

How To Create Killer Copy That Sells®

– Your Step-by-Step Guide -

by Michael Cheney

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Introduction



You can have the best product in the world and the best looking website on the planet but if you don't have great words on your website you will not sell a single thing!

No matter how much you learn about marketing your website, getting found in the search engines or developing the best product it will all be wasted money and effort UNLESS:

You develop killer copywriting skills that sell your product or service.

This Guide is designed to help you do just that. It contains proven techniques that successful Internet entrepreneurs have used time and time again to create content that sells.

You will learn techniques for creating great copy for your website, your advertising campaigns and for use in off-site promotional activities.

So – stop muddling around in the dark wondering why nobody is buying from you and use the contents of this Guide to boost the selling power of your website.

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Part 1 – “Finding Your Website’s Voice”

Before we explore the ins and outs of copywriting the first place to start is by finding the ‘voice’ of your website.

Almost all commercial websites adopt the practice of having a brochure-type ‘voice’. Reading a website written with this ‘voice’ comes across as impersonal and rather dry. For example, a website that uses a brochure-type voice might include copy like this:

“At XYZ we pride ourselves on our ability to deliver solutions in a timely and effective manner.”

This type of writing voice does not adequately speak out to the visitor - although it can convey that a company is large in size and has many operations under its umbrella. For most companies though, adopting this style of voice will be the wrong approach as it is not personal enough or direct enough to get across the real message to the visitor.

The most effective voice style for a website is the ‘one to one’ voice. As its name suggests – this is just like speaking to a prospect in person, face to face. So rather than using the grandiose “We do this” or “Our company does that..” the ‘one to one’ voice means speaking directly to the visitor on a personal level.

This is a typical example of the one-to-one style of voice:

“I have grown this business on my ability to get results quickly and effectively. I can help your company to be more profitable by..”

Once you have decided on the right voice for your website you then need to think about the exact nature of that voice.

- ☹️ Will you use humour in your sales copy?
- ☹️ Is a more formal tone appropriate for your target audience?
- ☹️ Would 'speaking' to visitors as 'one of them' be relevant to the product you're providing?
- ☹️ Will you be the person behind the voice or will it be a faceless narrator or perhaps another member of your company?

For consultants or authors being the person behind the voice is the obvious choice but making yourself the primary selling tool and characterisation of your business and your website might not be relevant for you.

Part 2 – “Don't Set Sail Without A Compass!”

There is no point deciding on your website's 'voice' and then hastily creating hundreds of words of copy, before you have decided what the ultimate objective for your website is.

The writing style you adopt should be totally determined by your target audience and what it is you are trying to achieve with your website. If you are looking to make money via your website, directly or indirectly, then there are only two goals your site should have:

- 1 – To sell something directly to visitors
- 2 – To capture as many email addresses from your visitors as possible

You may want to do both – great! But decide on what the ultimate goal is for your website and then start thinking about what content needs to be created.

The 'one to one' style suits the straight sales approach when you have something people can buy directly from your website. My advice to you would be to decide whether you want to sell something directly, capture email addresses (to market to at a later date) or both.

“What You Get By Working Through This Document”

Notice I said 'work through' not 'read through'!

If you work through this Guide and complete all the exercises and required actions the end result will be the creation of enough great copy to populate the most important page of your website – the homepage.

The end product to what we'll cover will be the necessary content to create a powerful, persuasive and compelling sales letter for your homepage that will drive people to buy / order / enquire / sign up or do whatever it is you want them to do.

If you are selling just a few products or possibly even a single product then having a long sales letter on your homepage **is the best way of generating most sales**. You will find this recommendation from just about every single Internet marketing expert out there.

“What Is A Sales Letter?”

It is quite simply that – a letter that sells. They started off in hardcopy format and are sent out in their millions every year to people across the globe.

A sales letter is piece of writing that enables the person selling to reach out from the page and speak directly to the prospective customer as if they are dealing on a face to face basis.

The art and science of sales letter creation has been around for years and years and yet strangely, its uptake on the web is still in its infancy despite it being one of the most effective ways to sell products.

When I first started out I hated those sales letters!

But guess what? It doesn't matter what I think – it's what my customers think and the number of sales I get tells me that a long sales letter is **the** way to go.

Just think about it – you spend all this time, effort and money on getting the visitor to your website. When they land on your homepage you need to **keep them there**. You are not going to achieve this by having all your messages, benefits and selling points hidden away in deeper levels of your website – you need to sock it to them right there and then!

