



8 Tips to Better Transcripts

<http://TheSmallBusinessTranscriptionist.com>

<http://TheSmallBusinessTranscriptionist.com>

© Cosminsky Solutions 2011

These tips are going to give you an outline to a better looking transcript and in the process make you a better speaker. Because, honestly, you want to look like an expert in front of your clients, not an intern.

The best way to make sure that you are going to come across as professional, clean and well spoken is to be prepared. If you aren't use to doing teleseminars, speaking engagements or videos, you may not be aware that most people when being interviewed have already prepared an outline for their call or for their speech.

What is your Ultimate Goal?

Whether you are giving a live speech or a teleseminar, you need to consider your ultimate goal and the plan to get there.

If you are wanting to sell verbatim transcripts of the call, you have an easier goal than if you want to create a book from it.



Plain Transcripts

Plain transcripts are the easiest and least impressive use of your calls and speeches. However, you can still make money off of them. Basically give a good speech and send the file to your transcriptionist.



Cleaned Up Transcripts

Many of you will actually want a cleaned up transcript. The transcriptionist will remove stutters, grammatical errors and correct sentence structure to your specifications. If you work as a proofreader or writer, you want a much cleaner transcript.

Another thing to consider is sometimes phrases that sound fine out loud look ridiculous on the page. For some clients, we remove crutch phrases, like starting every sentence with “And” or over use of so. I, personally, am terrible about saying “and that sort of thing.”

Simply ask your transcriptionist to clean up the transcript.

E-book Style Transcripts

Ebook Style Transcripts are The Small Business Transcriptionist's specialty. They include a customized cover page, a table of contents, disclaimer, and chapter and subheadings through the text, much like an eBook or book.

The subtle details are what impress and make your clients remember your product.

Check out this blog post for several examples.

<http://thesmallbusinesstranscriptionist.com/so-what-is-an-ebook-style-transcript>

How to: Ebook Style It

There are several steps you can take to get a nice looking eBook style transcript. First make sure it's something your transcriptionist offers, if you aren't working with The Small Business Transcriptionist.

If you have ideas for what you want your transcripts to look like make sure to send those details to your transcriptionist. My project manager specializes in making custom templates that reflect the personality and business of each client.

Chapters

Secondly, if you want particular chapters and subheadings in your transcripts, emphasize them. During my dictation or speeches, I will use phrasing like

- “Our next topic is How to Fire Contractors.”
- If you are doing a live speech, you might say “The Second Part of our presentation is on How to Make Your Small Business Profitable”
- “The next slide shows the topics we will cover on SEO Optimization.”

eBook to Books

The steps between an eBook style transcript and an actual eBook or book are simple. Typically a single speaker audio can be converted to a book by changing a few phrases from “call” style to prose.

Most transcriptionists and writers will charge you to edit your files. You can make this easier (and most likely cheaper) by removing as many references to the call or speech as you can. There is no real reason to start out by saying Today is Tuesday, May... most of your live listeners will know what day it is and where they are.

If you intend to sell or reuse the audio, all you are doing is dating the material. When you mention the call, in the middle of your speech, the reference is more likely to be missed.

You can also ask your transcriptionist or editor to add images and quotes to either your eBook style transcripts or eBooks.

Home Study Course

What is the real difference between an eBook and a home study course?

Aside from price, a home study course usually includes examples, worksheets, references, audio and possibly video. Creating a home study course on a subject you are familiar with can be easy. If your topic uses spreadsheets, or software, you would provide these on a lesson page with the audio, or instructions.

This is beneficial for you especially if your software offers an affiliate program.

Articles, Blog Posts and Other Uses

Articles and other segmented uses of transcripts take more work. They must have introductions, closures and transitions added as you are working with a chunk of the transcript less than a 1000 words.

Be sure to provide topic ideas and target market details to your editor before they begin working on this project.

Be Prepared

For example, if you are being interviewed at 11:00 on Thursday, it is very typical to meet with your interviewer over the phone on Tuesday to go over the questions. Even talking for a few minutes before the call helps. This ensure that they aren't going to ask you a question that you aren't prepared for.

You don't want to be searching your computer or the internet for an answer because by that point you've either lost your audience or you're going to move on to the next question and five or ten minutes later come back to a question that nobody remembers.



Important Tip #1

While doing teleseminars in an interview style, you may need to rearrange the topics due to the course of conversation. However, by planning, you have a better idea of how long it's going to take you and that you can get all your information in to the call. Most calls usually tend to go 15 to 20 minutes over the anticipated time so here's a hidden tip in this one.

When you are setting up your teleseminar, make sure you set your recording feature on your bridge line to at least double the amount of time you anticipate being on the phone. Most people will tell you to actually triple it. And then make sure you push record.

