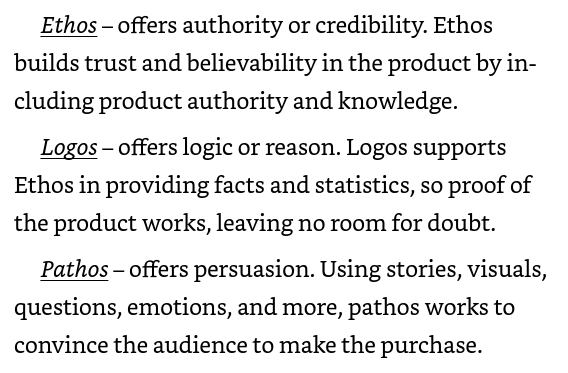
Copywriting Notes

Copywriting is the art or science of creating content that increases product awareness and persuades people to take specific actions.

The six basics of content delivery:

1. Expository – this type of content defines, clarifies, explains, or instructs.
2. Descriptive – this type of content describes, creates, and shows, often using the five senses.
3. Persuasive – this type of content persuades, convinces, coaxes, urges.
4. Narrative – this type of content comprises a story that hooks in the reader.
5. Technical – this type of content provides specifications or critical features of a product.
6. Poetic – this type of content offers brevity, density, rhythm, rhyme, and meter, as in brand slogans and taglines.

The three elements of writing according to Aristotle:



In copywriting, tone refers to the attitude, personality, or emotional tone conveyed through the writing. It's the way the writer communicates with the reader, shaping how the message is perceived and interpreted.

Tone can be:

* Formal or informal
* Friendly or professional
* Humorous or serious
* Sarcastic or genuine
* Encouraging or assertive

Effective copywriting uses a tone that resonates with the target audience, aligns with the brand's voice, and supports the message being communicated.

As in all forms of writing- know your audience by gathering demographic and cultural data to gain knowledge to help with selecting word choice and references that will best reach the audience members.

Some common tones in copywriting include:

* Conversational: like having a conversation with a friend
* Professional: polished and expert-like
* Fun: lighthearted and playful
* Empathetic: understanding and compassionate
* Urgent: creating a sense of importance or scarcity

Tone is the syntax or how you put the words together to create a particular resonance. For example:

"John Smith's gotta go. That guy uses *our* tax money to pay for *his* lavish trips, dinners with countless escorts, and meaningless golf outings. Voting for Bill Turner guarantees your money will be spent on programs that benefit our state citizens instead of satisfying one madman's selfish needs!"

Tone is created by:

1. Perspective
2. Word Choice
3. Arrangement

Use dynamic or action verbs to convey tone. Some examples may be:

* Discover
* Energize
* Ignite

When choosing words for copywrite, consider the voice of the brand. For example: you may want to use words such as “fluffy”, “soft”, and “warm” if you were writing for a quilt or blanket manufacturer.

Be sure to study all available information about the product and company when copywriting. That ensures that you will present the content in a way that is consistent with the “voice” of the brand.

Adjectives modify a noun or pronoun. These help to set modulations within copywriting. Some adjective examples are:

* Big
* Delicious
* Beautiful

With copywriting, the product is the center stage with the tone adding a spotlight.

Be consistent in voice and focus when writing copywrite. The audience will lose interest, trust, and faith when deviation occurs.

Style refers to the unique tone, voice, and language used to communicate a message, engage an audience, and persuade them to take action. It's the personality behind the words, and it can make or break the effectiveness of a piece of copy. Some examples of styles are:

* Conversational: Friendly, approachable, and relatable, like a conversation with a friend
* Professional: Formal, polished, and authoritative, often used in B2B or corporate copy
* Humorous: Light-hearted, playful, and entertaining, used to grab attention and make a point
* Storytelling: Using narratives and anecdotes to connect with the reader and convey a message

Try to avoid using cliched terms and phrases in your writing. On one hand, it can sound dated. On the other, it can sound corny and the reader loses trust in the product or message about the product.

Some things to consider when approaching copy:

* Decide on the type of content to reflect the product
* Define your grammar usage as it highlights the product
* Establish your voice as it appropriately reflects the product

SEO copywriting combines keyword optimization with compelling content that drives user action. It involves knowing your audience, using relevant keywords, and writing clear, persuasive copy that resonates with them, ultimately driving conversions and achieving your goals.