“The Anatomy Of Your Killer Sales Letter”

Before we go any further let me just show you how a winning sales letter should look. The order and components of sales letters that work have been tried and tested for years and years before the Internet was even around.

The format itself stems from the original hardcopy mailings and have since been tailored to fit the web environment. The point here is that it works. Thousands

of people the world over are using this technique to make more sales every day than they would using any other format of homepage.

So here it is – the anatomy of a winning sales letter:

| |
|--------------------------------------|
| Killer Headline |
| Killer Sub Headlines |
| A Great Story |
| Terrific Testimonials |
| Barrage Of Brilliant Benefits |
| Concrete Case For Credibility |
| Breathtaking Bullet Points |
| Verify Value |
| Bonanza Of Bonuses |
| How To Order |
| Psst! Don't Forget The PS! |

As I take you through this document we will explore how to create killer copy for each of the above 'ingredients' of the sales letter.

However, if you are selling lots of different products or in a specific industry sector creating a sales letter might not be the right approach for your website..

“When Long Sales Letters Don't Work”

Long sales letters aren't really the answer if you are selling a wide selection of products, as creating that amount of copy for each product just wouldn't work.

Aside from anything else it would take the reader hours and hours to digest it all!

The sales letter format is better suited to educating the reader about the benefits and selling points of one particular product or a small handful of products.

If you are selling multiple items or even have a catalogue of products you need to focus more on the creation of killer headlines and sub headlines.

All the exercises in this Guide are still relevant if your website is selling lots of products – the key difference is how you decide to utilise the content that you create when going through the exercises.

Rather than place all the elements of the sales letter (see above) onto one page – if you are a catalogue website owner you will need to pick out certain elements and spread them across various pages. So – to continue the analogy – the ingredients are the same – it's just *the recipe* that is slightly different.

The starting point to creating your sales letter is to killer headlines.

Part 3 – “Killer Headlines Are The Key To Your Website’s Success”

Headline writing is an art. Headline writing is also a science. I have seen software programmes out there that claim to be able to produce perfect headlines that will “sell your products like hotcakes” but, to coin a phrase, I just don't buy it.

It's true that there are certain elements, specific words and particular ways of creating headlines that work better than others. However, if it was just a matter of "headline writing by numbers" then copywriting would be a redundant profession - which I can assure you it most certainly isn't!

"Do Not Underestimate The Power Of Headlines"

A headline makes or breaks your copy. Your main copy could be the best in the world, laden with super benefits and massive selling points but if your headline sucks so will your sales figures!

Don't just take my word for it though, listen to what the advertising experts say:

"There are four important qualities that a good headline may possess. They are: 1. Self-interest, 2. News, 3. Curiosity, 4. Quick, easy way" – John Caples, Tested Advertising Methods

"On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty cents out of your dollar." - David Ogilvy

"The headline is the most important element of an ad. It must offer a promise to the reader of a believable benefit. And it must be phrased in a way to give it memory value" - Morris Hite

"The headline is the 'ticket on the meat.' Use it to flag down readers who are prospects for the kind of product you are advertising." - David Ogilvy

So – headlines are crucial to your success on the Internet. Period.

It is ridiculous to think that so much comes down to what might be less than 10 words in length!

Part 4 – “What Makes A Great Headline?”

Well, rather than me inventing this from scratch – let’s just summarise what the masters of advertising above have to say are the crucial components of a winning headline:

- ☞ Flag down readers who are your targets
- ☞ Promise the reader believable benefit
- ☞ Include one or more items of self-interest, news, curiosity or examples of the ‘quick and easy way’

So – pinpoint the right people, hit them with a benefit and evoke their curiosity and belief that it is in their own personal interest to find out more.

Part 5 – “Building A Barrage Of Brilliant Benefits”

The biggest lesson I have personally learned about copywriting is that the BENEFIT is the single most important aspect of a headline.

You can get everything else right but if you screw up or leave out the benefit the headline just won't work.

Let's pretend we're a business that sells deluxe office chairs that have a built-in massager and heater. The name of the product is Delux-o-Seat. We're going to go through the actual process of headline building for this product right now.

I suggest that as we go through this you follow the steps for the example product and also repeat them for your own product or service.

