

Stet

Independent Writers of Chicago

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MAY MEETING PREVIEW

Wow your clients! Tap into your creative brain!

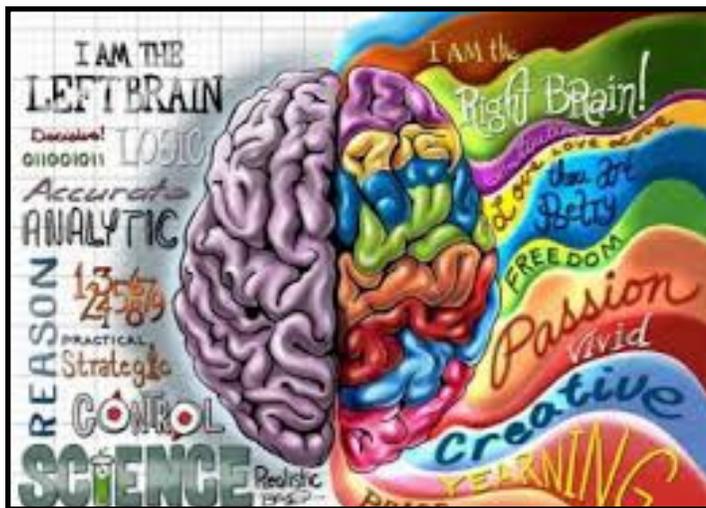
Do you want to learn how to be more creative when you're churning out those writing projects? Do you sometimes sit down at your computer and stare at the monitor for an hour or more without typing one single word? Then make sure to

join us as Gerald "Solutionman" Haman – founder of SolutionPeople, developer of the Chicago Thinkubator, and adjunct professor of innovation at Northwestern University – reveals the keys to creativity and innovation in writing as he presents,

"Writing is a "Know" Brainer: How to Use Your Whole Brain to Think Better, Faster and Smarter."

Drawing on lessons he has learned from 20 years of training more than 50,000 brains in 26 countries, he will tell us:

- How our brains function during the creative process
- How to develop a four-stage process for writing more creatively and innovatively



- How writers can share their creative ideas with other individuals on LinkedIn

All attendees will receive a free

copy of Version 5 of Haman's KnowBrainer™ creativity and innovation tool (a \$100 value).

As the inventor of the KnowBrainer™ innovator tool, Haman has been profiled in over 50 major news publications including *FAST Company*, *The New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Newsweek*, *Japan*, *The Australian*, *Singapore Straits Times*, *The International Herald*, *US News & World Report*, and *Investors Business Daily*. Haman was recognized by *FAST Company's* Influence Project as one of the most connected people online in the world.

Before launching his current business, Haman was a concert producer for a variety of Grammy-award-winning musicians including Air Supply, Cheap Trick, Harry Chapin, Little River Band, Alice Cooper, The Babys, Cliff Richard, Michael Johnson, Nick Gilder, Poco, Juice Newton and Head East. His responsibilities included talent scouting, contract negotia-

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Stet is published 11 times per year by the Independent Writers of Chicago, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1032, #W686, Chicago, IL 60604-4434, 800/804-4962. Internet address: www.iwoc.org.

Copy submissions are due by the 15th of the month preceding publication. All submissions and ideas will be considered. Copyright ©2014 by Independent Writers of Chicago.

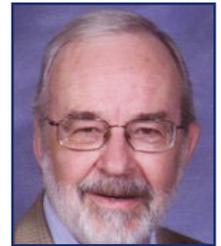
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BOARD RETREAT REPORT



It was a good day. Lots of energy. Lots of ideas. And a determination to make IWOC as relevant and useful as possible.

Your board of directors spent all day Saturday a week or so ago talking about how best to make IWOC serve you—and you and you and every member of our association. Led by Jeanne Gourgechon of Change Pace, an organizational development firm, the board and a few guests looked first at what we can all be proud of about IWOC; the list is extensive:

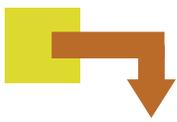
- Consistent second-Tuesday-of-the-month presence for 30+ years
- Program podcasts unique among local writers organizations
- Comprehensive and useful website
- Great diversity of skills among members
- Reliable directory that clients actually use
- Informative newsletter
- Attractive and convenient meeting space with friendly networking hour
- Excellent reputation that benefits individual members
- Willingness among members to share expertise, clients, and advice
- Long-term friendships—even three marriages!

