

A decorative graphic consisting of several circles of different colors and sizes. There is a yellow circle with a white outline, a large green circle with a white outline, a blue circle, a pink circle, a red circle, and a small light blue circle. They are arranged in a scattered pattern on the left side of the slide.

# STORY CRAFTING

TELLING YOUR STORY TO  
IMPATIENT, DISTRACTED READERS

LAURA HALE BROCKWAY, ELS

# Welcome



## **Laura Hale Brockway, ELS \***

I am an Austin-based writer and editor. I work for Texas Medical Liability Trust as the assistant vice president of marketing.

I have been contributing to Ragan Communication's *PR Daily* website for seven years, and I am the author of the writing blog, *Impertinent Remarks*.

*\*ELS stands for the Board of Editors in the Life Sciences designation of Editor in the Life Sciences.*

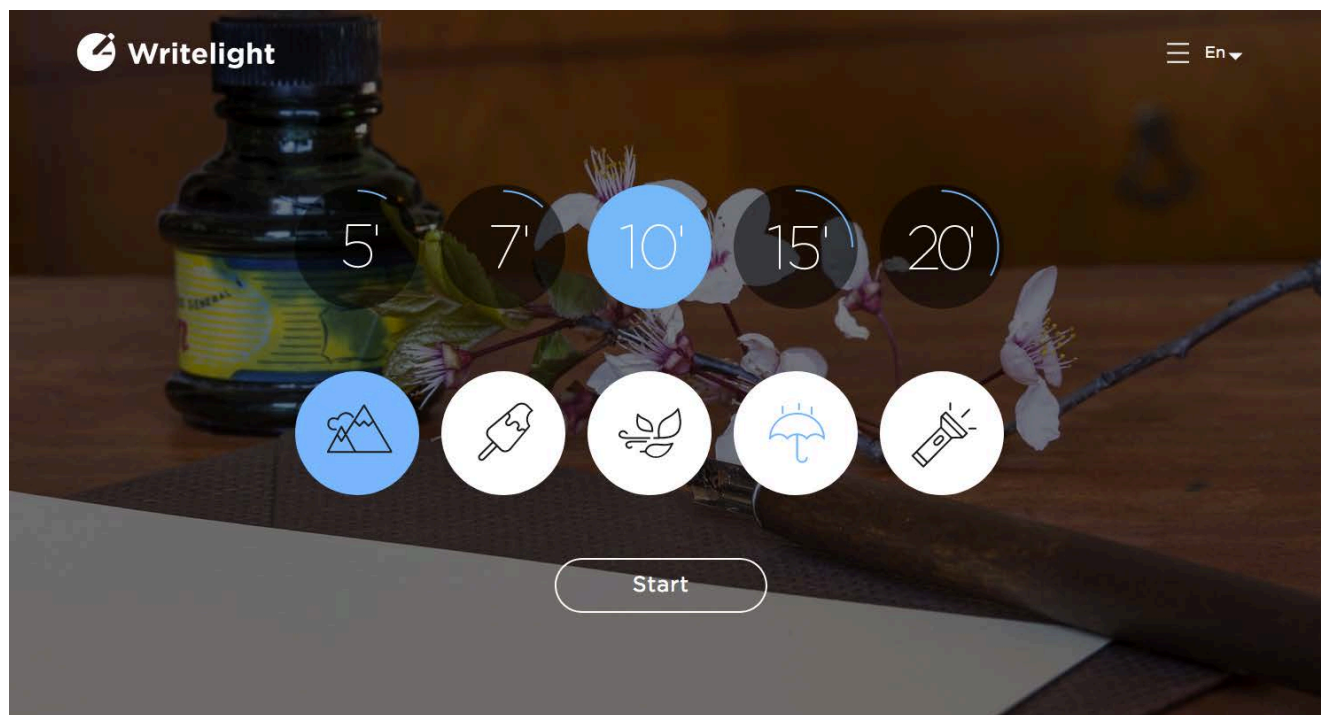
# Welcome



## Introductions

- Name
- Where you're from
- Company and role
- Content challenges

# Activity



# Introduction



## The age of distraction?

- **Socrates** — writing would weaken memory because people would no longer have to remember things.
- **18<sup>th</sup> century** — growing unease that the “emotional upheavals” caused by reading would affect an individual’s ability to reflect and think deeply.
- **19<sup>th</sup> century** — novels are dangerous; their “seductive powers” inhibit the ability to concentrate and focus.
- **Today** — distraction is rarely linked to reading books.

