

A SiteLeads.net **White Paper**



12819 SE 38th St. #146

Bellevue, WA 98006

425.985.4464

www.SiteLeads.net

Blog Postings and the Lost Art of Writing

By Liam Scanlan, SiteLeads.net

June 2008

Contents

Introduction.....	2
Effective blog postings.....	2
The writer works with three languages.....	3
Lost in Translation.....	3
The difference between language and communication.....	4
Conclusions.....	4

Introduction

Forgive me for forgetting where I read it, but someone once said that you must write a million words before you become a writer.

A million words! Holy mackaroos!!!!

The good 400-page romance novel contains 100,000 words. War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy has about 560,000 words in it. Try reading half a million words, let alone writing that many! This White Paper contains a paltry 0 words.

To write a million words of publication-quality prose would take you at least 2 years, assuming you work every business day and write ten, 250-word pages every day. From my experience, even that would be ambitious.

Effective blog postings

Being a chef is 80% about cooking and 20% about recipes. Being a writer is 80% about writing and 20% about subject. You and I could sit in Starbucks café for an afternoon and come up with a great storyline for a novel, but the real work, that which separates the successful from the failed, is in the writing of it. The best recipe book in the world cannot save a poor chef from obscurity, but a good chef can make up a recipe and work with meager ingredients.

So don't worry too much about how proficient you are in the subject of your blog posting just yet. You'll learn that in

time. For now, concentrate on the quality of your writing – the other 80% of it.

The writer works with three languages

We think of our mother tongue - English in my case - to be a single language, but for the professional writer, **Thought**, **Spoken** and **Written** are three distinct languages.

Most casual writing is, however, written just as the writer speaks – for it is little more than the “dictation of thoughts” – which

The written language must be *common* for it to be understood by a person who does not personally know the writer. Proficiency in translating from the **Thought** language into the common **Written** language is what separates the writers from the scribblers.

Lost in Translation

It is no surprise that a disproportionate number of successful writers, especially masters - everyone from James Joyce to Patrick O'Brian - were proficient in more than one language. The mental acuity gained from decades of translation - from French to English,



gives it an amateur feel when read by someone else, especially someone who does not know the writer.

To write professionally, you must translate from your personal thought language to a common written language. No one really knows how another person thinks, so I call that language “personal”.

Spanish to German or whatever - helped each of them with the translation from their Thought language into a common Written language.

A writer's skill is further enhanced while they are living in a foreign country. You might think, to write publication-grade English prose, it would serve a writer well to be speaking that language every day. Not so. The writing challenge is one of *translation* – not articulation – from Thought language to Written

language. The daily use of the language in its Spoken form might actually be an impediment to translating directly from Thought to Written.

The difference between language and communication

Living as a foreigner in Berlin in the 1980s gave me the opportunity to learn German. I studied hard, particularly early on, and within about a year, I achieved a reasonable degree of proficiency in the language. I can't claim that I mastered the language, but I secured a solid foundation in what many say is the biggest challenge of learning German: Its grammar.

After some six months or so, I began to notice, when conversing with Germans in their own language, a difference between those who had a command of a foreign language and those who had not. Those who had a command of another language spoke their own language differently to how other Germans spoke it. Because of their own experience of having learned a foreign language, they had a keen understanding of the challenges I myself would have speaking German, a foreign language to me.

Conclusions

- Learning to write professionally is a similar

challenge to learning a foreign language.

- Writing high quality prose requires translation skills.
- The reader of your work does not know you, so you must translate into a “written language” that is common to you and them.
- The average person might need to have written about a million words before they become good at writing.

Want to know more?

For more information on becoming successful on the web, visit our website: www.siteleads.net, call us at USA 425-985-4464 or email info@siteleads.net. Tell us what your goals are and we will show you how we can help.



SiteLeads.net

SEO Services for Small Companies

12819 SE 38th St. #146
Bellevue WA 98006
425-985-4464
www.siteleads.net