Facts
- Opinion
- Motivation



- Informing
- Evaluating
- Persuading

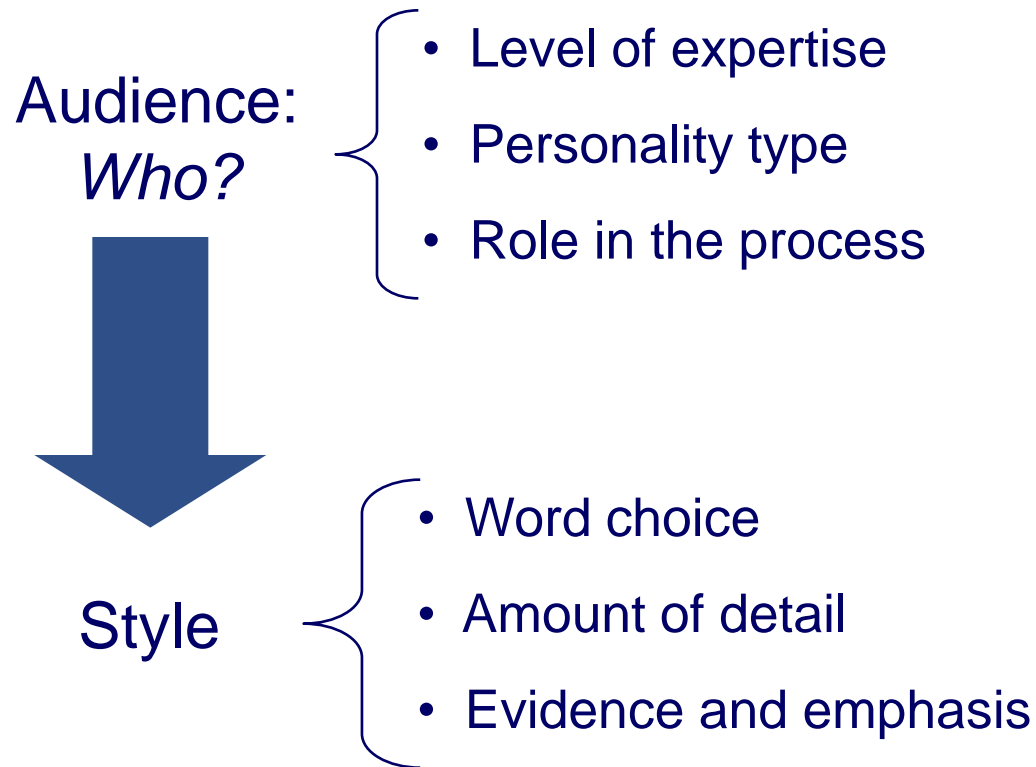


Purpose:
Why?

