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**Writing Copy For Online Catalogs**

**By Wild Bill Montgomery**

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What's one of the things that most of your ad copy has in common?

You write your copy for one primary product or service.

Since most of the ad copy is done in this manner, you may find that writing "Great" Catalog Copy is a little different. Online catalogs are a very popular medium on the Internet, but unfortunately there are only a handful of web site owners who give their catalog copy any justice. Even though we have grouped this copy lesson into catalog copy, there are several different types of catalogs to consider. Some catalogs feature every product that their company sells, while others focus on a specific product line or specific selection of items chosen for a particular criterion.

Aside from your web site traffic or email list(s) subscriber base, the three most important parts of a catalog are:

- 1) Product Placement in the catalog.
- 2) The Amount of Space you give each product.
- 3) Graphics, Photos or Illustrations used.
- 4) and of course, The Ad Copy.

While ad copy is not the most important part of the catalog, it directly affects each of the other parts. Without great copy, the other key parts of your catalog have to work that much harder to be effective. This article provides some tips on writing more effective "Catalog Copy".

Here are my Top 8 Tips for writing Catalog Ad Copy:

- 1) Match the amount and format of your copy to your catalog.

## Writing Copy For Online Catalogs

While the major consideration of most offline catalogs is space, this is usually not a worry for online catalogs due to the low cost of server space today. Unfortunately, the reader's attention span has not changed. If you are offering a large amount of products you will want to keep your copy short and to the point, while catalogs with few products can afford to write longer, more in-depth copy. Keep this in mind: More copy does not necessarily mean better copy.

Write copy appropriate for the product. You don't write down home, earthy copy to promote ball bearings. You could, on the other hand use this approach for personal items or a product/service that reflects a change in

your home. Match the type of copy you write to the product and audience.

Another consideration in format is the type of catalog you are writing copy for. Some catalogs are used as a sales aid, which would require a more direct, hard punch type of copy. Order Catalogs would be more straightforward, citing features, advantages and benefits in a more orderly and less flashy manner. Another words, get the information out there in the most favorable light, but keep it brief. This is not to say that it should be boring. Copy still has to move the prospect to action. Still another may be a promotional catalog, where you are setting the stage for a move to a "For more information, click here" page. Here you would keep the copy short, but would use a more persuasive and dazzling approach, Like writing headlines. Again, because space is not a concern for most catalog webmasters, this is the best approach for catalog sales on the Internet.

2) Visual Aides, such as graphics and photos play an important part in your copy. Each has it's own use and should be thought of in that sense. While graphics and animations can create eye-catching lead-ins to your copy, they would not be used to display the product. Think about it. Would you be more likely to click on a product that has the cartoon look of a graphic or the actual likeness of the product? The same applies to displays or packaging. Remember use graphics to draw attention and photos (or illustrations in some cases) to present the product.

3) Make your readers comfortable with ordering from you. Money back guarantees have no substitute on the Internet. This is the number one request from buyers. They want a guarantee that they won't be ripped off. Another one of the biggest foes of Catalog and Internet Purchases is the fact that people have to deal with a faceless seller. Reassure your buyer by mentioning names. Name other firms or clients that have used your service. They need not be famous people or companies. Here's a testimonial from Martha. The buyer doesn't know Martha from dirt, but because Martha liked the product or service, your prospect feels a little more at ease. Again,

## Writing Copy For Online Catalogs

photos play an important part. If they buyer can see you, they feel closer to you. "You" being yourself, staff clips or for that matter photos of anybody. A letter from the President of the company written to the buyer in a personal form is a big helper too.

4) A key to ad copy, including catalog copy is and always will be to show your buyer how your product will save them money or benefit them more than your competitors product or service. "Lowest Prices", "Now Discounted", "Revolutionary Product" or the old standard "New & Improved" are all examples of Power Words that convey this important thought. For more Power Words check here . But of course it's more than just using a couple of attention grabbing power words, it still takes great copy to support them.

