



Smart Brevity Fundamentals

Reed Tucker, Axios HQ

This session is eligible for 1 Continuing Education Hour

For these hours to appear on your certificate, you must:

- Scan your badge at the door
- Attend 90% of the session
- Fill out the online evaluation



Agenda

The science:

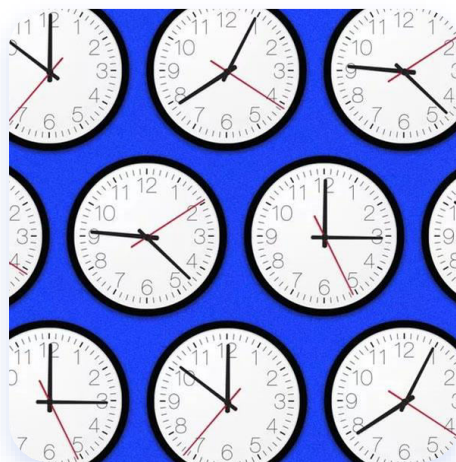
Why we use Smart Brevity.
5 mins

The method:

Actionable ways to apply Smart Brevity.
30 mins

Q&A:

15 mins

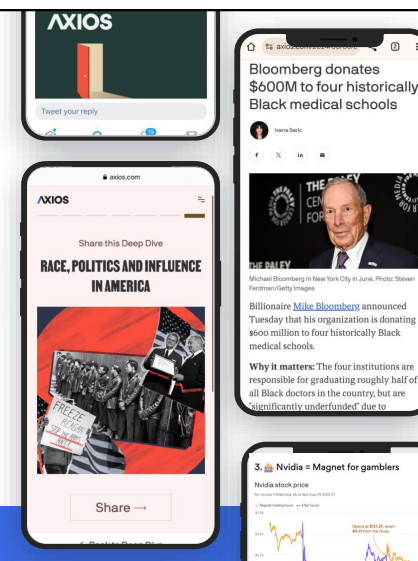


The big picture

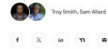
1/ Axios is a media & tech company based in Washington D.C.

2/ We communicate in Smart Brevity® — a style that keeps busy readers engaged.

3/ It works for every form of communication — whether you read, watch or listen.



Cleveland to streamline construction permitting



Bibb signs the executive order Thursday. Photo: Sam Alford/News

Cleveland's construction permit process is getting an overhaul.

Why it matters: The change is meant to fulfill Mayor Justin Bibb's pledge to create a more modern, responsive City Hall.

- The goal is to make building things in the city easier and faster for everyone — from the real estate developer erecting an office building or hotel downtown to the neighborhood resident adding a porch or garage to their home.

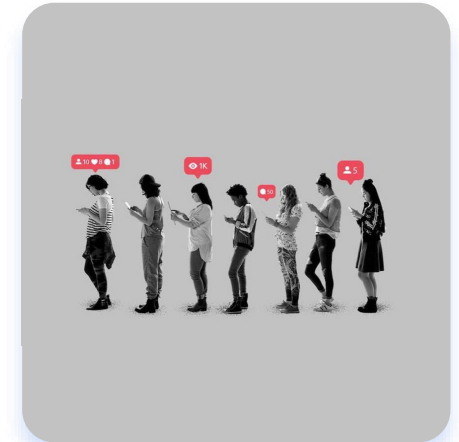
Driving the news: Bibb signed an executive order Thursday morning to communicate, he said, his commitment to implementing the overhaul and a sense of urgency.

What they're saying: He said that Cleveland should move at the speed of business and executed

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We live in a noisy, distracted world

- 1/ The average professional gets 126 emails a day.
- 2/ 5% of readers make it to the end of the average 800-word communication.

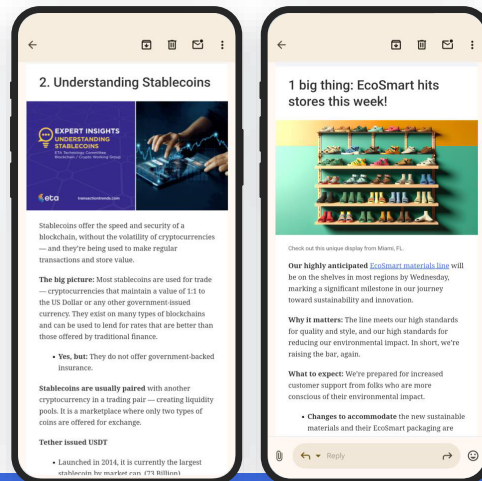


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How we break through:

Deliver worthy information in Smart Brevity to busy readers who trust us.

- Start with What's new and Why it matters
- Length is fear, brevity is confidence



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The Smart Brevity methodology



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Audience first!