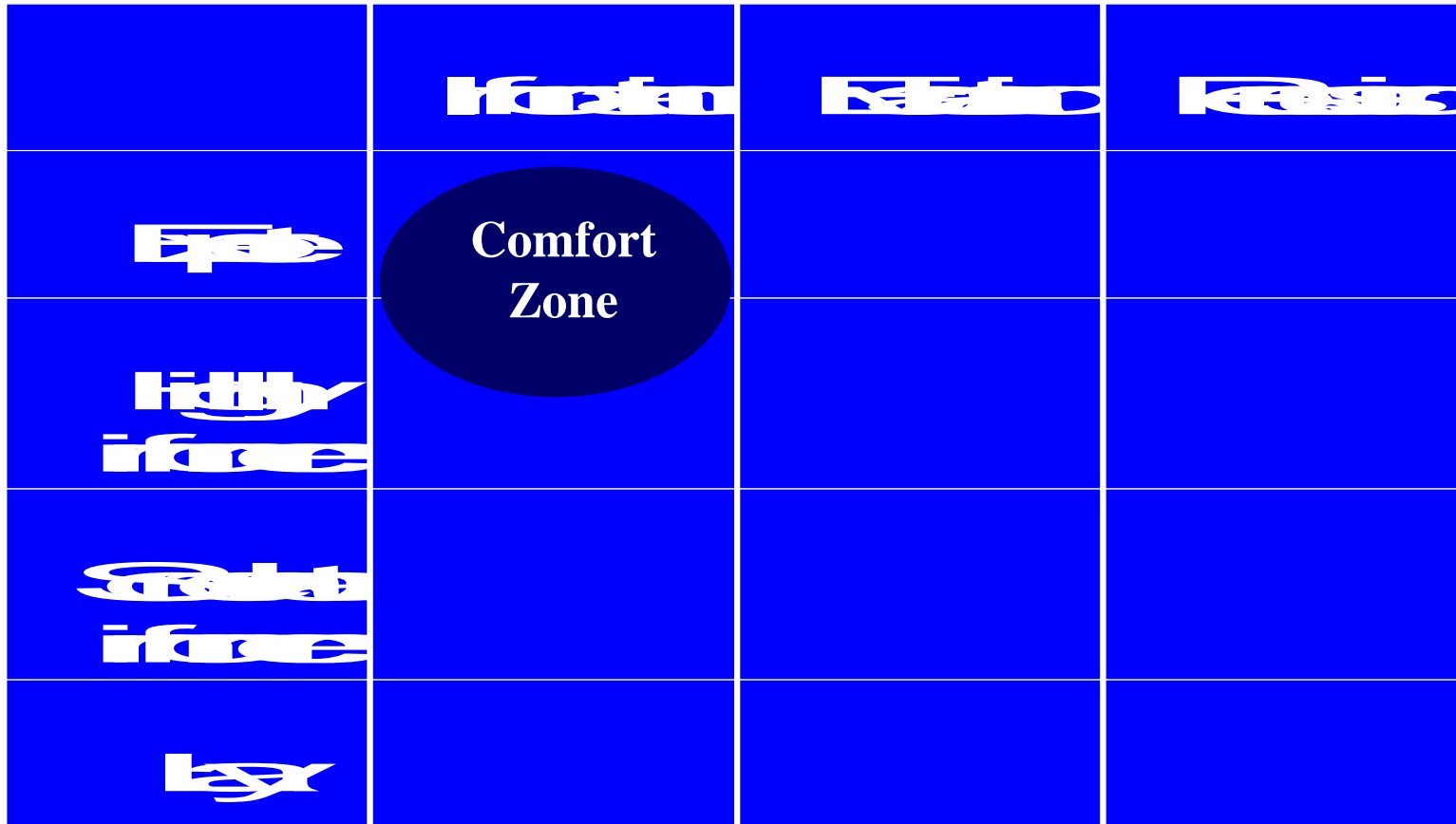


Structure

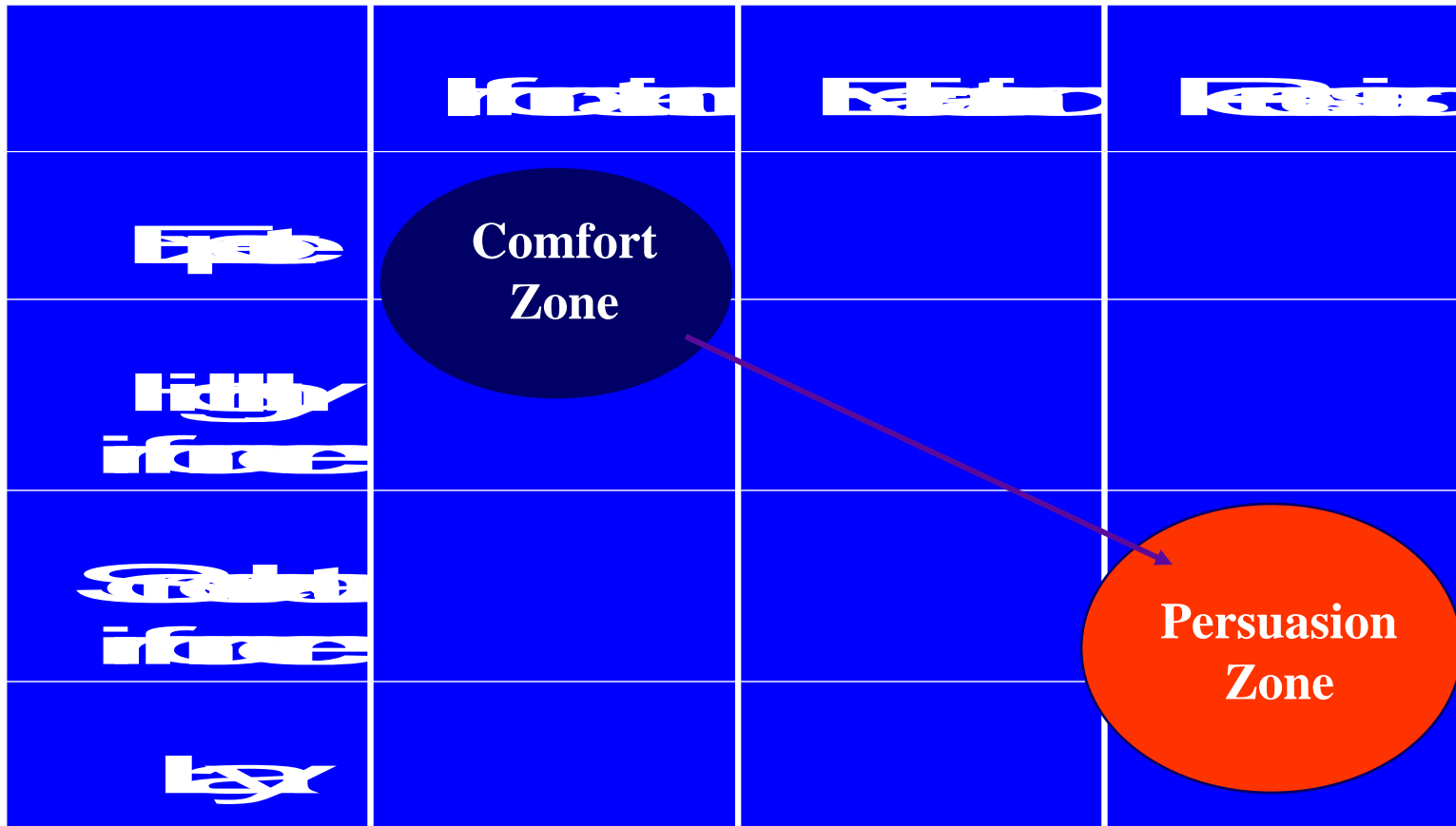
Suited to the Audience



The fallacy of the familiar



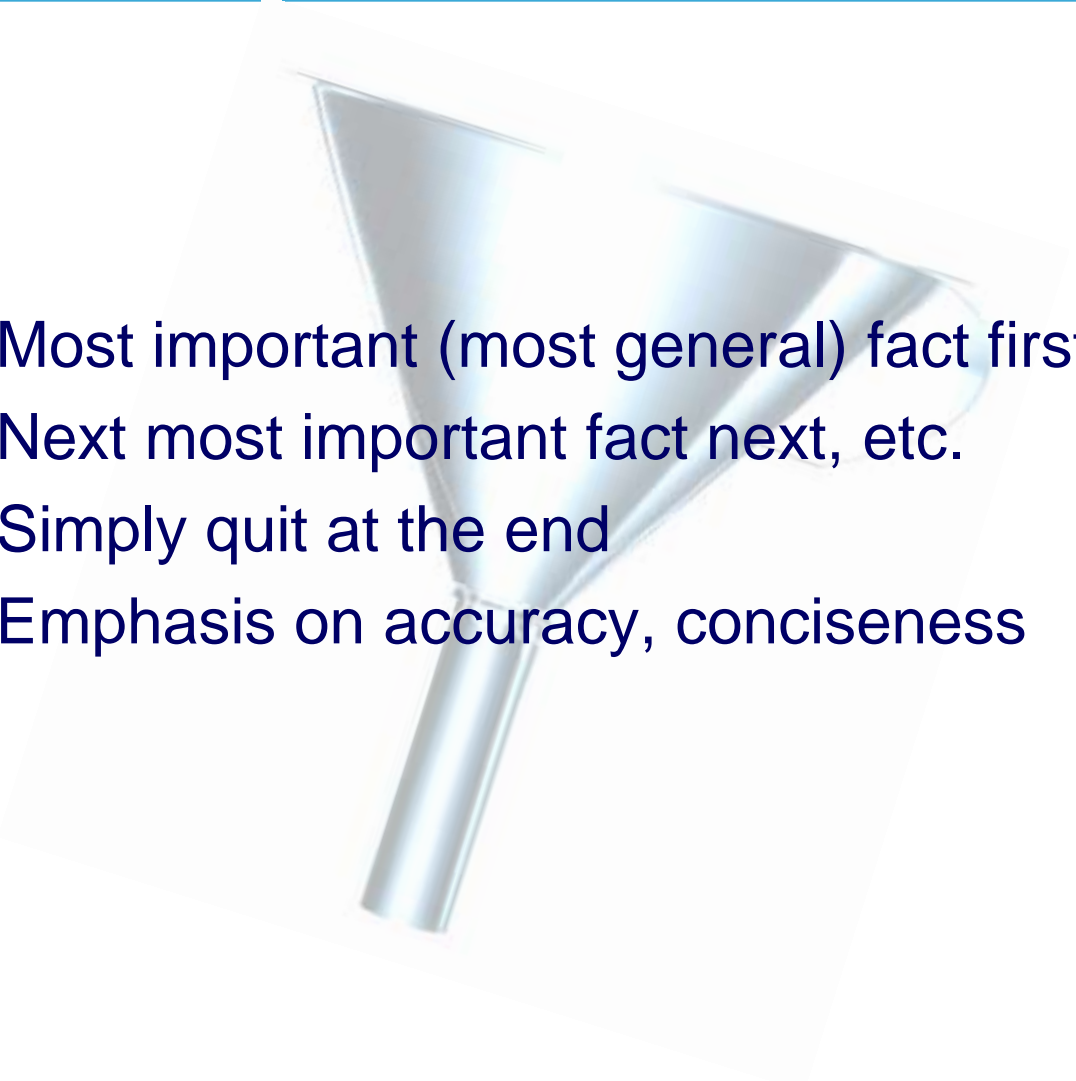
Moving to the persuasion zone



Informing



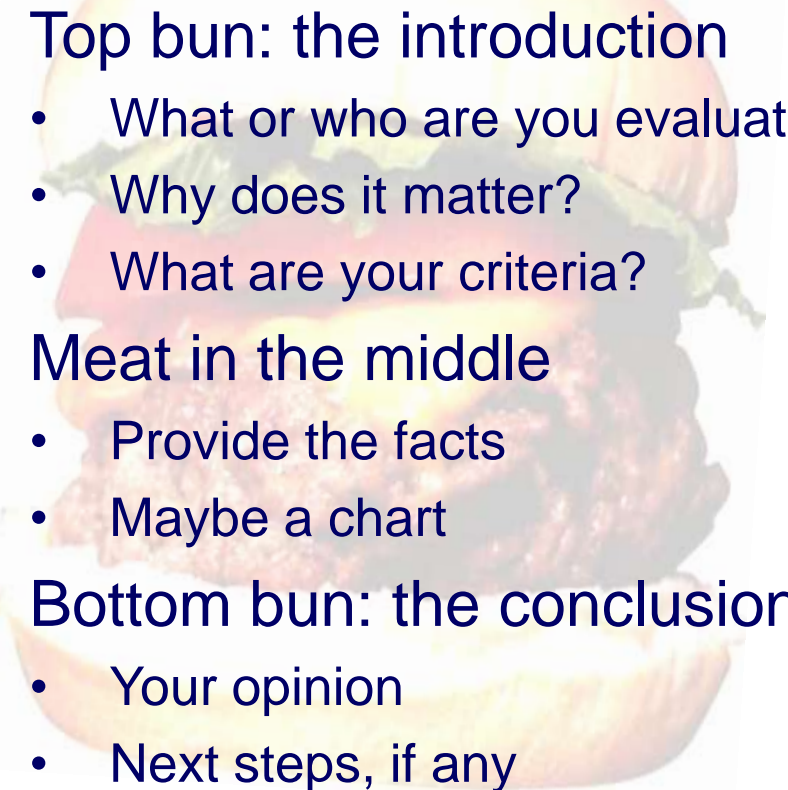
Informing

- 
1. Most important (most general) fact first
 2. Next most important fact next, etc.
 3. Simply quit at the end
 4. Emphasis on accuracy, conciseness

Evaluating



Evaluating

- 
1. Top bun: the introduction
 - What or who are you evaluating?
 - Why does it matter?
 - What are your criteria?
 2. Meat in the middle
 - Provide the facts
