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Keeping It Real: The Only Copywriting Trick That Works

By Robert Warren

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Much of today's accepted copywriting wisdom comes from old books written for a different, quieter world.

For most of the twentieth century, widely promoting a successful message was expensive and difficult, requiring control of significant resources and substantial time commitments. Though the general public was more trusting and open to suggestion, more effort was required to reach them. Until the mid-nineties, marketing was generally a money game: whoever could afford the loudest message often sold the most product.

The information age – and the Internet in particular – changed all that.

Today, your competitors aren't the other businesses providing similar services: they are the millions of voices screaming at the top of their lungs, desperate for attention. They are the vast seas of noise – the four billion websites that are of no interest to your prospects, the commercials that don't relate to them, the telemarketing calls that still interrupt their dinner despite new laws. Your competitors are everyone and everything that pushes the general public into apathy, desensitized by information overload.

Creative and pushy techniques don't work when a million other people are doing the same thing. The battle today is not to make people listen, but to convince them that you are worth listening to. While authenticity has always been a good strategy, now it is the entire game.

To write truly effective marketing copy, you must go beyond the buzzwords, slogans and pitches, to get to the secrets that make your business unique and credible:

Challenge your own assumptions about your clients and their needs. It is easy to fall into the trap of limiting your market with faulty assumptions. Take a hard look at your current marketing efforts – who do you think your clients are, and why do you think that? Gather as much information about your

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clients as possible and challenge any beliefs you hold that are not based on solid evidence. Never assume that common wisdom is actually true – it often isn't.

Question the quality and value of your own services. People do not buy things; they buy values. Take a fresh look at the value of what you offer, and what makes that value attractive to prospects and clients. Question it: explore new areas where your services would be useful, and new ways that you can improve their relevance. Dig deep to learn what you are really selling and what it truly means.

Embrace your flaws as well as your strengths. None of us are perfect, but most attempt to disguise or deny their flaws by overcompensating in marketing. Flaws are relative things, and weakness in one area is often the result of strength in another. Don't disguise your flaws – simply present them positively. Brainstorm ways to turn your weaknesses to your advantage.

Ask yourself – is your marketing driving you to higher standards, or disguising lower ones? Effective

marketing is never about the status quo; it is either a growth vehicle or a means of damage control. Which are you doing? Are you promoting yourself based on valid strengths, or are you trying to cover up apparent weaknesses? If your marketing does not inspire you to serve your clients better, it won't inspire prospects to become new ones.

In a world of noise and manipulations, your prospects crave simplicity and integrity. Honestly approaching these issues will result in a wealth of unique material for your advertising efforts, as well as new insights into your own business.

Retire the tricks and gimmicks – they don't work anymore and probably never will again. If you want to attract and keep clients, use the only copywriting trick worth learning: reality.

Robert Warren (

) is a professional marketing copywriter and editorial

consultant, specializing in promoting experts and independent professionals with the power of the written word. His offices are based in Orlando, Florida.

Profit Boosters Copywriting Checklist

By Mike Pavlish

You can use this copywriting checklist when you are copywriting – or to evaluate copywriting. It is based on what works best from over 1,200 copywriting projects we have done since 1978. It will lead to significantly more response from your copywriting.

Before writing:

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1. Study the company and the product/service being sold thoroughly so you have all the information you will need.
2. Research the prospects and the market to determine what benefits the prospect wants most, secondary benefits wanted, objections, and what would get him to buy now. Key: Don't guess; research.
3. Develop the main emotions you can touch with your copywriting for this project, and how you will do it. The strongest emotions are love, fear, greed, acceptance, survival, anger, and health.
4. Think like your prospect; and not like the marketer.
5. Develop the best offer(s) you can make to the prospect. Your offer includes pricing, terms, bonuses and guarantee.

At this point, you know the company and product, what the target prospect wants most, his objections, the main emotions you can touch, and you have developed a terrific offer.

Headline and start of copy:

6. Write at least 20 different headlines before choosing the best one.

Headline winners include a big, bold promise of the benefits the prospect wants most, specific figures, a guarantee, credibility enhancers, a special offer.

Legendary marketers John Caples and Claude Hopkins proved that one headline can pull 10 times the response as another headline ... with no other changes in the copywriting.

7. Start of copy should re-enforce the main benefit(s) of the headline, elaborate, and incorporate the secondary benefits the prospect wants most.

Body of copy:

8. Develop the prospect problem and pain points. Reinforce how these problems will remain or even get worse unless he takes action, and how your product/service is the best solution.
9. Copywriting should be first person, one-to-one, conversational.
10. List the prospects likely objections to buying, and overcome those objections.
11. Sincerely flatter the prospect if you can.
12. Get the prospect to mentally "picture and enjoy" the end-result benefits of buying.
13. Use testimonials, specifics, tests, clients, studies, success stories and memberships to add

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credibility and believability.

14. Be sure it is easy to read and "scan". Use sub headlines with prospect benefits, short sentences, short paragraphs.

15. If any copy is dull or boring, cut it or revise it.

16. If the flow gets slowed or stopped at any point in the copy, fix it.

17. Copywriting must be passionate, enthusiastic.

18. Create urgency to get a response now.

19. Tell the prospect what he will lose if he does not respond now.

20. Tell the prospect exactly what to do.

21. Close, Close, Close. Get action now.

Mike Pavlish is the president of Profit Boosters Copywriting. They have completed more than 1,200 copywriting projects for clients since 1978. Fees start at \$3,000.00 and up. He can be reached at

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