

Website and Sales Copywriting Basics for your Personal Website and your Lead Capture Pages

“Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind.” - Rudyard Kipling

A comprehensive course on writing sales copy is beyond the scope of this training, so what follows is a compilation of what I have learned over the past several months in researching. Probably the most important thing is, “It’s not what you sell, it’s HOW you sell it!”

Copy sells, not graphics. Pictures have never sold anyone anything. It’s your writing that must convince people to take action. And when it comes to writing copy for your lead capture pages and your personal website, it’s important to learn the insights that professional copywriters use, because they apply specific techniques and tactics that turn ‘writing’ into ‘selling with words.’

“The more things change, the more they stay the same”. That saying couldn’t be more true, especially when it comes to copywriting. The same things that worked fifty years ago continue to work today. Yes, times and technology have changed, but people’s psychology hasn’t. At least, not the way we react to an effective ad.

The most skillfully copy-written masterpiece still requires the reader to make a choice. Take action, or don’t.

Undoubtedly, copywriting is a skill that can really add a lot to your bottom line and I believe anyone can learn to become a good copywriter ... and without having to work on Madison Avenue for years and years.

It can make a **BIG** difference in your results when you use compelling website copy to ‘invite your visitors in to meet you,’ and make them willingly want to do business with you.

For starters, here are four general guidelines to writing effective copy for your lead capture pages and your name-branding website:

Your web pages **MUST** be written in a way that:

Is of interest to **THAT** visitor.

Is easy to read.

Inspires trust.

Invites further action to know more, or even buy!

For most people, this isn’t easy, but it can be learned. It all comes back to the basic rule - you must **KNOW** and **BECOME** your customer.

Get into their head ...

What do they want?

What are their worries?

Why won’t they buy?

You’ve got to tap into the emotional needs of this person.

This is easier said than done because it's natural to shift back into your own point of view, especially if you haven't been shown why certain words will motivate your visitors to learn more or buy. Or why other equally persuasive words are guaranteed to leave them bored and totally disinterested.

But how can this be?

After all, you know your business inside and out and upside down, right?

You have more passion about EcoQuest or one of the products than any other person alive. You're so certain the people out there will love it!

So how come no one's biting? Bottom line, your words probably aren't inspiring the trust you need for your prospects to take further action.

Why?

Once again, I'd describe it as 'a dance.' (Remember Steve and Lisa?)

Successful copywriting is a lot like learning to dance with a new partner. Some people know the right steps, but they probably picked them up from someone else, and they merely managed to 'get around.'

But... to create a partnership that's beneficial to both parties involved, you have to discover what your prospects want from you. And to do that, you have to figure out how they think. Until you do, you'll keep making mistakes ... stepping on their toes.

When you can anticipate their every move and understand why your prospect wants to move that way, you understand their mindset.

Just like a dancer, effective copywriting demands that you plan one step ahead of your reader and answer questions and objections before any come up. You need to know how they think so you can inspire with phrases that motivate them into responding the way you both want.

Once you know how to do that, you can talk to them on their level. You can identify what they really want. You can answer their questions. And you can solve their problem.

At that point, you're both moving smoothly along, directly towards them joining you or purchasing product.

It's in the preparation that you'll achieve the best results, so do your best to not cut corners in learning this stuff.

Think about what it's like to paint a house. You don't just open a can of paint and start slapping it on the walls do you?

There's some prep work to do (I hate that part). Cleaning, scraping, spackling, taping, and probably ten other things you're going to do to make sure the paint goes on smoothly, and looks great when you're finished.

Effective copywriting is the same - it requires preparation. And this usually comes in the form of answers to critical questions ...

Questions like:

- Who am I talking to?
- Where do they live?
- How old are they?
- How much money do they make?
- What feature do customers like best about my product?
- What benefit do they like best? Next best? Next best?
- How are they using it that I hadn't thought about?
- How can I be seen as an expert in this industry?
- What price attracts the most people?
- What's my unique selling proposition? (How do I stand out?)
- What do I want my prospect to do?
- What are my competitors offering? How do I beat that?
- Why should prospects trust me, my opportunity, product, or service?