As I have said – the benefit to the customer is the most important aspect of the headline (and indeed your entire sales copy) so you need to start from there. At first let's just forget the headline and concentrate on brainstorming the benefits of the product and writing down anything that comes into your head no matter how silly or minor the benefits may sound.

The trick here is to start off just listing the FEATURES of the product and then converting these into BENEFITS for the customer.

“Converting Delux-o-Seat Features Into Benefits”

| FEATURE | BENEFIT |
|---|--|
| Furnished with leading carbon polymer and Yak’s wool combo fibres | Supremely comfortable |
| Hand-manufactured in an expensive, labour intensive process | Exclusive product only available to a few top industry high flyers |
| Rotates at all angles, adjustable height, seat position and neck rest | Makes working easier |
| Contemporary and classic design | Suits any office |
| Shiny chrome and patent Italian leather finish | Stands out from the crowd – adds class and prestige to any office |
| Built-in massager | Gives you energy and enables you to achieve more |
| Scientifically designed and approved backrest | Keeps you healthy and encourages the perfect posture |
| Costs \$5999 | Sets you apart from other executives |

Okay – so now, if you’ve been mirroring this exercise for your own product, you will have a list of features of your product with an equivalent customer-benefit for each one.

The next step is to pinpoint the right people for your product. We are working our way towards creating some killer headlines – we've nailed down your product's benefits and now we need to target the right people.

Part 6 – “Flagging Down The Right Prospects For Your Message”

Nobody has a product that has truly mass-market appeal. Even the likes of Coca Cola know that there are clear market segments that their product appeals to more than others. They don't bother spending billions on advertising to the over 70s when the big bucks for them are at the lower age range.

And it will be the same with your product – you must have a picture in your mind about the nature of your 'typical' customer or how the different groups of customers you have can be segmented.

For the Delux-o-seat there are two main customer 'types' that we need to target.

High Flying Executives – these guys always have the latest gadgets and gizmos, they wear designer suits and have \$200K+ salaries. They want the best and will think nothing of spending \$6000 on a chair.

Managing Directors – the people at the top of organisations sometimes need to convey a certain image about their authority and power status. These guys will be interested in buying the Delux-o-seat to reinforce the image they have of themselves as being powerful, high status individuals.

You and I are responsible for creating the headlines for the Delux-o-seat - we do not want to target people who cannot afford the product or target people who will waste time and money by ordering a catalogue but not buying the product.

Targeting our efforts towards the right people means we will convert more of these into customers than if we just adopt a shotgun approach and market to the masses.

“2 Simple Ways Of Targeting People With Your Headlines”

We could be extremely unsubtle and just use headlines that start with phrases like:

“High Flying Executives – Are You....”

“Managing Directors – Did You Know..”
etc.

Hardly inspiring though are they?

To adopt a more subtle approach you need to think of things that will only appeal to your target audience or things that only your target audience will understand or appreciate. Here are some examples of how this could be applied to target those high flyers..

“Does Your Personal Assistant Say You Sit Down Too Much?”

“Life At The Top Isn’t As Easy As They Say It Is..”

“When Your Pay Gets Taxed 40% Don’t You Think You Deserve...”

“You’re Chairman Of The Board? Are You A Man Who’s Bored Of His Chair?”

Think about what makes your targets who they are – what makes them different to everyone else.

- ➡ What circumstances are they in?
- ➡ What decisions are they faced with?
- ➡ What experiences do they have that others don’t?
- ➡ What problems do they face that nobody else faces?

My personal opinion on targeting is that it is not 100% essential when creating a headline – if you do your marketing right in the first place the only people coming to your website should be well-targeted anyway.

However, as you can use headlines on other people’s websites and newsletters to promote your products it is still a useful technique to have in your armoury. Don’t fall into the trap though of thinking that every headline needs to pinpoint specific individuals.

Okay – so we’ve covered some ground on benefits and targeting the right people. Now it’s time to explore how to include the elements of self-interest, news, curiosity or the ‘quick and easy way’ into your headlines.

Part 7 – “How To Add That Magic Touch To Your Headlines”

Including benefits and targeting the right people with your headlines is not enough. Now comes the hard part! People being what they are means that headlines are subjective so no matter what information you can lay your hands on about ‘magic headline writing formulas’ there is, alas, no definitive answer!

As I’ve already demonstrated to you - there are steps you can take to make sure your headlines at least stand a chance of achieving legendary results for you!

