



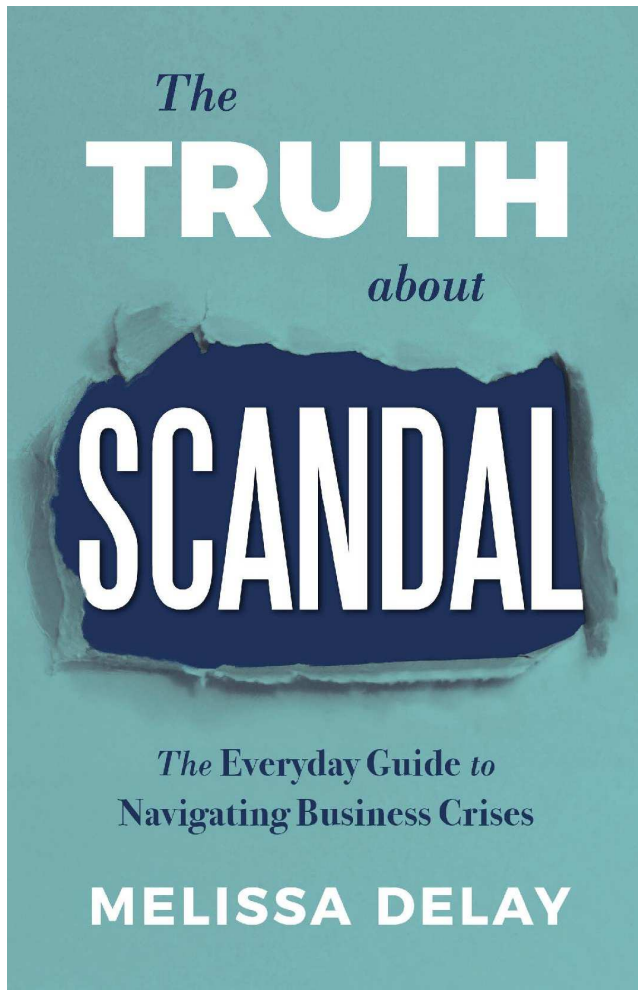
**TRU** PERCEPTION

**GOOD WAYS TO  
DELIVER BAD NEWS:  
HOW TO AVOID  
CONFLICT THE RIGHT  
WAY**

November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

# The Truth About Business





**The Truth About Haters**

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**The Truth About Awkwardness**

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**The Truth About Sabotage**

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**The Truth About Harassers**

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## 3 Simple Action Steps

1. Learn how to craft smart influential messages on the fly
2. Create a copy bible for the issues you can foresee
3. Write better emails.

**CRAFTING SMART,  
INFLUENTIAL  
MESSAGES ON THE FLY.**

## Elements of a Power Phrase:

1

They  
**tell the truth**

2

They're  
**considerate**

3

They're  
**objective**

## Responding to Negativity:

- “I'm getting an attorney.”
- “Everyone I've talked to tells me not to trust the insurance company.”
- “My doctor/union rep told me to talk to an attorney.”
- “My employer is looking for an excuse to fire me.”

## Power Phrases:

- Thank you for sharing your plans.
- I can't speak for others. Here's what I can tell you about us...
- I'm not sure that's an accurate characterization.
- Right now, we need to focus on [issue].
- I wish I could. Here's what I can do instead.
- First, let me clarify.
- Not exactly; let me explain.
- I wouldn't say that.



## Benefits of a Power Phrase:

1

They  
**buy you  
time**

2

Help you  
**diffuse the  
situation**

3

Show  
**diplomacy**

# Exercise: Practicing Power Phrases



## Power Phrases:

- First, let me clarify.
- I don't know if that's an accurate characterization.
- Right now, we need to focus on this issue.
- Not exactly; let me explain.
- I wouldn't say that.
- I can't speak to all of that, but here's what I can tell you...