 - Maybe a chart
 3. Bottom bun: the conclusion
 - Your opinion
 - Next steps, if any

Persuading

HOW TO OBTAIN



A Better Looking Nose

Improve Your Personal Appearance
My free book tells you how I guarantee to
improve the shape of your nose by remod-
eling the cartilage and fleshy parts, quickly,
safely, and painlessly, or refund your money.
The very fine, precise adjustments which
only my new patented Model 25 Nose
Shaper possesses, make results satisfactory
and lasting. Worn night or day. Over
100,000 users. Send for free book to
**M. TRILETY, Pioneer Noseshaping
Specialist, Dept. 193, Binghamton, N. Y.**

The Structure of Persuasion

The NOSE Pattern

- **Needs:** The customer's issues, pains, or opportunities.
- **Outcomes:** The benefits of those needs: *the motivation*.
- **Solution:** A recommendation that will solve the problem.
- **Evidence:** Proof of your solution and your differentiators.



problems,
and the deal.

me from meeting

or service that

and on budget:

In Summary...

1. Avoid the pseudo-languages: Fluff, Guff, Geek, and Weasel
2. Write in your own voice
3. Simplify to maximize clarity
4. Use the right pattern to achieve your purpose



Good luck... in developing winning proposals!



Dr. Tom Sant
tsant@hydeparkpartnerscal.com