

Study: Poor Writing Skills Are Costing Businesses Billions

Report shows more than \$3.1 billion is being spent annually on remedial writing training.



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More and more businesses are requiring employees to take remedial writing training.

IMAGE: Getty Images

Communication is an essential skill for any business, but what's shocking is how much time and money businesses are spending each year to bring employees up to a basic proficiency level. Writing seems to be one of the skills requiring the most remedial training.

A study from CollegeBoard, a panel established by the National Commission on Writing, indicates that blue chip businesses are spending as much as \$3.1 billion on remedial writing training--annually. Of this budget, \$2.9 billion was spent on current employees--not new hires. Think it's from lack of education? Think again.

College Training: Writing Gaps Persist

It appears that even a college degree doesn't seem to save businesses from the effects of poor writing skills.

A report from the Partnership for 21st Century Skills noted that according to employers, 26.2% of college students had deficient writing skills. What's more--employers said more than one-fourth of college graduates were not only poor writers, but also lacked proper communication skills across the board.

College students admit their writing proficiency, too. The 2011 book *Academically Adrift*, which followed more than 2,300 students through college, found only 50% of seniors felt that their writing skills had improved over the course of their four-year education.

In a modern workplace that requires employees to send daily emails, to write reports, to present at meetings--how can businesses spot weak writers early on?

Spotting Weak Writing Skills and Training Employees

Employers are already being proactive about weeding out poor writers from the hiring process. The CollegeBoard data showed that 50% of respondents take writing into consideration when hiring professional staff and 80% of corporations with employment growth potential assess writing during hiring.

One of the first places poor writing skills can be spotted is within the resume and cover letter. For those who do make the cut, some employers are asking potential new hires to complete a writing exercise during the interviewing process to evaluate writing skills before an offer is made.

For current employees whose writing skills need work--training still seems to be the answer. While expensive, most companies can't afford writing errors that can cost them business in the long-run.