

The
Health Policy Partnership
 [research, people, action]

Making crucial health information accessible for the people who need it

Sector

Accountancy and consultancy / Healthcare

Area of training

Report writing

Delivery

In-person courses, follow-up coaching and online learning

Delegates

21

The challenge

Lack of a consistently strong and punchy narrative style across a fast-growing team of researchers.

The solution

Team report-writing training and coaching, with online learning for extra support.

The results

A cohesive, confident team with a defined voice and the tools to keep developing.

Researchers often face serious challenges when turning specialist, technical content into something policymakers or the public can understand – and act on.

When your job is to help explain strategic healthcare challenges to leading public figures, you need to know that the documents you're producing are not only accurate, but engaging and accessible. The Health Policy Partnership is a consultancy specialising in health research. Its expert researchers write reports that help policymakers and the public understand key health issues – such as whether we're giving patients the care and support they need in different major disease groups – and make decisions based on their recommendations.

The managing directors needed to make sure the research team had the writing skills to create reports that could do this job, not least as the organisation and its breadth of work were expanding. The company was not prepared to lower its high editorial standards, around which its core market reputation had been built – meaning that new methods were needed to ensure consistency, clarity and quality across the board.

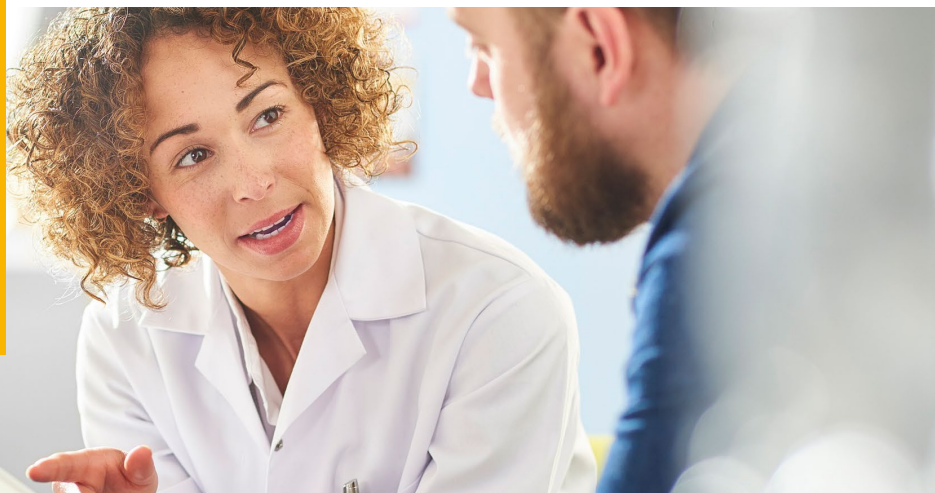
Creating consistency and impact in a fast-growing team

As the original team had expanded from 2 to 14, a lack of consistent writing style emerged as an issue. Many new recruits were master's graduates joining straight from university – and the academic style which suits dissertation-writing needed to go. For maximum impact, all the researchers needed to take their piles of data and build punchy, engaging narratives.

The team had also identified the need for a house style guide that everyone could follow, alongside equipping everyone with strong baseline skills to confidently take on any project. 'We wanted to create a brand voice and style that would ensure consistency across our work,' says Senior Editor Madeleine Murphy. 'Our diversity of projects means there is inevitable variation, but it's still important that everything we produce is recognisably

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ours.' *How* to do this was the question – which led the company to approach Emphasis.

Effective report writing courses and coaching

To meet the team's aims, we developed a report-writing course that covered every stage of the writing process, from planning to reviewing. Each delegate submitted a writing sample before the course (a [key part of the Emphasis approach](#)), to identify strengths and weaknesses so they could focus on the areas they needed to.

The course covered what turns detailed, data-heavy research into accessible yet accurate writing, appropriate for a lay audience, with attention-grabbing introductions and arresting endings. Critically, it also threw out the usual academic approach and delegates discovered the best structure for presenting such crucial information.

The team chose to follow up with coaching clinics – sending a second sample for analysis and having a 40-minute one-to-one session with the trainer. This gave them an opportunity to see their progress and zero in on any remaining sticking points in private. 'Everybody had a sense of trust in [the trainer, [Melissa Melly](#)], which meant everyone got something out of it,' says Madeleine. 'The individualised approach was really effective.'

Confidence, consistency and the tools to keep developing

'Since the training, the managing directors have been extremely pleased with everyone's progress,' says Madeleine. 'There's a greater understanding across the team of how to build a compelling narrative and how to write for our target audiences. This means more time for senior colleagues on each project to devote to strategy, and client and stakeholder liaison, which is a vital component of what we do.'

Best of all, the training helped the team to nail down the company style, exactly as they'd hoped. 'We have to take large amounts of research and turn it into accessible, impactful stories,' says Madeleine. 'Emphasis helped the researchers understand how to write in a way that is simple, without having to dumb down the information. The training was very helpful in developing our brand voice.'

Improving something as broad and personal as writing can take time, but the team have a strong framework to keep upping their game – bolstered by access to online writing programme, [Emphasis 360](#). 'The ongoing support from the online sessions is invaluable,' says Madeleine. 'Team members can access the course at any time, regardless of what they're writing. There are even sessions around writing emails, which can be particularly useful in stakeholder engagement.'

And, as the managing directors had hoped, the results have gone far beyond technical skills. 'There's definitely a boost in confidence across the team following the Emphasis training,' says Madeleine. 'From my perspective as an editor, it's great to work with people who understand the basics of how to construct a narrative. And now that they've had the training, they're all keen to continue improving, which can only be a good thing for the company as we continue to grow.'

5 reasons to choose Emphasis

1. Over 19 years' experience

We've helped improve writing and communications skills for over 50,000 delegates and we've worked with over 5,000 companies – including many just like yours.

2. Unique pre-course analysis

Using our unique method, we analyse the writing of every attendee before training, so our trainers have a solid understanding of each person's writing issues from the start.

3. Full course customisation

Our specialist course developers work hard to create a programme that's customised exactly to the problems your team are facing.

4. Post-course support

All delegates have access to our dedicated helpdesk for a year after their course, and we'll send them free tips and resources by email.

5. Our expert trainers

We only recruit trainers who have a strong background in professional writing and communications – and who are able to unfailingly deliver exceptional courses.

Get in touch with our team: call +44 (0)1273 732 888 or email info@writing-skills.com

