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To All Members of the Roofing Metal Heating Associates (RMHA), Area Roofing Contractors, Roofing Material Distributors, or Manufacturer Representatives of Roofing Materials:

The RMHA is starting a program to forward electronic pictures of custom and local roofing system installations via email.

The RMHA hopes the Picture Reports will provide visual information to help all roofing industry professionals learn about unique projects and how other roofing professionals approach roofing system installations. Furthermore, we invite you to share these photos with others in the roofing industry who may find them informative.

There are no charges to receive the pictures, and you don't have to be a member; however, whether you are a roofing contractor, material distributor, or a manufacturer's representative, we hope you may consider membership in the future.

We also hope that area Roofing Contractors, Distributors, or Company Representatives will submit photos of roofing system installations to share with others within the local roofing industry.

If you are interested in receiving the Picture Reports, contact me via email or call my cell phone

Regards,
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Communication, whether spoken or written, is a skill most people don't think about until they are asked to speak publicly or write something that will be publicly published under their own name.

Anyone who has been in either situation for the first time may feel stressed about doing either.

Why? Mostly because of possible criticism and being judged by the words we say or write.

While I can't comment on communication skills with public speaking, I can comment on writing, and I have a story that taught me a valuable lesson in communication through business writing.

But first, let me take a moment to introduce two former members of the Roofing Metal Heating Associates (RMHA), one of whom is the source of this article, Alan (Al) and Sidney (Sid) Kane, of S. Kane and Sons Roofing. Both brothers were the sons of Russian immigrants who fled Jewish persecution in Russia during the early part of the 20th century. The family eventually landed in North Philadelphia, where both Al and Sid grew up and, like so many of our past and present members, worked with their father in his roofing and sheet-metal company.

Al served in World War II as part of an engineer battalion and landed on Normandy Beach on June 7, 1944, the day after the initial landing. By the end of the war, he was a highly decorated combat veteran. Some members may remember Al, who was in his 90's, when Mike Donnelly of Donnelly Roofing would pick him up and bring him to our meetings until his passing at 95 in 2017.

Al's younger brother, Sydney, was a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. When I met both brothers, I was a very young roofing contractor, and they were both nearing retirement age.

During the 1960s and 1970s, there were major blistering and bubbling problems with low-slope asphalt-built-up roofing systems (BURS). The basic cause was generally traced to moisture in the organic felts from the manufacturing processes, improper storage, or felts getting wet during field installation. A secondary source was traced to moisture in the organic (black) facers of early urethane or polyisocyanurate roof insulations.

With Sid Kane having spent his life in the roofing industry and now holding a Mechanical Engineering Degree, he decided to write an article on the relationship between temperature and moisture variables that were causing blistering and bubbling problems in BUR systems.

Sid told me he spent weeks researching and writing the article. When he finally finished it, he knew it was the greatest article ever written for the roofing industry and was sure he would get tremendous industry-wide recognition if he could get it published nationwide in the National Roofing Contractors Association's (NRCA) monthly magazine.

So, Sid sent the article to the NRCA president, who was a personal friend. From the moment he mailed the article, he was waiting for a response that would tell Sid – what he already knew – his written article "was the greatest article ever written in the roofing industry". After three days, Sid figured his friend had received the article but was probably too busy to call him back to congratulate him on "writing the greatest article ever written in the roofing industry".

By the fifth day without a response, he started to think his friend still had not received the article, and it must be because the mail was so slow. He even thought he should have sent it by special delivery in the first place. By the eighth day without a response, he knew his written article had gotten lost in the mail. Thus, on the tenth day after mailing, he called his friend to let him know he had sent him a very important article for publication in the NRCA monthly magazine, but apparently, it had gotten lost in the mail. So, he would send the article again, this time by special delivery, so it would not get lost in the mail.

Sid was dumbfounded by his friend's response: "Sid, we received your written article, but we can't publish it." Sid was speechless and thinking, "The greatest article ever written in the roofing industry cannot be published", so he asked why not? The answer,

"Sid, we can't publish your article because we don't know what the hell you are talking about"!

Sid told me that story probably 20 years after it occurred, and while he was laughing when he told it, I think his ego was still feeling the rejection.

What I learned from Sid's story:

1) When writing anything in a business format, write so ordinary people can understand the subject.

2) Keep the writing as short as possible. If something was originally written on one page, convert it to one paragraph; if written in two pages, shorten it to one page or less. Reducing the length of a written business article or letter will be mentally challenging and probably very time-consuming.

   To paraphrase, a very famous 16th-century philosopher who once wrote a letter to his friend, and on the outside of the envelope supposedly wrote,

   Dear Friend,
   "Enclosed is the long version of this letter, because I don't have time to write the short one".

3) There is a major difference between writing a business letter or article compared to a private letter, story, or book where the number of words doesn't really matter, and the reader is not time-restricted to read the words.

   Business letters or written articles should be short, shorter, and even shorter; otherwise, the letter or article will not be read and probably be thrown in the trash.

And finally, to Al and Sid, from all the past and present members of the RMHA, *"you were both a credit to the Philadelphia Roofing and Sheet Metal Industry".*

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