Forms and personalised standard letters to customers have a crucial role in most organisations.

Not only do they feed your business processes, they also present an opportunity to powerfully influence your customers' attitudes towards you.

forms improvement at Text Matters

what do forms cost?

Forms can be expensive, and most of the expense comes after you have created and issued them. Audit studies suggest that over 90 percent of the cost of a form is incurred during 'back-office' processing, and that a large proportion of this cost can be avoided through good planning, careful writing, and good design.

Creating a good form takes time and costs money. But a bad form or letter will cost your organisation much more. Ill-considered and badly executed, they will contribute delay, error and cost to your operations.

good forms are

:: planned, considered
:: economic to use
:: easily understood
:: unambiguous
:: easy to administer
:: sources of useful, accurate data to improve your administration.

bad forms are

:: unplanned, organic
:: costly to use
:: jargon-ridden
:: ambiguous
:: costly and time-consuming to administer
:: sources of inaccurate data which can confuse and delay your administration.

how we work

Since 1990 Text Matters has been designing forms and form systems that work – for form-fillers, form-issuers and form-processors. In that time we have developed a methodology which makes forms part of the solution rather than part of the problem.

We get people involved. We believe involvement is the key to good forms work and understanding what is needed. The 'stakeholders' include form owners, the people who understand the legislation, data entry and call centre staff, and of course your target audience.

We focus on business process. Whether we are working on an individual form or all the forms for an organisation, we attempt to understand the processes which link end-users, form-processors, data entry, back-end systems and workflow. This is the context within which forms can be standardised, simplified (or often eliminated) and clarified.

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Having analysed the requirements, we use best-of-breed skills to structure, write and design individual forms that are clear and effective for all their users throughout their lifecycle.

Forms are two-way documents and need feedback from your customers and staff. Where practical, we test draft forms on a sample audience to gauge whether we have got it right. And we can recommend in-process monitoring methods which will help you manage form performance.

Your need for good forms won't go away and we will deliver the systems, standards and training that can enable you to create and manage future forms effectively within your own resources.

what about electronic forms?

There is a lot to consider when creating an online form. Your customers are bound to have questions particular to using an electronic form:

:: How long will it take to complete?
:: How secure are my details?
:: What about Data Protection?
:: Do I get a copy?

Using the electronic medium for your data-gathering will also raise questions for you:

:: How will we handle the collected data?
:: Will it be easy to use?
:: Will our technology/systems be able to handle it?

We can advise you on these issues and more. We are familiar with the different methods of creating electronic forms, using XML, HTML, Adobe Acrobat pdfs and Microsoft Word.

We are experienced in working with XML technologies and with data standards work complying with UK government eGIF mandatory standards for schema development, data cataloguing, security, accessibility and authentication.

our team

Text Matters has considerable expertise in writing and designing letters and forms. Our team comprises experienced forms designers and clear language specialists, backed by technical expertise in interface design and development. Working together we produce forms and letters that not only look good, but are also designed and written with the user in mind, where every action, calculation or decision is explicit.

taking the next step

Talk to us about what you need. Show us your existing forms and letters, tell us what the problems are and what you want to get from a redesign. We will be able to offer you a solution.

Please email us at post@textmatters.com or call us on 0118 986 8313 to arrange a meeting.