Then we looked at what's going on out in the world and how it affects all of us:

- Technology changes we wouldn't have dreamed of a few short years ago
- Reality that everybody's a self-styled writer nowadays
- Tighter fees and deadlines – some clients expect more for less: photos, etc.
- "Content" has replaced "writing"
- Expectations from clients that writers take on more production skills
- Overseas and agency cut-rate competition
- Fewer people join traditional associations – fewer people travel downtown
- Realization that writers must now be innovative entrepreneurs to survive
- Globalization of the marketplace that creates new opportunities
- Broadening outlets require broader skill sets

Finally we talked and talked about how best we can exploit all of these issues to improve IWOC and make it into the professional association that we believe our members want it to be: namely, an invaluable tool for connecting with outstanding cli-

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President's Column CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2.

ents and an asset to each member's skill acquisition, reputation, and desirability as a source of excellent creativity. In short, we resolved to make IWOC the go-to organization for clients looking for writers; the go-to destination for writers looking for Greater Chicago's premier association of truly professional writers; the go-to spot for building an outstanding client list; and the go-to place for current members to find multiple opportunities for leadership, personal development, and, of course, more work.

So . . . we congratulated ourselves upon our abilities to assess what we've done in the past and what we're all about today. Mission accomplished; let's go home.

But that's not the way these things work. We figured that if we want IWOC to work for us, then we need to work for IWOC. And so we set about planning what we're going to make happen and when we expect to see results. Enter the one- and two-year plans.

First we need some reasonable goals, a few things we can confidently say we can do within a relatively short time. We'll save the big-ticket items for later.

We decided we need a coherent brand, that is, an identity we can all buy into no matter how different our individual work is. Once we get there, we'll need a brochure, a take-away piece, that will explain IWOC to one and all. **Task force.**

We need to help our members mine for clients and, as an organization, assure those clients that IWOC

provides the best, the most reliable, the most professional pool of talent in the Chicagoland area. We discussed a speakers' bureau, how-to-hire-a-writer seminar, yet another brochure, postcard mailings, and publicity generated by our ready-to-go 2014 IWOC Rate Survey. **Task force.**

We need to reach those of our members whom some of us haven't seen for years. What do they need, why don't we hear from them, and what can we do for them? There are obviously reasons why they're members, and we, as a board, need



to find out what those reasons are and set about building on them to make greater participation attractive. We have much we can all learn from them. **Task force.**

By this time next year, the board decided we'd like to see at least one informational brochure completed, distribution of advance listings of upcoming programs centered on career enhancement, more publicity about our podcasts, and a schedule for greater and regular contact with all of our members firmly in place.

We think that much is certainly doable by an organization of volunteers. We may let ride for a while such items as a regularly scheduled Internet radio show and an IWOC publication(s) about various kinds of writing.

The board members alone don't expect to accomplish everything, of course. We'll enlist a few other folks to lend a hand. But one thing we were all adamant about was that we don't want to impose onerous tasks on anyone; after all, we're all working and have

only so much time to devote to nonbillable activities. We think, though, that the wisdom of help-IWOC-help-yourself is self-evident. And we're not thinking about responsibilities that require long-term commitment; instead we'll use time-specific task forces for discrete jobs that will have end dates. You'll be hearing

from us. Remember: our goal is to help you in your work – really.

We ended the day by trying to come up with a tag line that would encompass all that we're about . . . and gave it up. Ever try writing by committee? It's too painful to describe. One group came up with IWOC: Ongoing support and development for professional communicators. I suppose that just about says it all, but we'll continue working on it. With your help, of course. ■



One Size Does Not Fit All

One could get giddy contemplating the size changes in electronics. First we had *big* desktops, some so large the processor had to sit on the floor. Then came laptops, followed by notebooks, and now tablets. (Those in the adjacent picture are the 10-inch iPad on the left and the smaller Surface on the right.) Since everyone wants to be up-to-date, even people with the eyesight of bats are snapping up these itsy-bitsy devices. Pretty soon one will need a jeweler's loupe to see anything on them.

