



The Exact Expertise to
Ignite and Sustain Performance™

LSA Global | White Paper



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Grammar Goofs?

A Checklist for Monitoring Your Calls and Emails for the Most Common Grammar Mistakes

As you listen and monitor phone calls or review written email correspondence, you're probably looking for the standard components such as proper opening, accurate information, proper tone/style, etc. However, one element that is often missed, both in phone call monitoring as well as email reviews, is the use of proper language and grammar. It's perhaps more noticeable and observable in a written document, but it certainly matters in voice conversations too.

Here are some of the most common grammar problems and mistakes. Most of these grammar rules you and your staff learned back in high school, but it never hurts to have a quick review of these rules and common mistakes as a refresher every six months or so.

Mistake #1: Preposition Placement

One of the biggest written and spoken grammar mistakes is putting a preposition at the end of a sentence. Here are some common examples:

- Where is your office located at?
- What address should we ship to?
- I can look up the site it shipped from.

Just make sure those prepositions are removed from the end of the sentences or questions. You might want to rephrase the above to read:

- Where is your office?
- What is your shipping address?
- I can look up the site that shipped it.

Mistake #2: Noun and Pronoun Disagreement

It's important that the pronouns you use in your sentences agree with their corresponding noun in gender and plurality. Here is a common mistake where a plural pronoun (their) refers back to a singular noun (customer):

- Every customer will receive their package in the mail.

This mistake could be adjusted in several ways, all of which are correct.

- Every customer will receive his or her package in the mail.
- All customers will receive their packages in the mail.
- As a customer, you will receive your package in the mail.

Mistake #3: Double Negatives

Another common mistake is to have a double negative in a sentence. This is not a case where two wrongs make a right! Here are a couple of examples of double negatives:

- They won't do nothing about that.
- We can't hardly believe our good luck.





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These sentences don't just sound awkward, but also actually lose their meaning with the double negative. Better alternatives would be:

They won't do anything about that.
We can hardly believe our good luck.

While the first three items here can be observed in both verbal and written communications, there are some common problems that will be found in written communications only. The primary written communications problem is the misuse of certain elements of punctuation, and the most common problem is probably the use of the apostrophe.

When using an apostrophe, keep in mind these rules:

- Use to replace missing letters in a contraction. For example, an apostrophe would be used to replace the "a" when "they are" gets shortened to "they're".
- Use to show possession, putting the apostrophe before the "s" in a single noun and after the "s" in a plural noun, as seen in: Please supply your spouse's phone number so we can include it in our employees' in-house directory.

The most common mistake made with the apostrophe is the use of it with the word "it". An apostrophe is used in the contraction for "it is" but not in the possessive form of "it" as seen in: It's amazing to experience its ease of use.

Another potential area for problems has to do with the misuse of words such as "their" versus "there" versus "they're" or "affect" versus "effect". We'll explore these words and the proper use of them in the White Paper entitled Foolproof Emails.

About LSA Global

Since 1995, LSA has helped organizations create and maintain competitive advantages through people. Over 85% of our business comes from repeat clients and our customer satisfaction rating is 97.5%. Our clients tell us that we are different. Our clients tell us that we save them both time and money. Our clients tell us that they appreciate access to experts across many areas

Our Leadership and Management clients report that we decrease their costs by up to 50%, while helping increase speed-to-productivity by 60% and decrease unwanted attrition by up to 40%.

Our Sales clients confirm that they have grown sales by 40%, increased units sold by 42%, increased average pricing by 12%, and closed over 50% of their pipeline.

Our Project Management clients inform us that, by regularly completing projects that meet or exceed expectations, they have become an anomaly in the world where most projects disappoint or fail.

Our clients succeed in the marketplace through increased revenue, decreased costs, and higher productivity. They maintain that our rigorous assessment, implementation, and measurement capabilities bring them tangible results. As an organization, we are fiercely devoted to supporting their success.

