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**Strategic Copywriting: So Much More than Text Optimization**

**By Carolyn Evans**

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So Much More than Text Optimization

Because web copy is so important for achieving the results you want and expect from your website – and because so much stress is now placed on the use of WORDS by SEO companies – we want to explain the concept of "strategic copywriting" and in doing so, show you why it's so much more than optimizing text for search engines to read it. This is our definition:

Strategic Copywriting is the skill of designing words to create an experience that motivates a customer to take a desired action and enables him to achieve his desired purpose. A little clunky, but there it is. Now, for what this means...

Designing words...

If words were graphics, they would have size, shape, depth, width, weight, color, texture, organization, position, and a relationship to what's around them. For copywriters, words are our graphics, and how we 'design' them to shape a message determines their impact on a customer. Part of the copywriting process is to combine words with a visual design that guides a customer's interest and understanding. A good writer–designer team will agree that, with few exceptions, words are king and visual design the loyal servant. In website development, this rule is golden. In all media, strategic copywriting is the skill of designing words that influence behavior.

Create an experience...

Why do print, radio, and television ads work? The short answer is, they create an experience that motivates a response. So what is that experience, and how do ads create it? There is no simple answer to this question, but one key factor is this: The ad copywriters and designers know the customer. This knowledge dictates the message that will appeal to that customer. If the ad is written and designed specifically for that customer, if it's delivered through the right media (say on television, on a certain channel, during a certain program, on certain days of the week, at certain times of day or

night), and if the customer happens to see it, he might respond. Or if not then, perhaps another time. When he does respond, it's because the ad provoked in him an emotion that caused him to act.

Web marketing works basically the same way, with one very major difference: here, the customer comes to you in search of a certain experience. With a copywriter and designer who know that customer, your website can give him the experience he's looking for.

Motivate the customer...

By "customers" we mean people who are most likely to want or need what you offer, whether they actually buy from you or not.

In the world of web marketing, customers conduct a search because they're motivated to find something. If you have a website that offers them what they're looking for, the first and most important experience you must give them is finding your website. This is a matter of configuring your site to come up on the first or second page of a search. This is a function of search engine optimization, which is covered in another article.

Assuming the customer has found your website in a search, the next experience you must give him is a reason to stay there. Some basic rules for accomplishing this include:

- oKeep it simple.

This rule pertains to everything about your site: the words and design should be 100 percent about helping customers find – and buy – what they need or want.

- oMake sure your site loads immediately.

Avoid using complicated graphics, Flash movies, animations, and Splash screens. If your site takes more than a few seconds to load, you're probably going to lose that customer -- forever.

- oEnsure that your website visitors are who you want them to be.

Know your customer, use language that speaks to him, and know the keywords he is likely to use to find you.

- oImmediately tell them where they are and how they will benefit from being there. This is where your value offer comes in. Design your words to inform and motivate customers to stay and look further.

- oFocus your copy on benefits to the customer – not on you.

Customers don't buy from you because of who you are but because of what you can do for them.

- oClear a path to easy and trouble-free navigation.

Include tools to help customers find what they're looking for, such as a search function, navigation buttons, etc., make them visible and uncluttered, and make sure the links work.

"Desired actions"

Your website must enable a customer to do what you would like him to do: Request more information; register for a course; fill out a membership or subscription form; follow advertiser links; make a purchase through PayPal or credit card; or just forward a link to your site to someone else. To enable customers to take any one of these actions, your website must:

- oProvide an opportunity on every page for the customer to buy your product/service or contact you.

Some customers will make a sudden decision to hit the "Purchase" button, while others may want to think about it or call for more information. Many will leave your site to find competitors who offer the same product or service at a lower price. (This is why your value proposition is so critical – the more unique your offer, the more difficult it will be for customers to find the same deal anywhere else.)

oEnable them to take the desired action on the spot.

Provide a shopping cart, registration form, secure payment feature, toll-free number, and visible links that make it easy for the customer to take the action.

oReassure them that the action they take is safe and secure.

Online customers want to know that the information they leave behind will not be used in any way other than what they specify. If your site has an ecommerce function, be certain it's secure and that your customer has good reason to believe that it is. Also, assure the customer that his privacy is important and that you will not sell or pass on his customer information to anyone for any purpose.

oKeep customers coming back.

Customer retention is a huge part of your online business success. Obviously, the first step is to satisfy the customer with the product/service purchased and the experience of purchasing it (ease in ordering, customer service support, quick shipping, etc.). Beyond the first positive experience with your site, you

want to give customers reasons to return to your site regularly. To do this successfully, your site needs a good tool for tracking and profiling every customer and ample opportunity for the customer to opt-in to receiving email, newsletters, faxes, or even direct mailings from you.

Enable the customer to achieve his desired purpose...

Why did this customer come to your site in the first place? We can only assume he was looking for something he thought you might offer. Did he find it? Did he buy it? Did he leave immediately?

In any case, your site should have enabled the customer to achieve his desired purpose. If he was looking for something you offer and found it, that might be all he wanted to do this time around. Maybe he wanted to compare prices or think about the purchase. If he bought it, you enabled him to. And if he left your site immediately (assuming that the home page loaded quickly), it was probably because he was in the wrong place. Again, you enabled him to achieve his desired purpose – to go elsewhere to find what he was looking for.

Strategic copywriting is about understanding human beings and what satisfies them. It's about courtesy, sensitivity, quality, and respect for consumers, whether you offer what they're looking for or not. The simple courtesy of enabling a customer to accomplish his purpose, be it buying from your site or leaving immediately upon learning he's in the wrong place, is the essence of strategic copywriting for a successful and effective consumer experience.

Carolyn Evans is the principal of CopyMaxima.com, a search-engine optimization company for small businesses and start-ups

### **Your Very First Steps To Outsourcing**

**By Indratno Widiarto**

Eventhough the concept of outsourcing has been around for years, its implementation often incorrect and misled.

Outsourcing is NOT about having jobs done by other parties.

Outsourcing is about having the best talent and resource to do some tasks, so you can concentrate on more strategic ones.

The distinction is obvious. Your strategic tasks is the most important things you need them to be done to grow your business. You do not want to be distracted by other repetitive tasks you can outsource to third parties. However, if you select those parties carelessly, you may jeopardize your business entirely. On the other hand, if you put your outsourced tasks on the hand of the best expert you can find, you may even increase your productivity.

If you have no experience in outsourcing, you can follow these steps:

1. Determine which task is strategic and which one is not.
2. Outsource non strategic tasks.
3. Do your research to find third parties with the best talents and resources.
4. Don't be cheapy. You always get what you pay for.
5. Do some testing and observe the outsource results. If you find those third parties are not what they have told you, fire them.
6. Consider to use media to attract talents.
7. You may need to write 'help needed' ads to attract talents.
8. Outsource that copywriting task, too.
9. Do your strategic tasks to find the way to win your business
10. Once you find the way, find best talent and resources to do it.

With that process, sooner or later you will find the difference between outsourcing and out tasking. The later is when you get your tasks done by other parties regardless of their capability and talent. They just do what they have to do. Sure, you get your tasks done. But the results do not give any contribution to your productivity.

One thing you should understand about strategic thinking. Thinking strategically is about finding any possible ways to win. So, your strategic tasks are activities in finding ways to win. Once you find the way, find the best talent and resources to do it and make it happen. That's outsourcing.

Indratno Widiarto is the editor and CEO of The Infopreneur World. You can find articles and resources on infopreneuring including free ebooks and subscription at



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