

# HOW TO STAY HUMAN:

The before-and-after  
guide to better  
writing with AI



# Using AI to draft in seconds? Nice. But never outsource your credibility.

AI tools can help you write business emails, reports and documents faster than ever.

But left unchecked, AI writing quickly becomes vague and generic. That's when readers switch off – and question your credibility.

This guide shows you how to fix that.

You'll see how 12 AI-generated drafts can be edited into clearer, more effective business writing.

Let's jump in.



**Vikki and Veronica**  
CSA Founders and Facilitators

# The 7 credibility killers to cut

- 1 Repetitive phrasing and structures**  
How to fix: Break the patterns – and vary your rhythm.
- 2 Writing for no one**  
How to fix: Get clear on your audience *before* you prompt.
- 3 A formal and wordy tone**  
How to fix: Cut ruthlessly and default to plain English.
- 4 Burying the point**  
How to fix: Lead with what matters most.
- 5 The passive problem**  
How to fix: Make someone the subject of your sentences.
- 6 Hedging**  
How to fix: Delete qualifiers and be decisive.
- 7 The wall of text**  
How to fix: Learn to love white space. Add headings and lists.

## CASE 1:

# Burying the recommendation

## AI DRAFT

**Executive summary**

This report was undertaken to better understand the current customer service experience and identify opportunities to improve the way enquiries are handled across the organisation. Feedback was gathered from staff interviews, call data and a sample of recent customer emails.

The findings suggest that while staff are committed to providing helpful support, there are several areas where the current process could be improved. These include response times, consistency of information and the way complex enquiries are escalated.

A revised triage process may assist in improving the customer experience and supporting staff to manage enquiries more efficiently.

## HUMAN EDIT

**Executive summary**

This report recommends introducing a revised triage process for customer enquiries.

We undertook a review that uncovered three issues with the current process:

1. Customers wait too long for complex enquiries to be escalated
2. Staff do not always give consistent information
3. Teams are spending time on enquiries that should be redirected earlier

We arrived at these findings on staff interviews, call data and a sample of recent customer emails.

A clearer triage process will help staff direct enquiries sooner, reduce delays and give customers more consistent answers.

## CASE 2:

**Passive voice in a risk section**

## AI DRAFT

**Key risk**

A delay in the launch timeline has been identified due to incomplete content approvals.

Several pages are still awaiting review and final sign-off has not yet been received from the relevant stakeholders.

If approvals are not completed by Friday, the launch date may need to be moved. Additional support may be required to ensure outstanding pages are reviewed in time.

## HUMAN EDIT

**Key risk**

The launch is at risk because three content owners have not approved their pages.

We still need final sign-off for:

- Pricing page
- Implementation page
- Customer support page

If the content owners do not approve these pages by Friday, we may need to move the launch date.

We recommend asking each department head to confirm their approvals by 12 pm Friday.

## CASE 3:

## The robot voice

### AI DRAFT

**Subject: Feedback on the draft proposal**

Hi Elena,

Thank you for sharing the draft proposal for review. Upon careful consideration, I have identified several areas where further refinement may be beneficial before the document is circulated to the client.

In particular, the opening section could be strengthened to provide greater clarity around the client's current challenge and the recommendations section would benefit from a more concise articulation of the proposed next steps.

Please let me know if you would like me to provide additional input.

Kind regards

Marcus

### HUMAN EDIT

**Subject: Two edits for the draft proposal**

Hi Elena

Thanks for sending the draft proposal. Please make two edits before you send it to the client:

1. State the client's problem more clearly in the opening statement. At the moment, it takes a while to see what we are responding to.
2. Shorten the recommendation section. The next steps are there, but they get lost in details.

I'm here to help, so let me know if you want to chat.

Kind regards

Marcus

## CASE 4:

**Burying the point**

## AI DRAFT

**Subject: Website copy review**

Hi Sam,

I hope you're having a good week.

I've been reviewing the latest website copy and thinking about how it aligns with the broader goals of the project – particularly around improving clarity for prospective clients and making sure the page gives people enough information to understand the service before they enquire.