**WHAT ABOUT THE  
ISSUES  
YOU CAN FORESEE?**

**THE COPY BIBLE**

## Elements of The Copy Bible:

- Personal Mission Statement
- 10-30-60-90-Second Elevator Speech
- Professional Bio
- LinkedIn Profile
- Website or Marketing Collateral
- Repetitive Good News Messages
- Repetitive Bad News Messages

## Elements of The Copy Bible:

- Personal Mission Statement
- 10-30-60-90-Second Elevator Speech
- Professional Bio
- LinkedIn Profile
- Website or Marketing Collateral
- Repetitive Good News Messages
- **Repetitive Bad News Messages**

## The Same Elements Apply:

1

You must  
**tell the truth**

2

Be  
**considerate**

3

Be  
**objective**

**Plus you must:**

Cast everyone **in as**  
**favorable** a **light**  
as **possible.**



## And Avoid Emotionally Charged Words:

- Love...hate
- Ramifications
- Inferior...dumb
- You never...you always
- Fail...terrible
- Axe to grind...in the hot seat
- Aggressive
- Denied
- Rude
- Disappointed...irritated...frustrated
- Selfish
- Unfair

## Addressing Issues You Can Foresee:



**Skeptical Claimants**



**Saying No Without Damaging Relationships**



**Delivering Bad News**



**Addressing Missteps**



**Dealing with Longwinded Talkers**

## Skeptical Claimants:

“ I know it’s difficult to put your confidence in an [insurance company] especially when the end result is so important. I can’t speak to for other [adjusters], but here’s what I can tell you about your case ...

## Saying No Without Damaging Relationships:

“ One of the ways that I’ve been able to best support claimants is by remaining fair. Because my core focus is [recording facts, answering process questions] I would be going outside of that if I advised you on [XYZ]. However, I’m happy to make a referral to someone who could assist you.

## Delivering Bad News:

“ I wish I was sharing different news. Your claim was not approved.

I understand this is difficult, and I wish I was sharing different news.

## Addressing Missteps:

“ I need your help to clear up a potential misunderstanding. It seems some steps were missed during the investigation.

What can you tell me about your efforts?

## Dealing with Longwinded Talkers:

“ “ Because I have [90-seconds/3.5 minutes] before my next call, let's focus on next steps.

I understand this is difficult, and I want you to feel comfortable approaching me about any topic. Because I only have 90-seconds remaining before my next call, I'd like to confirm agreement on our next steps.

**HOW TO WRITE MORE  
EFFECTIVE EMAILS,  
LETTERS AND OTHER  
RESPONSES**



## Top Email Strategies:

- Write for your reader not yourself.
- Keep messages as short as possible.
- Write smart, actionable subject lines.

**Write for Your Reader  
not Yourself.**

# Your readers

1

They're  
**as busy**

2

They're  
**as smart**

3

Their stuff **as**  
**important**

## Questions to Ask Yourself

- What obstacles or perception issues does your audience struggle with? For example, do they believe you're too demanding or irrelevant?
- What motivates them to action?

# Right-way Rewrites

Hi Megan,

Why haven't you responded to my e-mail?! We are terribly behind on this project, and I need to hear from you right away!

Jaclyn

Hi Megan,

I hope you enjoyed your vacation. I'm sure you're still catching up on e-mails, so I'll give you a call later today. I have an idea on how we can quickly move forward on this project now that you're back.

Thanks,  
Jaclyn

## TIPS

- Avoid emotionally charged words.
- The more difficult the news, the more in-person it should be.

# Right-way Rewrites

**Subject: HR Conference:**

Jim,

Hi! I am following up to see if you've okay with us booking the travel for the upcoming HR conference.

We expect that the costs will be around \$10,000 for the entire team. We would really like everyone to go, but of course I understand if you'd like me to limit attendance to just managers. Also Sara had mentioned using some tracking software – can we get access to the reporting to help us figure out what we need to do?

We need to make travel arrangements soon to keep costs down. Also, can I get a cost center from you?

Thanks,  
Barb

**Subject: Time to book**

Hi Jim,

I hope all is well with you. The team's excited about attending next month's HR conference. I just need a few items to get everything scheduled:

- Cost center for travel and registration
- Reports from your tracking software and
- Number of attendees (approximately \$649 per team member)

If there is someone else on your team I should reach out to, please let me know.

Thanks,  
Barb

## TIPS

- Write more conversationally
- Avoid buzz words
- Break up long paragraphs
- Shorten content and create proof points
- Bold important people and phrases
- One call-to-action per email

## Email Openers That Work

- **Addressing a colleague's mistake:** "I need your help to clear up a potential misunderstanding."
- **Keeping your team in the know:** Instead of, "I just wanted to update you," write, "We are making great progress with XYZ."
- **Bridging the time gap:** "I trust all is well since we last connected."

**Keep Your Messages  
Short & Sweet.**



#8

How long should your message be?

TRU PERCEPTION

Good friend **extra long**,

Known customer **short**,

Prospect **super short**.

