



## **Step Away From that Buffet!**

Corporate communication and academic communication are two different animals. Academic communication—whether written or spoken—often follows the “more is more” philosophy. However, communicating in a business setting requires a “less is best” approach. There simply is not time to go through an in-depth review of the details for every task, issue, and decision.

A few years ago a marketing VP for a large pharmaceutical company asked me, “Do you do anything about email?”

He said, “It’s gotten so bad that now when I open an email, I see if it’s longer than a paragraph. Then I delete it.”

I said, “You mean you stop reading after the first paragraph?”

He replied, “No. If it’s longer than a paragraph, then I don’t read any of it.” He shook his head and said, “I get over 400 emails a day.”

While most managers seem to get the “less is best” idea, front line staff and technicians need training to make the transition from the academic to corporate approach. The more years of education—Master’s and Ph.D. degrees—the more necessary training becomes.

Using the academic style in business is like eating with the wrong utensil. It looks awkward and it just doesn’t work as well.

So remember, buffets are good for meals but bad for business communication. Serve up reasonable portions and wait for your audience to ask for more. Hopefully, they’ll choose the right fork!