

Writing for Impact

Lucy Stone



Lucy Stone - about me!

- Increase Grant, Trust and Foundation income
- Develop new income streams
- Improve relationships with funders
- Arts & Cultural organisations
- Sussex Grassroots Organisations

Who I've worked with



I am also a Trustee!



Pelican Parcels

You

- How are you?
- How is your mental health?
- Are you getting support?
- Are you taking breaks?
- How is your time management?
- Are the 'nos' hitting you harder?

You

- You can not do your best work for your organisation if you are not ok.
- You can't write well if you are frazzled
- This has always been an important question, however, post COVID-19 and cost of living crisis the world is very different.

Stress Bucket



Developed from an idea by Brabban and Turkington (2002)

Writing for Impact - what do we mean?

Other titles for this session

- Be less boring
- Get to the point
- Focus on the key information
- Stop waffling
- Let's start a relationship!
- Make a human connection!

Session Overview

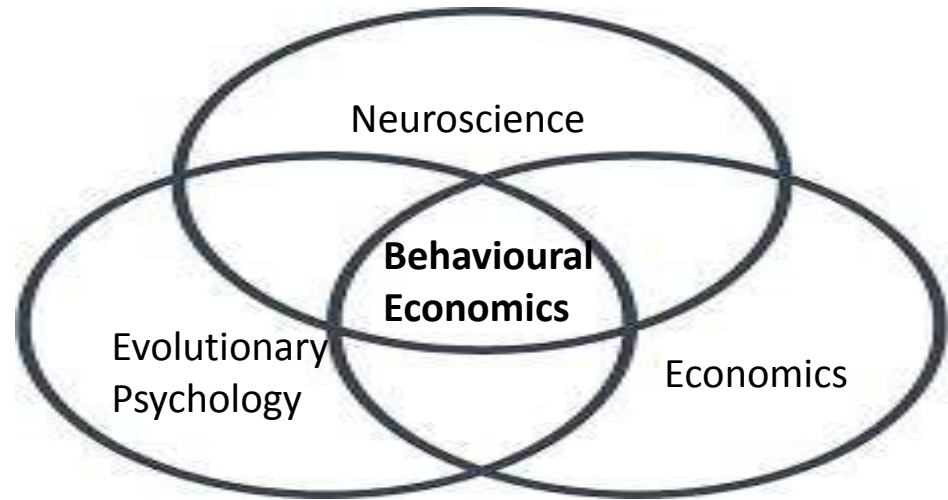
1. Behavioural Economics
2. Case for Support
3. General Tips
4. Types of Writing: Applications, Free Form Applications, Letters
5. Useful resources

1. Behavioural Economics

Behavioural Economics

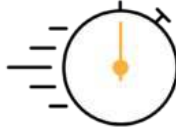
Traditional economics assumes we are all rational acting in our best interests.

BE says we often use **short-cuts**, also called heuristics (intuition), to make these choices instead of using logic. It helps avoid danger or **risk**, saves **time**, and **energy but not necessarily rational**.