Branding is like a person's overall personality, while voice is like their tone and language when they speak. Branding is an important consideration when writing copy. Some questions to consider might include:

* Why does the product exist?
* How does the product differ from the rest?
* What problems does the product solve?
* Why should people care about this product?

If your copy causes the consumer to repeatedly nod while reading when the time comes to purchase the product, the decision has already been made.

Voice is the personality of content, as in the qualities that form a company’s distinctive character. Voice is the specific way a company communicates and expresses itself. A company's voice should be consistent with its branding. Some things to consider when thinking about voice:

* Company personality – who are they and what do they stand for?
* Type of product – medical, technology, sports.
* Product design – from generic to sleek.
* Pick three words to describe the product.
* Ask yourself, “What would the product say if the product could talk?”

Products themselves may also have “personality.” In copywriting, a product's personality refers to the human-like characteristics and traits attributed to a product or brand. It's a way to give a product a distinct and relatable identity, making it more engaging and memorable to the target audience.

A product's personality can include aspects such as:

* Tone: Friendly, serious, sarcastic, or humorous
* Language: Formal, casual, playful, or professional
* Values: Adventurous, eco-friendly, innovative, or traditional
* Attitude: Confident, empathetic, or rebellious
* Emotions: Fun, caring, or bold

There are six important psychological considerations regarding persuasion. Because copywriting involves selling a product or service, persuasion is a vital consideration. These elements to consider are:

1. Reciprocity – Meaning offering something to receive something in return. Think about how freebies and discounts are offered to entice consumers.
2. Commitment – Signing up for a newsletter or committing to a trial period. This is a great way to keep people coming back for more.
3. Social proof – Refers to the use of customer testimonials, reviews, ratings, and other forms of feedback to build trust and credibility with potential customers, demonstrating that others have had positive experiences with a product or service.
4. Authority – Refers to the credibility and expertise of a brand, product, or service, established through credentials, endorsements, evidence, and confident language, to build trust and influence with the audience.
5. Liking – Refers to the principle of influencing people's behavior by creating a sense of rapport, affection, or friendship. It's based on the idea that people are more likely to say yes to those they like and trust.
6. Scarcity – When someone in high authority makes a claim that a product or service may be limited and eventually unavailable.

The standard elements of copywriting:

1. The headline grabs the reader's attention, sets the tone, and clearly communicates the main benefit or promise of the product, service, or idea, enticing the reader to read further.
2. The hook grabs attention, raises curiosity, and draws the reader in with a provocative or intriguing opening.
3. The narrative contains many vital parts including:

* Connect with the headline by reassuring the customer they’re in the right place
* Build Credibility by establishing trust and believability
* Offer incentives to keep the audience’s interest
* Establish value
* Provide proof that you can deliver what the product/service promises
* Describe the aftermath of the product/service solving the problem
* Discuss benefits of solving the problem
* Show how the product/service is unique compared to the competition
* Establish how the advantages of the product/service outweigh the cost
* Guarantee the product/service effectiveness
* Clearly state what the consumer gains and what they need to do to get that service/product
* Close by establishing a sense of urgency

One statistic suggests that 80% of people read headlines, but only 20% continue reading beyond that point. Therefore, a concise, attention grabbing, and relevant headline is important to draw readers in.

Following the headline, there are some ways to continue gaining reader interest.

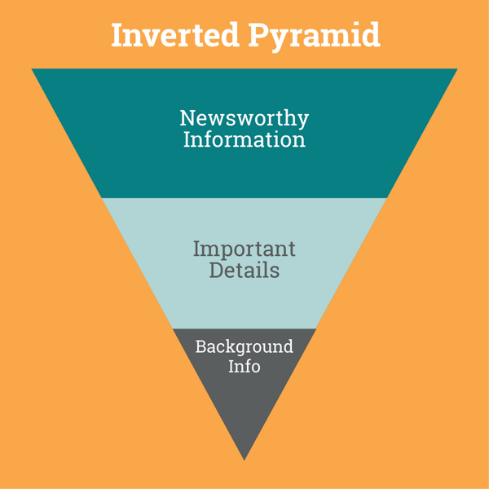
* Lead with a strong quote
* Make a humorous statement or observation
* Make a promise of what the product/service seeks to accomplish
* Provide a unique vision of what the consumer can expect in the aftermath of use
* Provide and alarming statistic to motivate the consumer to action
* Ask an urgent question of the consumer to prompt action
* Propose a benefit the consumer may gain, and rely on their curiosity to keep them reading
* State a shocking fact that will compel them to action

