



# SENDING TEXT TO YOUR GRAPHIC DESIGNER

SAVE TIME AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF YOUR PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPONENTIALLY

I know what you must be thinking as you read that headline. “Come on, André... how dense do you think I am? I know how to send you text!”

It’s true. Sending me text is super simple. Just type it up, and *voila* — text sent to me. Piece of cake.

But as a designer who has received text for countless projects over the past 20 years, **there is “right way” to provide the materials needed to get the best possible results.**

While there are no “wrong” ways for content to reach a designer, there is a most efficient way. A way where you can help me get your project done faster, more complete, accurate and that can save you money and save you lots of frustration!

## THE WRONG WAYS

**Smoke signals, semifore, carrier pigeon, morse code and duck calls** all serve(d) a purpose, but all fit in the “Wrong Way” category. So lets move on to what works the best.

**Snail Mail** — Stop laughing. I had to include this because I have received content this way in the not so distant past. But lets just admit that this is not a preferred method.

**Dictation** — This is the 21st century and unless one has been comatose for the past 50 years, stenographers are very retired and I sure don’t know any shorthand. Let’s go ahead and dismiss this as well.

**Fax** — The fax machine was a perfectly valid tool to send text quickly in the early 1990’s but in today’s world of email and sending files back and forth with such ease, the fax machine is more than likely heading to a Museum near you sooner rather than later. On a rare occasion it may yet be useful, but less and less.

**E-Mail** — We are now getting a little better, but pasting loose content inside the body of an email is typically not the best way to send your materials. Things can shift and get screwy during transmission. But sending text via email is part of the puzzle... keep reading!

**PDF File** — Not a bad option, but often times it can be difficult to extract content from a pdf. When text comes into the new document i’m working with to produce your project, the formatting can be messy and that leads to lots of extra time to clean everything up. What worked for one document, may not be effective for a different document. There are different sizes, colors and fonts that may be used. So... all that formatting won’t work on the new file the same way it did the first time you may have used it.

## IT’S NOT JUST A WORD DOCUMENT BUT THE WORD DOCUMENT

I would not recommend using MS Word to design your brochure, but when it comes to sending the copy that will appear in your brochure — this is the gold standard.

While, using MS Word may be the right way to send your content to me, there are still details to consider. If all you are doing is typing your copy out, performing a spell check and then sending it off to me, you’re in for more than you bargained for, because that kind of casual simplicity is going to cause you massive delays as the project moves closer and closer to production.



### WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WITH YOUR TEXT

When you send in your text, and call it ‘final’ I am left with the impression that you have carefully edited the content with your business partners or staff. I am further assuming it has all the punctuation required, the language is correct. It is communicating to prospective customers precisely what you want to say when it is printed.

You take the time to choose a font, bold headlines and select specific colors. If all of that helps you sobeit, but when I take your copy and paste it into my InDesign file, all of your formatting disappears. The bolds, italics, colors, fonts — it all comes into my file as black Times Roman 12 point type.

Based on the approved design we have initially created together, I will change the font, update the leading and positioning of the text within the page. From this point, I go back to your word file and look for the bolds, and italics you put into your document and bring them back into the InDesign file. I select colors as prescribed by the design, and when completed, I send through the primary draft with all of your ‘live’ copy in place.

### THE ‘RED’ PEN

Sounds pretty simple, right? You now have your ‘final’ copy in position, in the right font based on the design and everything is just as you...

“...Oh wait... I don’t like the way that sentence reads. Let me print this out.” You reach for your red pen to make some changes.

“Hmmm, I think if I re-word this sentence... oh darn... now the rest of the paragraph doesn’t make sense.”

“OK, that’s better. Glad I was able to re-write that paragraph, but now, gee... I’m not keen on that headline. I think I have to think about re-writning that.”

Sounds all to familiar. Before you know it, you have made changes to the 3 headlines, 2 sub-headlines and made substantial changes to two-thirds of the text in your brochure. So, you send me an email with a new Word document.

**“...it will be easier if you just use this new file because I made lots of changes...”**

### TAKE A MOMENT NOW AND READ THE LAST SECTION ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENS WITH THE TEXT YOU SEND TO ME!

Depending on the project, the changes you made after I sent you the first draft just cost us as much as 2, 3, 4 hours or more. All of the formatting that was done originally is now gone. It has to all be done from scratch.

**I think we can agree that this is not the optimal use of time.**

I have had projects that began as simple as one-sided posters or 100 word eblasts go through as many as 17 or 18 sets of revisions. Indecision can often be the culprit. Consulting too many people — all of who have their own ideas. This leads to a clients frustration, as well as great difficulty for me to effectively and efficiently do my job. And a project that could have — **should have** — been completed in a day or two, now bleeds into a week or more. The client has incurred additional cost for the additional time spent, and lost his/her own sanity in the process. That’s NOT a good day at the office!

### STREAMLINING THE PROCESS

I DO NOT wear a cape. I DO NOT have a magic wand. The computer is an effective tool that helps speed up the process, however, **it is just a tool**. Formatting your copy — be it 6 pages or 60 pages — is not as simple as copy/paste. But it can be done with less of the back and forth copy changes that cause delays and ALL OF THAT BEGINS WITH YOU!



### ***SOME TIPS...***

#### ***Read and re-read***

Once you write your copy and spell check it, you should understand that this is just the beginning. You should print it, read it, and re-read it. It is guaranteed you will notice where you missed punctuation and you will find numerous places where you will re-write whole sections. **This is your time to shine.** You can quietly make the changes you want and say what needs to be said the way you want without interference from anyone.

#### ***6 Eyes***

I highly recommend that you have at least two other people read your content after you have what you believe is your final draft. This means 6 eye balls have viewed your document.

#### ***Fresh eyes are going to see your words in a new way.***

They will be able to look at your copy critically. These readers are also going to read your copy the way potential customers will read it. They can make suggestions that will further help polish your content.

#### ***Don't Kill Yourself Formatting***

Once you have edited your copy and have had others review it, don't go crazy with colors and picking "the font you like best" on your word file. Remember — all of the formatting you do in Word disintegrates the moment I place it into my InDesign file. **SAVE THE TIME.** What you can and should do is **bold** and *italicize* what you need or want. I can see that in the Word file and will transfer that into the finished document.

#### ***Committee Approval***

If you are working with a Board of Directors, Committee or small team, be sure that everyone has seen and approves the content

before sending to me. If just one person who wanted to sign off on the text didn't see it, we could end up doing a lot of work only to have it all end up in the trash. **INCLUDE THE TEAM AS NEEDED.**

#### ***Names***

Have a listing of names (like on an invitation) or locations? **Spell check is not going to know if a proper name is spelled wrong!** It is imperative that you provide this content spelled correctly. Neither I, nor spell check is going to know if the proper spelling is 'Smith,' or 'Smyth.'

#### ***Using A Professional Copywriter***

I highly recommend that if you want the best possible result, that you use a professional copywriter. They are the text experts! They can take your outline or thoughts and write your message clearly and will present you (and me) with completed content. As long as you communicated your preferences with the copywriter and signed off on what they have produced, you and I should have no need to edit a word, or add one exclamation point to your text.

#### ***THE REAL FINAL DRAFT***

While "***perfection may be the poison of profitability,***" the more you edit your text before sending it to me, the faster project(s) will get done. It really is that simple. The control is in your hands. Putting in the time NOW leads to far less anxiety (for both of us) later.

Regards,

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