



EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

EUROSYSTEM

Effective written communication for practitioners

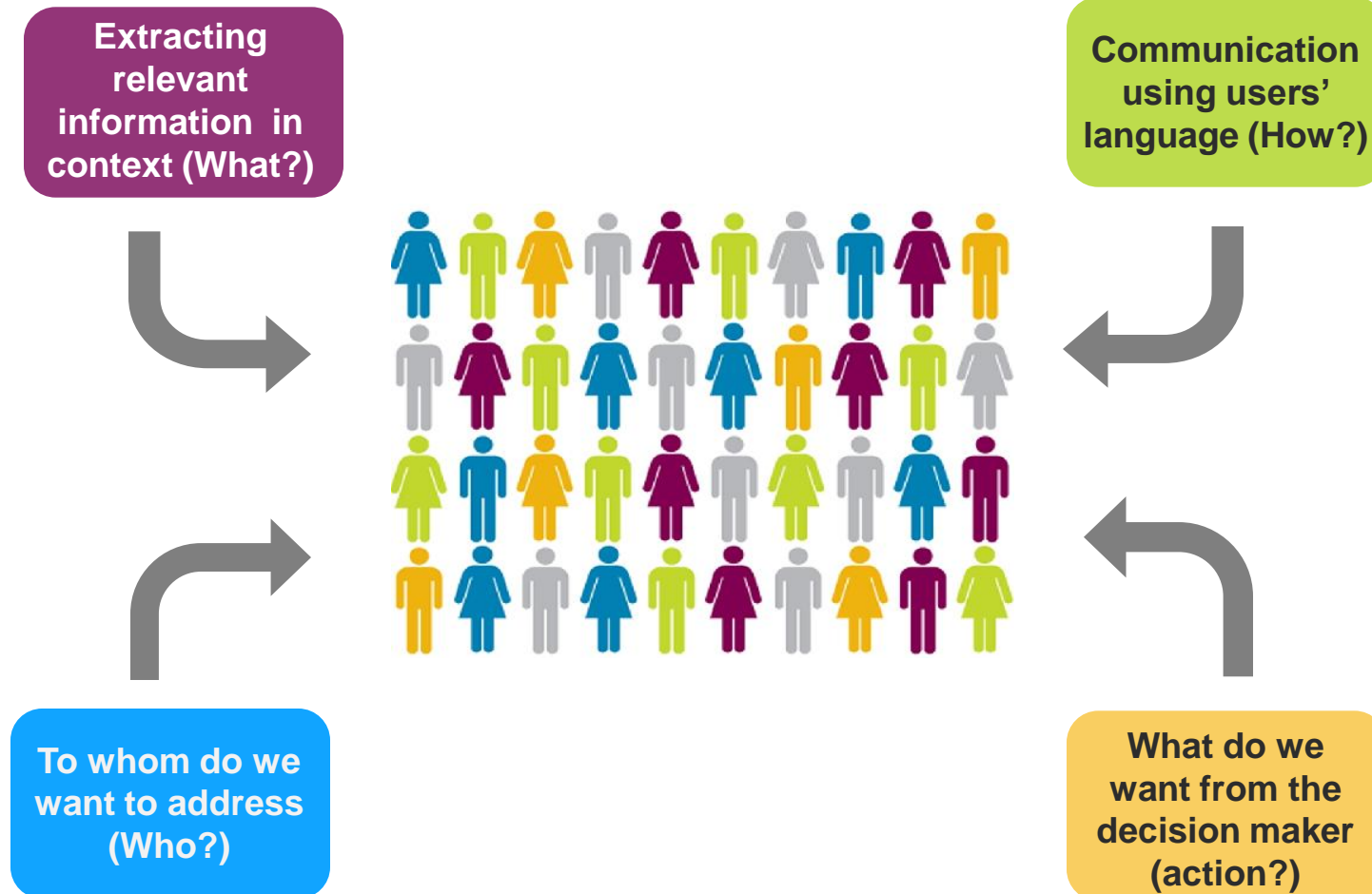


Workshop on writing and Communication in Research

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Effective written communication for practitioners