Another vital statistic is that only 20-28 percent of written words are read, with people scanning instead. This underlines the importance of making sure content is:

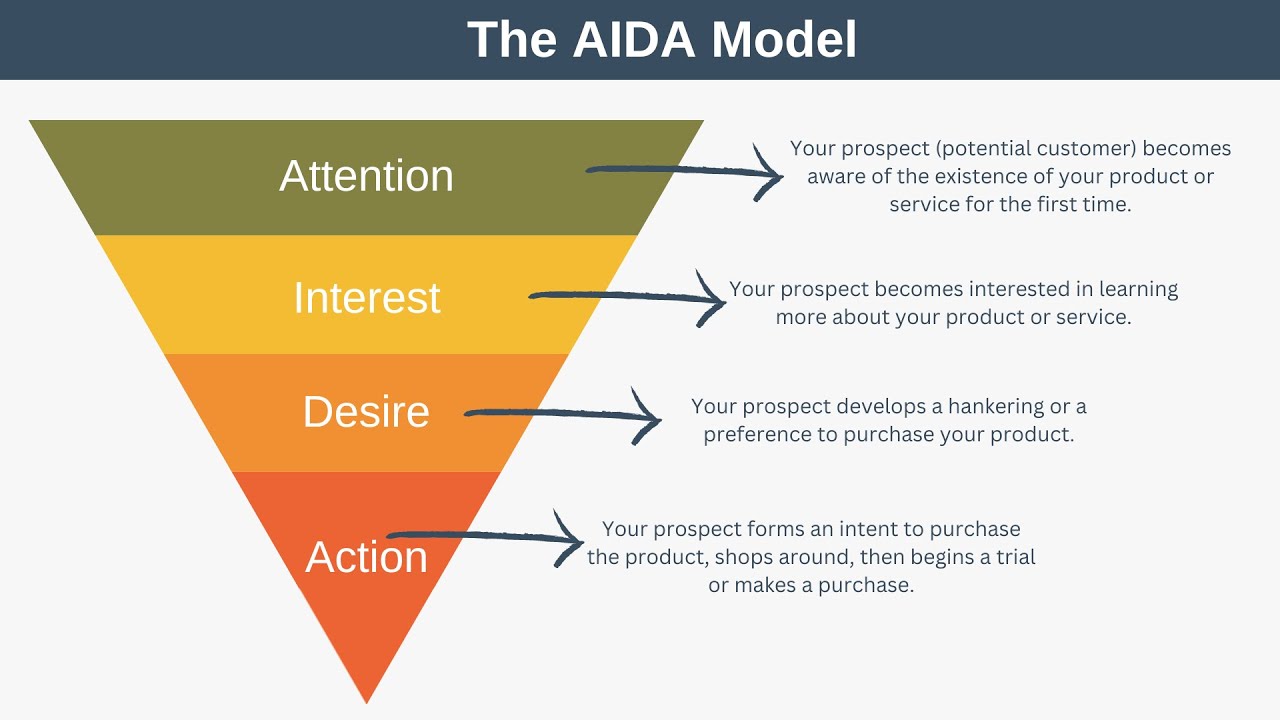
* Easy to read
* Brief (14 words or less)
* Includes plenty of whitespace
* Makes use of headings and subheadings to offer quick access to information

There are several different structural formats that the above elements can be situated in.

