

Step 2: Start with a simple project

When you begin working on plain language revisions, you will want to take on every single convoluted, bureaucratic, outrageously unfair document you can uncover. A veteran plain language writer knows better. You can't change the world overnight!

- First, smaller projects take less time. If your small, six-month project is a success, your organization will know about the benefits of plain language sooner than if you'd launched a three-year project to rewrite 1,000 form letters.
- Second, a small project will give you a feel for the challenges ahead and give you the experience you'll need for a larger project.

So, instead of mapping a plan to revise every single document and web page in your organization, **create a simple, targeted project aimed at solving a specific problem.**

- It could be a single form letter your hotline manager says increases calls by 90 percent each time it is mailed.
- It could be a home page with unclear link labels that consistently guide customers to the wrong part of your site.

Keep it simple and be clear about what the project's business goal is. If the improvement works, it will be obvious, the idea will catch on and people will want you to continue your work. Don't try to change the world overnight.

Project Tracking Sheets

Develop a consistent system for recording your progress.

Here are some sample tracking systems:

- [Plain Talk project tracking sheet \(DSHS\)](#)
- [Plain Talk rewrite project sheet \(L&I\)](#)

Other Plain Talk Resources

Read about other Plain Talk start-ups:

- [From gobbledygook to plain English: How a large state agency took on the bureaucratic form letter](#)