

How to make your web copy better.

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How to make your web copy better.

By David Miranda

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One of the biggest mistakes you can make when creating a web site is to take large chunks of copy from your existing marketing materials (ads, brochures, sales letters etc.) and cut and paste them onto your web pages.

What you have to understand is that the internet is different from the world of print and it's a medium that web visitors are still getting used to. For most people, reading from a computer screen is not an enjoyable experience, and some find it downright uncomfortable.

No wonder users are impatient and skim on a whim. That's why the vast majority of web users (over 79%) scan the text looking for information that interests them. Very few read each and every word.

Another revealing fact is that users read 25% slower on a computer screen compared to reading from a magazine, newspaper or a book. So if people read more slowly and are scanning too, you have to create web content that's easy and inviting to read.

MAKE EVERYTHING SHORTER

One of the quickest and easiest ways to improve web copy is to shorten long paragraphs. For example, if you have a paragraph that's 12 lines long, break it up into two or three short ones. And if you need to write about many different items, use a bulleted list ...

- interesting fact number one
- fascinating fact number two
- remarkable fact number three

Also, use short words and short sentences. They're easier to read than long ones. And, if you want to emphasize a point within a sentence, put it in bold type or highlight it with color. Use these techniques sparingly. If you overdo them, your page will look visually messy and will discourage people from reading it.

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Although it's best to keep pages and paragraphs short, there are times when you'll want to expand upon a topic. That's when links come in handy. Just put a "Continue" or a "Read more" button at the end of a paragraph, then you can take your reader to a new page devoted solely to your topic. Again, don't overdo higher links. Too many of them on a page are distracting and will weaken the impact of your main message.

WRITE 'USEFUL' HEADLINES

Journalists and copywriters frequently use cute, clever headlines to capture the attention of readers. But research shows these types of headlines are not effective on the web. The cuteness of the headline goes "over the head" of the reader because he or she is far too busy scanning. So avoid puns, clichés and metaphors. Be simple and direct and write in simple, plain English. And make sure your headlines offer the reader a benefit or useful information.

Another consideration is keywords. After you've researched and found the best keywords for your business, place them in your headlines and sub-headings. What's more, if people have to come to your place of business in order to do business as is the case with doctors, lawyers or dentists, make sure your location is integrated with your keywords. For example, a lawyer from Texas whose keywords are "divorce law" and "divorce lawyer" might use a headline like this:

Dallas divorce lawyer reveals the facts about Texas divorce law.

Also, weave your keywords throughout your body text, especially your opening paragraphs. Keep in mind: the best keywords are two or three words phrases - not single words. (Useful keyword research tools are Wordtracker-www.wordtacker.com and Overture - www.inventory.overture.com/d/searchinventory/suggestion/)

DON'T SHOUT AT YOUR READER

We've become accustomed to TV and radio announcers ranting and raving on the benefits of their products or services.

But when writing for the web, hyperbole comes across as hype. Therefore, don't shout. Talk to your reader in a reasonable voice as if you were talking to a friend. Avoid words like "stupendous"... "awesome"... "breathtaking". People are skeptical of exaggerated claims; you're much better off being understated rather than overstated.

The best way to make your web content persuasive is to use true facts - as many as possible. Pile one interesting fact on top of another, till you end up with a strong, compelling sales story. Also include testimonials; praise from unbiased third parties makes your content more convincing.

CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT PEOPLE FEEL GOOD ABOUT

Customers won't buy from people they don't trust. So it's imperative to create an online environment that's trustworthy and friendly.

- Make sure your navigation links steer people in the right direction.
- Stress the benefits of your product or service clearly and succinctly.
- Avoid overly complex Return Policies or self-important Mission Statements.

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- Include a Privacy Policy if you gather information about your customers.
- Include a Contact Us page which, in addition to your e-mail address, provides the company's mailing address, phone number, and the names of key members of your management team.

Above all, understand the mind set of your reader - be empathetic. And convey through your copy that you care and can provide solutions to your reader's problems.

David Miranda is an award-winning copywriter with over 25 years experience. David heads Miranda Writes, a copywriting service that helps small and medium-sized companies increase sales and profits by creating persuasive marketing materials and web site content. Contact him at david@mirandawrites.com.

How To Write A Killer Sales Letter

By Patric Chan

I sit down and look at my notebook. Then, I put myself into the `zone'.

That's how I start to write web copy that sells.

Whether you agree with me or not, your web copy will determine whether your product's going to sell online or not.

Simple reason. In an offline sales pitch or presentation, you get to interact with your prospect. You get to touch him. He gets to see you personally.

But not online. No, no, no. It all depends on the words on your site. See how powerful words are?

I'm not saying I'm a guru at web copy. There are many other copywriters who are far better than me. Many. But I've written my own web copy and it's selling. And at the same time, I've been hired to write for others.

Keep on reading on how I write killer web copy and you can pick up any of the tips.

The first part to write a copy, you MUST be in the `zone'.

What the heck is the `zone'? The `zone' is like... the mood. You see, writing a great copy is like an artist painting a beautiful picture. When you are in the `zone', your hand can't stop typing and your mind keeps on coming up with amazing ideas to write.

Like, I'm in the `zone' when I write this article.

How to be in the `zone'? I'm not sure how you can achieve that, but for me, I put in a lot of passion to write a killer copy and I look into the future to see how this copy will sell like crazy.

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That's how I get into the 'zone'.

Once you are in the zone, keep on writing. Don't stop. Even though, you know you are writing wrong grammar or putting in weird ideas. Just keep on writing.

Then, after it's finished, read it all over again. This time, you'll pick up the mistakes and you'll add in more ideas. Continue doing this until you are satisfied with your work. Finally, edit your work.

When you start your copy, your headline is one of the most important parts of the copy.

Some copy writers write tons of headlines before they start. For me, I'll write about 5 headlines and read it over several times. Then, I'll pick the best and fine tune it at least 5–10 times before I decide to

use it.

One more part of writing copy; don't feel bad 'borrowing' some ideas from successful copy you've seen.

Get a swipe file of the best copy you can find.

And the last thing you need to keep in mind when writing a killer copy is this:

"What's the end result the reader will get if they buy from you?"

Your copy **MUST** sell hope and benefits to the reader if you want them to buy anything after reading your copy.

Now go write your killer copy.

All the best.

Warmest regards,

Patric 'High-Speed Marketing' Chan
Chief Marketing Strategist

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Patric works with world-class internet marketing gurus to build successful online businesses. He is also the author of 'How To Make More Money Easily'. Discover more insider secrets and the exact proven strategies to make money online:

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