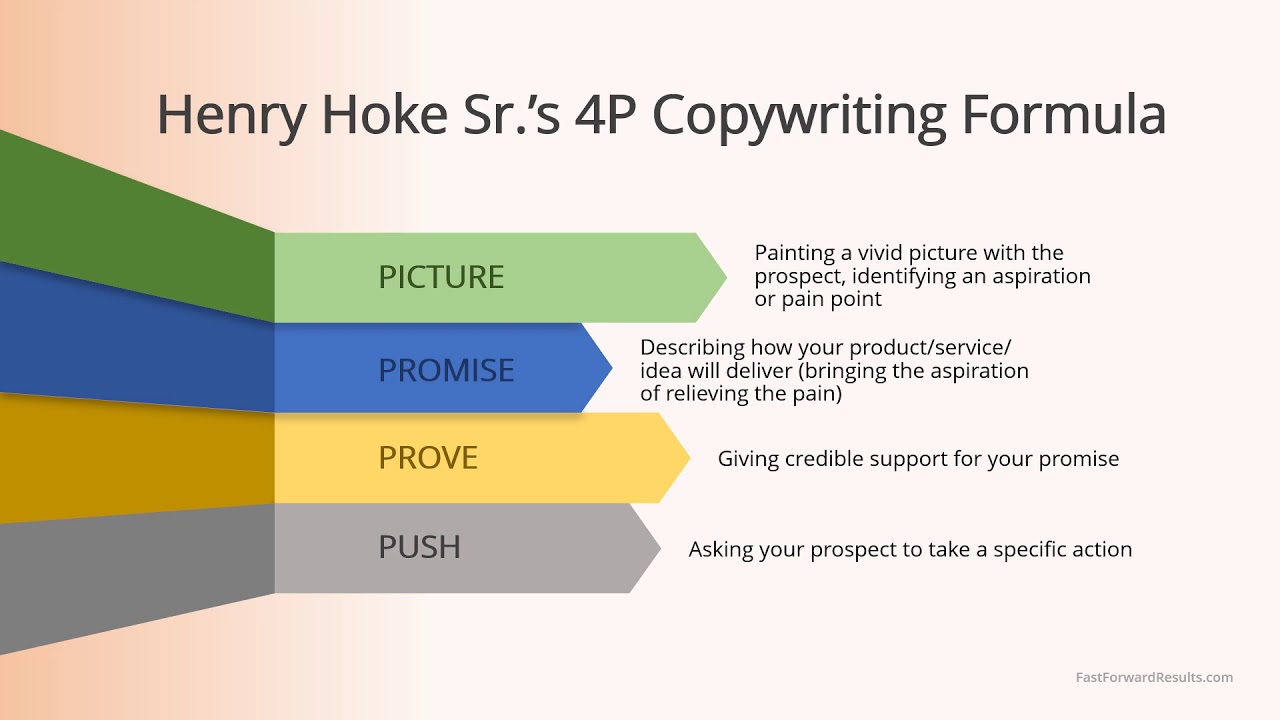
* The inverted pyramid is a writing approach where the most important information is presented first, followed by secondary details, and finally, supporting context, in a hierarchical format, to effectively communicate key points and grab the reader's attention.



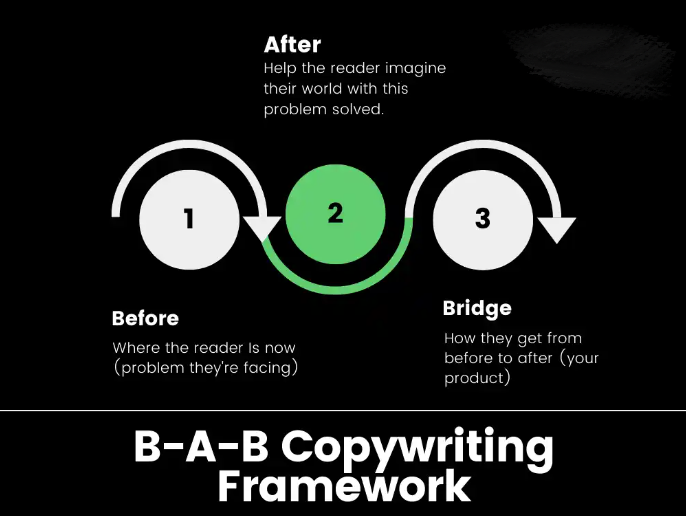
* The AIDA writing structure is a persuasive writing approach that follows a sequential format of Attention (grabbing the reader's interest), Interest (generating desire), Desire (creating a sense of need), and Action (encouraging a response or conversion).



