



danibu update

Spring 2021 - update #17

The LANGUAGE issue

Welcome to the Spring edition of the danibu update, sharing tips and tricks from the communication and presentation trade. I still make the short workplace-home commute, descending from my 1st floor bedroom to my ground floor home office (or garden). I've adapted everything from working, communicating, socializing, ordering or shopping to the changing tide, turning **danibu** into an online consulting and training business (for now). The unusual has become habit.

I've just prolonged my **interim contract with DOMO Chemicals** and am thrilled to continue the transformation journey with them until the end of this year. "Creating easy-to-read content. Formulating complex topics simple. Crafting compelling conclusions" - these are some of the skills required for this assignment. And rightly so. In my 25 Communicator years I've come to appreciate that having a good grasp of wording and spelling is a game changer, and that writing stellar copy can open this all-important conversation with your audience - face to face and online.

Enjoy reading more about the aspect of *language* in communication, and why everybody should become a wordsmith.



Astronaut language



Astronauts - more than anyone else - need to be sure that what they say and what ground control hears are one and the same thing. Prattling on in space will not help for their message to be properly understood. Astronauts

communicate razor sharp when they formulate that ‘one thing’ that stirs their recipients into action.

This is why astronauts are known to have a specific language. I went to visit [Space Expo](#), the visitor center of the European Space Agency (ESA), to learn more about communication skills in outer space. Their job profile is extensive, and no matter how you put it: **Communication is part of their skills set** and not just a nice-to-have topping on their curriculum. Effective use of (verbal and non-verbal) language and having composure under pressure must be their second nature.

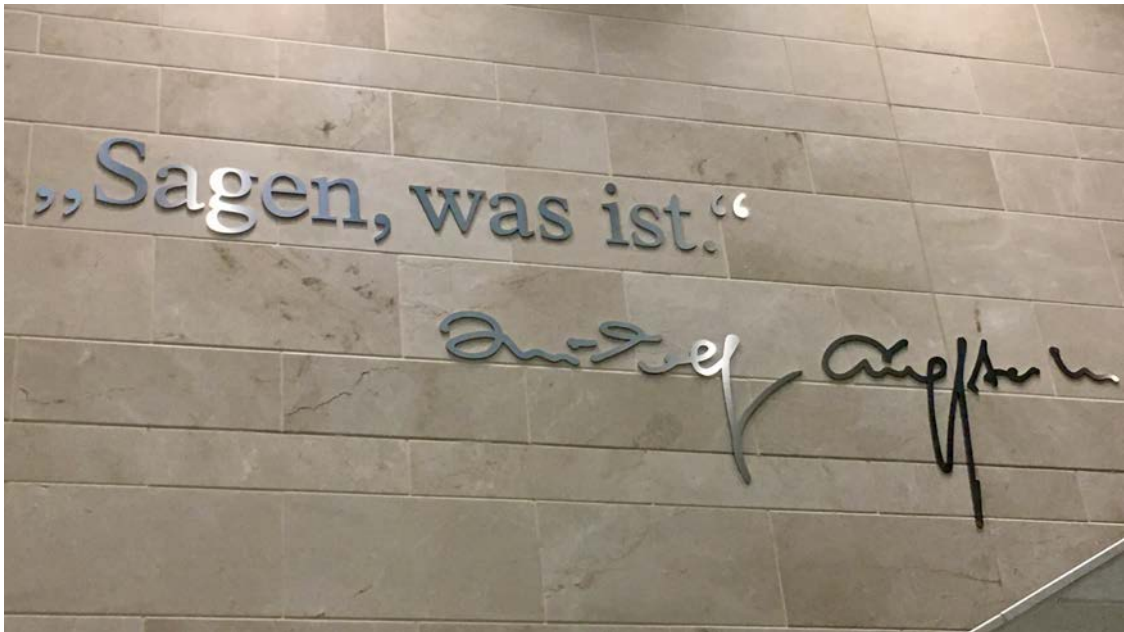
“Communication is the one thing you can't learn in a simulator”, astronauts say. In the dynamic high-risk environment in which they operate they simply have to have the ability to recognize and correctly interpret a large number of signals in a timely manner. When they float weightlessly in the International Space Station (ISS), doing orbits around the moon, they have to possess the intangible quality of radiating coolness verbally. Spacemen and spacewomen are renowned for their stoic calm.