Effective written communication is important

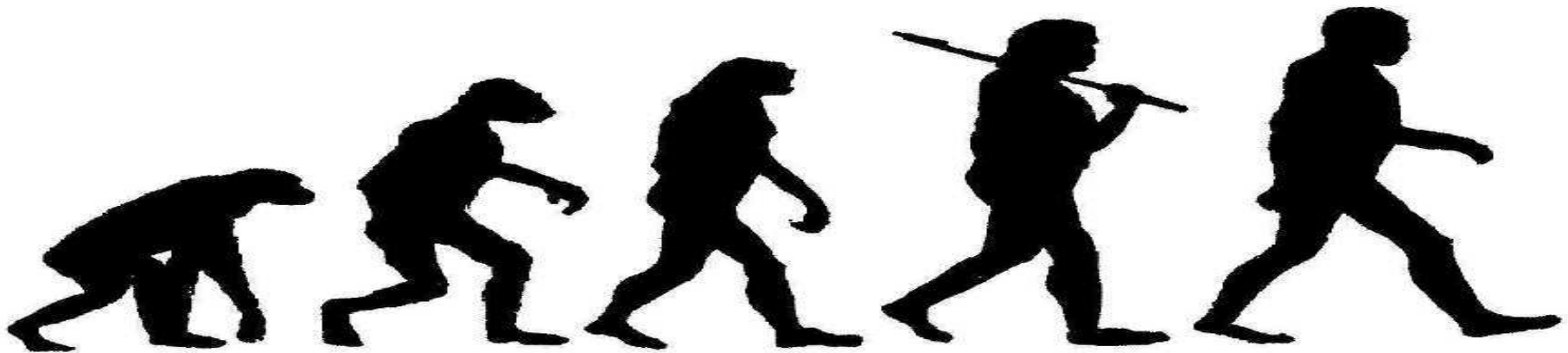
- Facilitates and fosters a sound decision making process
- Optimises the use of resources within organisations
- Streamlines corporate communication for easy focus and reading of policy makers
- Provides structural guidance for staff drafting documents; and as a tool to provide constructive feed-back
- Reduces time to market of delivering papers for discussions
- Reduces the length of documents without loss of substance

❖ *A plan for implementing the concept in practice*

Main causes of excessive documents

- Documents have structural shortcomings, so the **reader has to read substantial texts** before coming to **the issue** in question;
- Authors tend to skip the **planning process**. Thus, authors end up presenting information in a similar way in which they think about it.
- Lack of authors to focus on the needs and **to anticipate questions**.
- **Repetitiveness** and excessive **unnecessary background information**.
- Lack of focused and **structured paragraphs writing**.
- Lack of **structural feed-back** and genuine **guidance** to authors;
- Authors have the misperception that long documents are used as a measure of importance;

Core guidelines for effective communication




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- PLANNING PHASE



- Vital to orientate and structure ideas into clear and focused messages



- The ideas and choices should be agreed with its superior, direct manager prior to drafting documents



- Tool : A document planning page (DPP)



- The DPP can be used to provide constructive and consistent feed-back

A good planning is a project half implemented

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PLANNING PHASE - *review and agree the planning page with your manager before writing the document*

What is the purpose of the document

What do **I want to achieve** with the document? Decision – approval – guidance- support - advice – direction?

Who are your readers and which questions?

Who are your **writing for**? Management, Board, Committee? What information **do they need for deciding**? Which **questions could they have**?

What are the main points of your message?

There are **three options**? - The first option is recommended based on... - How do we get there (**roadmap**) and which implications do this have on time, budget, resources?