* The 4 P Copywrite formula involves considering the Product (idea or argument), Price (effort or commitment required), Promotion (messaging and communication), and Place (context and timing) to effectively influence and persuade others.



* The Before-After-Bridge (BAB) framework is a persuasive structure that presents a problem or pain point (Before), followed by a solution or vision (After), and then a bridge that connects the two, explaining how to transition from the current state to the desired outcome.



* The Identify-Agitate-Solve (IAS) framework in copywriting is a persuasive structure that identifies a problem or pain point, agitates it by emphasizing the consequences or emotions associated with it, and then offers a solution to alleviate or solve it.



Copywriting content does not have enough room for fluff, distractions, or needless words. Make every word count and add up to the sale.

From the consumer’s perspective, there are four things that they look for in a product:

* Core – Meaning the benefits the product provides to the audience on various levels, including need, price, comfort, status, or style

1. Ensure the product stands out as different
2. Create core values and follow them
3. Write content that speaks to the audience
4. Focus on the features
5. Monitor customer reactions following sales

* Tangible – Meaning the features, quality, brand, and packaging
* Augmented – Meaning the after-sale services that support the purchase, as in the delivery and installation
* Promised – The value the product holds and the dependability of the product’s results

Three major things that consumers care about, which tend to draw and keep interest:

* Health
* Money
* Sex

Appealing to emotion, using positivity and motivation, and utilizing trigger words are some things the writer can use to keep the audience engaged.

When creating personas to write to, use these general questions to familiarize yourself with the audience you’re writing to:

* Gender
* Age
* Ethnicity
* Family status
* Occupation
* Interests
* Income
* Needs
* Wants

Once a persona is generated, approach the writing from an empathic standpoint- what does that person require of a product or service? Put yourself in their shoes.

Features describe the product or service, while benefits explain how it will improve the customer's life, making benefits the more compelling and persuasive aspect of copywriting. The prime concern is in regard to benefits, and *not* features. Benefits convince customers they cannot live without the product/service.

A call to action (CTA) in copywriting is a prompt that encourages the reader to take a specific action, guiding them towards a desired outcome, such as signing up, buying, or contacting a business.

You might need to explain how the product works. Using bullet points makes this task easier for you and the consumer and always have a call to action (CTA) as a part of the copy.

Targeted copy won’t happen unless you have exact plans, tools, resources, tactics, and strategies. Focused copy draws in visitors, then conveys trust that pulls them in deeper. Compelling copy should reach a specific audience with a particular issue to the point that it deflects away from those who can’t relate.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory proposed by Abraham Maslow that suggests human beings have different types of needs, which are hierarchically ranked in order of importance. The needs are:

* Physiological needs (basic survival needs like food, water, shelter)
* Safety needs (security, stability, protection)
* Love and belonging needs (social connections, relationships, community)
* Esteem needs (self-esteem, recognition, achievement)
* Self-actualization needs (personal growth, creativity, fulfillment)

In copywriting, understanding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs clarifies consumer needs:

1. Identify your target audience's needs and desires
2. Craft messaging that resonates with those needs
3. Position your product or service as a solution to meet those needs

Acquire ten times the information you need, so your content reads as rich and full and makes it easy for them to engage.

Knowing new combinations of words helps attract attention, makes your content flow better, and touches the audience in new ways that make them feel moved to make the purchase.

Understanding language levels is crucial in writing content. It helps you tailor your message to your audience's comprehension and preferences, ensuring clarity, accessibility, and the right tone. This consideration also impacts your brand's voice, consistency, and even search engine optimization (SEO). By adapting your language level, you can effectively communicate with your audience and achieve your writing goals.

Some ways to determine language levels in an audience include:

* Know your audience: Understand their demographics, education level, and profession to gauge their language proficiency.
* Conduct surveys or polls: Ask your audience about their language preferences, reading habits, and comprehension levels.
* Analyze existing content: Study the language level of content that resonates with your audience, such as blog posts, social media, or comments.
* Readability metrics: Use tools like Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level, Gunning-Fog Index, or SMOG Readability Formula to measure the complexity of your content.
* Feedback and comments: Encourage audience feedback and analyze comments to understand their language needs and preferences.
* Language analytics tools: Utilize tools like Google Analytics, SEMrush, or Ahrefs to analyze your audience's language and reading behavior.
* Industry research: Study industry reports, research papers, and benchmark studies to understand the language levels of your target audience.
* Social media listening: Monitor social media conversations about your brand, industry, or topic to understand the language and tone used by your audience.
* Customer support interactions: Analyze customer support queries, emails, or chats to understand the language levels and pain points of your audience.
* Content testing: Test different language levels and tone in your content to see which resonates best with your audience.