System 1

Fast



Unconscious



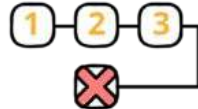
Automatic



Everyday
Decisions



Error
prone



System 2

Slow



Conscious



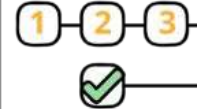
Effortful



Complex
Decisions



Reliable



Explicit
Analytical
Learned
Rule-based

How we *think*

How we *think* we think



Priming & Anchoring



G R E E _



G R E E _

Nudge

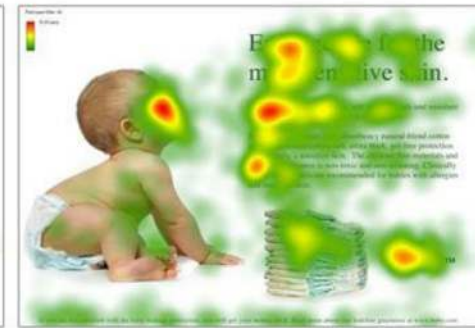
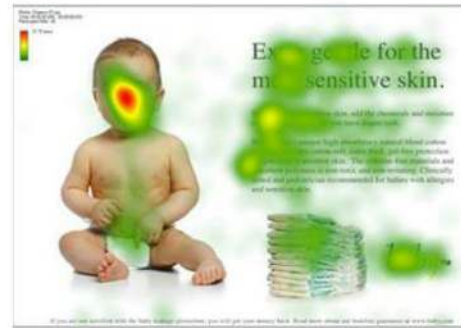
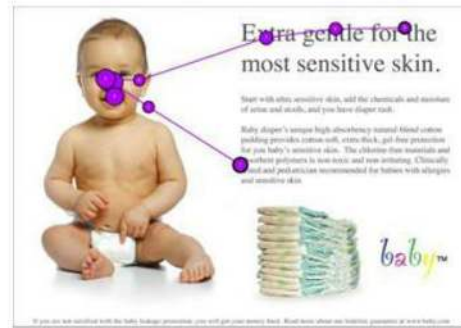


Faces

Before



After




- We look at faces
- We look where the eyes are looking

unicef UNITED KINGDOM | FOR EVERY CHILD IN DANGER


MAKE A DONATION


MONTHLY		SINGLE
£27	£14	£5

 Each month, your £14 could help protect 100 children from polio.

£ OTHER AMOUNT

DONATE NOW





*Look at the donation ladder
Look at where the child is looking*

Framing

And...

Mirror

Neurons



Which doctor would you choose?

- With treatment you have an 80% chance of survival
- This treatment has a 20% chance that you will die

Same facts, different message

Which stories work?

PRESENT

FUTURE

POSITIVE

Opportunity

Vision

NEGATIVE

Crisis

Risk

BE and your writing

- Is it quick and easy to understand? (System 1)
- Does it help the reader think we are a safe investment? (No risk)
- How can you include and increase empathy? (Mirror Neurons)
- Does it shows that others support you? (Social Proof)

BE and your writing

- Do you use signs and signifiers the reader will understand?
(Priming)
- Have you made the most of your data? (Framing)
- Is the decision making easy? (Heuristics)
- How have you ensured movement to action? (Nudge)

2. Case for Support

What is a case for support?

- Message to your supporters about why you should be supported
- Tells people what you will do with their funding support/donation
- Can be for a campaign or the whole organisation
- Tells your story

CASE FOR SUPPORT

PROBLEM

- What is the problem you are set up to address?
- What is the problem and need?
- Who benefits from your work?
- When is the help needed? Why now?
- Where is this happening?
- How are you evidencing your statements?
- Why is this a problem?
- Scale and scope of the problem (facts/figures)

SOLUTION

- Be specific.
- Align it to the problem.
- What will you do? When, Where, How?
- Who is solving the problem?
- What is your methodology?
- Vision for the impact your solution will have?
- How will you know when you have succeeded?

WHY YOU?

- Why are you the organisation to solve the problem?
- Proof - Facts, Figures and Data
- Quotes from others backing up your statements
- Achievements or track record

BUDGET

- Make sure it balances and not all round numbers!
- Be clear about core and project costs.
- Make sure everything that you mention in the application has a corresponding budget.
- Your budget can be part of your story telling.
- Future funding – who/how/for how long?

IMPACT

INPUTS

- What do you need to do your work?
- Resources – people, IT, equipment, spaces/venues – required to implement the project

ACTIVITIES

- What will you do?
- How often?
- For how long?
- For whom?

OUTCOMES

- What is the change you are aiming for? For whom?
- Increase, decrease, improved etc
- Keep them simple - no 'ands' and no qualifications
- Short, medium and long term outcomes
- Do not have too many
- LINK BACK TO PROBLEM! ie key elements of the problem should link to key outcomes

OUTPUTS

- How many people, activities and things have been achieved?
- What are the numbers?
- Consider volume, values etc

EVALUATION

- Measuring your impact, outcomes and outputs.
- What do you measure - outcome indicators.
- How do you measure it - sources of evidence.
- Who is giving the evidence?
- Quantitative and qualitative. How will you measure it against original vision?