The fact is, these and many other questions form the foundation for what you're going to write and WHY. Without the 'WHY', or the emotion that communicates *'what's in it for me'*, your copywriting won't give you maximum results.

Here are some additional copywriting basics to follow:

Write it so it can be scanned quickly. That's how most people start reading and then decide whether or not to go on. Try to stay away from overusing CAPS or BOLD CAPS if possible. It slows the reader down and interrupts the flow of your message. Use bold to emphasize and bold underlined to really emphasize your points.

Write an opening headline that sells. We've touched on this and there is no getting around it if you want to keep your visitors on your site and give them a reason to read further.

Remember, you have mere seconds to make your visitor think there's a reason THIS is something for them ... or they'll be gone. In fact, at least 80% WILL read your headline. It MUST do the job of making them want to know more.

According to experts, just changing the headline of an ad or sales letter has been known to dramatically improve its effectiveness ... by up to 1000 percent!

I know it's tempting to want to be cute or clever, but on the web, there isn't any time for it in your headings. People want information and they want it now! So you need to let your readers know exactly what you're offering in your headline.

Be direct. In other words, say what you mean and mean what you say.

Headlines that evoke some type of emotional response are the most effective and will generally generate more sales. Emotions motivate people into action. The stronger the emotion, the quicker the action.

So headlines that make the reader afraid of losing something, or excited about gaining something, will invariably produce the best results.

There are a number of words that have been shown to appeal to people, some of these are: Free, New, Proven, Secret, Success, Instant, Fast, Simple, How to, Save, Easy, Limited time only. Always try to include at least a couple of these words in your Headline.

Some other good words to include are:

Absolutely, Amazing, Approved, Attractive, Authentic, Bargain, Beautiful, Better, Big, Colorful, Colossal, Complete, Confidential, Crammed, Delivered, Direct, Discount, Easily, Endorsed, Enormous, Excellent, Exciting, Exclusive, Expert, Famous, Fascinating, Fortune, Full, Genuine, Gift, Gigantic, Greatest, Guaranteed, Helpful, Highest, Huge, Immediately, Improved, Informative, Instructive, Interesting, Largest, Latest, Lavishly, Liberal, Lifetime, Limited, Lowest, Magic, Mammoth, Miracle, Noted, Odd, Outstanding, Personalized, Popular, Powerful, Practical, Professional, Profitable, Profusely, Proven, Quality, Quickly, Rare, Reduced, Refundable, Remarkable, Reliable, Revealing, Revolutionary, Scarce, Secrets, Security, Selected, Sensational, Simplified, Sizable, Special, Startling, Strange, Strong, Sturdy, Successful, Superior, Surprise, Terrific, Tested, Tremendous, Unconditional, Unique, Unlimited, Unparalleled, Unsurpassed, Unusual, Useful, Valuable, Wealth, Weird, Wonderful.

Craft your headlines to use words and phrases that will pique your prospect's interest.

If you're targeting people interested in starting their own home business, you can try phrases related to "Stay Home And Make Money" or "Kiss Your Job Goodbye Forever".

A word of caution here - This is the point where headlines can tend to get unbelievable. If you don't want your visitors to roll their eyes, make sure that your claims are truthful and that your copy supports their truthfulness.

Avoid mentioning EcoQuest on your capture pages. Keep your copy relevant, but generic until they've jumped through the hoop and opted in.

For homework, write variations of the same headline until you've exhausted all the ideas you can think of based around the EcoQuest business opportunity, or the product you want to promote. This will be both frustrating and difficult at first, if you've never tried it, but it'll become easier with practice. Remember, nothing worthwhile ever comes easy.

After you've written your list of headlines, make sure each one passes the litmus test for the following criteria for a good headline:

Does it grab your attention?

Does it answer the question, "What's in it for me?"

