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**Organizing Your Data to Write Better Copy**

By Neroli Lacey

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Last quarter I talked about interviewing / gathering data. So now you've got several thousand words of notes, hopefully digitally recorded. What comes next?

**GETTING ORGANIZED**

I suggested organizing your interview questions into 4 groups. I'm going to label them for you A, B, C, D. ·what is the business problem? = A ·what is the high level solution? = B ·can you tell me more about the solution? = C ·why should I trust you (as my vendor?) = D

Any decent piece of writing has a beginning, a middle and an end. So before you start editing / writing you want a map, to show you where you are going. Take a blank sheet of paper, write four major headings and label them A, B, C, D, as above.

Now read your notes. When you find data relevant to "A" (the business problem), underline that copy and mark a big "A" in the margin (in red?) . Keep working through until you have marked up relevant copy for all four sections of your piece.

You will be leaving out anything that does not seem suitable as you go.

**THE CUT AND PASTE JOB**

Next comes a cut and paste job. Group together all the "A"s, then the "B"s, "C"s and "D"s.

Next, take a look at all the ideas you have in the A group. It helps if you take a new sheet of paper and write a list of the ideas or facts in the A group. Now prioritize. Be ruthless. And trust your first instinct. If an idea seems to leap out and have life, put it first. The less important ones come later. Weed out any repetition or weak data. Now you work on flow. Do you have a logical flow of ideas that your reader can

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follow? Are you telling him/ her a story that you yourself could believe in?

You will go through the same exercise with the remaining blocks of notes, ie "B", "C" and "D".

### EDITING IS PRIORITIZING

Editing is prioritizing. Often you will want to limit a list of ideas to 3. Three has a flow to it. And is about as much as any reader or listener can grasp at one sitting.

Finally you polish. Now you are reading for flow or musicality. You are cutting out superfluous ideas and words.

This is the long way to write.

### THE SHORT WAY TO WRITE

The short way is to sift and prioritize all your notes in your mind ie you turn on your thinking tool. The key idea will pop into view, and hey presto, you begin writing about that one. You have a feeling for what comes next and what after that. You understand how to prioritize your ideas. Soon with a bit of jiggling ideas around the page, your story has a beginning, a middle and an end.

You can teach yourself the short way by writing the long way, again and again. Or by turning copy round in the middle of the night for an 07.00am deadline as I often had to do as a newspaper feature writer.

"When we encounter a natural style, we are astonished and delighted: for we expected to see an author, and we find a man." Blaise Pascal. Quoted with thanks to John R. Trimble, *Writing with Style* published by Prentice Hall.

Do you have a robust marketing plan to execute against? How clear and persuasive is your website, brochure copy or direct mail? Call Neroli Lacey NOW to win more business TODAY.

CALL ++ 612. 215. 3826 NOW

or email:

I'm Neroli Lacey of Beyond Communications Inc. in Minneapolis, MN. I've been helping executives transform their businesses and their lives with outstanding marketing materials since 1995. VISA, 3M and Perot Systems are some of my bigger clients. I have worked with clients in Boston, San Francisco, Dallas, Austin, Minneapolis, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Dublin and Delhi. I used to be one of the top journalists in Britain writing for *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *The Evening Standard*, *New Statesman*, *Vogue* and *Tatler*.

Before newspapers I was an investment banker. I grew up in London, England, studying Latin with Greek at Bristol University.

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## **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.

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

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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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