Case for Support



PROBLEM

- What is the problem you are set up to address?
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- How are you evidencing your statements?
- Why is this a problem?
- Scale and Scope - facts and figures



SOLUTION

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WHY YOU?



- Why are you the organisation to solve the problem?
- Proof - Facts, Figures and Data
- Quotes from others backing up your statements.
- Achievements or track record



IMPACT



Inputs, Activities, Outcomes, Outputs

Outcomes

- What is the change you are aiming for as part of your work?
- Increase, decrease, improved
- Keep them simple
- Short, medium and long term outcomes



EVALUATION

- Measuring your outcomes and outputs.
- What do you measure - outcome indicators.
- How do you measure it - sources of evidence.
- Who is giving the evidence?
- Quantitative and qualitative.
- How will you measure it against your vision?



BUDGET

- Make sure it balances.
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- Your budget can be part of your story telling.
- Future funding - how/ who and for how long?



3. General Tips

General Tips - Language

- Short sentences - 17 words
- Active vs. Passive Voice - for example 'children love ice cream' (active) vs. 'ice cream is loved by children' (passive)
- Plain English - Be clear - Avoid Jargon
- Donor and people are the heroes
- Use data
- Tell Stories - write with the heart
- Spelling (including names!)

General Tips - Layout

- Headers
- Bullet Points
- Lists
- Photos
- Infographics
- Bold/ Italic
- Data - evidence
- What do you want to draw their attention to?

Examples of this later...

General Tips

- Keep a central documents that you use for applications up to date
- Ask for feedback
- Cover the first 2 paragraphs and see if you need them
- Read it backwards!
- Think about the reader - be kind to them!
- Whatever the format - make sure you cover the main parts of the Case for Support.

Funders pet peeves

- Copy and paste or question not answered
- Budget that doesn't balance
- Missing info or attachments
- 'Completely unique'
- Anecdotes not data
- Not read the guidance
- All concept no practical information - who, what, when, where, how?

Let's look at some writing examples

- This is not a confession session!
- We've all written like this at some point!
- Be critical - how would you received this information?
- Think about the reader!

Long sentences that have no punctuation are very hard to follow and sometimes you start talking about one thing but then end up talking about something else which you understand as the person who wrote the sentence but the person reading it can't tell where one idea ends and the other starts which also means that key thoughts or points are lost.

Short sentences are powerful. Good punctuation is your friend to help you make important points! Bullet points are helpful because you:

- highlight your main points
- ensure your ideas are clear
- make sure you don't go off on tangents

Example

We believe that all children have the right to art and culture as in the The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states in Section 31.

States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

We deliver art workshops to help children unleash their creativity.

You could just say...

Children are creative. We help them unleash their creativity.



Example

We are a charity (no 12345) formed in 1927 called XYZ Charity. We used to support people with disabilities including learning and physical disabilities but after a new CEO called Joe Bloggs joined the organisation in 1997 we now focus on working with autistic children. Because of our funding we only work with children under the age of 10. *'Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior.'* (Wikipedia). Many autistic children have other neurodevelopmental disorders such as ADHD, DLD, IDD, GDD, NVLD or Down syndrome.

Who cares?

We are a charity (no 12345) formed in 1927 called XYZ Charity. We used to support people with disabilities including learning and physical **disabiliies** but after a new CEO called Joe Bloggs joined the organisation in 1997 we now focus on working with autistic children. Because of our funding we only work with children under the age of 10. *'Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by difficulties with social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behavior.'* (Wikipedia). Many **autsici** children have other neurodevelopmental disorders such as **ADHD, DLD, IDD, GDD, NVLD** or Down syndrome.