5) Time is always an important factor. Unlike turning pages in a catalog, navigating an online catalog can be much more involved. Always make it

possible for your buyer to locate the product in two or 3 clicks. I'm sure you've heard this before; Humans are, by large, impatient beings and the longer it takes them to reach the product in question, the more chance you have of losing them. Use indexes and/or categories. Not just one, but several. Make it possible for your visitor to access the product from several different angles or headings. Remember Wild Bill's Rule. Never make them look past 2 or three clicks from your opening catalog page.

Page load times should be kept to a minimum. All web designers keep load speeds at or near the top of their lists. This factor is especially important on catalog sites. Your goal is to host visitors that are here to buy, not to be entertained. Keep your flashy Java Modules, Javascripts, DHTML Time Lines and Page Graphics to a minimum. Your pages need to load at the peak of efficiency, just like turning a page.

6) Add "Value" to your catalog. Even catalogs can benefit by content. The Internet is all about information. Use content as a draw targeted prospects to your catalog. Say for instance that you host a catalog for tools and home improvement items. A perfect benefit for this catalog would be How-To articles on Home Improvement. For beauty supplies, you could give tips for makeovers. Get the point? Offer content relative to your products to properly align this free or low cost marketing idea to your product base.

Offer extras! There is nothing new about offering your buyers "FREE EXTRAS" for purchasing your products. FREE Extras could be slow moving or stagnant products, a how-to guide, a toll free number, free delivery or a free product support. The idea is that you are giving the buyer something extra for buying from your catalog.

## Writing Copy For Online Catalogs

7) Just as any other web site, the opening page or cover page to your catalog should begin the selling process. Just as magazine, book publishers and yes, catalog publishers spend a lot of time and resources designing and implementing the covers, so should you. You have to have an opening page that says "Open Me, I'm Worth It!" Think of your "opening page" as a big headline. You must use all your writing and design skills combined with enticing graphics and/or photos to convince them to turn to the next page so to speak. Whether true or not, a dull cover conveys the appearance of dull products. Goodbye Sales! Here is the place to begin aligning your copy with your product line. "Comprehensive Product Line", "Product Superiority", "Problem Solutions" and "Price" as a whole should be addresses and enforced right here. You could be giving away the best made product, for the most popular fad, and if you can't get them to open the cover (or click inside), you won't be giving away spit.

8) Make ordering easy. Recently, I needed a CD Burner and I visited an online catalog, whose copy and presentation was excellent. They had comparable pricing and quality products. I was ready to buy. I went to the order form and found a 2 page demographics survey that had to be filled out for the privilege of purchasing their product. I Don't Think So! Keep your

form to the minimum requirements, clear and easily understood. If you must have demographics, ask for them after the purchase. Getting back some demographics is far better than getting no sales.

Accept Credit Cards. Except for very limited product lines you must accept credit cards to survive. I myself don't accept credit cards yet, but have not had a need to do it yet. Then again, I do not operate a catalog site. People buying from an online catalog, expect; no demand to be able to use their credit cards for immediate purchase. Make it clear what credit cards you accept and that fact that you use a secure server for the transaction.

Closing Thought:

The Internet Shopping Arena is growing at unbelievable speeds, literally destroying old name business that deny the Unbeatable Force of that we call "The Internet". Every day more and more people turn to Online Catalogs to fulfill their shopping lists. Are you ready? Is your online catalog up to snuff? Only your web surfers know for sure!

My best wishes for your Success!

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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 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.

## Writing Copy For Online Catalogs

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:

How To Write A Killer Sales Letter

Optimizing Online Catalog Copy for the Search Engines

Research the Old-Fashioned Way: Why the library is not obsolete

Online Gardening Catalogs At Your Disposal

You can download music videos from several music services online

Profitable Crafts Vol 4

Write Around The World FREE!

Profit Pulling Reports

Carefully Crafted Sales Emails And Web Copy

How To Find A Topic For Your Ebook



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