

## For Stronger Writing, Don't Muck Up Your Verbs

Welcome to the first issue of Monthly Makeover. I want to talk about how verbs can make a piece of writing stand out – but only if they're not "mucked up."

To get my point across, I use a "before" and "after" example. For the "before" example, I use verbiage from the Internet or other printed marketing material. So these aren't hypothetical examples, but I've changed names and information to disguise them.

### ***What's a Verb's Job?***

Verbs, of course, provide action in your sentences. They're at their best – conveying power and movement – when you use the root form of the verb:

Promote ... instead of "promotion of" or "promoting"

Encourage ... instead of "encouragement of" or "encouraging"

### **Before Example**

This example is from the landing page for a non-profit organization:

The International Busybody Group is a volunteer organization dedicated to:

- the promotion and maintenance of helpful resources through the medium of the Internet;
- the encouragement of ethical practices and accurate research; and
- the promotion of international cooperation among busybodies throughout the world.

## After Transformation

This is how I would re-write it:

The International Busybody Group is a volunteer organization that:

- Promotes and maintains helpful resources on the Internet.
- Encourages ethical practices and accurate research.
- Promotes international cooperation among busybodies worldwide.

## The Root Rules!

Notice that the root form is:

- Shorter – and whenever you're trying to appeal to a general audience, shorter is better.
- More direct and conversational. No one likes to be spoken down to, and when you use a conversational tone, the chance of snagging your targeted audience's attention goes way up.

And in this example, using the root form of the verb also gets rid of the passive voice – double whammy!

I hope this has been helpful and informative. Have a productive week!

Regards,

Mary McCauley-Stiff

P.S. Feel free to forward this newsletter to your friends and colleagues. They will thank you for it – and so will I!

### [Five Star Writing, Inc.](#)

"Clear and concise writing for the software and manufacturing industries."

If you have a writing project coming up, I'd love to talk to you about it. Please contact me for a complimentary 30-minute consultation.

**678-697-2555 ★★★★★ [maryms@5starwriting.com](mailto:maryms@5starwriting.com)**