This is why a movie like Top Gun is Hollywood kitsch. Pilots don't scream - let alone astronauts aboard a spaceship. Everything they communicate over the radio is short and businesslike, using a slightly irritated undertone. “I'm saying this now - but actually you, ants there on the ground, are distracting me from what I'm doing here.” They never babble. They never sound excited or scared. Or confused. They use ironic understatements. And it's cool. “Okay, Houston, we've had a problem here” (Apollo 13 astronaut Jack Swigert after fatal-seeming explosion aboard the spacecraft, with minimal chances of returning to Earth alive). Astronauts and fighter pilots avoid unnecessary fill words (aka *Kremlin language*: “we might, we might not “...) and ‘insecurity vocabulary’ like *fear, danger or risk*.

The learning? Simple is good!

Crisp and clear speaking and writing make communication effective: Short sentences, short paragraphs and vigorous precision of words and grammar.

Out of your head and onto paper



The photo shows the famous quote "Sagen, was ist" ("Say what is") by Rudolf Augstein, founder of DER SPIEGEL, one of Europe's most prestigious news magazines. I took the photo when visiting [DER SPIEGEL's impressive Headquarters](#) in Hamburg, Germany, last year.

If you want to communicate, using half the verbiage and making twice the impact you have to write things down every now and then. Ideas that make perfect sense in conversation suddenly don't when you try to write them down. Why? Writing forces to think in a linear style, and the rigor of writing demands a greater precision of thought than speech.

It's easy to believe that humble writing skills can get you through every business (or private) situation. Becoming a wordsmith should be on everybody's to-do list. Tightening up your thoughts can make all the difference to a career, and to an organization's success. Being an effective leader means being an effective communicator through the habit of writing stuff down:

1. Writing facilitates clear thinking

You'll notice a sense of relief and weights lifted off your shoulders when you write things down. Thoughts put on paper escort your overflowed brain back to the essence and transform mental clutter into the first stages of being organized - which, in return, creates a feeling of being in control and well on your way to prioritization and then action.

2. Writing replaces ruminating

Writing down what's on our mind is a great way to process emotions and work through inner conflicts. Why spending money on a shrink?

3. Writing builds confidence

Writing down thoughts and feelings creates a record of experiences that might otherwise be forgotten. The record is the proof of achievement or progress, a documented shot of motivation. A piece of writing shows how tricky situations have successfully been dealt with in the past, creating confidence for the future and a sense of satisfaction.

So, reserve a moment in your day to write things down. Cross items off your mental list and get that feeling of productivity, which enhances positiveness. A perfect virtuous cycle to be in.



Smeyes or Smize



Have you heard about the latest neologism in the Corona dictionary?
Smeyes (or Smize) = Smiling with your eyes when wearing a face mask.

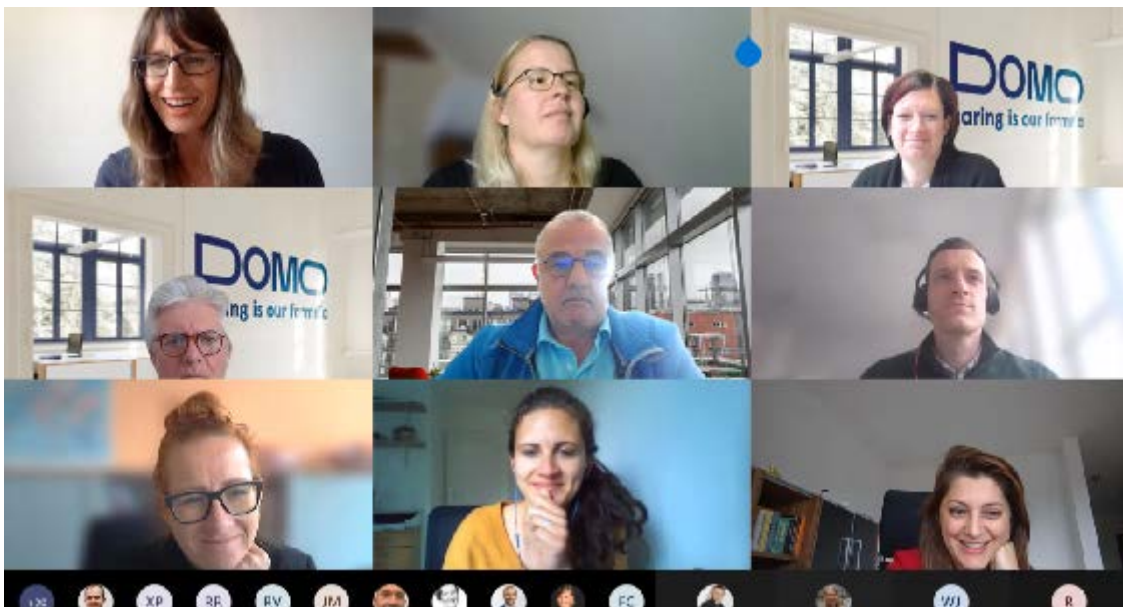
A textile cloth is changing the way we interact. Communicating in a face-masked Covid-19 world without losing that winning smile is an issue that keeps not only the service industry busy. Communication is all about connecting. This is why I choose to wear a transparent face shield for my voluntary work at a local history museum in Haarlem, NL, so I can welcome visitors with the visible motivational power of a happy face.