Make Yourself Notes

Most calls are conversational yet professional so don't feel overwhelmed that you have to stiffly follow your outline.

Give yourself some bullet points. I highly suggest not writing out every word of your interview but bullet points detail on the topics that you want to make sure to hit because odds are that once you get on the phone and you get rolling in your mind, you'll speak faster than you think and you'll miss something really important.

Background Noise

Background Noise is a huge deal whether you're on a teleseminar live, listening to a recording or you're giving your audio over to a transcriptionist. There are a couple things that I highly suggest with background noise.

If you are at home and you know that you have animals or something that is going to be an incessant noise during your teleseminar, do everything that you can to either record in an area shut off from that animal or distraction or consider if you have to put the dog outside or a cover on the birdcage because those types of noises are louder on the audio than you would imagine.



Small Children

With small children, everybody's been on a teleseminar that someone's giving and their child has gotten up when it's late at night. Most of your clients are probably parents themselves and are going to be understanding if you have to pause your teleseminar to tell the child to go back upstairs or ask them to do something else while you're on the phone.

This is usually perfectly acceptable in the small business work at home world.



Acceptable Behavior

You also have to be aware of what you're doing while on your call. It's one thing to have your computer pulled up, but I highly suggest that you not type during your teleseminar. Not turning off your cell phone or fax machine can cause unnecessary and distracting background noise as well.

Those types of noises are very apparent to your audience and your phone will pick up the noise in such a strong way that your audience will feel like you are not giving 100% of your attention to them.

Lock the Door

Again, choose quiet places to record your interview or teleseminar. Recording an interview while going down the road with the windows down and a big dog in the backseat is not acceptable in any situation. It ruins your audio.

Usually you'll lose about 60% of your content by trying to interview someone in that kind of situation.

And yes, this is a real example.

It's always wise to record for 2-3 minutes and listen to the file to make sure you aren't going to hear something amplified on the audio.



Condense

Most people want to get in an extremely large amount of content into each and every call they do. If you schedule an hour long call, you might as well expect it to go an hour and 20 minutes or an hour and 30 minutes unless you are extremely practiced in giving your content. In order to provide a good quality hour of content for your audience, you want to condense your pieces especially resume style stories at the beginning of your calls.

When I document the stats for my clients on the back ends of their calls, the clients that give a 20-30 minute run down of their resume and their history are more likely to lose about 20% to 30% of their callers within the first 15 minutes of the call than those that keep it to less than 5 minutes of background.

Histories and Backgrounds

I do think background is important. There may be some on your call because they were invited by someone else. But you should also consider most of these people have been on your website and have signed up for this call. They're already on the call with you *because of you*.

Many of them have probably been on calls with you before and if you are giving the same 30 minute resume spiel in every call, they're likely to stop calling to listen to your calls just because they've heard this same 30 minute story over and over.

Change It Up

Another way that you can leverage your background to create an expert status with your caller is to change the story up. Instead of going in a chronological order like most people would in a resume, you can go in a flashback style where you look at the now and say a year ago I was doing this, this and this.

You can leave out big chunks that are not really pertinent to what you are speaking about at that time but consolidating each chunk and referring to either online references or books for more information is usually good for an audio because no matter how much time you've had, there's always going to be more content than you can fit into one call.

Important Tip #2

You can't fit 90 minutes of content into a 60 minute call. If you've scheduled an hour long call and it goes an hour and half or two hours, likelihood is you will have people drop off.

Yes, some of us have loyal client bases, raving fans that would listen to us for hours. But your future clients, the ones on the edge of purchasing your product, are not going to make it to the end of the call if you keep blabbering on about the same thing for 15 or 20 minutes for each topic.

It's very important for you to get your caller to the end of the call. Typically your summary points are your selling points. And if listeners don't hear your sales pitch they just listened to an hour of you talking for no reason. Now obviously not everyone that ever calls into your calls is going to buy, but if they don't hear the sales pitch, you know they won't buy.

Munching

Yes, you read that right. Munching.

You will notice during a lot of focus meetings or different kinds of board meetings the host may provide snacks. Not only is this a bad idea because it distracts guest's focus but it's also a bad idea because it ruins your recording.



If you are going to provide snacks you want to provide a quieter food like chicken fingers or sandwiches that don't have cucumbers or are heavy with lettuce. Pretzels and potato chips are very, very loud and the recorders pick them up a lot worse than you expect.

Cookie Monster!

You never know when a VIP from your company or a business partner is going to want to hear this focus group recording. If the audio is bad you are going to be embarrassed to give it to them.

Nobody wants to have that “Numnumnum” Cookie Monster sound in their recording. Not only is it unprofessional, it makes your focus group lose its' expert quality.