1/ Picture an informed reader in the middle of your audience — a real person.

2/ Select the details most relevant and interesting to that person.

3/ Consider: Would you read it?

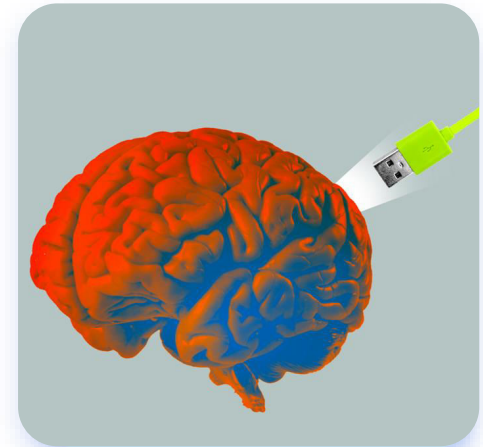


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Your turn...

Think of a communication you recently wrote.

- How did you think about the audience?
- What's one decision you made based on your readers?



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Decide what's worthy

1/ Shares new information and provides essential context.

2/ Explains why something matters with authority and expertise.

3/ Speaks to insiders and intrigues outsiders.



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Your turn...

Audience: all staff

Organizational Announcement: New Project Manager Joins ElectriCore Solutions

ElectriCore Solutions is pleased to announce the addition of Jennifer Rodriguez as our new Senior Project Manager, effective August 15th. Jennifer brings an exceptional track record of electrical systems management from her previous roles in commercial and industrial electrical contracting. At United Power Systems, she successfully managed a \$4.2 million hospital renovation project, implementing complex electrical infrastructure upgrades. During her tenure with Metropolitan Electric Contractors, she led a team that completed the electrical systems installation for a 250,000-square-foot mixed-use urban development. Most recently, at Regional Power Solutions, Jennifer oversaw critical infrastructure upgrades for three municipal government facilities, consistently delivering projects under budget and ahead of schedule.

Jennifer holds a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from Illinois Institute of Technology, where she graduated magna cum laude. She completed her Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Project Management from Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. Her professional certifications include Project Management Professional (PMP) certification from the Project Management Institute and a Certified Electrical Safety Compliance Professional (CESCP) credential, demonstrating her commitment to technical excellence and safety standards.

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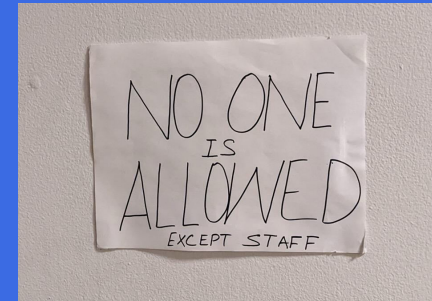
Short, not shallow

It is better to exclude something than to include something unworthy.

- I won't waste your time.
- I won't insult your intelligence.



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Before

- Safety Training Workshops Did you know we're now offering safety training workshops? Workshops like Arc Flash Protection, Advanced Grounding Techniques, Confined Space Rescue, and Electrical Safety Compliance are included with company professional development benefits. Can't attend in-person? We've launched a series of live virtual technical training modules through our August Professional Skills Platform.

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After

- Compliance, confined space rescue and other [safety training workshops](#) are now available and included with your company professional development. Join in person or online with a series of virtual modules.

Write like a human

- Be conversational: Short, simple words have more energy and impact.
- Be authentic and relatable.



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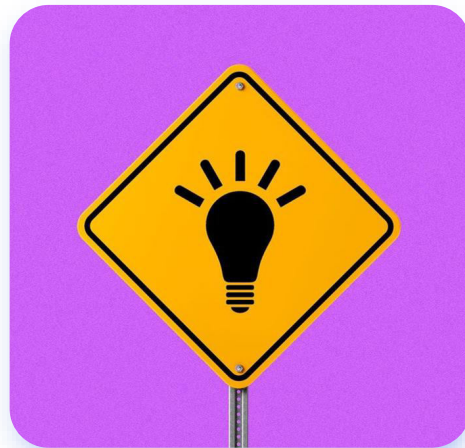
Corporate speak kills your writing's punch.

In the high-stakes corporate landscape of Nakatomi Corporation, a resourceful executive finds himself inadvertently thrust into a strategic hostage situation during the company's annual holiday gathering. Tasked with navigating complex interpersonal dynamics and overcoming formidable obstacles, the hero employs innovative problem-solving tactics to disrupt the disruptive actions of the antagonistic villain and his hostile takeover agenda. With a blend of tactical acumen and resilience, the hero implements a dynamic strategy to thwart the villain's ambitions, showcasing the power of agility, adaptability, and strategic foresight in the face of adversity.