Section 1

Topic questions and for decision makers

Section 2

Description of options and assessments

Section 3

Recommendations

Section 4


Way forward and which answers do you expect from the decision makers

Review and agree the planning page with your manager before writing the document

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- STRUCTURING DOCUMENTS



- A direct correlation between the answers within DPP – a red thread throughout the document – and the structure of the document



- The use of structuring documents means to present information in a logical and chronological way focusing on the reader!



- To ensure that the purpose of the document is directly linked to the main findings



- Facilitates the reader in assessing the request for advice, decision or recommendation

A structured document has a higher probability of success and for the author to be recognised

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STRUCTURING DOCUMENTS – *what is your request in non technical terms?*
Focus on communicating the main conclusion upfront

Introduction
Context

Zoom out – Grand overview
Reminds the reader why s/he is reading this and in which context

Purpose

An opening sentence that tells the reader what is the subject, what is expected by when (The purpose of this document is. ...?)

Road map

What is to be found where and what? **Section 2 deals** with a description of the options. **Section 3 addresses** the recommendations, **section 4 the way forward..**

Conclusion

Focus on communicating the main conclusions of your analysis and research - Do **not** introduce new issues in the conclusion

Technical information

If a lot of background or technical information is unavoidable, **put it in an attachment** and, in the text, refer readers to the attachment if they require further details

Executive summary are very important for longer documents: Focus on facilitating the reader to quickly and easily capture the main topic, recommendations, implications and deadlines.

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- PARAGRAPH WRITING



- Each section has structured paragraphs



- A well written paragraph is organised around one main idea



- A paragraph starts with one sentence which summaries the paragraph



- A paragraph uses short sentences and avoids jargon language

A good paragraph is a thrill to read

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PARAGRAPH WRITING – principles and guidelines

Arrange the information in order of priority – put the most important information first

Avoid **heavy noun** structures and **jargon**; explain **acronyms**
Use **bold** for important sentences

Have a short **summary** or an **executive summary** – even for documents that are less than two pages long

Be concise – re-read the document and remove unnecessary text

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PARAGRAPH WRITING – *Examples:*

Definition of systemically important financial sectors



There is no clear, universally accepted definition of “systemic importance.” Systemic importance is not a binary concept but can be measured along a continuum, using different criteria. Systemic importance is also contingent on the state of global or domestic markets, thus reflecting to a certain degree the subjective views of market participants. Distinguishing between different countries on the basis of whether or not their financial sectors are “systemically important” is thus fraught with difficulty.

Nevertheless, establishing a set of relevant and transparent criteria for identifying systemically important financial sectors is a critical component of the proposal to integrate financial stability assessments into Article IV surveillance. It is key for the uniform treatment of all members in the context of a more risk-based approach to financial sector surveillance. Nevertheless, since financial sectors and their interconnectedness evolve over time, the determination of countries with systemically important financial sectors on the basis of these criteria would have to be reviewed periodically.

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PARAGRAPH WRITING – *Examples:*

Definition of systemically important financial sectors



The point of departure for defining systemic importance for this exercise is the conceptual framework developed by the IMF, BIS, and FSB. This framework - originally developed for evaluating the systemic importance of financial institutions, markets, and instruments (SIMIs) - approaches systemic importance from both a domestic and a global point of view. It identifies the following three key concepts:

1. **size, i.e.**, the volume of financial services provided by an individual financial institution or market;
2. **interconnectedness, i.e.**, the extent of linkages with other financial institutions or markets; and
3. **substitutability, i.e.**, the extent to which other institutions or markets can provide the same services in the event of the failure of part of the system.

Example is taken from the IMF: Integrating Stability Assessments Under the Financial Sector Assessment Program into Article IV Surveillance. August 27, 2010

Main golden corns



Planning

structuring
documents

Paragraph writing

Stay **objective**, stay **neutral** and stay **factual** when presenting

- the **purpose** of the document
- the **options**
- **advantages** and **disadvantages** of proposals;
- any proposal has **both** advantages and disadvantages which equally has to be presented
- argue with a **holistic view** for a preferred options
- include **minority or diverting** views

Q&A