You will hear those experienced teleseminar hosts say, “Oh, let me get a drink of water.” and then you won't hear them for a second. Most of them are actually moving the phone away from their head or muting their microphones.

They don't want to have gulping or gurgling or any of that Cookie Monster noise in their audio because they know that it immediately gives people a bad impression.



Just Spit It Out

A lot of times we as transcriptionists, when we're doing verbatim transcription, may have to type out the exact same line three times in a row. Because often you do get hung up when you're talking nerves can make you speak faster than their mind can process what your trying to say.

Because most of the time now, teleseminars and seminars are more laid-back rather than an old-school corporate strict setting, you can usually say something like, "Man, that's a hard question." Let them know that this is one of the more difficult parts of your field, rather than making yourself look a buffoon while you're trying to stutter over everything that you're saying.

Important Tip #3

Here's where you can take a lesson from any beauty queen.

It's better to repeat the question than to stumble over your words. If you actually slow down, repeat the question, and give yourself a few seconds to think about what you're going to say, you're less likely to stumble or stutter or start one story and then realize that you're not even answering the question.

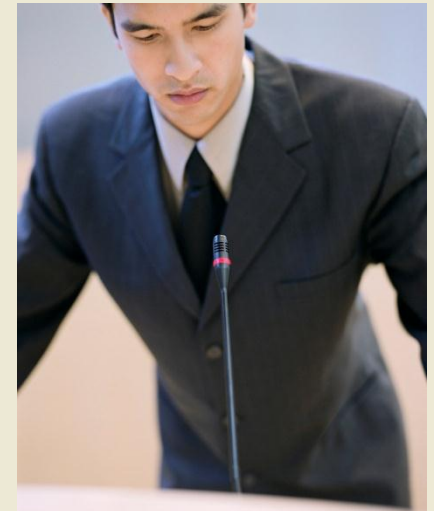
A lot of times if you're on an interview or a teleseminar, your listeners aren't even going to notice if you stop and take a breath. This may also be a good time for you to use the excuse of "Let me take a drink for a second", just to give yourself a second to think if it's a hard question.

Live Events

Digital Recorders and External Mics

One of the biggest mistakes that I have seen for people that are speaking at live events is incorrectly recording themselves in the first place. If they have a hand held mike, they hold it too far or too close to their mouth. There is an art to the way to hold a microphone.

If you're given the option for a lapel microphone, take it. No questions asked. Let them pin the microphone to you and test it. If you sound good in the room, you're going to sound good on your audio.



If you are giving a speech it is a great idea backup audio with your hand held recorder.



A bad idea is to put the tape recorder or the digital recorder in your shirt pocket. If you put it in your shirt pocket and put on a coat, it's going to muffle your voice number one, and you're going to pick up noise from your shirt either from the tape recorder rubbing against your chest or from the shirt.

Just as bad as putting the recorder into your shirt pocket, is putting your recorder onto the podium. What if you walk away from the podium, you're not going to hear anything you're saying.

Best Recording Options

From my personal experience, setting the tape recorder not directly next to but near the speakers in a room is typically the best place to do it. I would suggest at least five feet away from the speakers so that you don't get a squeak in the recorder from it being too loud.

There's always the obvious solution. If the team doing the audio seem nice enough just to ask them if you can plug into their system. Typically, if they have the correct cables or you have the correct cables with you, they will let you record a backup directly from their system so that you end up with the best audio you can. Most audio professionals will do that if one of you is prepared.

External Mics and Focus Groups

You can buy ball mics or mini mics that you can plug into digital tape recorders, cell phones and video cameras. Most of the handheld video cameras now you have will take an external microphone. The Flip is one camera that will not take an external microphone.

The Kodak ZI6 and ZI8 will take an external microphone and they even have Bluetooth microphones that you can use so that you get a better recording and those are especially important when you're doing focus groups with six or eight or ten people.

Most transcriptionists either hate transcribing focus groups or will just not do it because they're so difficult. It's very mentally challenging for the transcriptionist. It's very hard to figure out who is talking especially if it's a room full of men or a room full of women just because when trying to differentiate between eight people's voices at least two of them will sound very similar especially on the audio.

Quality Audio = Better Pricing

Getting a good quality recording from those focus groups will also keep your price down. Most transcriptionists will list a specific price for a focus group of five to ten people. If it's a bad quality audio the price will jump anywhere from \$25 and up than for a good quality audio.

Not having those people well miked will also just obliterate your content. You've gotten this focus group together for a reason. You might as well get the good audio so that you can figure out what they were talking about later.

All of this will result in better transcription pricing as well as a quality, polished and professional looking product.



The Small Business Transcriptionist

Questions or additions for this eBook? Need a transcriptionist?

Contact me at Erica@Cosminsky.com

<http://TheSmallBusinessTranscriptionist.com>

© Cosminsky Solutions 2011