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Pro tip: Read your writing out loud

- You can even record yourself with your phone then play it back.



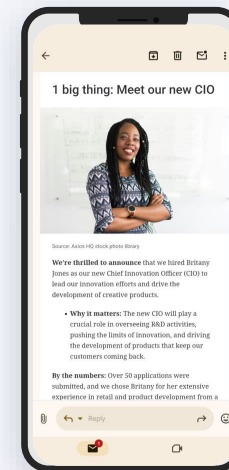
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Three key parts of a communication

To be successful, optimize for:

- Scannability
- Comprehension
- Memory

These are your most critical elements.



Headline

What's new

Why it matters

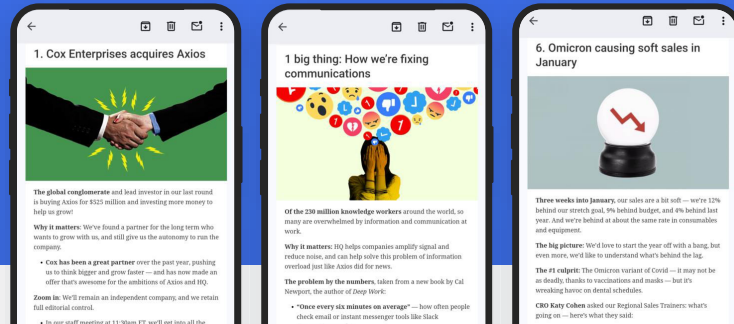
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Grab readers by the shoulders

Headlines and subject lines should be:

Brief: 10 words or 60 characters

Precise: Teach them something in this small space



Your turn...

What's wrong with this headline?

Subj: Policy Update

Dear team,

At ElectriCore Solutions, we have always prided ourselves on being at the forefront of electrical contracting technology and safety innovation. Our commitment to our team's well-being and operational excellence drives every decision we make. As we continue to grow and evolve in an increasingly complex industry, we recognize the critical importance of adapting our processes to protect our most valuable asset—our dedicated field technicians.

ElectriCore Solutions is implementing a critical update to our field communication safety protocols to enhance workplace safety and improve real-time incident response. Effective immediately, all field technicians will be required to utilize our new digital safety check-in system during electrical installation and maintenance projects.

The new SafeConnect mobile application will replace our previous manual check-in procedures. Each technician will be required to log their location, current work status, and safety conditions at the beginning of each job, during critical work phases, and upon project completion. The application provides an automated digital tracking system that

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Before

Subj: Policy update

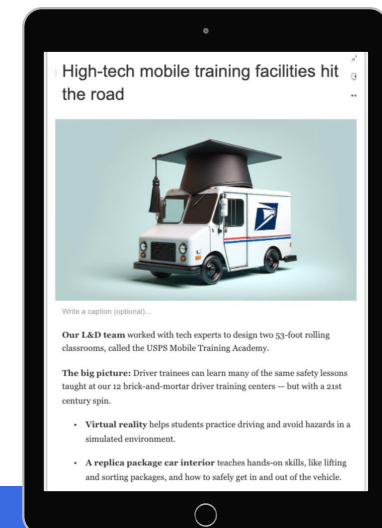
After

Subj: An update to our field comms safety protocols

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Tell them "What's new"

- One sentence.
- Sharp and straightforward.
- If you remember one thing, make it this.



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Your turn...

What is this communication about? What is the big takeaway?

Subj: An update to our field comms safety protocols

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Make your What's new one crisp sentence.

Subj: An update to our field comms safety protocols

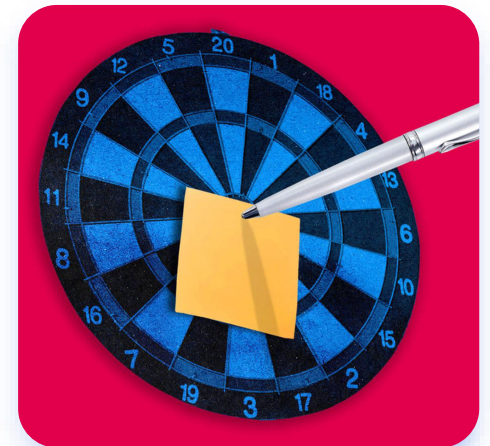
Dear team,

Effective immediately, we're rolling out the SafeConnect mobile app — a new digital check-in procedure that will replace the old manual one.

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Answer "Why it matters"

/ Provide context so your smart, curious reader understands the impact this news will have on them.



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The Why it matters should also be one sentence.