Typo

Ah - that's what you do!

Errrr - ok - what does that mean? Why that source?

You've lost me now!

4. Types of Writing

- A. Application forms
- B. Free form application
- C. Letter

Application forms

- The funder has chosen the format
- The summary/ intro might be the only thing that trustees read
- You need to ensure you answer the questions
- Use all of the tips above
- Think about why they are asking this information
- They will probably cover most points in the case for support

Dealing with word counts

- & instead of 'and'
- Check the, that, which
- Active vs. Passive Voice - for example 'children love ice cream' (active) vs. 'ice cream is loved by children' (passive)
- Using formatting - bullets will help with word count.
- Shorter sentences

Free form application

- When a funder asks for 2/5/10 pages
- Sometimes they give you a structure - sometimes they don't!
- They will still expect to see certain content (see Case for Support below).
- They may have 100s to look at

Let's look at some layout ideas first...

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What are the issues here?

- Font size
- Margins pushed to the edge
- Full justification
- No personality
- Possibility too much information

How often do you do this?

How would you feel reading this?

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet

Consectetur adipiscing elit. Proin id tempus nunc. Sed varius faucibus diam. Sed pretium, purus nec porta euismod, risus nisl dignissim elit, in **97% fringilla mi lorem et massa**. Pellentesque vitae magna convallis, varius nulla nec, elementum tellus. Morbi felis odio, blandit ac metus eu, dapibus posuere sem. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Etiam sagittis mi odio, quis consequat quam maximus sed.

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Why is this clearer?

- 12 point font - DDA compliant
- Normal Margins
- Left aligned text
- Font styles - bold and italics
- Bullet points
- Box
- Photo

Using the format to draw their attention to the important points - even if they skim it they will have a good sense of what you do!

Which would you prefer if you had 100 to look at?

