

Phil's Quick, Down & Dirty Copywriting Guide

I'll get straight to it shall I?

COPYWRITING!!!

Master this skill and your sites really will convert like crazy because copywriting is the key to conversion.

Good copy + good offer = cash.

It really is that simple. In fact **good copy + bad offer** has still made many marketers a fortune. Plus it's not as difficult to learn how to write good copy as you may think.

So I'm going to start posting my guide to great copy, piece by piece. I've studied copywriting for years and I love it, because it's actually all about psychology as you'll see.

So first of all, always remember that visitors to your site are usually in the market for what you're selling. People will not just wander onto your site, they'll arrive because:

- They've clicked on one of your ads
- They've read your article and clicked on your link
- They've read your comment on a forum and clicked on your link
- They've found your site in the search engines because they searched for your site subject (keyword)
- They've clicked on some other form of advertising or self promotion

In other words, when they arrive at your site, all you have to do is convince them they've made the right decision. Now before you run off screaming, please understand, you don't have to become a copywriting expert. But it would help if you understood the



basics.

And I mean really help. Then as you go along you can build your knowledge and techniques.

Rejection free selling

Copywriting can best be described as “Salesmanship in print”. It’s persuasive writing that aims to get someone to do, something you want them to do. It could be to buy your product, sign up for your list or click on one of the links on your site.

Now don’t panic about the word “Salesmanship”, because unlike a normal salesman, sorry . . . salesperson, you never have to face your prospect.

You don’t have to cope with the rejection attached to real world selling. Simply because the only way they can reject YOU is if they don’t buy your product, click on your link etc etc.

The good thing is, if people aren’t doing what you’re asking them to do you can simply change your copy. Maybe your headline, your benefits, your call to action.

You could simply change these, one at a time, and log the results. Did they make your conversions increase? Or decrease? Perhaps there was no change?

That’s the great thing about having a website, you can change things in minutes, watch the results, then keep or discard the changes. I’ve actually seen examples of changes to a sites copy, improving conversions by 400%, 500%, even up to 1000%!!

When you understand the main principles of copywriting, marketing becomes so much easier and so much more effective.

So what are the main principles? Well to start with you need to learn about headlines.

The most important part of your copy is your headline.

It draws people in to the rest of your page. (Or Ad) If someone finds your headline interesting, they are far more likely to then read your sub-head or opening paragraph.

And your opening paragraph should keep your visitors interested enough to read your second paragraph, and so on.



Your headline should GRAB your visitor's attention.

"Hi, welcome to my site" just doesn't cut it.

How about . . .

"New top secret Russian herbal weight loss discovery, will give you the firm, toned and sexy body you've always dreamed of OVERNIGHT . . . without leaving stretchmarks!!!"

Tell me if I'm wrong but you would read the next paragraph . . . would you not?

Now I'll agree, it's an extreme example. Or is it? I've seen real headlines that are not that far removed from the above.

The best headlines are normally based around the benefits someone will have once they've used the product. In the example above the benefit is getting a sex symbol body without stretch marks. Simple enough?

This approach normally works because it's emotive. And always remember, we buy based on emotions and rationalise that decision later, just to make us feel better.

Find the problems your visitors need to solve and offer the solution. It's generally far easier to sell to a "hungry crowd" than hobby type markets.

The hungry crowd need it now, right now, TODAY!

That's why your headline is so important.

We live in an OCEAN of marketing messages and yours has to stand out. One of my favourite copywriters is an Australian guy called Brett McFall. I always remember something he said about making yourself noticed:

"You have to stand out like a hippo in a herd of flamingos"

When people arrive at your site, you need a way to capture their interest. A good headline will do that. After all, the majority of people go online looking for information.

Have YOU got the information they're looking for? Can you solve their problem? Make their life better? Make them richer? Make them slimmer? Tell them.

When you pick up a newspaper, how do you decide which articles to read? Headlines of course.



1. **“Local woman finds pine cone washed up on beach.”**
2. **“Government to lower age of retirement to 40 and introduce £50,000 bonus, plus unlimited cash on demand system for pensioners.”**

Which story would you read? Unless you're a rare pinecone collector, I'm guessing number 2.

OK, so you are starting to understand why your headline is the most important part of your website copy, aren't you? Good!

Another main principle: Understanding the difference between features and benefits.

Incredibly important but often misunderstood. No-one and I mean no-one buys anything because of its features. You don't buy a pen because you can write with it. You buy it because:

- It can save you time. (Writing a shopping list will keep you structured in the supermarket and cut your time down by half)
- It can improve your love life. (Don't believe me? Try penning an unexpected love letter to your partner)
- It can bring instant relief from that itch on your back that you can't quite reach with your hand alone. (Come on! I can't be the only one)

You always buy based on the benefits something will give you.