# Introduction



## The age of distraction?



# Introduction



## Impatience



# Introduction



## Storytelling



# Objectives



**In this hands-on session, you'll learn how to:**

- **Discover your story** — Everyone has a story. What makes yours special? What makes yours credible?
- **Craft your story** — How can you make every word count?
- **Expand your story** — How to re-purpose your story and curate your content in other formats and media.



# Discover your story

## Think like a marketer



What stories can you tell about your product or service? How do you make those stories memorable and credible?

**Content marketing** involves the creation and sharing of content for the purpose of acquiring customers. It is the art of communicating with customers and prospects without selling.

**Account-based marketing** is content marketing for specific accounts or segments (customers or prospects.)


# Discover your story

[HOME](#) [TOPICS](#) [TRENDING](#) [MEDIA](#) [SPECIALITIES](#) [CASE STUDIES](#)

## CASE STUDIES

Closed claim studies based on actual malpractice claims



### Failure to diagnose cornual pregnancy

A 33-year-old woman came to the emergency department (ED) complaining of bilateral abdominal pain, back pain, and shortness of breath.

[Read Article](#)

### Failure to diagnose retained sponge

A 55-year-old woman was admitted to a hospital in New Mexico for a colostomy reversal.

[Read Article](#)

Want more closed claim studies? Subscribe to the CASE CLOSED newsletter.

Email

### Failure to diagnose tuberculosis

A two-year-old boy with a five-day history of intermittent fever and stomachache was brought to his pediatrician. The child was diagnosed with a viral syndrome and treated with simethicone drops

[Read Article](#)

### Delay in detecting melanoma

A 58-year-old man came to his family physician for evaluation of a lesion on his back. The man was a long-time patient of this physician.


[Read Article](#)


### Failure to insist on EMS transport

At 8:30 a.m., a patient's wife called her husband's family physician and requested an appointment because her husband was experiencing chest pain that began the previous evening.

[Read Article](#)

### VIDEO: Failure to Insist on EMS Transport

[Watch Now](#)



### Failure to follow up on mammogram

A 54-year-old woman returned to her primary care physician, Family Physician A. The patient reported pain in her

[Read Article](#)

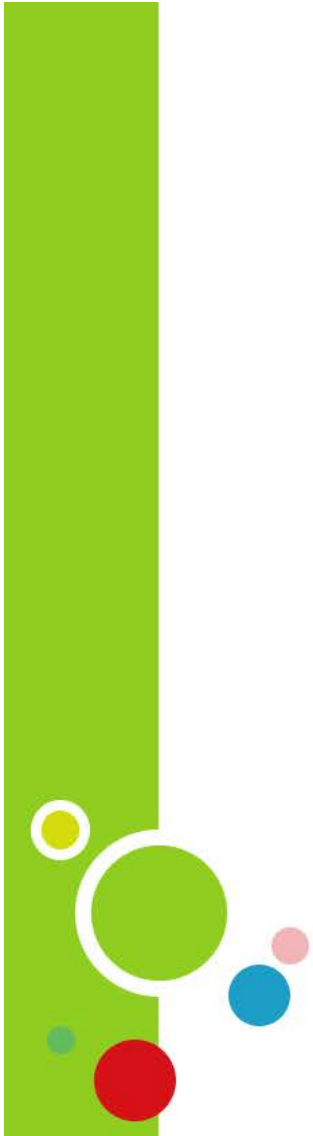
### Failure to diagnose rhabdomyolysis

At 3:20 p.m., a 3-year-old girl was brought to the emergency department (ED) with complaints of fever, lethargy, sore throat, severe leg pain bilaterally with decreased sensation, and absent reflexes.

[Read Article](#)