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Letters - The reading curve



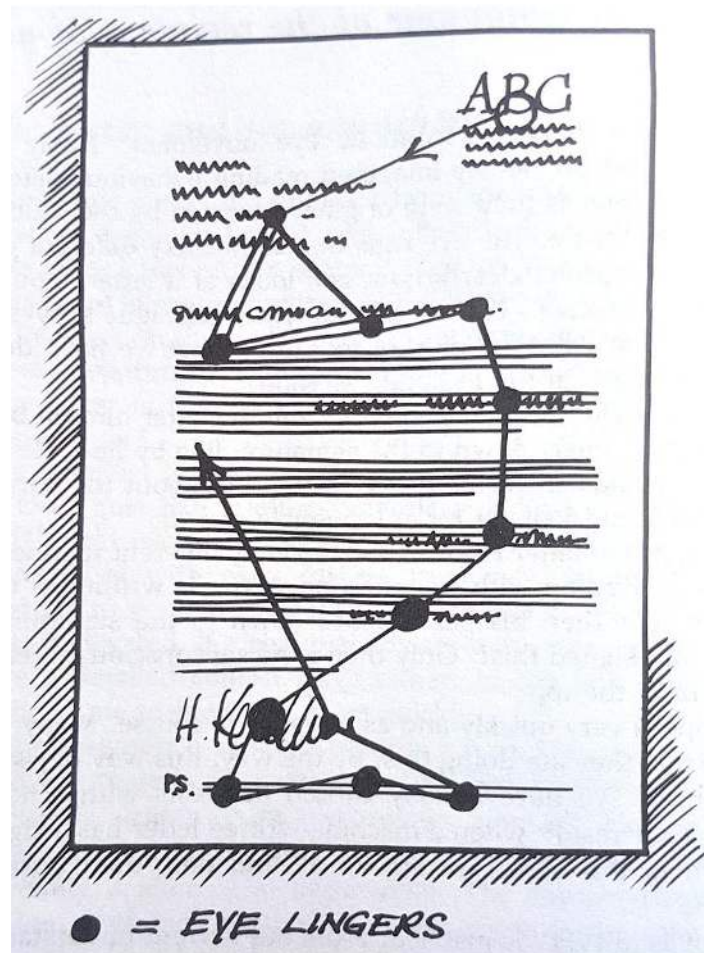
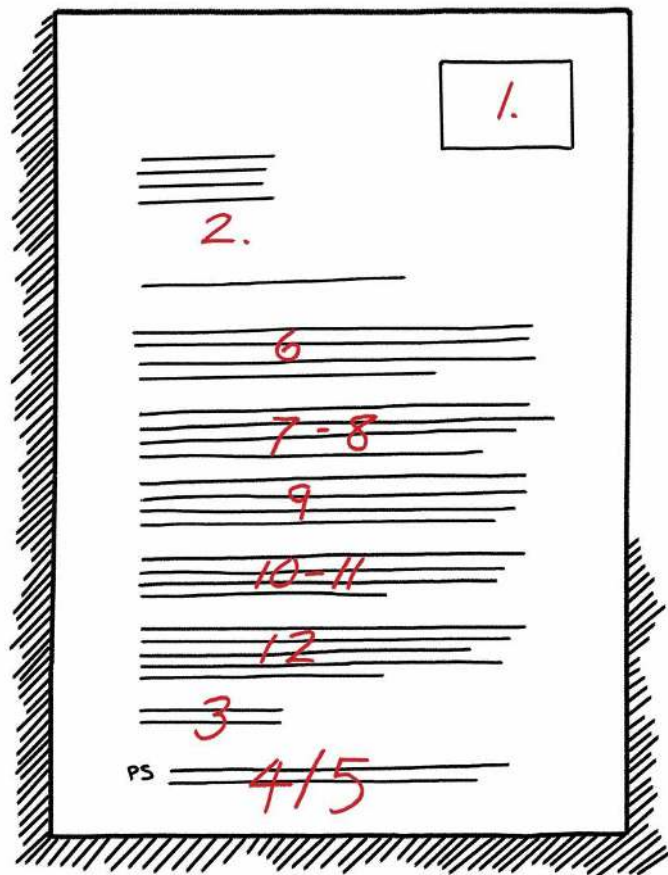
1. WHO IS WRITING TO ME?

2. ARE THEY WRITING TO ME PERSONALLY?

3. HAVE THEY TAKEN THE TIME TO SIGN THE LETTER?

4. IS THERE A SPECIAL MESSAGE IN THE PS?

5. ONWARDS: IF YOU'VE CREATED A 'POSITIVE' FEELING THROUGH STEPS 1 TO 4 YOU'LL GET TO 5 AND ONWARDS WHICH IS THEM SKIM READING THE CONTENT FOR OTHER 'POSITIVE' CONTENT?



5. Useful resources

Useful resources - Behavioural Economics

- Change for Good - Using Behavioural Economics for a Better World by Bernard Ross and Omar Mahmoud [HERE](#)
- Decision Science - case studies, events and research [HERE](#)
- Mind Space: Helping Supporters Choose – putting the science into cultural fundraising [HERE](#)
- Nudgestock - <https://nudgestock.co.uk/>

Useful resources - writing

Hemingway app <http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>

Powerful words

<https://coschedule.com/blog/emotional-headlines/>

Useful resources - Deprivation statistics

To check if the area you work in is an area of deprivation you will want to look at the Lower Output Area (LOA). Output areas are to do with population sizes.

- LOA info here -

http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/iod_index.html#

Useful resources - data

Cultural Engagement - Arts Council England data

<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data/our-research>

The reading curve articles

What Is the Reading Curve in Direct Mail?

<https://bolger.com/what-is-the-reading-curve/>

Who Is Dr Siegfried Vogele?

https://mailandprint.co.uk/dr_siegfried_vogele/

How People Read Letters

<https://medium.com/@chriskfundraising/how-people-read-letters-1e>



Keep in touch

I will be producing free templates over the coming months so please email me



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