“Me, Myself And I”

All a customer cares about is themselves. They were not brought into this world to pay your mortgage or just buy your product for the sake of it. They always, always, always want to know:

“What’s in it for me?”

If you don’t answer this question with your headlines it’s game over. What you need to do is put them at the centre of the whole proposition.

The way to do this is to take your shoes off.

Yes – take your shoes off and put yourself in the shoes of your prospect. Ask yourself these questions:

- ☞ What is this prospect currently missing out on because they don't have my product?
- ☞ What pain is the prospect suffering because they don't yet have my product?
- ☞ Why would the prospect's life be better if they bought my product?
- ☞ Why would the person have the best day of their lives today if they bought my product?
- ☞ Why should the person buy my product rather than other similar ones available?
- ☞ What is slowing the person down by not owning my product?
- ☞ What negative effects is this person experiencing as a result of not owning my product?
- ☞ Why is my product the answer to the person's problems?
- ☞ How will it totally and utterly transform this person's life in some way if they buy my product?

Got answers to all the above questions? Good!

What's that? You're struggling to come up with answers? Here's some examples using our product the Delux-o-seat then to help you:

Q. What is this prospect currently missing out on because they don't have my product?

A. They are ruining their back and getting less work done because the seat they are using will not be as good as the Delux-o-seat.

Q. What pain is this prospect suffering because they don't yet have my product?

A. Physical pain! They are also possibly suffering social pain of having *the same chair as everyone else* when really, as they are high flying executive they feel they deserve to stand out from the crowd and have something unique.

Q. Why would the prospect's life be better if they bought my product?

A. They would feel healthier, more energetic and more prestigious in the Delux-o-seat!

Q. Why would the person have the best day of their lives today if they bought my product?

A. They would be full of energy and totally relaxed and with no aches or pains despite spending a hard day at work.

Q. Why should the person buy my product rather than other similar ones available?

A. There are no similar products available! PLUS the Delux-o-seat comes with a 100-year money back guarantee

Q. What is slowing the person down by not owning my product?

A. They are not achieving as much with each working day as they could be. They are possibly shortening their life span by ruining their back using bad seats.

So – have you answered all the above questions for **your own product?**

If not – do it now!

To recap – so far, on our road to headline greatness we've already created:

A Barrage Of Benefits

Sure-fire Ways Of Targeting The Right People

Series Of Statements About How Buying Our Product Will Change People's Lives

Part 8 – “Creating Curiosity And Self-Interest In Your Headlines”

You will remember that the essential actions to creating a winning headline are to:

- ➡ Flag down readers who are your targets
- ➡ Promise the reader believable benefit
- ➡ Include one or more items of self-interest, news, curiosity or examples of the 'quick and easy way'

We have looked at flagging down the readers who are your targets. We have spent some time exploring how you can turn the features of your product into customer-centric benefits. Now it's time to evoke curiosity and self-interest in the reader!

Some Eye-Grabbing Openers

Try some of these great headline openers that create curiosity and build a sense of self-interest in the reader:

“Are You Wasting Your Money On ... When You Could Be ...?”

“Do You See Yourself As A ... ?”

“Are Sick And Tired Of ..? Do You Want To Change This Right Now?”

“Learn How You Could Be Saving Yourself ... By Taking 3 Simple Steps..”

“Why Are You ... When You Could Be ...?”

“Don’t You Wish That You Could...?”

“What Would You Do With .. Extra Dollars / Hours ... ?”

Using questions in the right way will encourage visitors to read on and find out the answer – particularly when combined with an angle of self-interest that targets the reader personally.

The simplest way to incorporate self-interest into your headlines is to use words like “You”, “Your” and “Yours”. So rather than a headline that states:

“Back Problems Cost Employers One Million Annually”

It would be better to phrase it:

“Your Employees’ Back Problems Are Costing You Thousands In Lost Revenue Every Year – Discover How You Can Eliminate This Lost Expenditure Right Now”

Building curiosity with a headline is a tricky business but any form of question will usually work. Powerful phrases you can use to evoke curiosity include:

**How To
Learn How To
Discover
Uncover
Secrets Revealed
Exposed
Find Out Why
Learn What
Insider Tips
Exclusive**

Part 9 – “The Quick And Easy Way To Include ‘The Quick And Easy Way’ ”

The world is speeding up.