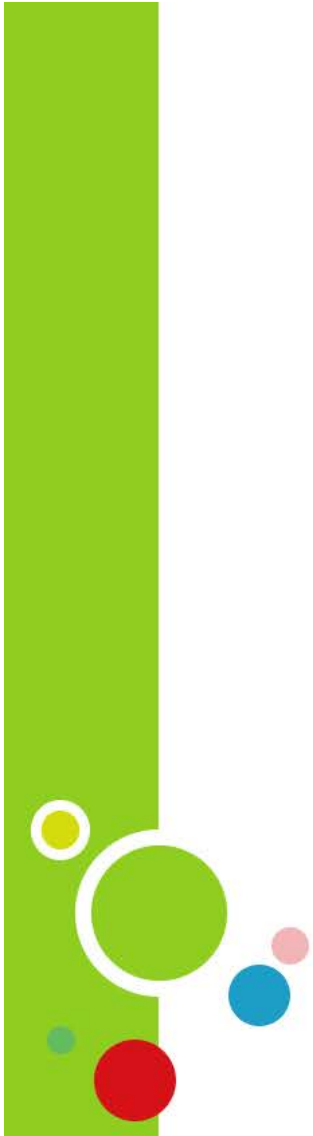
# Discover your story

Farmer's "Hall of Claims" commercials



**Discover your story**

**RESOURCE  HUB**





# Discover your story

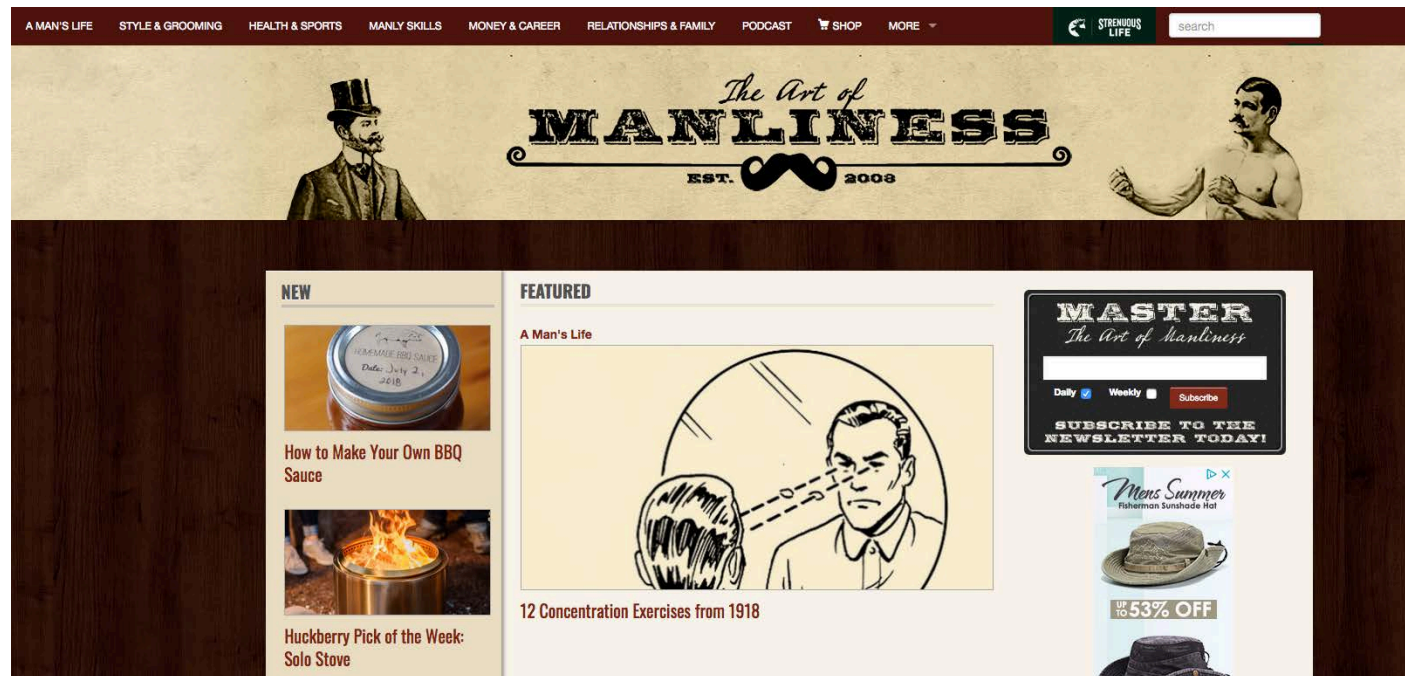
## *The Art of Manliness*

A men's lifestyle site with more than 10 million monthly page views.

The site “explores all things manly — from the serious and philosophical to the practical and fun.” *Art of Manliness* “encourages our readers to be better husbands, fathers, brothers, citizens — a new generation of great men.”

Founded by Brett McKay in 2008, the blog is site now run by Brett and his wife, Kay. Has been expanded from the website to podcasts, email newsletters, videos, book.