On the other hand, TVs and monitors have morphed from modestly sized to absolutely huge. Today one can get a monitor so large it has to be mounted on a wall. Do we really need to see every page of an article at once? Where will it all end? ■

— *The editor*

iPad Killer? Microsoft to Launch New Surface Tablets

Microsoft's Surface tablet has been around for a while, but it appears that the company will go all out to knock off the iPad's dominance with the launch of two new Surface tablets, which will feature Intel processors. The size of the display on the Surface Mini is still unclear. It may be larger or smaller than the 7"-8" that has been rumored.

Regardless of display size, one lure of all the Microsoft tablets is that they come with Windows 8 installed, so that users don't have to switch to another device to do work they currently do in other popular Windows programs.

Microsoft's current Surface Pro 2 tablet already has an Intel processor, but it's a heavy-duty — and

therefore very pricey — device. Reports are that, price-wise, Microsoft's new launches will go head-to-head with mid- to low-priced tablets.

How do they plan to do that? They've already got a leg up in terms of features. For example, most lower-priced tablets do not include a USB port to connect a monitor, charger, or other device. The Surface Pro 2 has that feature. Microsoft has also already changed the way Windows tablets treat storage. They've also sweetened the pot by including a free copy of Microsoft Office Home & Student Productivity suite. This includes Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and an upgraded version of OneNote. Not long ago, users would have paid about 140 bucks for that suite. (Most writers would prob-

ably want a more professional version of Office, but if you do most of your work on a laptop or desktop, this suite might be good enough for your needs.)

With the new Surface entries, Microsoft could possibly put the squeeze on iPad sales at various price levels. (Could we dare hope that Apple would drop its astronomical iPad prices?)

Microsoft is also taking aim at the many tablets powered by the Android operating system. So if you haven't already acquired a tablet, but you yearn to buy one, you might want to wait until after the new Surface tablet launch scheduled for a May 20th event. Increased competition could make for some attractive prices, regardless of which tablet you covet. ■

— *Joel Kinnan*

Direct Response Lives & You Can Do It

Attendees at the April IWOC meeting eagerly awaited the presentation on direct response marketing by IWOCers Brent Brotine and Laurel Johnson, both seasoned pros in the field. And they weren't disappointed.

While most of the hype today targets social media as the way to

a big way. Devoted cat slaves both, Brotine and Johnson likened direct response targets to cats: They're not paying attention; they don't care; they want immediate payoff; and they're nearly impossible to motivate. Direct response answers these challenges where other methods might not.

Direct response uses the AIDA approach: generate **A**ttention, **I**nterest, **D**esire, and **A**ction. Organizations that hire writers for direct response include: ad agencies (pitch the creative director or creative recruiter), associations and nonprofits (try the membership director or the marketing manager), printers (contact the project manager), and B2B and B2C organizations. Here there's a wide range of opportunities, including: financial (credit card, insurance, and mutual funds), telecoms and utilities, food (food service, ingredients, equipment manufacturers), healthcare (pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, hospitals), collectibles, loyalty programs, educational institutions, hospitality organizations, and senior centers. Are you beginning to see a pattern here? These types of

organizations either answer immediate needs/wants and/or require a more long-form pitch to explain their offerings. Contact the marketing manager for jobs with them.