# Long vs. Short Email

## **Subject: Job posting process**

As you may recall, Human Resources conducted an employee survey regarding the internal job posting process in the fall of 2016. The survey was intended to gather information to assist in the review of our internal job posting process using a racial/socioeconomic review toolkit to evaluate how the existing process impacts various employee groups. Survey responses clearly indicated that a longer posting period would help to alleviate reported employee concerns related to both the opportunity to learn about open positions and to having time to apply before the application deadline under the existing standard of 5 days for an internal posting (the minimum period required by the AFSCME contract). As a result, all future job postings will be posted for a minimum of 10 business days (M-F). This 10-day period will apply to both internal and external job postings for positions posted after April 1, 2017.

Human Resources will continue to distribute copies of job postings for display on departmental bulletin boards (a requirement of the AFSCME contract). It is important that a consistent posting method and location be established within your worksites and that this is communicated to your staff so they know where to find this information to ensure that we are in compliance with this requirement. If you would prefer to receive job postings via email rather than hardcopy to facilitate timely posting, feel free to contact Human Resources.

Feel free to contact HR any time with questions or concerns. Thank you!

## **Subject: Job posting extended to 10 days**

Hello everyone, in the fall of 2016, Human Resources conducted an employee survey to:

- Gather information on the internal job posting process
- Evaluate how the process impacts various employee groups

The top recommendation from the survey was to:

- Lengthen the posting period so employees can learn about open positions and have time to apply before the application deadline.

As a result, beginning April 1, 2017, all future internal and external job postings will be posted for a minimum of 10 business days (M-F).

HR will continue to distribute copies of job postings for display on departmental bulletin boards (a requirement of the AFSCME contract).

If you would prefer to receive job postings via email rather than hardcopy to facilitate timely posting, feel free to contact Human Resources.

Thank you,

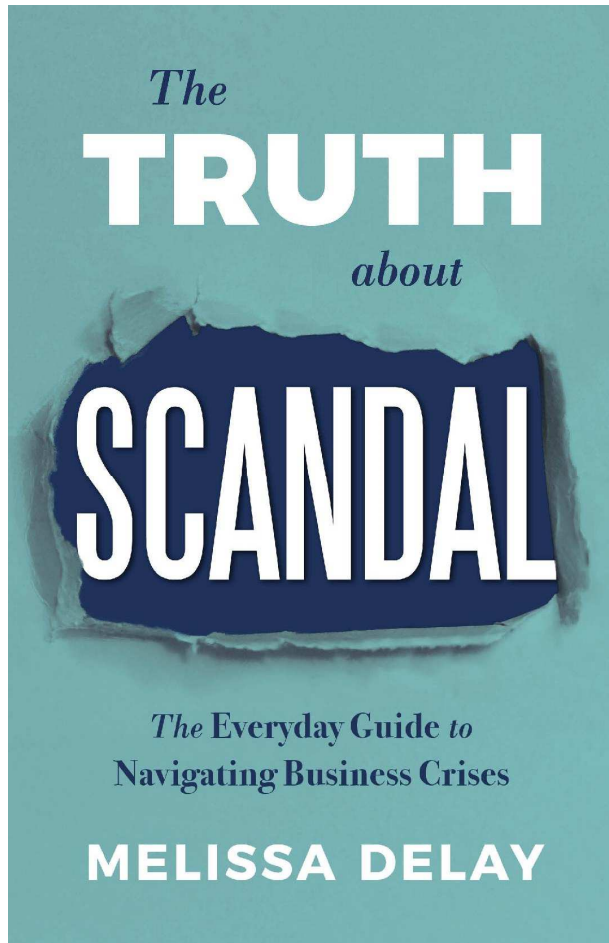
## TIPS

- Break up long paragraphs
- Use bullets whenever possible
- Eliminate every unnecessary word

**Write Smart,  
Actionable Subject  
Lines.**

## High Performing Subject Lines:

- Quick question?
- Time to talk?
- A few reminders...
- As promised...
- Review by 4pm
- Idea for you
- Yesterday's meeting



## AVAILABLE NOW

*In her new book, The Truth About Scandal, reputation management expert Melissa DeLay maps out what to say to diffuse modern scandal and controversies in the workplace.*

The majority of communication strategists shy away from baring their most scandalous real-life stories and PR crises from behind the CEO's door. Not Melissa.

In her new book *The Truth About Scandal: The Everyday Guide to Navigating Business Crises*—out now from Wise Ink Creative Publishing—she holds nothing back. From employee sabotage on social media to botched mass layoffs making waves in the press, Melissa shares every excruciating detail and teachable moment from her storied career as a crisis communication expert.