# Discover your story





# Discover your story

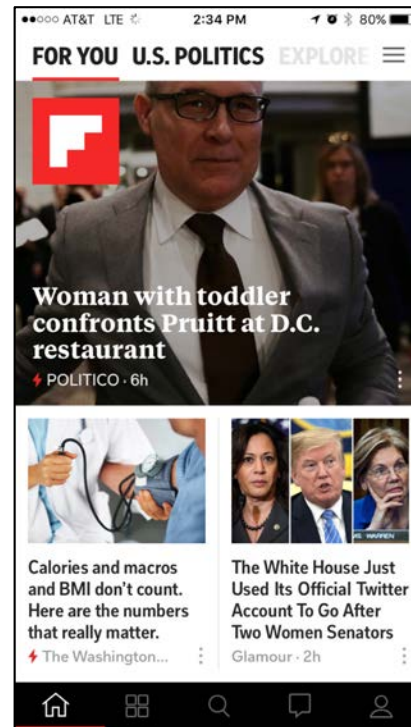
## 1. Stories should give useful information

Does your content answer a question? Fill a need? Help someone?



# Discover your story

## 2. Credibility is critical





# Discover your story

## 2. Credibility is critical

How do you establish your company as a credible news source?

- **Publish straightforward content.**
- **Cite and date credible sources.**
- **Avoid sensationalism.**
- **Check for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.**



# Discover your story

## 2. Credibility is critical

- **Be transparent. If your content is biased . . . own it**

Label it “editorial” or “analysis”

“Not many people feel this way”

“You may not agree with all of this, but

“Of course we’re going to say that we sell the best widgets, but so do our customers.”

# Discover your story

## 3. Credibility is critical

The screenshot shows a web page with a dark red header containing navigation links: A MAN'S LIFE, STYLE & GROOMING, HEALTH & SPORTS, MANLY SKILLS, MONEY & CAREER, RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY, PODCAST, SHOP, and MORE. The main article is titled "7 Mistakes New Wet Shavers Make" by a guest contributor, dated October 2, 2014, and last updated May 27, 2018. It is categorized under "Shaving, Style & Grooming". The article features a black and white photo of a man shaving in a bathroom. Below the photo is a sponsored section for "WET SHAVE CLUB" with a "5.7K" badge. The article text begins with an editor's note and an introduction to the topic of transitioning from electric to manual razors. On the right sidebar, there is a "MASTER" newsletter sign-up, a "THE ART OF MANLINESS PODCAST" section, a grid of grooming products, a "chewy.com" advertisement, and a "NEW TO AOM? BEGIN HERE" section with a "VOTED RANDOM POST" button.

A Manly Guest Contributor | October 2, 2014  
Last updated May 27, 2018  
Shaving, Style & Grooming

### 7 Mistakes New Wet Shavers Make

This post is brought to you by [Wet Shave Club](#), a subscription service that delivers an awesome variety of shaving soap and double edge razor blades right to your door every month. Get \$5 off on your [first box](#) with discount code [ARTORMAN](#).

**WET SHAVE CLUB**  
JOIN NOW

5.7K

Editor's note: This is a guest post from Mark "Mantic92" Hemo.

So you're new to wet shaving. Maybe you're at that time in your life where you're just beginning to shave. Or perhaps you're [making a transition from electric razors to manual](#). Or you've decided to [shave like your grandpa](#). In any case, there are some common mistakes new wet shavers make that I see all the time. I cover 7 of those mistakes below.

**MASTER**  
The Art of Manliness  
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NEW TO AOM? BEGIN HERE

VOTED RANDOM POST



# Discover your story

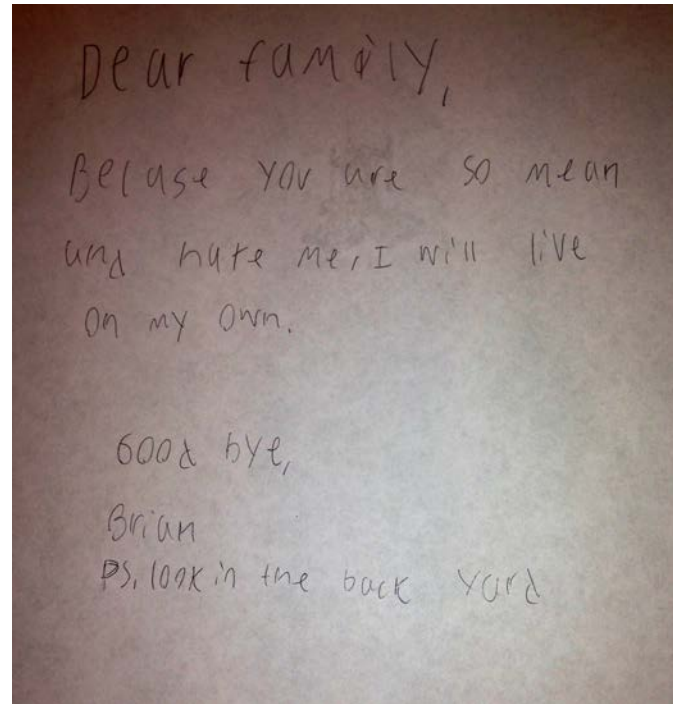
## 4. Start with the why

Leading with the “why” helps everyone understand the purpose of your content right up front.