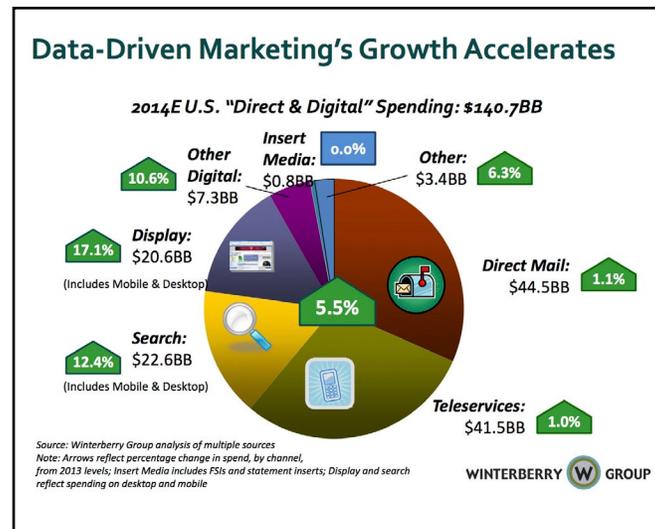
Obviously, DR hirers are so diversified that writers with almost any informational background would have some knowledge of the products, but there are a few special requirements for writing good DR copy. Top-notch DR writers: are comfortable with long-form copy, understand strategy, think visually, possess excellent grammar skills, work well with teams, and know how to **sell**.

Our speakers even told us how the work-flow works. The project starts with an input/strategy meeting. Then you brainstorm with the art director. Next you build your writer's roughs with headlines. Now comes the presentation of the concepts, followed by refining of said concepts. So far, you haven't written any real copy, but you do now. Finally, comes the part writers dislike most: rewrite, rinse, repeat.

What can you expect to earn? Here are some sample pay rates for experienced DR writers: self-mailer (\$400-\$1200), 2-page sales letter (\$500-\$800), brochure (\$800-\$2000+), complete "classic" DM package (\$1500-\$4000+), web landing-page (\$200-\$400), e-mail campaign (\$800-\$2500), radio script (\$600-\$1500), 2-minute Dr TV script (\$2000-\$4000), website copywriting (\$1000-\$3500). ■



generate business/sales, many were surprised to learn that direct response — mailed postcards, letters, brochures, etc.— still plays a huge role, as the slide below clearly shows direct response still works in



— Joen Kinnan

Did you know...



Welcome to this edition of Fictionary, where you, dear readers, get to guess the meaning of obscure words. Ready? Here we go!

1. Cruciverbalist

- a. One who removes and discards the crust from pizza
- b. One who loves or creates crossword puzzles
- c. A singer in a small chamber ensemble
- d. One who collects and categorizes herbs

2. Wroth

- a. A small, slow marsupial native to New Zealand
- b. An alcoholic drink made with Scotch
- c. Fabric woven with double thread at regular intervals
- d. A synonym for anger

3. Jumentous

- a. Extraordinarily large
- b. Causing heart-stopping amazement
- c. Wildly oscillating
- d. Smelling similar to horse urine

4. Pyknic

- a. Being short and fat
- b. A picnic (alternative spelling)
- c. A peaceful protestor
- d. A medical instrument used to close sutures

5. Scacchic

- a. A sugar substitute mostly used in South America
- b. Motionless
- c. Having to do with chess
- d. A short period of time

6. Nidorosity

- a. Tasting raw meat after burping
- b. Resembling a spider
- c. Creatively thinking
- d. Designed for shifting gears

7. Rabiator

- a. A car part that regulates gas intake
- b. Someone greedy and violent
- c. A venomous snake
- d. One who raises rabbits

8. Gabelle

- a. Large armed 16th-Century vessel with oars and sails
- b. A tax on salt
- c. Fiber for paper obtained from the sedge plant
- d. A type of furniture embellishment or ornamentation. ■

— Katherine Mikkelson

Some Pointers on Modern English Usage

Let's start with "like".

I can *like* you on Facebook.

Or I can say, *like*, as in

"like, it was when..."

Then there's "you know."

I say "you know" when I *know*

And often when I *don't* know.

Last comes "I mean."

"I mean..." goes at the beginning of an answer

It could be a trifecta

at the beginning of a sentence.

"I mean, like, you know..."

Wait, what was the question?

Nobody says *anything* any more.

They just go...like...I mean...you know.

No, I don't know. ■

— Catherine Rategan

**IWOC Welcomes
New Members
Shari Brady
and
Brandon W. Campbell
and
Returning Members
Laurel Johnson
and
Cynthia Tomusiak**

Answers: 1. b, 2. d, 3. d, 4. a, 5. c, 6. a, 7. b, 8. b.

