

## How To Write Documents That Reflect Well On You

Every letter, memo, and e-mail you create is an extension of you. Here are some suggestions to help you write sharp, effective documents.

- **Be confident.** Just because you didn't major in Elizabethan poetry doesn't mean you can't write effectively. If you're confident on the job, you shouldn't be afraid to show it. A confident tone will give your reader confidence in the information you're providing.
- **Keep it simple.** You could have the best idea in the world, but if it's buried beneath a mountain of extraneous words and unrelated information, no one will ever know it. Stick to the point.
- **Keep it short.** Overexplaining is a sign of insecurity and no one has the desire or time to read a five-page memo. Writing something that's too long is the best way to ensure it never gets read.
- **Know your audience.** Before you start writing, think about who will be reading your document. Avoid overly technical terms when writing for a wide audience. Don't try to impress your readers with big words or complicated concepts. They'll be much more appreciative if you haven't wasted their time.
- **Anticipate questions.** After you've written a draft of your document, reread it as if you were the person receiving it. What questions would you be most likely to ask? Go back and answer them in your rewrite.