



Small UK charity makes big international impact thanks to clear, convincing communications

Sector

Charity

Area of training

Writing clear and effective emails and reports, and writing to persuade and influence

Delivery

Training day in the virtual classroom plus access to e-learning

Delegates

8 (all staff)

The challenge

Developing the confidence and skills to send clear and powerful communications to key advocacy targets, to provoke awareness and action.

The solution

A tailored day of training, plus e-learning access, covering impactful reader-focused writing, writing to influence and effective ways to structure.

The results

Staff are planning and writing in a more structured, strategic and precise way, channelling their passion into targeted messages with clear asks.

Raising awareness and prompting action on key human rights issues hinges on effective communications that grab decision-makers' attention and clearly express their ask.

Refugee Rights Europe started in 2015 as a response to the crisis situation in Calais and the lack of information about displaced people. Five years later, they still have only seven staff but have made huge strides in establishing themselves as a credible voice in important international conversations.

The charity collaborates with grassroots organisations and bridges the gap between the people on the ground and external stakeholders including large NGOs, MPs and members of the European Parliament.

It was a challenge for their staff to understand how to switch confidently between this range of audiences in order to communicate effectively with each. They were also keen to ensure their advocacy messages were always clear, concise and powerful – and led to readers taking action.

Only seconds to grab attention

'Lots of our advocacy targets are very busy and might not take more than a couple of seconds to decide whether to pay attention to an email,' says Operations Manager Fae Mira Gerlach.

They wanted to learn how to structure emails, write persuasively and feel confident dealing with bigger organisations and partners, no matter what their role in the charity. 'With smaller organisations, there is no-one really there to do the core communications work, so individuals all need to be flexible,' explains Fae.

They also recognised the need to be able to channel their knowledge and passion around issues in the best

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Fae Mira Gerlach, Operations Manager,
Refugee Rights Europe



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Fae Mira Gerlach,
Operations Manager,
Refugee Rights Europe

way, so that they could communicate effectively with decision-makers. 'People can be really passionate and the subjects are complex, so it helps to send a really clear, concise email with the information you need,' says Fae.

Building the team's capacity

A previous experience with Emphasis led Refugee Rights Europe to consider commissioning some writing training. Executive Director Marta Welander had taken the course at a previous company and remembered how powerful it had been. She thought the whole team could benefit from the skills she had honed.

'Marta had a really good experience and felt the tools were really concrete,' explains Fae. 'We wanted to build the capacity of our team to ensure a high quality of written work.'

Emphasis delivered a bespoke version of their *High-impact writing* course, covering impactful reader-focused writing, writing to influence and effective ways to structure emails and documents. The materials were tailored to incorporate the team's own documents and style guide, so they could readily see how to apply the techniques to their own work.

Campaigns now as clear as possible

After attending the course, the team saw an improvement in their written communication – both internal and external.

As well as noticing that people were writing in a more structured and concise way, they also saw the improvements extend to their oral communication and presentations too – being clear, prepared and knowing what they wanted to achieve.

Fae says this is essential for making the most of their small team. 'The overall speed has improved and we can communicate better with each other, saving ourselves time so we can focus more on going in-depth and being creative. Our work processes and campaigns are now as clear as possible.'

Improved credibility

Importantly, improving their communication skills has also helped them firmly establish their place in international advocacy and position themselves as a trusted source of information.

'Clear writing has helped lift our credibility,' says Fae. 'It's important to appear sober, clear and precise and know how to channel passion and messages for the right audience. It feeds into us being very effective in our advocacy.'

So much so, they are regarded as a key influencer despite still being a very small organisation.

'We are perceived along the lines of older, more established human rights organisations,' says Fae. 'We are mentioned alongside people like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.'

Channelling needs

The charity works with lots of different stakeholders and sets up forums to discuss what good solutions would look like. They act as a bridge between the voices of displaced people, organisations on the ground and more formal structures at EU level. It's key to be able to channel everyone's needs constructively.



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What you really want

Fae says this kind of impact is particularly important for small organisations, who have less time and resources, and need to make every email and communication count. By making sure the whole team have those core skills, they are able to have a greater impact and reach more people.

'You're so focused on the services you are providing and reacting quickly, but it really helps to focus on how important your communication is. It has such a broad effect,' says Fae.

And Fae recognises that the value gained from taking a fresh look at their communications is twofold. 'We would definitely recommend the writing training,' says Fae. 'It does two things – it gives you these practical tools you can use straight away, but it also helps you reflect on what you really want and how to be strategic and precise about it.'

5 reasons to choose Emphasis

1. Over 25 years' experience

We've helped improve writing and communications skills for over 80,000 delegates and we've worked with over 1,000 companies – including many just like yours.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