Use online readability tools to check writing levels of content to ensure that it meets with audience understandability.

In copywriting, market awareness refers to the level of knowledge that the target audience has about a product, service, or brand ¹. It is a crucial concept in marketing and advertising, as it helps businesses understand their customers' needs, preferences, and pain points, and create effective marketing strategies to reach and engage with them. Not studying market awareness is one of the biggest mistakes a copywriter makes. Here are the five stages of market awareness:

* Unaware: The target audience is not aware that they have a problem or need that the product or service can solve.
* Problem Aware: The target audience is aware that they have a problem or need, but they are not aware of the solutions available.
* Solution Aware: The target audience is aware of the solutions available, but they are not aware of the specific product or service.
* Product Aware: The target audience is aware of the specific product or service, but they are not aware of its features, benefits, or pricing.
* Most Aware: The target audience is aware of the product or service and its features, benefits, and pricing, and they are ready to make a purchase.

You can’t know how your product fits into the consumer scene until you know the whole landscape for that product’s industry. To do this, you need to research everything out there, including the competition.

Copywriters often get stuck because they wrestle with copy that’s not working. They hold onto a favorite idea instead of letting the copy flow. It takes confidence and a belief in the process to give up on an idea and explore others, but, in the end, letting go usually translates into a more vital message.

Within the realm of creative copy, becoming an expert will make your copy more believable, and the more confidence your content will exude.

Write more than you need, and then pare down your words to get the richest content possible.

Long sentences, paragraphs, content that fails to focus on the product, jokes that fall flat, and the use of patronizing tones are some common missteps that negatively impact copywritten documents.

Avoid using weak words such as:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| This | That | Thing |
| Those | May | Hope |
| Could | Will | Can |

Some other tips:

* Avoid using passive words and sentences
* Never say anything to eliminate anyone from the audience
* Never refer to something the audience is unaware of
* Try to avoid flat words and boring the audience
* Use descriptive verbs
* Use words that appeal to the five senses
* Use specific nouns

Troll the internet continuously to find new ways of writing award-winning copy. Use full search terms when doing this type of research to ensure that your search results produce the best results possible.

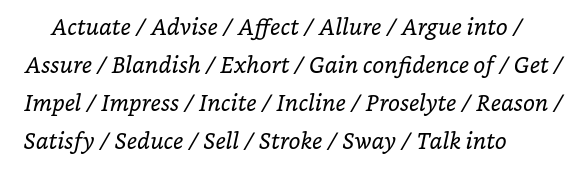
One very good tip to remember: trust the company you’re creating content for. They are the most familiar with the product, so if they suggest changes- take that to heart when making adjustments to copy.

Clarity is important: always make sure that you are using a word correctly. Otherwise, it will confuse the audience and they will lose trust in what you’re trying to convey.

Make sure that pronouns are clear- keep them close to the noun they are replacing so that the audience isn’t confused about who/what that pronoun is referencing.

As in all good writing- try to avoid using cliches. Often, the writer means to elicit familiarity with the audience by using these terms. Mostly, it comes off sounding tired and unoriginal.

There are many persuasive terms that can help set the appropriate tone in copywriting. Here some common ones:



Some of the actual tones that a copywriter may want to elicit include:

* To assure
* To advise
* To entice
* To enlist
* To impress
* To convert

When writing copy, keep in mind that you’re going to focus more on how your product or service affects that person’s life. Also, branding is continually evolving and companies today tend to treat products and services like a relationship.

It is often advisable to focus on using more periods than commas in copywriting. Mainly, that’s because commas often accompany long sentences, and brevity and conciseness should be the goal in this genre.

