

TAKE 5 WITH Passkey

Take 5 minutes and read 5 tips to improve your work

Five Steps to Self-Editing by Passkey Partner KDVM Communications

All writing can benefit from self-editing, whether you're writing an email, a memo, an article or a presentation, and regardless of whether your audience is internal or external. Follow these five steps to make your writing and your message clear.

1

Read for Content. Once you've finished your first draft, look it over to make sure that it includes everything relevant and nothing irrelevant. Make sure you've been clear about your main points, next steps or a call to action, if there is one.

2

Review for Tone. Your audience and format will dictate to some degree the tone you take in your writing. How formal or casual, friendly or aloof, silly or serious you sound is up to you, but make sure that you're choosing the right tone for each situation. Also, remember that humor and sarcasm are not easily conveyed in writing, so be very careful if you opt to use them.

3

Remove or Explain Jargon and Acronyms. It's very easy to slip into industry-speak, and there are times when that's appropriate. Within Farm Credit, for example, almost everyone knows what the FCA is...but, if you're writing an onboarding piece for new employees, will they? Being overly explicit can seem tedious, but keep your audience in mind and make it easy for them to digest and understand what you're trying to convey.

4

Combine Similar Concepts. Make sure your writing is organized so that like concepts are combined. The form this organization takes will vary based on your topic: for example, if you're describing a process, put all the information related to each step together; if you're writing a credit action, put all the customer history information together; if you're discussing an enterprise initiative, put all the benefits together.

5

Do a Final Proofread. It can be hard to be your own proofreader, but a final review of your writing is critical. Run a spell check and don't ignore any of the red or green underlines. You can't rely solely on this tool, so read every piece yourself to check grammar and spelling, particularly of individual and business names, as well as factual accuracy and homonym usage (like there, they're and their).

Sometimes perfecting your message requires a little help. From a single article or memo to planning and executing full communications plans, KDVM Communications specializes in writing for Farm Credit and ag coops.

Contact us to improve your communications.