All of us are being asked to achieve more with less time. As this pace grows the one thing we all have less of nowadays is time. If you can incorporate the ‘quick and easy way’ into your headlines you will see a greater response. Some examples include:

“7 Simple Steps To Losing Weight In 7 Days”

“How To Make \$299 In 24 Hours Without Spending A Cent”

“How To Set Up Your Online Business In One Day”

“We Can Help You Lose Up To 5 Kilos By 12th Of February”

Everyone wants things quicker. If you have a product or service that saves people time or is delivered quicker than anybody else's or has a positive impact on the customer's life in a matter of minutes or hours then make a song and dance about it!

If you an electronic product that people could be benefiting from immediately after downloading it then tell them!

If you have a course that takes 7 days to complete and means the person will have mastered a certain task then get across the point that they could "Experience a new and better life using the skills you master in 7 days from now!".

It's important not to go overboard with this technique – you should only use it if you are 100% confident that your product can live up to your claims. It's an old saying but is extremely relevant for headline writing:

Always under-promise and over-deliver.

Remember what we covered right at the beginning of this Guide – you need to include **believable** benefits. A 'quick and easy way' is fine – over the top claims of miracles and overnight success stories may be pushing it..

Part 10 – “How To Piece Together Your Headline”

Up to now we've looked at each of the components of headlines separately. Now it's time to start bringing all these separate pieces together to start creating your first headlines.

Let's use the Delux-o-Seat as an example.

In a moment I will show you some headlines that:

- ➡ Flag down our target prospects
- ➡ Promise the reader a believable benefit
- ➡ Evoke curiosity in the reader to find out more
- ➡ Have a strong element of self-interest for the reader
- ➡ Make reference to a 'quick and easy way'

Remember, these are the crucial pieces that together make a killer headline. So, using the above pieces that we have already covered in detail here are some headlines created using each of the elements:

“Does Your Personal Assistant Say You Sit Down Too Much? Discover In The Next 60 Seconds How You Can Be Healthier And Achieve More Without Moving A Muscle”

“When Your Pay Gets Taxed 40% Don't You Think You Deserve To Treat Your Back With The Best Seat The World Has To Offer?”

“How To Instantly Boost Your Status, Health And Effectiveness By Owning An Item That Leading MDs Are Calling ‘a revolution in office seating’ ”

So there you have it – some headlines created using the essential pieces we’ve worked through.

You will have noticed reading through this Guide that all the headlines have been presented in quotation marks. Studies have shown that putting headlines in quotes increases their effectiveness as readers feel a closer connection to the words and listen more attentively to the ‘one-to-one’ voice.

Part 11 – “Now You Have The Tools – Start Creating Headlines!!”

You now need to brainstorm headlines – spend at least two hours, yes **two hours**, writing down as many headlines as you can about your product or service. Come at it from all angles – the crazier the ideas the better! If it comes into your head – write it down.

Remember to include the essential pieces of the headline that we’ve covered:

- ☞ Flag down our target prospects
- ☞ Promise the reader a believable benefit
- ☞ Evoke curiosity in the reader to find out more
- ☞ Have a strong element of self-interest for the reader
- ☞ Make reference to a ‘quick and easy way’

Try not to read over what you've written until the time is up. You will find your train of thought takes you down all kinds of paths – just go with it.

You need to keep your energy and momentum during this – the killer headlines will probably come to you somewhere in the middle of the exercise (but you won't know until you look back at them afterwards!).

“Back To School – Marks Out Of 10?”

It is essential that once you have completed your 2-hour headline writing exercise that you take time out to recover! I find that coming back to your headlines the next day with a fresh pair of eyes works well.

So the next day grab your masses of headlines and pretend that it's back to school time. Get a big red pen and score each of the headlines from 1 to 10. Don't be afraid to delete headlines which you know in your heart of hearts are just plain garbage.

Work your way through the headlines and **score them from 1 to 10 and delete those that you don't even feel deserve a 1 out of 10!**

Just go with your gut feeling when you score them – the first score that enters your head is what you should write down next to each headline. Don't dwell on whether or not it's the right score.

Once you have developed the scored list **it is a good idea to have someone read the headlines out to you so you can hear what they sound like.**

Although a headline may look okay when it is actually read aloud it can reveal unnatural language and cracks that you will need to iron out.

Reading the headlines out loud and getting second opinions may change the rating you give to some of them so make any required changes to your list if this occurs.