In my freelance copywriter days, I came across the simplest, most eloquent sentence to sum up how to write benefit based copy.

Want to know what it was?

“Don't tell me about your grass seed, tell me about my lawn.”

Think about that for a moment. Has it dawned on you yet? No-one wants to know about your product.



They want to know:

- What your product can do for them.
- How it can improve their life (or lawn!).
- Save their time.
- Solve their problems.

In other words . . . how it can BENEFIT them. Simple don't you think?

If you only remember one thing while writing the words on your site, do yourself a favour and remember that. Because telling your visitors the benefits of your products WILL help you sell more. It's that simple.

Think of when you go out to buy something. Take a couch for example. You don't pay more money for one made of hardwood and the thickest, plushest fabric BECAUSE it's made out of hardwood and the thickest plushest fabric, do you?

No.

You buy it because it will be stronger and therefore longer lasting and therefore you won't have to spend your money on another one for many years and therefore you'll have money to spend on . . . Get it?

You'll also glow with pride when everyone's impressed because you buy quality. And we all like to glow, don't we?

Its strength will also come in handy when your kids are using it for a trampoline and the hardwearing fabric will ensure it's beautiful, expensive looks still impress your friends and family, long after the kids have been grounded for trampolining on your expensive, impressive furniture. OK?

Let's try another one.

Why do people buy the products in High Profits?

So they can learn how to make money on the web, right? **Wrong!**

Oh OK, I get it. It's so they can earn enough money to free them of their 9 to 5 shackles?

Ooo . . . better, much better.



Wait a minute . . . it's so they can have the financial freedom to spend more time with their kids, enjoy their hobbies, never have the stress of worrying about unexpected bills again and free them from the drudgery of the 6am alarm clock?

Excellent! Fanfare please!

So why do they buy slimming products?

Er . . . to lose weight? Don't be ridiculous.

No problem . . . I'm getting the hang of this now. Is it because they want to feel sexy again, soak up oodles of genuine compliments from friends and family, fit into the latest slinky fashions thereby feeling like a superstar and overdosing on feel-good endorphins and have the most attractive members of the opposite sex, taking their life into their hands and leaping over speeding cars to ask them out on a hot date?

YES! YES! YES! I'm impressed. You little copywriter you.

If you use these principles in your own copy, you'll have higher response rates than if you don't. **Always tell people what your product or service will do for them, how it will change their life for the better and solve their problem NOW.**

Start this process with your headline and you'll successfully draw your visitors in to the rest of your message.

More main principles: Bullet Points.

357 Magnum? 9MM? 22?
Arf arf, very funny, but no.

I'm talking about a concise list of the **biggest benefits** of your products or service.

You will definitely have seen this principle if you've been on the web for more than 2 minutes. Actually you'll see it in any good ad, online or off. Like the pen example I gave before.

You can also try listing the features followed by "**which means . . .**" then drive home the real benefit.

For example:



Our couches:

- Are made from the **most beautiful yet hard wearing fabrics**. Which means you'll **never be embarrassed** by tears or holes and your couch will still be comfortable and **impressing your visitors in 10 years time**.
- Come in a **huge range of colours and designs**. Which means you'll find exactly what you're looking for to suit your home and **won't have to compromise**.
- Use a new stain repellent process in the fabric. Which means **you can stop worrying** about accidental spills spoiling the appearance of your living room centrepiece and spending a fortune on specialist cleaning.

Get the picture? Just expand on the main features of your product by explaining how the feature actually benefits them. Use the examples I've given you here as a starting point.

You can use bullet points to break up your copy too. Look at any good salespage and you'll see what I mean.

You need "White space" on your page and this will help. . You're creating a webpage or sales-letter, not a novel. You need to separate your paragraphs and make them as short as possible, like I've done in these posts.

But don't be afraid to write as much copy as you need to sell the product effectively.

Generally, the more expensive the product, the more copy you need to persuade someone to part with their money.

Using sub headlines

As we discussed earlier, headlines are important because they draw visitors into the rest of your copy. Sub headlines can be very effective for keeping your visitors attention as they read or scroll down the page.

They are the bolded, centred, one liners you see as you go down a salespage. Here's an example:



Just imagine:

- ✓ Work from home to fit work around your life
- ✓ Say goodbye to the morning and evening rush hour
- ✓ Tell your boss what they can do with their job – and then EARN MORE THAN THEM WORKING FROM HOME!
- ✓ Take vacations whenever you want to
- ✓ Never have to worry about bills ever again!
- ✓ Scrap your car and buy a fancy new one
- ✓ Beat the credit crunch and take your fancy new car to the shops for a shopping spree!

You could earn over \$3000 every single month so just imagine what your typical day could be like...