Logic, facts, and data can be important to support a position in some genres of writing. With copywriting, you don’t want to come across as authoritarian, so either find a good balance or minimize that type of information.

On average, 8 out of 10 people read headlines, but only 2 out of 10 read the rest of the content. This is why the headline is so powerful and why it so highly determines the effectiveness of the entire piece.

Some ways to grab attention with headlines:

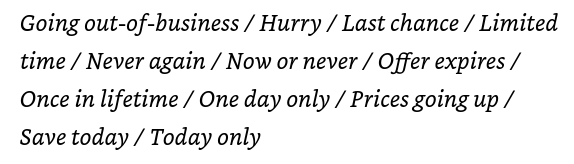
* Challenge a fact or myth
* Confess a dilemma
* Create curiosity
* Declare a fact that generates fear
* Describe something
* Give a prediction about the future
* Build intrigue
* Introduce a contradictory statement
* Introduce an unusual situation
* Introduce conflict
* Make a declaration
* Pose a question
* Make an ironic statement
* Use a shocking statistic
* Suggest a dire situation
* Surprise with a fact
* Use a quote
* Use a metaphor

Here are some best practices for writing copyright headlines:

1. Be Clear and Concise: Use simple language and get straight to the point. Aim for 6-9 words.
2. Focus on Benefits: Instead of listing features, explain how your product/service will benefit the reader.
3. Use Keywords: Incorporate relevant keywords to improve search engine optimization (SEO).
4. Create Curiosity: Use questions, surprises, or intrigue to grab attention and encourage readers to click.
5. Use Action Verbs: Verbs like "Discover," "Learn," "Get," and "Find" encourage action.
6. Make it Unique: Avoid clichés and overused phrases. Stand out with fresh, creative language.
7. Use Emotional Triggers: Appeal to emotions like joy, excitement, or urgency to resonate with readers.
8. Use Numbers: Incorporate numbers, statistics, or percentages to add credibility and interest.
9. Use Social Proof: Highlight customer testimonials, ratings, or reviews to build trust.
10. Test and Refine: Try different headlines, analyze performance, and adjust accordingly.

Urgency is a psychological response deeply seeded in our brain. Urgency is part of the loss aversion or Fear-Of-Missing-Out (FOMO) that is almost a knee-jerk reaction to certain stimuli. It is up to you, as the copywriter, to create this FOMO and guarantee the consumers will act now.

Words that can prompt action include:



Your primary sales weapon is the product’s benefits. Mentioning them at the beginning and then at the end increases the chance that your copy will inspire action.

Yet another way of persuading the consumer to perform the call to action is to guarantee the product or service. Guarantees build trust, eliminates the obstacle of risk, and is a relationship-builder because of the confidence the consumer feels from the brand.

Another important facet- outline how the consumer can go about purchasing the product/service. Many copywriters assume that the audience will figure this out on their own. Don’t take that chance: make sure to explicitly state how they can do so.

Sometimes, a product or service will offer an incentive to make the purchase. This can be something like a discount, priority shipping, or access to a one-time price point.

There are many ways to close the copy:

* “Hard close”- encourages the consumer to complete the process in a brief and final way
* “Summary close”-briefly summarizes all the good points and encourages the consumer to complete the commitment
* “Test drive close”- by letting the consumer sample the product, it will lead to the commitment
* “Question close”- pose several questions where the answer is “yes” to get the consumer to make the commitment
* “Suggestion close”- describes how the future will look after the product has been purchased and met a need/want

Your content should take the consumer away into a world of solutions and pleasures where the easy life exists.

Consumers feel connected when the brand’s values match their own. In this way, they think the company understands them and their needs, and this feeling is as good as gold.

Because the goal is to pull the reader in, the first sentence must be compelling, shocking, curious, or questioning, and it must be brief. Then, seeds are dropped along the way to cause the consumer to want to read more.

92% of people claim they read testimonials when considering making a purchase. 88% said they trusted reviews as much as personal recommendations. Third-party validations strengthen compelling content.

Use Coherence Markers – Repetition is used to create coherence. This means using the same word or phrase at the end of one sentence and the beginning of another. Example: Molly can’t sleep at night. Because she can’t sleep, she takes a sleeping pill.