*Because we are uncertain of the health risks associated with the electronic cigarettes, these devices have been banned at all facilities.*

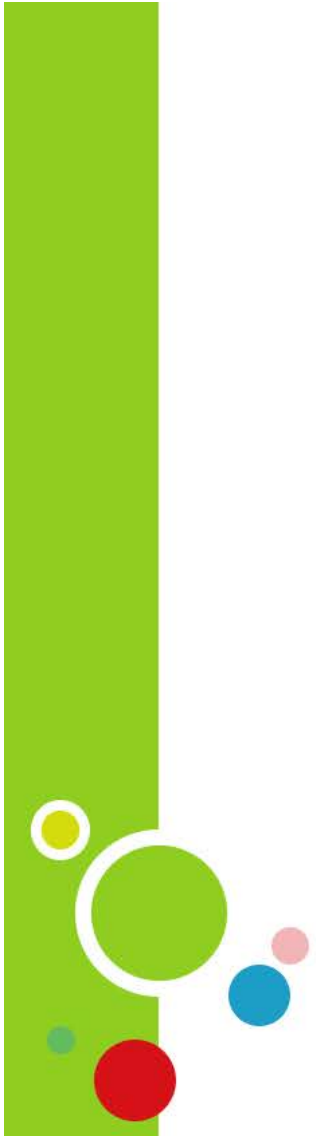
# Discover your story

## 3. Start with the why



# Discover your story

## 4. Remember the WIFM



# Discover your story

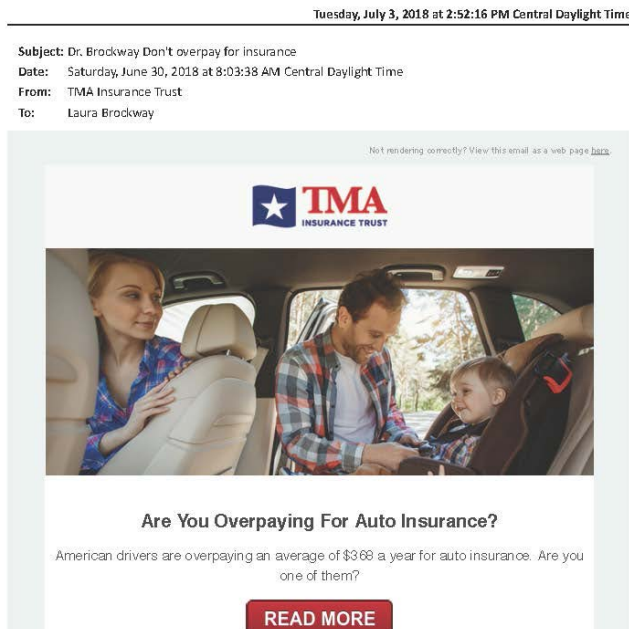
## 5. Don't distract readers with irrelevant information





