

Greater Houston Chapter		Meeting Minutes	
APMP <i>Association of Proposal Management Professionals</i>	Subject: Transparent Writing	Date: 08/01/07	Start Time: 11:00 AM
	Written By: Janet Dodd	Date of Report: 08/15/07	Meeting Location: ABB
	Attended By: 29 Members and Guests	Distribution: APMP Houston Chapter Website	Speaker: John Sturtevant

Topic	Notes	Action
Meeting Welcome	Jeannette Waldie, President, opened the meeting. She welcomed everyone, spoke a few words about the new APMP knowledge database and also referenced the latest issue of the Houston Chapter newsletter. In addition, she announced a drawing for door prizes provided by the Fox and the Hound.	
Speaker Introduction	Tanya Willis introduced John Sturtevant of The Writing Workshop.	
Presentation	<p>After lunch, J. Sturtevant made his presentation, "Transparent Writing". His key message was that clear communication is an essential skill for anyone in business. Clear thinking and persuasive writing result in increased cooperation, simplified processes and improved productivity. Ten key points for clear writing include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define your objective. Ask the question: "Why am I writing?" Then make sure your ideas support that goal. Give the reader everything he needs to compel him to reach the outcome you expect. 2. Know your reader. Really know your reader. Not just a name or a job title ... but who they are, how they think and what's important to them. Learn to speak your reader's language. 3. Plan, write, revise, edit. Learn to get your ideas down first. Tell a complete story. Then fix it later. 4. Perfectly sliced tomatoes. Like the lead-in to the Ginsu knife commercials, tell your reader the benefits, not the features, of what you have to offer. 5. Information is useless. Your job as a communicator is to show your readers why what you think is so vitally important is so vitally important to them. Give your readers relevance, context and meaning. 6. Find time to think. When you're stuck in traffic, turn off your radio and take the opportunity to think. The best solution will often come to you when you're not trying to solve the problem. 	

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	<p>7. Make your writing transparent. Clear writing is like a window and your ideas are the view. You don't want your reader to think you've written a clever sentence, you want the reader to think you've made sense.</p> <p>8. Read your writing aloud. If it bores you, it will bore the reader. If it confuses you, it will confuse the reader. Each sentence should contain just one idea. And the sentences shouldn't be unnecessarily long.</p> <p>9. Ask simple questions. Your reader is expecting you to answer questions such as: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? And last but not least, so what? If you don't answer those questions, the reader will quickly lose interest.</p> <p>10. Be clear. The essence of clear writing is to focus on being clear. Before you issue your next document, ask yourself: "Are my ideas clear? Will my reader understand this?"</p>	
Close of Meeting	<p>J. Waldie thanked J. Sturtevant for his presentation. The next General Meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 3, 2007 at ABB. The speaker will be Sandra Zimmer of The Self-Expression Center. Her topic will be "You Must Be Present to Win! How to Coach Experts for Project Interviews and Presentations."</p>	