Get up in the morning, and whilst your toast is cooking, check your inbox for the latest offers. Over a cup of coffee, fill out a basic survey taking just 10 minutes – that's \$25 banked. Have a shower, do some errands, go to the gym. Get back, and participate in an online focus group for \$100. Have some lunch, and then do two more surveys for \$25. Then decide to call it a day. Your total earnings? \$175! That's for just a few hours work. Do that 5 days a week and you will earn \$875. That's \$3,500 per month – that's an income of over \$40,000 per year – and you are only working a few hours per day!

Check out our simple earnings calculator to see what you could earn!

Sub heads are just smaller headlines directly under your main headline and sprinkled, if you're clever, throughout the rest of your copy. Think of the subheads throughout your copy as chapter titles, introducing the reader to each section of your copy and compelling them to keep reading.

Make them as powerful as your headline by using beneficial examples of what the user will get out of your product.

Call to action

Always have a call to action near the bottom of your page just before the order button. Don't presume your visitors will order, you have to TELL them to order. In fact you can use call to actions through out the whole of your page.

You'll sometimes see a call to action right after the first paragraph of a salespage. "Ok, I've seen enough, let me buy this right now." This text will be a link that will take you straight to the order page. You have to give your visitors as many opportunities to buy as possible and sprinkle them throughout the page.

Adding a PS

Another popular technique you'll see online is the PS. Yes, it's the same PS as you'd use in a personal letter, when you want to add something at the bottom.

This is used to give your reader one last reminder of what they'll lose out on if they don't buy right now. Mention the main benefits again, what they'll be missing if they don't buy and maybe add another link to the order page.

The PS is obviously used on a sales page. If you are using a review site approach or some other non sales page technique, you don't really need a PS.



Writing Style

You will eventually develop your own writing style but for the majority of niches I'm a big believer in conversational copy. Just write as if you're having a conversation with someone.

Don't worry about strict grammar. You may have noticed for instance that I've started a few sentences with the word "And". Now I don't know about you, but my English teacher would have been very upset if I'd have used such grammar at school.

But this isn't school. This is copywriting and it's a completely different ballgame, with a completely different set of rules.

So try to use a conversational style where possible as I have done throughout this guide. It adds a human touch in the cyber world! And because we start sentences with "and" and "but" when we are conversing, it's OK to do it in conversational copy. OK?

Take note that people will often read your headline, your bullets your price, maybe your PS and nothing more. That doesn't mean all you should write are those things.

Remember, I said some people. But it makes sense to make these the strongest parts of your sales page.

Use short sentences and short paragraphs wherever possible. You'll find in general that the more expensive the product, the longer the copy needed. People need more convincing to spend \$1000 than \$100. This is just a rule of thumb, it's not written in stone. You should use enough copy to say what you need to say.

No more, no less. But say it with passion and stick to what I've outlined here.

One of the quickest ways to write great copy is to use a swipe file. A **swipe file** is simply a collection of ads, sales-pages and the like, which you collect and keep on your hard drive.

If you think a sales-page or ad looks effective or it really appeals to you just save it. It doesn't have to be in your niche, in fact it doesn't actually have to be online. Tear them out of magazines etc and keep them in a folder.

If you are sent some direct mail that you think is effective, save it. Found a great ad in a magazine? **Save it.**



When you come to write your copy, just refer to your swipe file of saved pieces and draw inspiration from them. You can mix and match too. Take the headline from one piece, opening paragraph from another, bullet points from another etc etc.

Don't use them exactly as they are but fiddle with them a bit and make them your own. It's incredible how you can get inspiration for your copy just from reading other copy.

Swipe files are not new. The most successful sales letter ever written was apparently based on a swiped idea. The Wall Street Journal subscription, "Two Young Men..." letter, written by a freelance copywriter called Martin Conroy, was first sent out in 1974 and mailed continuously for over 25 years. Other copywriters tried to write letters that were more successful but it was only beaten very recently.

You may have come across swiped headlines that are used over and over again.

"Who else wants to . . ." followed by something related to your product ie; ". . . lose 10 pounds this month" ". . . add 50 yards to their golf drive."

The "**Who else wants to**" headline has been used for years in every imaginable niche. Yet it still works as a good all round headline. If you haven't come across it yet I'm sure you will.

There are countless other famous headline examples like:

"How to . . ."

"Little-Known Secrets..."

"The Shocking Truth About..."

"What You Should Know About..."

That's the great thing about copywriting swipe-files. It's not that difficult to come up with professional looking copy when you have a great collection of examples in front of you.

Mix and match until you get what you need.

Well that's it for this quick guide. I'll be adding more stuff in Income Elite as we go along. Just remember the principles I have explained here and learn as you go along.

Using good copywriting will help your site, I guarantee it. You don't have to spend years learning, you can apply one thing at a time and see the difference it makes.

Later
Phil