But how to effectively communicate with 2/3 of your face covered? For wearers and non-wearers, here a couple of easy techniques:

- Be more aware of your non-verbals: Keep more eye contact to understand how the other feels. Try to pick up on some sort of emotion
- Be more attentive to the other's tone and hand gestures
- Use more exaggerated body language to compensate for the loss of half of your face. For example: Frown expressively, using your eyebrows to the max, or signal approval through a simple thumbs-up
- Over-communicate. Use more words than you normally would. Speak slower. Use more intonation. Ask more questions



What's up in the danibu community?



* Photo authorized for publication with consent of people shown in imagery

Online training: Better Communication, Presentation and Speaking

Nothing beats real life interaction! But - if Covid-19 leaves you with no other choice than a virtual setup, it's great to train a wonderful group of leaders you're already familiar with.

I was very happy to be asked to develop an online program to help leaders in DOMO Chemicals improve their impact, performance and effectiveness as communicators. The training became part of DOMO Chemicals' organizational learning curriculum for their leadership that's tasked with motivating, engaging

and bringing about change in their teams. Called Champions of Transformation, these 140 senior business leaders embraced the necessity to be expressive presenters and communicators. Considering the number of cascades, presentations, employee meetings and speeches they have to deliver, they might equally call themselves “Chief Explanation or Engagement Officers”.

The conclusion of the 6-hour training: If your message (spoken or written) resonates deeply with your target audience, speaking to their emotions, using perfect wording, alternated with good visuals, then it will likely be understood – much less championed.

Connect if you want to enhance your (teams’) communication and presentation skills - face to face or online.



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Pitch?

Here's a bit of etymology: Where does the expression *pitch* actually come from? Well, there really isn't a good word for it in some languages. For example in Dutch, where they use the Anglicism in the curriculum/coaching territory. Pitch derives from the Latin *pix*, which in Old English became *pic*, in Middle English *picche* or *pich*. The meaning? 'A sticky, gummy substance secreted by trees'.

Stickiness is what you're looking for in your communication. Imagine you're in the elevator and you are standing next to the CEO. He asks you what you do and you say ...

Getting this question usually means lots of ideas spinning around in your head, and if this situation happens in a virtual setting, it's an even more difficult ballgame than in-person pitches. The solution: Prepare your pitch in advance, when you don't have to. Being 'sticky' is not about emptying your head and throwing all content onto a slide, word document or email. It means pulling your thoughts together to **create your 60-second signature story**.

No idea where to start? **Email danibu** to explore the options for one-to-one or team coaching to tackle business and pitch writing with ease.

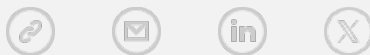


Did you know? Fonts



Fonts are important to give language a design and branding. Fonts turn words into impactful triggers on an audience's different senses. Font psychology and choice are something a communicator can't afford to overlook.

Click [here](#) to find out why.



danibu is the communication consultancy and creative production company that gets everybody in step with one another. danibu partners with clients across industries and markets to improve communication footprints and to create unique work for leading businesses and brands.

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