



Heartlands High School invests in better writing skills for a stronger future

Sector

Education

Area of training

High-impact writing skills, including email and report writing

Delivery

In-person bespoke training

Delegates

10

The challenge

Increased reliance on written communications highlighted skills gaps in crucial areas, including effective email and report writing.

The solution

A tailored day of learning covering the entire writing process, ensuring that the mixed group all received the training they needed – and enjoyed it.

The results

A confidence and morale builder leaving everyone understanding how to approach writing in order to get the results they need.

Staff at growing London academy Heartlands High School are more optimistic about their future after working to bolster the business-writing skills of back-office staff – and their confidence.

The school is on the cusp of becoming a multi-academy trust: where a single entity is established to manage, improve and maintain high educational standards across a number of schools.

New demands

This planned expansion means new demands will soon be placed on staff – at the heart of which will be the need for stronger writing skills. Whereas previously staff could talk face to face, soon they'll depend on written communication across the different locations. This highlighted email-writing as a vital skill gap: the ability to write a coherent, well-structured message will be key to efficiency and building trust with their new associates.

Some staff members also face the increasing need to craft longer documents that persuade or inform. For example, with a more demanding board to report back to, one number-crunching colleague was struggling with the new challenge of constructing a succinct, compelling narrative around her figures.

A skills and morale boost

Many staff had received no writing training at all since their own school days. So Dr Robert Barr, Director of Finance and Business Development, approached Emphasis for some much needed support.

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'We found that our staff were familiar with presenting information verbally. But providing a report for a meeting or committee was a skill they had not previously encountered. And they had trouble with it,' says Robert. 'They weren't familiar with writing to persuade or inform in a business environment.'

Robert was also keen to lift the delegates' morale and self-worth, so they could adapt to the upcoming changes with self-assurance. This was an altruistic move – but also a practical one. 'I realised that unless I improved the staff's confidence in delivering written information, I'd end up having to do it myself.'

An effective-thinking course

So how did we achieve both the skills and morale boost? Emphasis worked with Robert to design a high-impact writing course that addressed the writing process from start to finish. The content covered everything from profiling the intended reader and structuring information logically (to persuade or inform) to perfecting grammar and punctuation and checking for errors.

Robert notes that, in a group of mixed abilities, everyone felt the benefits. 'Those who found writing difficult became a lot more confident. Those who were more competent already also found the course very good, in not only going over lessons they'd forgotten, but also in highlighting a self-consciousness of writing.'

And the key reason the training worked across the board? It changed every delegate's **approach** to writing. 'Everybody came away with the knowledge that thinking about how they write informs the quality of their writing,' Robert explains. 'It was not so much an effective writing course as an effective thinking course – in effective communication.'

Additional benefits

For Robert, there was an additional but equally important factor in measuring the course's success: it had to be fun. 'People had to have a positive experience,' says Robert. 'I knew how motivating that could be.'

And his cunning plan paid off on the day. 'They found it very lighthearted, and they found it very informative,' Robert continues. 'They felt that they were learning without the hard work.'

Looking forward

The ultimate effect of the training experience has been that the staff now feel boosted in both skills and spirit in order to face – and embrace – the future. 'Everybody writes a lot better. They're a lot more confident and consistent, and more fluent in communication,' says Robert. 'There's a strong sense of excitement about the future – and the changes – that there wasn't before.'

5 reasons to choose Emphasis

1. Over 19 years' experience

We've helped improve writing and communications skills for over 50,000 delegates and we've worked with over 5,000 companies – including many just like yours.

4. Post-course support

All delegates have access to our dedicated helpdesk for a year after their course, and we'll send them free tips and resources by email.

2. Unique pre-course analysis

Using our unique method, we analyse the writing of every attendee before training, so our trainers have a solid understanding of each person's writing issues from the start.

5. Our expert trainers

We only recruit trainers who have a strong background in professional writing and communications – and who are able to unfailingly deliver exceptional courses.

3. Full course customisation

Our specialist course developers work hard to create a programme that's customised exactly to the problems your team are facing.

Get in touch with our team: call +44 (0)1273 732 888 or email info@writing-skills.com

