By Kimi Mattig-Louria Posted June 28, 2019 In Advertising, Marketing

HOW TO CRAFT GREAT COPY THAT GETS READ AND COMPELS ACTION

TURNS OUT, PEOPLE DO READ COPY

I'd like to start by giving all my fellow copywriters a fist bump; because, as it turns out, we now know that people actually do read copy. Web studies have provided quantifiable measurements which confirm that copy is read, such as the amount of time people linger on a webpage… and how often they engage. That being said, copywriters still need to know how to craft and deliver great copy that gets read and compels users to action.

Notice that I said "great copy," not "good copy"? Merriam-Webster actually has a definition for "good copy." They define news stories and political scandals as "good copy." Here's some better-than-good advice: marketing your product or service with merely "good copy" will usually get you a bad return. Let's discuss what it takes for copy to accomplish all its sets out to do.

COPY … AS IN SALES CONTENT

Copy, as I'm referring to it, are the words used to help establish and sell goods, a product or service. Your "copy" is your word content, which is spoken in radio and television commercials and written in ads, websites, blogs and digital marketing. It has a place throughout the entire Omnichannel experience. Copy is how a brand conveys its persona and value to an audience in order to get them to take a desired action. Copywriting is the craft of creating content that helps promote brands and sells products. Good copy is often overlooked. Great copy is read and prompts action. We're going to discuss the specific elements that help make good copy great.

POINTS FOR AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The first rule of great copy is to know your audience. Find out what makes them tick. How do they speak and like to be spoken to? The best way to engage an audience is to connect with them. The only way to make a connection is to know them. If you're writing to new moms about diaper absorbency, your language will be different than if you were speaking to the CEO of a medical supply company about their sales reps. The most important copy tip I can provide is to *write your copy the same way you would speak to the audience you're addressing.*

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When ascertaining who your audience is, here are some other items to keep in mind so you can write in a way that engages well with them:

• **Trade lingo.** Every profession or interest group has a jargon they use. Learn it. Use it. Become one of the group by talking to them in their own lingo.

• **Education.** Someone with a master's degree can handle a higher level of vocabulary than someone who is at a 4th-grade reading level. Adjust your copy to be on the right level for your audience.

• **Tone.** This plays a huge role in copywriting and is often overlooked. Lighter subjects can provide room for more humor. More serious topics demand more reserved copy. Even if you don't consider a subject important, your audience might. Find out before you take on a comedic tone.

• **Time.** How active and busy is your audience? A single working mom usually has considerably less time than a part-time college student. Make sure to hit your copy facts fast for recipients who are short on time.

Now that you know how to discover the tone you need to write with, let's look at how to develop the copy so it does its job.

HEADLINES SPEAK VOLUMES

It doesn't matter if it's an outdoor board, a digital banner ad, social media post, print ad, web page header, subject line, or any other medium. Regardless, *the headline is the first impression your audience has of what you're going to talk about.* If a headline doesn't pique interest, the user may not read the great copy you have written for them. So, make sure to craft headlines for your copy pieces that capture attention and reel in the audience to read on. Here are some simple headline rules to live by:

The headline is the first impression your audience has of what you're going to talk about.

• Keep it short … 6-8 words or about 40 characters, max
• Appeal to your audience
• Promise a benefit
• Announce something
• Don't insult their intelligence—equate your headline to their education level
• Personalize when appropriate, such as in email or direct mail
• Suggest urgency

To top that off, I would simply advise you to make your headlines interesting. Use humor when you can—or pull at heartstrings when that's a better choice. Just be sure to make a connection with your readers so they are encouraged to read on.

CRAFTING COPY: THE MATH SIDE OF THINGS

Copy has never been more formulaic than now—especially when writing online for SEO, which we won't cover, but you can read more about here. The art of what was affectionately known as "long copy" (meaning many words and paragraphs without breaks on a page) is long gone—even for printed brochures. Today, *readers want to scan content rather than fully digest it.* Copywriters, this means that you need to get to your points quickly and serve them up in digestible chunks, with ample breaks and photos to lead your reader on.

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A smart way to accomplish this is to use a formula. There's the math rub. Not to worry … the tried and tested copy formulas I've listed below are easy to adopt and follow. They're only meant to help you organize your content so that it grabs the user's attention and leads them through your copy. Formulas should be used to help direct your copy, not dictate it. Some of the most popular copy formulas include:

The **FAB** Formula:

1. Present the **Features** you want to highlight
2. List the **Advantages** of your product
3. Provide the **Benefits** your product offers

The **PAS** Formula:

1. State the **Problem** you want to identify
2. Work up the problem until you **Agitate** it
3. Show how your product can **Solve** the problem

The **AIDA** Formula:

1. Get the reader's **Attention**
2. Spark **Interest** with unique and engaging content
3. Create a **Desire** for your product
4. Use a powerful call to **Action** to take the desired step

There are lots of other copywriting formulas out there. My suggestion is to figure out what you need to say in order to create a desire in your reader for your product. Then, outline how you plan to accomplish that in your copy. A formula might be helpful in creating your outline. Once complete, you can use the outline to guide you as you craft your words.

TOP 25 TIPS TO CRAFT BETTER COPY

Copywriting is not easy. It's an art form. As an art form, copy is subject to the opinion of everyone it reaches. Although many people think of themselves as writers, it takes a lot of practice to learn the art of great copywriting. One way to tell you've written great copy is that it converts. Bottom line: *If your copy doesn't compel the reader to take action, it needs work.* Whether you're a new writer or have written for years, here are 25 fast copy facts that can help you craft better copy today:

If your copy doesn't compel the reader to take action, it needs work.

1. Speak in the language your reader uses (casual, formal, etc.)
2. Use the right tone for your product
3. Follow an outline or formula
4. Know your product (topic) and relay your expertise
5. Use an active voice
6. Engage your audience
7. Tell a story
8. Deliver bite-sized pieces of information
9. Create a sense of urgency
10. Educate your reader
11. Emote and cultivate emotion
12. Try to say the same old thing in a fresh, new way
13. Include metaphors, similes and analogies
14. Break up the copy with headlines, subheads, photos and icons
15. Apply colorful adjectives
16. Lead your reader down the page
17. Add a big benefit
18. Include support points
19. Use facts and statistics for reliability
20. Humor your reader (when appropriate)
21. Be timely
22. Be relevant
23. Be trustworthy
24. Add testimonials
25. Keep it simple

With those copy facts, you have plenty of guidelines to begin writing. It may take a while if you've never written … or if you're writing for a new product; but keep at it and don't give up! Copywriting is a process and the more you do it, the better you'll get.

SEEKING GREAT COPY

After going over the bits and pieces you've picked up here today, you may still be feeling a bit hesitant. You know the audience and your subject matter, but the part about writing great copy still has you stumped. So, the best thing to do then is to find a great copywriter who can craft great copy for you. We have them. Feel free to reach out to us today so we can help your product move ahead with copy that compels.

Let's talk

By Kimi Mattig-Louria

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