Subj: An update to our field comms safety protocols

Dear team,

Effective immediately, we're rolling out the SafeConnect mobile app — a new digital check-in procedure that will replace the old manual one.

Why it matters: The new protocol will not only improve safety — our top priority always — but also speed up incident response times.

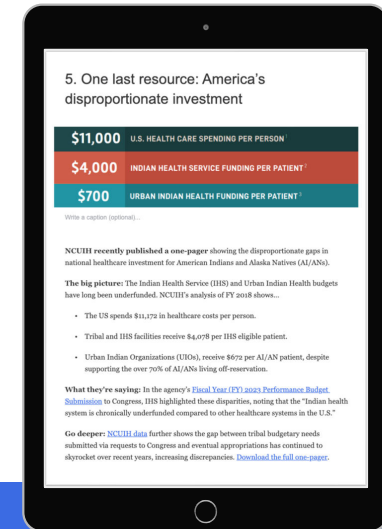
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Use Axioms like street signs

/ They provide quick visual orientation and help the reader navigate.

/ You can borrow ours, or create your own.

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Before

The community cleanup event was a resounding success, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of our colleagues at The FlipTide Foundation and San Diego community members. The event helped clean up our local environment and brought the FlipTide family together, strengthening our commitment to sustainability and community engagement. Over 100 participants joined the cleanup, including 23 of our own teammates, and the Foundation plans to organize more community initiatives like this. Keep an eye out for upcoming events and opportunities to make a positive impact.

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- **Why it matters:** The event helped clean up our local environment and brought the FlipTide family together, strengthening our commitment to sustainability and community engagement.

■ **By the numbers:** Over 100 participants joined the cleanup, including 23 of our own teammates.

■ **What's next:** The Foundation plans to organize more community initiatives like this. Keep an eye out for upcoming events and opportunities to make a positive impact.

Styling in Smart Brevity

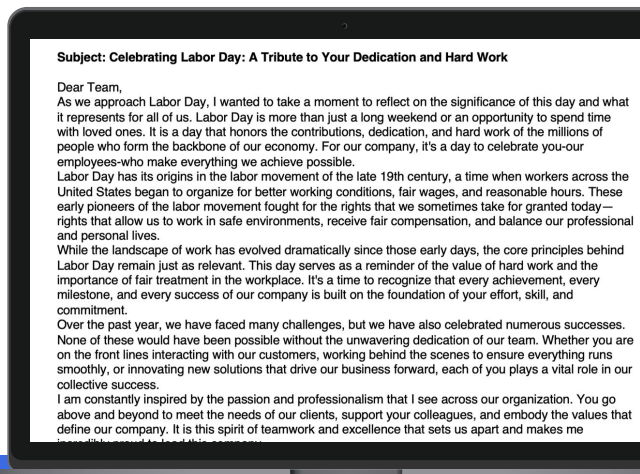
- Readers will judge the look of content in as little as 17 milliseconds.
- Our goal: Make our copy friendly and approachable.



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Your turn...

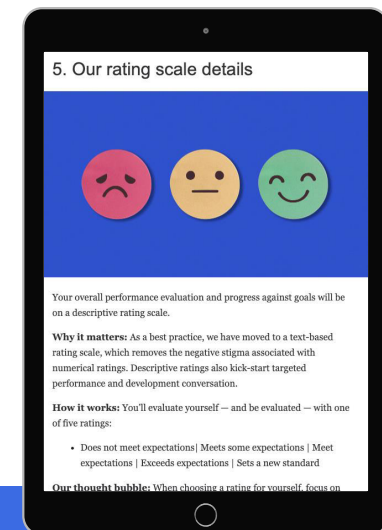
How does the look of this email make you feel?



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Our styling tips

1. Shorter paragraphs for readability.
2. Bullets for scannability.
3. Bolding for impact.
4. Link out to go deeper.



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Before

- It's more important than ever to do what we can to stay healthy. To help keep you safe, Live Well at ElectriCore will be offering free flu shots on-site September 19 and 20. Additional details will follow on how to register for an appointment.

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After

- Get a free flu shot courtesy of Live Well at ElectriCore — on-site Sept. 19 and 20. Sign-up link to come!

Questions?

- 1/ **Picture** your smart reader
- 2/ **Raise the bar** on what's worthy
- 3/ **"What's new"** is first
- 4/ **"Why it matters"** is second
- 5/ **Style the rest** for impact



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Please Complete the Online Evaluation



NECA NOW
2025

The logo for AXIOS HQ is centered within a rectangular frame. The word "AXIOS" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font, and "HQ" is in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The frame is decorated with light blue wavy lines in the corners: the top-left and bottom-left corners have lines that curve inward, while the top-right and bottom-right corners have lines that curve outward.

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