Is it truthful and believable?

If a headline doesn't meet these three criteria, rewrite it or eliminate it from your list altogether.

Continue using this process of elimination, one headline at a time, until you're left with what you feel are the three best and strongest headlines.

How will you know which one is best?

Well, realistically, there's no way to know for sure until you test them against each other, but here's a nifty copywriting tool I found called Headline Analyzer that can generically measure the emotional value of your words to help you increase the selling power of your headlines. Best of all, it's free! Check it out at www.aminstitute.com/headline

Ok, let's move onto some more general copywriting points that can be used for many different situations, including your name-branding site as well as lead capture pages ...

Write a brief, stimulating introduction. It must seamlessly flow from your headline, and start the process of ‘pulling’ the reader further and further into what you want them to know. In most cases, skip the ‘Welcome.’ Nobody cares.

Identify yourself, but don’t make it about you. Make it about how you can benefit the visitor because of your special or unique experience. Otherwise, they really don’t care.

Use lots of sub-headings. These serve two important needs. First, it helps the break up the text into ‘bite-size’ pieces that are much easier for the reader to digest.

Secondly, they serve as mini-headlines, telling your visitor what to expect next.

Vary the length of paragraphs. While paragraphs that all look neat and orderly look good to the writer and designer, to a visitor scanning a web page, it’s likely to look ... um, boring! And once this happens ... you got it... they’re gone.

Vary the length of your paragraphs to avoid this.

Use short sentences. This applies to most every media, but on the web, it goes double. The reason is it takes 20% longer to read a computer screen than a printed page.

Short sentences are easier to read. That means less tiring on the eyeballs, and more enjoyable to read.

Do your best to write your copy in a way that each point flows smoothly to the next.

Don’t be afraid of writing long copy when it’s appropriate. If you write it in a compelling way, people will follow it all the way through. It’s a myth that long copy doesn’t work. It could actually work the best depending on what you’re promoting.

Use simple, conversational language. Again, the nature of communication on the Internet, whether on a web site or in an email, is that it’s more of a personal conversation.

In real life, people don’t talk to each other in long, drawn-out sentences. And ‘fancy’ language tends to either alienate people, or make them believe they won’t understand what you’re saying.

Again, write as if you were talking with your prospect face to face. Avoid talking at them, but rather, with them.

You also want to avoid using complex words or concepts. Find a balance that a fifth grade student would understand without insulting anyone’s intelligence.

Remember the ‘WIIFM’ factor - “**What’s in it for me?**”

This is THE question in the minds of your readers. Include the benefits of your product everywhere it makes sense to do so. This helps to keep them glued to your message.

As with all advertising, this is what people are interested in - how EcoQuest or our products can improve their life ... not the benefits it will bring to humanity or the environment, but “**what’s in it for me?**”

Your opening words, then, must tell people HOW they’ll benefit from visiting your site.

When you're writing, include the words "you" and "your" as often as you can. Your prospects have got to see how this will benefit them, not you.

By saying "Your bottle of enzymes will be sent overnight", or "you'll discover", transfers ownership psychologically. This will pull your visitor into wanting to read more.

It's much better to have 3-10 times the words "you" and "your", rather than "we", and "I", and "us", and "our", and "me" in your copy. The reader only cares about how THEY will benefit.

By the way, if your copy is vague or too general, you'll find out quickly because people will have lots of questions. If you're getting the same question over and over again, then you'll know what to fix so you can eliminate it from coming up again. On the other hand, if you're getting sign ups or orders automatically without any questions, you've done a great job!

What's the point? Stick to it. On a lead capture page, it's easy to wander into telling your visitor everything about you, EcoQuest/product benefits. That's NOT the purpose here.

Your visitors are there ... To learn. And to buy.

If you wander from helping them with these two points, even for a moment. .. 'click.' Kiss 'em goodbye. **Sell the sizzle, not the steak.**

Never get caught up writing about just the features of your offer. You've gotta clearly explain the benefits. For instance, don't tell us that we'll make "thousands of dollars" with this program ... tell us we'll "see a 20% increase in sales within the first month" and we'll be more likely to believe you.

