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Recommended reading for business storytellers

I'll be expanding this list as I make new discoveries. Got a personal favorite to suggest? Bring it on: rona@ronamaynard.com.

Books

Everybody Writes: Your Go-To Guide to Creating Ridiculously Good Content by Ann Handley (Wiley, 2014).

You can tell this book is newer than Pinterest—traditional writing coaches don't talk about "content" or offer tips on writing with hashtags. But Handley's principles have roots that go back to Strunk and White. I particularly like her relentless focus on readability.

On Writing Well: the Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction (30th Anniversary Edition) by William Zinsser (Collins, 2006). This deft, witty book has been keeping writers honest and on track for more than 30 years, and retains its freshness in the electronic age. The chapter you need most is the one on business writing, but don't stop there. The whole book brims with telling examples of prose that sinks or soars. With Zinsser at your side, you'll appreciate the difference.

The Sense of Style: the Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st Century by Steven Pinker. A neuroscientist tells you how to craft your message for the overburdened brain of your reader. Unlike most of his scientific peers, Pinker writes with humor and panache, bringing key points to life with smile-worthy examples. His ideal reader is a language geek; the rest of you may want to skim the theory. Highlights: a takedown of impenetrable contracts and manuals and a timely attack on curmudgeonly rules best forgotten.

Articles available online

["The Jargon Trap"](#) by David Tuller, *The New York Times*, August 4, 2014 (I also recommend the reader comments)

["Four Tips for Writing Better Email"](#) by David Silverman, *Harvard Business Review*, March 6, 2009

["A Bizspeak Blacklist"](#) by Brian A. Garner, *Harvard Business Review*, March 21, 2013