Once you have given every headline a score it's time to get them into a ranking table with your best headlines at the top then working down the page to your poorest. This is easier to do electronically but don't worry if you're written your headlines out by hand – you can just literally cut and paste them onto a large piece of paper in the right order.

Once you have your ordered list you can start planning where each headline will be used on your homepage.

“Which Headlines Go Where?”

You should now have a list of all your headlines with a score for each and ordered with the best headlines at the top of the page and the lowest-scoring ones at the bottom.

Here is my suggestion on how you should use the different headlines:

Use Headlines That Score 9 – 10 For: Main headlines

Any headlines that you have scored 9 or 10 should be considered as the uppermost headline to be used right at the very top of your homepage. If you have lots – great! You will need to select your favourite and use this as the top headline.

Your second favourite you can use as the sub headline on your website that appears directly under your main headline. Any other headlines that scored 9 or 10 you can use in the subsequent parts of your homepage as explained below.

Use Headlines That Score 7 – 8 For: Sub headlines

Any headlines scored 7 or 8 should be used as the sub headlines dotted throughout your homepage. They should be highlighted using bold or a larger font size so that people scanning down your homepage will notice them.

These sub headlines will help to build the case for your product and educate the potential customer about what it is you are offering.

As part of your headline brainstorming exercise there will be duplication to a certain extent so use the best variation where you have similar headlines. Seeking assistance from a colleague, friend or partner on this is a real life-saver!

Use Headlines That Score 6 For: Bullet points

Throughout your homepage there will be a series of bullet points that explain the benefits and key selling points of your product. Headlines that scored a 6 should be used for this purpose. They are not powerful enough to be main headlines in their own right but should still encapsulate your main messages and customer-focused benefits.

Use Headlines That Score 5 For: Main website copy

It would be ridiculous to have a homepage made up entirely of headlines so weave the wordings of those headlines you rated a 5 into the main copy or 'story' of your homepage. These headlines are not actually headlines at all –

they become part of sentences and short paragraphs that build up the detail of what you are offering.

As we'll look at in the next section of this Guide – your job when building a homepage sales letter is to tell a story. The main headlines are like the book's titles and chapter headings. The headlines you scored a 5 are the actual words and phrases that make up the story.

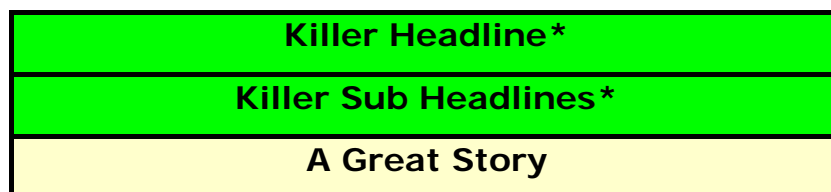
Use Headlines That Score 1 – 4 For: Reworking And Trying Again!

Any headlines on your list that scored 4 or less should not make it onto your website. You need to head back to the drawing board with these bad boys! Don't delete or discard these headlines though because although they just scored a 4 or less they may be a 9 or 10 headline in the making with a little more work.

If you carried out the headline brainstorming exercise for 2 hours using all the tips and pointers from this Guide you should now have more than enough headlines, sub headlines, bullets and main copy for your website. Now it's time to pull all the various elements of your sales letter together..

Part 12 – “The Anatomy Of A Winning Sales Letter”

Just to recap, here is the anatomy of a winning sales letter:



| |
|---------------------------------------|
| Terrific Testimonials |
| Barrage Of Brilliant Benefits* |
| Concrete Case For Credibility |
| Breathtaking Bullet Points* |
| Verify Value |
| Bonanza Of Bonuses |
| How To Order |
| Psst! Don't Forget The PS! |

The headline creation exercises we've covered already have now given you lots of great copy for many of these ingredients. The asterisked green items in the above list have been covered already – the other ones I will talk you through now.

Although we have covered the anatomy of a winning sales letter it is important to realise that this is not an attempt at a definitive answer. You should experiment with the ingredients – for example, you will need to have testimonials *throughout* your sales letter, not just in one part of it.

The 'Concrete Case For Credibility' is also something that should not be restricted to one portion of your homepage – it is an ingredient much like mayonnaise that dribbles *throughout* the sandwich rather than just sticking to one single layer!

The same can also be said for the creation of your Great Story..

