



Copywriting Resources for the Busy Business Owner

Copywriting is a combination of art and science that takes years to master – and even then, good copywriters are always learning. But sometimes there isn't time to have a copywriter create your words, or even review what you've written.

That's where this paper comes in. This collection of tips and tricks will help you write clearer, more compelling copy and prevent some of the most common mistakes people make when they write.

We hope you will keep them handy and use them as a reference when you sit down to create your marketing copy. If you have a piece you've written and would like us to review it – at no charge – just e-mail it to Mandy at mminor@jallanstudios.com. She'll be happy to answer some of your questions or look over your writing!

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mandy'.

Mandy Minor
Principal and lead copywriter, J Allan Studios

Articulate the benefits your business provides to customers

To successfully convey your message, you must communicate how you can help. By identifying readers' needs and showing how you will help meet them, you'll give your clients and potential clients a real reason to get in touch with you and use your products or services.

- Identify your target market and appeal to their pain
 - Problem → agitate → solve
 - Find the problem, twist the knife, and then solve it
- Features vs. benefits
 - Features are descriptors; benefits are emotional elements
 - Every feature should have a corresponding benefit
 - To find the feature's benefit add "so that" at the end: this pen is red *so that* you can find it
 - Paint the picture that shows how your product or service is going to improve their life
 - List the benefits early in your writing to hook the reader
- If you have the space (website or letter), keep writing!
 - If someone is interested they want to know all they can (like charity solicitation letters); if they're not interested they won't read no matter how short it is
- Ask these questions to make sure it's relevant:
 - What's the Big Idea? – one single, solid idea at the core
 - So what? – If the Big Idea doesn't stir passion in you, it won't stir passion in your prospects
 - Why does it matter now? – Is your message current enough to feel like news worth reading?
 - Why does it matter to this audience? – What good is a clever, catchy marketing message that has no appeal to your market?

General copywriting tips

When you need to get something down on paper fast, use the tips and ideas below to make it the best you can. And when you have some extra time before your marketing piece, brochure, or website goes live, make sure you let a professional copywriter help you. The extra expense will more than pay for itself in increased sales and improved brand image!

- Make your piece scannable for the quick once-over people do before they read
 - You need headlines, subheads, graphics, bulleted lists
- Headlines
 - Read your headlines out loud to avoid language mistakes like “Kids make great snacks”
 - Make it active: “Put music in your life” vs. “Puts music in your life” (the “s” increased conversion by 400%)
 - Appeal to self-interest: What’s in it for them?
 - “Job tickets never stack up with SuperHelpDesk”
 - Appeal to news: People are always interested in what’s new
 - “Hungry Market Snaps Up Latest Jaguar”
 - Appeal to curiosity: The best way to use curiosity is to combine it with an appeal to self-interest or newsworthiness
 - “Here’s one question you should never ask your CEO” is good; “Here’s one question you should never ask your CEO before you get a raise” is better because it stimulates curiosity and offers a benefit
- Enticing hook
 - The first sentence’s job is to get people to read the second sentence; second sentence’s job is to get people to read the third sentence; etc. – each sentence is a “hook” to the next
 - Use joining words we’ve been told not to use in “real” writing
 - Start sentences with “And,” “But,” etc.
- Your offer is critical
 - Let them know what they get for the money
 - Must state exactly what they get; be very clear
 - Overcome objections by addressing them
 - 3 main objections: lack of time, money, and usability
 - A strong guarantee helps a lot
- Close
 - P. S. is the second most read part of a letter, after the headline
 - Need a call to action that’s real and has a time limit
 - “Call us within 10 days to receive a 25% discount”
- Proofread – or better yet, have someone else read it
- The most common mistake in copywriting is using too many words
 - People want to read without effort, so use the fewest number of words that clearly explain your point