

HOW TO WRITE BRIEFLY

Some insights from Joseph McCormack, author of *Brief: Make a Bigger Impact by Saying Less* (Wiley, 2014).

1. Live by point #17 from Strunk & White's *The Elements of Style* and **"omit needless words."**
2. Map out a **visual outline** of your key points before writing anything.
3. Set a **sentence and word limit** from the start and keep to it (hint: less than seven and 150 words will hit the spot).
4. **Don't believe** that making it longer will make it more interesting.
5. Ask **someone else** to edit.
6. Choose **simpler, shorter** words over longer and fancier ones.
7. Buy a box of **red pens** and use them on a printed, draft copy.
8. **Start and end** strong – the first few words set the stage, the last wrap it up.
9. Consider the **audience is drowning** and excess words will push them under.
10. If you want an **immediate response**, see them in person or pick up a phone.

Less is more; each of these suggestions will **set you apart** as a writer.

For more information on becoming an effective and efficient communicator, contact mmckinney@thebrieflab.com or call 910.693.0063.