

KEEPING IT BRIEF

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EARLY



The keys to crafting engaging marketing copy.

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YOU'RE PROBABLY READING THIS GUIDE BECAUSE YOU'RE LOOKING TO ENGAGE YOUR CUSTOMERS WITH THE WORDS YOU USE. YOU MAY HAVE STRUGGLED TO FIND THE BEST SALES PITCH, THE RIGHT BLEND OF INFORMATIVE VERSUS HARD-SELL LANGUAGE, OR YOU SIMPLY WANT TO CREATE A TONE OF VOICE THAT STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD. WHATEVER YOUR WRITING CHALLENGE, THIS BRIEF GUIDE IS HERE TO HELP YOU TO TURN WORDS INTO SALES.

Working in marketing, we deal with a lot of copywriting. Brochures, flyers, ads, websites, whitepapers, guides and more. The briefs we receive from clients are often tricky, convoluted, and confusing (no offence to our clients). As marketers, it's our job to sift through the dust and produce pieces of writing that simplify the complex, represent the client in the best way possible, and sell.

The process we go through is the same for any client and the rule we stick to here at EarlyWMC is: keep it simple and brief. A Microsoft study has suggested that humans have an attention span of just eight seconds. While we'd hope that this isn't quite true, the data we've got access to here at EarlyWMC marries up with today's reality of audiences easily distracted by the next Facebook post, Instagram pic, text or tweet that comes their way.

When we look at statistics on average page view times, scroll rates, and heatmaps for websites we've designed, the value of a clear, short message that speaks instantly to your target audience is obvious. So how can you avoid presenting your users with far too much information?

Obviously, the best way to learn the art of writing is to write and to read regularly. There are a few guidelines you can follow, however, that will instantly improve your marketing penmanship and turn your words into sales.

1

SELL THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

It's tempting to launch into every detail about your awesome product or service - your tech was developed at CERN, your company has decades worth of experience, and you offer free shipping on orders over £20. Whilst all of this is important, you first need to earn your audience's attention, and the best way to do that is to prove you understand the problem they want you to fix. You only have a few seconds worth of attention to convince people to keep reading, so talk about something they'll recognise and resonate with instantly – the issue they've looked you up for in the first place.

2

KEEP IT AS BRIEF AS YOU CAN

Once you're finished writing, run through the page and rearrange sentences to cut down your total word count. Avoid tautology (saying the same thing twice). This may seem obvious, but it's easy to do, for example: 'I went there personally.' Brevity is the soul of wit.

3

DON'T SACRIFICE SIMPLICITY FOR FLAIR

Don't always treat pieces of marketing content as creative writing exercises when they don't need to be: begin work by defining a clear objective or message and then summarise it, in simple terms.

4

THINK ABOUT YOUR AUDIENCE

Who's reading this? In which medium are they reading it? One exercise we'll always perform with clients before getting started on a campaign is audience profiling. Again, it seems obvious, but different demographics require completely different marketing approaches, language and style.

A 'cold' email, for example, should take a completely different tone to one you send to customers you already have a relationship with. You haven't yet proven yourself to be valuable to their interests, so should bear in mind that the subject and first few lines of copy will dictate whether your prospect chooses to read on or discard your email as spam.

5

ANTICIPATE THE QUESTIONS OF YOUR AUDIENCE

What are they thinking when they reach your website, read your brochure or product flyer? What are their concerns likely to be? It's easy when you've designed a product or service to lose sight of the concerns your average customer might have – you need to be objective. Put yourself in their shoes.

6

USE COMEDY WITH CAUTION

This next bit of advice will be a ground-breaking revelation for many: you don't *have* to include a pun. Witticism is great, but sometimes the stars of the English Language just won't align for you and there's nothing wrong with that: shoe-horning in a half-baked pun will achieve nothing but groans from your target audience.

7

BRUSH UP ON YOUR GRAMMAR

Seriously, even if you think yours is great - it's not just the complex stuff like semicolons that we see people having trouble with. One of the most common mistakes we see people make are superfluous commas - which stick out like a sore thumb to anyone who paid attention during English lessons. Nobody likes a grammar nerd, but they exist and your mistakes will cost you their business.

8

LIMIT THE USE OF 'MAYBE' WORDS

One problem that plagues a lot of writers is that they appear to have very little confidence in what they're saying. Some words and phrases to avoid include: 'possibly,' 'perhaps,' 'arguably,' and 'in my/our opinion.' Subconsciously, readers see these words as signs that you're playing fast and loose with the truth. If you're writing something, and it's what you *actually think*, then act like you believe what you're saying (and if you don't, act like you do). Your tone of voice should always be confident.

9

DON'T RELY ON FONT BUTTONS

Capitalisation, underlining or hitting the bold and italics buttons every two seconds to emphasise a point looks lazy and can interrupt the flow. Your writing should speak for itself, confidently without font embellishment or the addition of smileys. That said, some of the techniques cautioned above do have their valid use if deployed sparingly and with care.

10

LET THEM KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT

Finish with a strong, clear call to action. It never ceases to amaze us how many so-called marketers forget this last one. You need to tell your reader what to do next and by when, how to get your product, where to buy it or how to reach you. We've tried, tested and proven this model time and time again to be the best way to construct a piece of marketing copy that engages and sells.

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is one of the
talented copywriters
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**THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS FULL OF INCONSISTENCIES AND IDIOSYNCRASIES
MAKING IT IMPOSSIBLE TO WRITE A DEFINITIVE LIST OF RULES THAT WILL
ALWAYS BE APPLICABLE, SO TAKE WHAT WE'VE SAID ABOVE AS RULES
OF THUMB; GENERALLY SPEAKING THOUGH, FOLLOWING THEM WILL MEAN
A CLEARER MESSAGE THAT LEAVES POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS MUCH MORE
LIKELY TO ENGAGE AND BUY.**

THANKS FOR READING

Thanks for reading - for more content like this, visit www.earlywmc.com. To get in touch and find out how we can fulfil all your marketing needs, send us an email at sayhello@earlywmc.com or call +44 (0) 20 3488 3500.