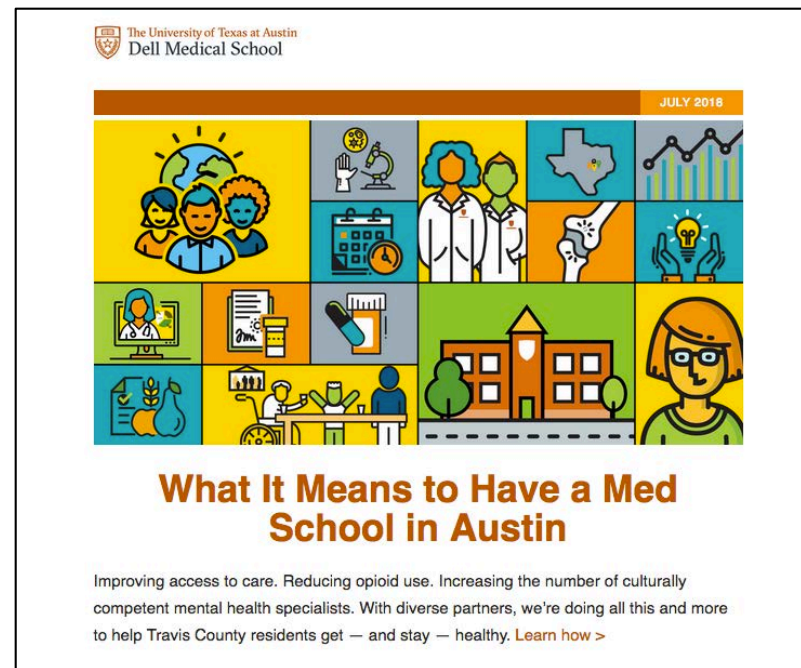
# Discover your story

## 6. Use balanced language, not over-the-top sales pitches



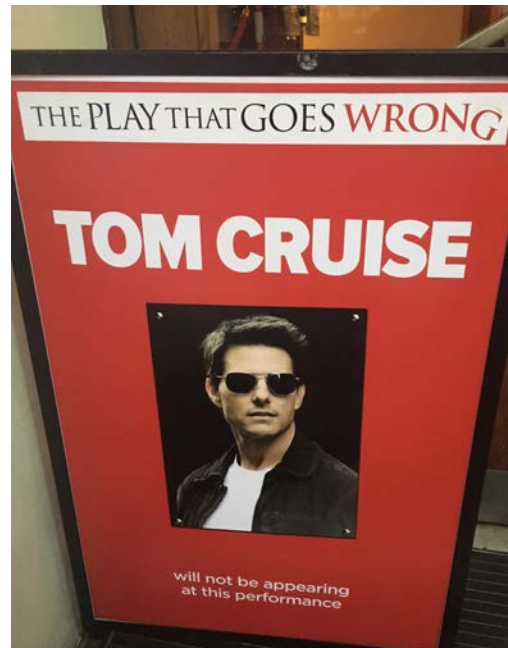
# Discover your story

## 6. Use balanced language, not over-the-top sales pitches



# Discover your story

6. Use balanced language, not over-the-top sales pitches . . . unless it's very clever.





# Craft your story

## 1. Make every word count

**“This report, by its very length, defends itself against the risk of being read.” — Winston Churchill**

- Use simple words, active verbs, and meaningful modifiers
- Cut out extra words
- Avoid jargon, define acronyms, link to simplified explanations



# Craft your story

## 2. Write for your readers

“Writing for your audience” often takes a back seat to the whims and demands of executives or colleagues. Your boss might want to include 500 words of background information in a blog post, but that doesn’t mean readers want to read it.

Remember, your audience is not your boss, but the “end user” of what you’ve written. Think about that audience before you start writing.

# Craft your story

## 3. Don't bury the lede

**“Flash, I love you! But we only have 14 hours left to save the earth!”**





# Craft your story

## 3. Don't bury the lede

- It means your copy fails to highlight the most important or actionable items at the beginning of the message.
- Too much information can cause readers to ignore the message completely. Will your message be understood by someone reading it on their phone while in line at the grocery store.
- Background information and statistics can be added through links or by listing them under the *Background* or *Quick Facts* in later paragraphs.



# Craft your story

## 4. Stop relying on crutch phrases

Unnecessary phrases add to the noise readers are trying to filter out.

*“As many of you are already aware, performance reviews will start next week.”*

“As many of you are already aware” is meaningless and doesn’t add anything to the sentence. Remove it and jump straight into the sentence.

*“Performance reviews will start next week.”*





# Craft your story

## 4. Common crutch phrases

- As a matter of fact
- As you may already know
- At this point in time
- Basically
- Because of the fact that
- During the course of
- For all intents and purposes
- For the purpose of
- Generally
- Given the fact that
- In case you haven't heard
- In light of the fact that
- In my opinion