Use specific numbers if possible - "101 Little-Known Ways to Make Money" is more likely to gain our attention, rather than "Make Money".

A headline should contain plenty of verbs - you need to convey a sense of action and urgency if you want people to buy from you or request more information .

Skip the analytical 'jargon.' It's boring. It doesn't help your web site hold your reader's attention and make the sale. And yes, this applies to 'techies' as well as everyone else. They only really need to know if the benefits outweigh the cost.

Humor is difficult. It's fun to make people laugh, but it's NOT easy to do when they don't know you from Adam. This is especially true on the web where visitors can come from vastly different cultures every minute. Bottom line? People don't buy from clowns, so be selective when trying to inject humor into your copy.

Skip the 'hype'. If your message sounds like all the other over-blown, exaggerated beyond-belief messages we all see (and ignore), your reader will smell the hype and run from it, quickly!

Here's a list of words to avoid in your copywriting. These words will destroy sales:

buy, contract, bad, death, loss, hard, worry, taxes, wrong, difficult, sell, deaf, fail, liability, cost, obligation, decision.

Here's a list of words to include in your copywriting. These words create sales!

free, love, amazing, safe, new, benefit, gain, money, happy, glad, proven, guarantee, fast, results, discover, how you, how to, now, fun, value, easy, you, your, yours, you'll, healthy, natural, magic, secret, proud, comfortable, secure, solution.

Something else that's also very effective is to include a post-script (P.S.) at the end of your ad or sales page. Your post-script should include some sort of enticement to get your prospects to order NOW. You can also use the post-script as a final call to action.

Here's an example of an effective post-script:

"P. S. - Don't forget, if you join me within the next 72 hours, you'll also receive my eye opening Free Report "How To Get An Instant Pay Raise Without Asking Your Boss, Compliments of Uncle Sam". Click Here to Join NOW!"

You can also use a postscript to tie everything together by summarizing your most important benefits.

Here's another reason to use a post-script. ... Studies have shown that most people, when reading an ad or sales letter, will read the headline and then immediately zoom right down to the bottom of the page to check out the price (if it's a sales page) and see if your offer is anything that they'd be interested in. They'll also read your post-script.

Of course there's more to good copywriting, but it all starts with identifying your prospects' emotional needs. From there, the rest of the process is really pretty simple.

And remember, when writing your copy, ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS keep in mind that one question we all want to know: "**What's in it for me?**"

Create A Sense Of Urgency

One of the greatest challenges in the marketing process is your prospects' indecision and procrastination.

Let's face it, most people are genuinely lazy by nature and they procrastinate.

And most of them will put off making a buying decision if they think they have time to delay ... and still, some prospects will put things off even if they know your product and the business opportunity is exactly what they're looking for.

Your copywriting results ultimately rely on your prospect's ability to make a decision and take action on your offer. There are lots of ways to convey urgency, but one of the most powerful ways to do that is to use the "*take away*" approach.

Tell them they can't have it! People love to get things other people can't and creating scarcity can make your offer sound exclusive. And if you include the possibility that they might lose out on your exclusive offer, your conversion rate will shoot up.

Why does it work?

Because people are more likely to take action based on the fear of loss, rather than an opportunity for gain.

In fact, most people don't even realize how badly they want something til it's suggested they can't have it.

Here are few popular examples of creating scarcity in your copywriting:

“Limited copies available.”

“First 50 people only.”

“Special discounts.”

“Order Now, this special gift won't last long”

You can also set a date, or even have a countdown clock that shows how much time is left for them to act. You can also run holiday or weekend specials.

This creates the urgency to buy right away, or risk losing out, which compels fence sitters to do what you want them to do.

Regardless of the phrasing you use, the key to success is creating a sense of scarcity so that your prospect will feel the urgency to buy or join right away.