There are some strong sections in the draft and the overall direction is working well. I do think, though, that it would be useful to make a few changes before we send it to the web team.

Could you please review the service description and send me your comments by Thursday?

Thanks

Nina

## HUMAN EDIT

**Subject: Please review the website copy by Thursday**

Hi Sam

Could you please review the service description and send me your comments by Thursday?

The overall direction is working well, but the page needs editing before we send it draft to the web team. Specifically, let's make the service clearer for prospective clients before they enquire.

Please focus on simplifying:

- Who the service is for
- What the client receives
- What they should do next

Thanks

Nina

## CASE 5:

# Responsibility is MIA

## AI DRAFT

**Subject: Update on the client report**

Hi team,

The client report has now been reviewed. The executive summary will need to be shortened and additional data will need to be added to the recommendations section before the report can be finalised.

The revised version will need to be ready by Wednesday afternoon, provided the required data is received by Tuesday.

Kind regards

Asha

## HUMAN EDIT

**Subject: Update on the client report**

Hi team

Thank you for preparing the client report. I suggest two changes:

1. **Tom**, could you please send me the missing data for the recommendations section by Tuesday?
2. **Leah**, could you please shorten the executive summary to no more than 450 words by Wednesday lunch?

If I have both by then, I'll finalise the report on Wednesday afternoon.

Kind regards

Asha

## CASE 6:

**Wordiness that wastes time**

## AI DRAFT

**Subject: Meeting follow-up**

Hi Jordan,

I'm following up on our conversation from earlier today in relation to the upcoming stakeholder meeting.

As discussed, we are going to prepare a short briefing note for the executive team and it would be great if you could please send through the latest attendance numbers so that these can be incorporated into the draft.

Thanks again for your time today. I really appreciate your input and support.

Kind regards

Eve

## HUMAN EDIT

**Subject: Attendance numbers for executive briefing**

Hi Jordan

Thanks for meeting with me today.

As discussed, could you please send me the latest attendance numbers by 3 pm tomorrow so I can add them to the draft for the executive team?

Thanks again for your help.

Kind regards

Eve

## CASE 7:

**Corporate jargon and puff-speak**

## AI DRAFT

**Subject: Elevating our onboarding experience**

Hi Priya,

We have an opportunity to optimise the onboarding journey by leveraging recent feedback and implementing more streamlined information sharing across the first two weeks.

This would help us boost employee experience, improve alignment and foster stronger engagement.

Could we schedule time next week to discuss how we might take this forward?

Kind regards

Daniel

## HUMAN EDIT

**Subject: Helping new starters settle in**

Hi Priya

We have received important feedback from new starters that they receive too much information in their first week and often don't know which tasks to complete first.

I'd like to simplify the onboarding process by spreading the information over the first two weeks and creating a short checklist for early tasks.

Are you available at 4 pm next Tuesday to discuss this?

Kind regards

Daniel

## CASE 8:

## The wall of text

## AI DRAFT

### Changes to the booking process

We are making changes to the booking process from Monday 20 July. We have had several issues with duplicate bookings, missing dietary requirements and incomplete attendee details, which have created extra administration for the programs team and increased the chance of errors in the information sent to facilitators before each workshop.

From Monday, all bookings must be entered through the online form rather than being emailed directly to the programs inbox. The person making the booking will need to include the participant's full name, email address, organisation, workshop date and any dietary or accessibility requirements before the booking can be confirmed. If any information is missing, the programs team will return the request and ask for the missing details before processing it.

## HUMAN EDIT

### New booking process starts Monday 20 July

From Monday 20 July, please enter all workshop bookings through the online form.

Do not email bookings directly to the programs inbox.

We're making this change because recent booking emails have missed key details, which created extra admin and increased errors.

Before a booking can be confirmed, your form must include:

- Participant's full name
- Email address
- Organisation
- Workshop date
- Dietary requirements (if any)
- Accessibility requirements (if any)

If any details are missing, the programs team will return the request to you before they can process it.

## CASE 9:

## The jargon jungle

**AI DRAFT****Opportunity to enhance client communication**

As we continue to navigate an increasingly complex and fast-paced client environment, it is important that our communication practices are reviewed and refined. This will ensure that expectations are being managed effectively and that key stakeholders are being kept informed throughout the lifecycle of each project.