# Craft your story

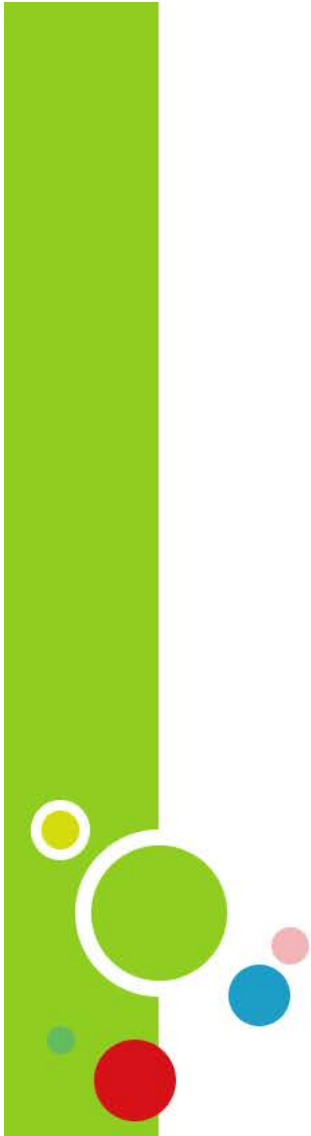
## 4. Common crutch phrases

- In regard to
- In the event that
- In the process of
- It has come to my attention
- It is believed by many that
- It is interesting to note that
- It is well known that
- It may be said that
- Needless to say
- Please be advised that
- That said
- The fact of the matter
- We have every intention

# Craft your story

## 5. Choose simple over complex

The use of unfamiliar or complex terms interferes with comprehension and slows readers down. Readers may even skip terms they don't understand, hoping to find their meaning in the rest of the sentence.





# Craft your story

## 5. Complex terms and their simpler alternatives

Instead of	Try
Advantageous	Helpful
Ameliorate	Improve
Cognizant	Aware
Commensurate	Equal
Consolidate	Combine
Deleterious	Harmful
Disseminate	Issue, Send
Endeavor	Try
Erroneous	Wrong
Facilitate	Help, Lead



# Craft your story

## 5. Complex terms and their simpler alternatives

Instead of	Try
Implement	Carry out
Leverage	Use
Optimize	Perfect
Prescribed	Required
Proficiencies	Skills
Promulgate	Issue, Publish
Proximity	Near
Regarding	About
Remuneration	Reward, Payment
Subsequently	After, Later



# Craft your story

## 6. Use active verbs

“As the new year commences, we are leveraging our core competencies as we endeavor to meet our customers needs.”



# Craft your story

## 6. Use active verbs

### Instead of

Accompany  
Ballpark  
Commence  
Consolidate  
Dialogue  
Disseminate  
Enumerate  
Facilitate  
Ideate  
Implement

### Try

Go with  
Estimate  
Begin  
Join  
Talk  
Give, Send  
Count  
Lead, Help  
Think  
Carry out, Start



# Craft your story

## 6. Use active verbs

### Instead of

Incentivize

Peruse

Promulgate

Synergize

Utilize

### Try

Motivate

Read

Issue, Publish

Work together

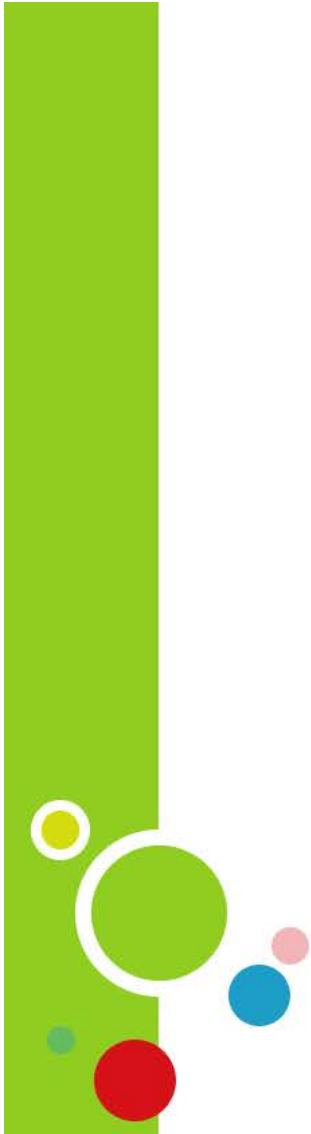
Use



# Craft your story

## 7. Meaningful modifiers

- The use of indirect and unclear descriptors causes readers to ignore or misinterpret your message.
- The same goes for adjectives that have lost their meaning through overuse or misuse, such as “unique,” “amazing,” “revolutionary.”
- Eliminate unnecessary modifiers, such as “really” and “very.”
- Descriptors should be precise. (“overwrought” instead of “stressed.”)





# Craft your story

## 7. Meaningful modifiers

Modifiers drained of their meaning through overuse and misuse.