Note - If you use a time-based sense of urgency in your marketing offer(s), don't make the same mistake lots of marketers make by not making the deadline real.

I've seen it many, many times over the years, and still today, where a marketer creates a deadline, and the deadline passes and they still make the same offer.

BIG mistake and it will hurt your credibility and reputation.

When you set a deadline, it's got to be enforced. When you do this, your reputation for honesty (and integrity) will be respected, and your prospects will know that if you set a deadline, you're going to stick to it.

This is what creates the urgency that moves them to take action now and in the future, so make sure you use scarcity and urgency in your marketing arsenal.

Incorporate 'Hypnotic' Writing

Joe Vitale is the king pin on the mechanics of hypnotic writing for the web. Most of us have experienced it in one form or another, while listening to a talk radio show or watching TV. If you need some proof, here's a quick example ... Ever notice how on a popular TV show like 'LOST' (love that series!), just as the momentum is building ... all of a sudden - CUT! Gotcha!

Leaves you hanging, wanting more - and the same is true with hypnotic writing on the Internet. It's something that enables you to tap into and penetrate the subconscious minds of your visitors.

This is some powerful stuff here, so pay close attention ... Below I've listed some examples of the best hypnotic phrases and sentences for you to try out in your own marketing campaigns.

This way you can experience the power of using hypnotic writing first hand.

Ready? Ok, here we go ...

Imagine what it would be like if..
Can you remember a time when. ..
After you read this short report you'll have learned ...
You don't realize it yet, but in the next 2 minutes you're going to learn ...
As you read every word of this article, you'll discover ...
Can you imagine ...
Just picture ...
Imagine experiencing ...
You probably already know this ...
And as you absorb this information, you'll ...
Have you noticed yet that...
The more you keep reading this document the more you feel ...
Imagine what it would be like if..
In a moment, I'll tell you ...
Now, let me ask you a personal question. ...
Do you remember a time when ...
As you pay close attention to this page ...
Just suppose ...
If you're like me ...
Okay, you're probably wondering ...
I know you're feeling ...
See yourself...
As you allow yourself to go further and further down this page, you're realizing ...
In just a short while ...
With each word you read you feel more and more ...
And you will begin to ...
Read these facts carefully.
Proven Fact:
Here's the bottom line ...
Studies will soon prove that. ..
You're absolutely right...
STOP and ask yourself this key question ...
obviously
clearly
softly
apparently
certainly
You're ready for success, aren't you?
Pay close attention!
Now listen closely!
Listen closely:
Here's a secret:
Stop!
Listent!
Forget everything and listen,
Pull up a chair and hear me out:
Just imagine experiencing a new way to
All this can be yours!
Don't believe me, believe yourself!
Imagine being able to try out a product without any risk. Now it's a reality!

While each second passes, you know you must be satisfied, or you'll get all your money back.

Look at this

See it

Focus here

Watch this

Sounds good

I hear you

Call me

Do it now, while you're thinking about it!

Who Else Wants ...

Little-Known Secrets ...

The Shocking Truth About ...

The Single Most-Important. ..

There's Nothing Quite Like ...

Simple But Powerful ...

Enjoy The Ultimate ...

All you need to know ...

Here's something that will ...

In this report you're going to ...

Just take a look at what's inside: Here's what you'll learn ...

Consider these benefits:

the complete guide to

takes you step by step

... and the list goes on. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Try these phrases out in your own marketing efforts and see what happens!

Becoming a great copywriter takes time and practice, practice, and more practice. Study and learn all you can from books, and study other people's ads that you receive in your email inbox, and all over the net, as well as print ads in magazines.

If you come across an ad or web page that motivates or moves you to purchase the product or request more information, go through it, and try to define the exact areas that push your buttons to take action.

If you're interested in more proven techniques for powerful copywriting, check out "Make Your Words Sell!" <http://myws.sitesell.com> by Ken Evoy as well as Joe Vitale's Hypnotic Selling Secrets (<http://www.hypnoticmarketingfusion.com>).