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WORKSHOPS, CONSULTING & INFORMATION PRODUCTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## WRITING PERSUASIVE DOCUMENTS

In order to persuade, you must:

- Establish the trustworthiness of yourself and your organization. Your audience must believe you are a competent person, a professional.
  - Present information accurately.
  - Use verifiable data.
  - Use meaningful resources and expert opinion.
  - Ensure accuracy.
- Appeal to the audience's values, motivation and emotions.
  - Inform the audience about the difference you are making in people's lives.
  - Show the audience that your services are vital.
  - Tell stories that appeal to mind and heart.
    - Tell your story simply
    - Use short simple sentences
    - Show rather than tell
    - Illustrate with short stories of success
- Deliver a reasonable, straightforward and well-documented argument.
  - Show real, positive results achieved by your program to meet real needs.
  - Explain what your program will do and cannot do if not funded and what the cost will be to the community.
  - Include logic, numbers, facts and data.
- Build a sense of urgency.
  - Explain why "now."
  - Make it easy to decide and act.
- Communicate features as benefits.
  - Create a "need."
  - Explain what the audience gets and/or avoids.



## Translate Features into Benefits

Features inform; benefits persuade. To identify the feature, ask "so what?"

<b>FEATURE:</b> What are the characteristics of my products or services?	<b>BENEFIT:</b> How does each affect my reader's life in a good way?
This software can be implemented quickly.	Customer can start using it within minutes.
Cellphone number stays the same even if you move.	Customer does not risk losing valuable calls from contacts that do not know his number has changed.
Vehicle has 12 airbags.	Customer and his family are protected.

## Use Embedded Commands

Embedded commands are language patterns that bypass the conscious mind and directly influence people at the subconscious level. You can use them to influence how people feel or to take specific actions. They are perceived as imperatives (commands) within (embedded) a larger sentence. Because they are buried in a longer sentence, the conscious mind may not be aware of them, but the subconscious mind is. They can have a powerful impact on your reader's decision making process. For example:

- It seems as if **YOU AGREE** with what I'm saying. If we **ACT NOW**, I can help you get what you want in the time you need it...does that work for you?
- The easiest way to stay informed on important campus news is to **CHECK BACK TO OUR WEBSITE EVERY DAY**.
- As soon you **SEND IN YOUR REPORT**, we can begin the second phase of the project.
- It is necessary **TO DECIDE NOW** if we want to **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE DISCOUNTED PRICE**.

You want to emphasize slightly the embedded command. I recommend not using formatting or limiting it to italics, rather than using bold or all caps. If you place too heavy an emphasis, the command becomes obvious.

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