- Amazing
- Awesome
- Complex
- Effective
- Epic
- Exciting
- Exclusive
- Ground-breaking
- Historic
- Iconic
- Incredible
- Innovative
- Insane
- Interesting
- Literally
- Natural
- Outstanding
- Proactive
- Progressive
- Unique
- Revolutionary
- Ridiculous



# Craft your story

## 8. Cut out extra words

### Instead of

afford an opportunity  
as a means of  
at this point in time  
due to the fact that  
during the period  
has a requirement for  
in a timely manner  
in accordance with  
in accordance with  
in advance of  
in regard to

### Try

allow, let  
to  
now  
because  
during  
needs  
quickly, promptly  
by, following, under  
by, following, per, under  
before  
about, concerning,



# Craft your story

## 8. Cut out extra words

### Instead of

in the amount of  
in the event that  
in the near future  
no later than June 1  
pertaining to  
provides guidance for  
under the provisions of  
until such time as  
with reference to  
with the exception of

### Try

for  
if  
shortly, soon  
by June 1  
about  
guides  
under  
until  
about  
except



# Craft your story

## 9. Avoid jargon

**Audience** — Think about where and under what circumstances readers will access your content. When was the last time you made it through a technical or jargon-filled article on your phone while waiting for your dentist appointment.

**Jargon pushes readers away.** It's not a huge leap from skimming to clicking away. Readers won't take the time to find the meaning of an unfamiliar term in the rest of your message.



# Craft your story

## 9. Avoid jargon

**Jargon makes you seem out of touch with your readers.** They might abandon your content in search for something easier to read — something “meant” for them.

**Save the jargon** for the footnotes or for links to a reference or a glossary page. Acronyms can be linked to their definitions.

**There are better word choices.** English is a versatile language, and we have a wealth of synonyms available. Use a thesaurus or keyword search tools to find alternative terms that speak to your readers.



# Craft your story

## Activity

**Subject line — Is your independence being squeezed out?**

### **TMA Launches Partnership to Help Independent Practices**

The Texas Medical Association and TMA PracticeEdge have joined a new partnership that supports independent physician practices transitioning to value-based care.

The Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care (PEPC) announced its launch Thursday, embarking on an effort to support value-based care to reduce costs, improve quality, empower patients and physicians, and increase access to care for millions of Americans through a competitive health care provider market.



# Craft your story

## Activity — Sample answer

### Help for independent practices

If you're an independent physician moving to value-based care, TMA has formed a partnership to help you reduce costs, improve quality, and increase access to care.

The Partnership to Empower Physician-Led Care launched Thursday. [Read more](#) to learn how this partnership can help you.





# Expand your story

## Think about your content from 10,000 feet

Curate content and think about how to use it in more than one format.

Closed claim studies started out as articles in our newsletter.

- Book series (*Case Closed*)
- [Book series with continuing education credit](#)
- Book series by specialty
- Podcasts (discontinued)
- By [specialty](#), [allegation](#), or [clinical condition](#) on Resource Hub
- [“Hot topic” continuing education courses](#) (opioids, maternal mortality)
- [Videos](#)
- [Slideshare](#)



# Expand your story

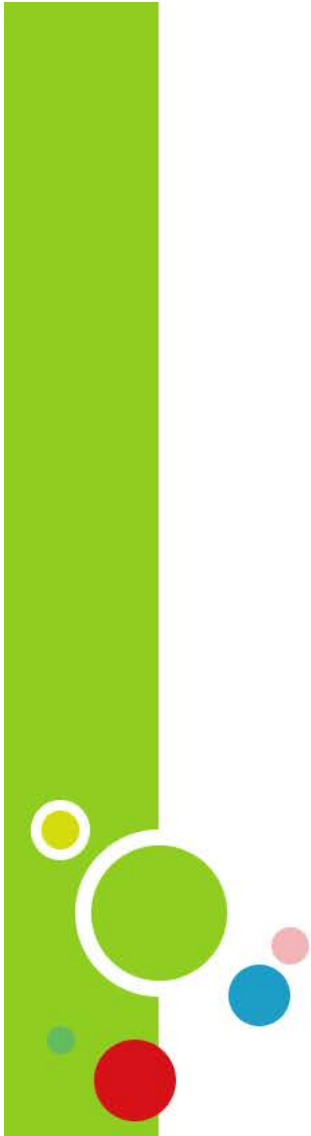
**Make your story accessible in other formats & media**

- Blog
- White papers
- Email newsletters
- Presentations
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Slideshare
- Publication/Self-publish
- Continuing education
- Publish with partners
- Social media
- Infographics

# Expand your story

## Activity

Come up with three different ways to use your company's content.



# Thank you



## Story Crafting — Telling your story to impatient, distracted audiences

### Questions?

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