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**Progressive Headlines Guide Customers To Buy**

**By Karon Thackston**

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by Karon Thackston © 2004

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Headlines are, without a doubt, one of the most important elements in copywriting. As has been said countless times before, if you don't get your readers' attention with the headline, the chance of them reading your copy is virtually none. But headlines (and sub-headlines) play a vital part in the copywriting process for other reasons, too.

Whether we, as copywriters, like it or not, the fact is most people will not read all the copy word for word. Headlines can help fill in the blanks in several ways so "skimmers" still get the gist of the information included in the copy.

**Headlines Outline the Benefits**

Using headlines and sub-heads that state benefits about your product/service can be a powerful strategy. Using wireless home networking for example, you might create headlines and sub-heads that read:

- Work From Anywhere In Your Home
- No More Jumbled Cables Strung Everywhere
- Have Multiple Computers Online At The Same Time
- Make All The Computer Users In Your Home Happy

Even if the customer didn't read the copy included in between these heads and sub-heads, they would still be made aware of all the benefits of having a wireless home network.

**Headlines Give An Overview**

## Progressive Headlines Guide Customers To Buy

Depending on the type of copy you're writing, headlines can help to urge your customers to read further. In fact, in long-form copy, headlines should create their own sub-set of copy. If you read just the headlines, they should make sense all by themselves. For example, copy about a new book on how to start your own business might use the following headlines.

### New Book Takes You Step-by-Step Through Starting Your Own Business

An introduction would go here as well as copy designed to gain the attention of the reader.

### Starting A Business Is Easier Than Ever

Continue with the copy here.

### The Little Known Secrets In This Book Will Show You How

More copy here.

See? As you read through the headlines and sub-headlines they make sense even without any copy. This serves to give an overview of the information to those customers who may not read every word of the copy you've written. If they read just the headlines and sub-heads, they'll still understand what you're offering.

### Headlines Can Raise Curiosity

Make a statement that's so unusual it doesn't make sense. Create "cliff-hangers" with your headlines and only give so much information before stopping. When you use these and other interest builders, you can encourage customers to read further into your copy just to satisfy their curiosity. Using natural gardening products as our example, the headlines and sub-heads often look like this:

- My Roses Are Bursting With Blossoms Since I Stopped Watering Them
- My Prize-Winning Tulips Would Wither Up and Die If It Weren't for...
- Which Annual Blooms Twice As Big When You Give It A Beer/Shampoo Cocktail?

These statements make you think. They start the reader wondering so that he/she continues to read on to get the rest of the story.

When creating headlines in your copy, think about how they all work together. Instead of just plopping bolded words in between paragraphs, create a plan revolving around progressive headlines that can lead your readers to buy.

Tired of endlessly searching the `Net in hopes of finding the latest copywriting techniques? Need an up-to-date directory filled with the best ways to learn copywriting? Visit <http://www.learn-copywriting.com> today for the widest collection of the most popular copywriting resources available.

## **Your Next Job: How Progressive Is A "Progressive Company"? (Part 4 Of A 5-Part Series)**

**By Judi Perkins**

Have you said this one? "I'm looking for a progressive company."

Progressive is a real buzzword. It conjures up delightful feelings of working for a company current with the latest trends, using cutting-edge techniques and thinking, employing the latest technology, providing means of convenience for its employees, demonstrating an understanding of the employees' personal needs—in short, a company where everyone is happy to be there because this company is doing things that other (thus unprogressive) companies are not.

Web sites, want ads, brochures and other marketing pieces are designed to perpetuate this feeling. Even when the word "progressive" isn't stated, it's implied. Companies don't usually specify what part of the company is progressive, and few job seekers notice - or know what part of their next job they want "progressive".

No company is universally progressive, and one or two progressive aspects don't guarantee a progressive company. But almost every company considers itself universally progressive!

Here are some examples from Google:

· ThinkHost, a progressive, socially responsible, web hosting company... · Epson is a progressive company, trusted throughout the world.... · KnightsOptical: a progressive company... · Tincan is a progressive company working primarily.... · Employment opportunity in a progressive company... · Hallmark Jewelers: a modern, progressive company... · Lab Safety Supply is a progressive company that offers... · Ben Meadows Company: Put your experience to work for a progressive company....

Then there are companies that take the concept a step further and use the word in their name: Progressive Insurance, Progressive Moving Company, Progressive Tool Company, Progressive Windows, and thousands more.

The understood definition of progressive is forward moving, making progress; promoting or favoring progress toward better conditions or new policies, ideas, or methods. Well, of course!

If you don't want a progressive company, does that mean you want a backward or stagnant one? Perhaps you would if you like troubleshooting. But even then, if the company is looking to move forward and change its reputation that, too, could be progressive. It's a word applicable in either reality or goals to almost every company, whether they're achieving it or not.

So the real question is in what way do you want a progressive company?

· How it thinks? · What it does? · How it does it? · Progressive externally or internally? · New products? · New marketing strategies? · Unconventional employee configurations, policies and procedures? · The way in which the management approaches problems? · The way in which you are allowed to do your job? · Flexibility in working hours or location?

## Progressive Headlines Guide Customers To Buy

Be clear with yourself on exactly what progressive means to you, so that, not only can you convey it to

your interviewer if need be, but also so that you know if the company with whom you are interviewing is progressive in the manner that you want.

Progressiveness in providing facilities such as a gym and cafeteria for employees is not the same as providing progressive services to clients. Progressiveness in the latest equipment and technology doesn't guarantee you a progressive-thinking boss or the flexibility some companies offer to single parents.

Most companies think of themselves as progressive, but it's a broad term. Make sure you define it before you become seduced by the spin of the stereotype.

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Judi Perkins has been a search consultant for 25 years in both the contingency and retained market, with a short stint in the temporary and local permanent placement markets. She has owned her own firm and successfully assisted numerous repeat clients in hiring all levels of management. She is a Career Expert and Forum Moderator with

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