A more proactive approach to communication would help to foster stronger relationships, enhance transparency and ensure that potential issues are identified and addressed in a timely manner.

It would be beneficial for all project leads to consider how client updates are currently being delivered and whether there are opportunities to improve consistency across the team.

**HUMAN EDIT****Please send client updates every Friday**

Starting next week, please send a short update to clients every Friday for each active project.

The update should cover:

- What we completed that week
- What is due next week
- Any decisions the client needs to know about

We're making this change because some clients are hearing about issues too late. Regular updates will help us set expectations earlier and reduce last-minute surprises.

I'll send a simple template tomorrow.

## CASE 10:

**Robot voice in a sensitive message**

## AI DRAFT

**Important business update**

Following a review of current commercial conditions and internal resourcing requirements, a decision has been made to temporarily pause recruitment for non-essential roles across the business. This decision has not been made lightly and reflects the need to ensure that resources are being managed responsibly while market conditions are monitored.

It is important to note that this pause is intended to support the long-term sustainability of the organisation and should not be interpreted as a reflection of individual team performance.

Further updates will be provided as additional information becomes available.

## HUMAN EDIT

**Temporary hiring pause**

We are pausing recruitment for non-essential roles from today.

We've made this decision after a low-revenue quarter and a review of our resourcing needs. It gives us time to manage costs carefully while we confirm what the next few months look like.

This is not a reflection of individual performance. It is a temporary business decision and we'll review it again at the end of next month.

I know this may raise questions. Managers will discuss what this means for their teams this week and I'll share another update once we have completed the review.

## CASE 11:

**Generic service page copy**

## AI DRAFT

**Communication training that empowers teams**

In today's fast-paced business landscape, strong communication is more important than ever. Our tailored training solutions are designed to empower professionals, enhance collaboration and unlock stronger performance across your organisation.

Through practical tools, expert facilitation and real-world examples, we help teams build the confidence and capability to communicate with clarity and impact.

We don't just teach skills. We transform teams.

## HUMAN EDIT

**Train your team to write, speak and present clearly**

We help teams communicate more effectively at work.

Our training focuses on the tasks your people handle every day: emails, reports, briefs, presentations and feedback conversations.

Your team will learn how to structure messages for impact, cut unnecessary details and engage the people who need to act on it.

## CASE 12:

**Product page with cliché patterns**

## AI DRAFT

**Compliance made simple**

Compliance is not just about meeting requirements. It's about building trust.

Our platform is more than just a tool. It's a smarter way to manage risk, streamline processes and unlock visibility across your organisation.

Whether you're managing audits, policies or reporting obligations, our services help you stay ahead in an ever-changing regulatory landscape.

## HUMAN EDIT

**Manage audits, policies and reporting in one place**

Our compliance platform helps teams track audits, policies and reporting obligations from a central, easy-to-use system.

You can:

- Assign owners to compliance tasks
- See which actions are overdue
- Store audit evidence in one place
- Track policy reviews and approvals
- Report on open risks and completed actions

Get a clearer view of what needs attention – before deadlines even get near.

# Final checklist to stay human

Before you publish or hit send on an AI-generated draft, ask:

- ☒ Have I written for this reader – not a generic audience?
- ☒ Does the opening sound like it's from me?
- ☒ Is the main point *unmissable* in the first few lines?
- ☒ Have I named who needs to do what?
- ☒ Can I cut any fluff without losing meaning?
- ☒ Have I replaced jargon with plain English?
- ☒ Is the message easy for time-poor audiences to scan?
- ☒ Have I avoided AI's clichés and repetitive sentence patterns?
- ☒ Have I fact-checked claims, figures, dates and data?

## REMEMBER:

Your credibility depends on the final human pass and the version you choose to send.

# Communication works for those who work at it

Communication Skills Academy (CSA) is an Australian training business dedicated to elevating people's communication skills at work.

We've been delivering our flagship program, Business Writing Essentials, across Australia since 2008.

Ready to build your writing skills and confidence – with and without AI? Get in touch today.



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