Use Metaphors – When concepts are hard to understand, metaphors come to the rescue, although remember to use them sparingly. Example: Julie’s voice is music to my ears.

Mimic disdain for a specific problem – This is a very effective approach. Readers want to know you understand what they’re going through and that you have a solution that can help.

Neuroscientists conducted a study to define human spending patterns, the results of which were:

* Unconflicted spenders/Average spenders: 61%
* Tightwads/People who spend less: 24%
* Spendthrifts/People who can spend more: 15%

The four consumer buying behaviors are:

1. Complex Buying Behavior

* High involvement in purchase decision
* High degree of brand loyalty

2. Dissonance-Reducing Buying Behavior

* Medium involvement in purchase decision
* Some degree of brand loyalty

3. Habitual Buying Behavior

* Low involvement in purchase decision
* Little brand loyalty

4. Variety-Seeking Buying Behavior

* Low involvement in purchase decision
* Desire to try new products or brands

Studies have shown that consumers are more likely to purchase a product when they are targeted as part of a group: senior citizens, athletes, vegans, erectile dysfunction. This makes them feel included.

Product differentiation involves producing content that distinguishes your product from the competition. However, the product can’t be just different. It must be better than the rest. A differentiated product also solidifies brand loyalty and a higher price point. If the consumer believes a product is better than its competition, paying a higher price is worth it. Make sure that any differentiation is factual though- otherwise, the consumer will distrust the product and this may cause a chain reaction with other consumers.

Some factors in differentiation that draw consumers include:

* Appearance
* Additional features
* Durability
* Guarantees
* Packaging
* Size
* Performance
* Origin
* Weight

The final detail for writing excellent copy is enriching your content with keywords or search terms. While creating content, you must include search engine optimization (SEO) terms that won’t disrupt the natural flow. Use keywords the audience would look for with your product/service, and use broad terms that may answer “long tail queries” (questions entered into a search engine).

The primary functions of search engines are three-fold:

1. Crawl: to continually crawl to find existing, new, and updated content.
2. Index: to store and organize reliable, relevant content and make it available for the internet user.
3. Rank: to provide content that best answers the internet user's question, from least relevant to most relevant.

Idea: by uploading several copywritten documents from similar competitors to an AI chatbot, the author may be able to prompt the AI to generate a list of the most-used terms to decipher common keywords being used.

Several different online programs can help with keywords, like Google’s Keyword Planner. Google offers this free tool to analyze how specific keywords and combinations of keywords will perform.

“Thinking outside the box”, in regard to copywriting, can be effective if it is successful. However, one stat by the Harvard Business Review asked participants whether they “thought outside the box” and it demonstrates why most prefer to use traditional methodologies. The participants voted:

* Often or always: 28%
* Seldom or never: 41%
* Sometimes: 31%

When a copywriter does try something new and unique, it’s vital to test the new way to ensure that it is effective.

Communicating clearly with your client and keeping in mind all of the details discussed in this book helps avoid needless revisions. The more you pay strict attention to your content initially, the less work you’ll have to do in the end.

Once you have typed your last period into your content, let it go, walk away and take a break.

Remember, 20% of the work involves getting the wording just right. The other 80% consists of digging, probing, searching, and polishing to correct all your words and concepts.

Remember to always remove obvious information, redundancies, details, and modifiers to improve clarity and concision.

There are some words that bog down sentences. Some are listed below. These should be eliminated from copy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Actually | Absolutely |
| Basically | Definitely |
| Generally | Kind of |
| Particular | Really |
| Sort of | Type of |

Final editing should always include:

* Identifying and correcting grammatical errors
* Recognize and correct style mistakes
* Evaluate readability
* Improve content flow
* Rearrange and restructure problematic or awkward sentences
* Tone consistency

Remember to edit two or three different times to hone anything that was missed.

Lastly, if the customer is unhappy with content, there may be a few reasons. Start by considering whether the copy is strong enough. Is the client changing their mind about what they originally wanted or failed to clearly communicate needs? As the writer, do you understand the subject matter? Is the client one that is difficult to appease (this *does* happen).

Be mindful that copywriting is similar to applying for work, or being rejected for a promotion- you must continue to work at it to find success. Always try to learn from past mistakes, and don’t be afraid to ask for feedback.