Part 13 – “Telling A Great Story”

Nothing will entice readers to stay on your homepage more than a well-crafted story that builds a picture up in their minds and evokes curiosity about its outcome.

Now this doesn't mean starting off with “Once upon a time..” all it means is that you need to weave your benefits and selling points into a flowing structured story.

Some great ways to do this include:

- ☞ Telling the story of how you got started in the business and why readers should listen to you
- ☞ Telling the story of their problem, how frustrating it is and then slowly uncovering the solution – i.e. your product
- ☞ Telling the story of a customer you helped get from A to B (where A is desperation and B is total satisfaction and improved quality of life)
- ☞ Telling the story of your industry, what state it's in and why your business sets itself apart from the other players

The key to this is to hook them in early. The more specific you can be, the better. So if you choose to use an existing customer's story of success – **be specific.**

The Devil Is In The Detail

Don't just say:

“One of our customers started out with...”

Say:

“Janice Smith, a 30-year old dietician from Florida, has been a customer of ours for five years. When she first started out...”

People **love** reading about other people. Let’s face it – we’re all a little bit nosy so getting to hear about other people’s failures, successes, adventures, discoveries and experiences makes us feel **as if we’re actually there**.

And this is the crucial part to story telling – **by telling a story you are strengthening the connection between you and the reader**. They no longer see the voice on your homepage as something that is selling to them – they view it as a friend who is sharing an experience with them for their greater good.

Your homepage is really doing both of these things but using a story to get your message across means you can do so in a non-salesy way.

“Make Sure Your Story Is Like A Sandwich”

I’m sure you learned at school that a story should have a beginning, a middle and an end. Or one slice of bread to begin the sandwich, some filling in the middle and another slice to end it.

Start off with the end in mind – what conclusion could your story have that will get across your message to a reader most powerfully? Where do you want the story to take them? Do you want to show them what their life would be like if they don’t buy your product or what it would be like if they do?

Perhaps you want to tell them the story of all the mistakes you have learned as you educated yourself in your particular industry. Or maybe you want to tell them the story of the best customers you've had, the awards you've won or how you have beaten the competition or grown your business.

The only limit to how your story will work is your imagination.

What you should do is create a story that takes the reader on a journey – where they start off with a problem or a worrying situation (their life without your product) and then are gradually 'shown the light' about how your product can help them to move forward.

The ending point to the story needs to be a position in the future for the reader – what their life will be like **after they buy your product.**

Taking a reader on a journey like this means you are essentially getting them to step back and see what it is like to live without your product. They are able to clearly see what problems their situation gives them.

Reading further then makes them realise what they are missing out on and they start to imagine and visualise what it would be like **if they DID own your product.**

And then in the final part of the story they will start picturing themselves reaping the rewards and benefits of buying your product.

You can only get people to think in this way by using a story – I hope you can see now what a powerful technique this is and how essential it is to the success of your sales letter.

Part 14 – “Terrific Testimonials”

So far we have spoken about getting **your** message across and saying what **you** have to say about **your** business. But the truth of the matter is that what **you** say will only have so much sway on your readers.

Buyers, and we are all buyers, are generally a cynical bunch and we will take any opportunity we can to feed this cynicism. A great way of overcoming this is to hit your readers with glowing testimonials about your product or service.

Choosing How To Present Your Testimonials

The best testimonials I’ve seen come in video format – they literally speak out at you from the web page! I think it will be a while until everyone moves in this direction and Internet connection speeds along with technical constraints mean that adopting a slightly less advanced approach might be best for you.

Deciding on exactly how you present your testimonials all comes down to what you are trying to achieve with them. Testimonials will add weight to your argument – they will add more voices to the belief that your product is the greatest. There are certain key elements that you need to try and attain with your testimonials:

- ☞ Use testimonials to **Boost credibility**
- ☞ Use testimonials to **Demonstrate value and results**
- ☞ Use testimonials to **Prove relevance to your target market**
- ☞ Use testimonials to **Justify expenditure**

At a bare minimum each testimonial should come with the quote, the person's name and their business (if relevant). It will add extra weight and believability if you can accompany each testimonial with a photograph. Better still would be a small audio clip or even video clip.

Using Testimonials To Boost Credibility

Your testimonials ultimately are there to boost your credibility in the eyes of the reader. The more weighty the testimonial, the more believable it is, and the more respected the person is who's giving it, the more likely it is that you will successfully gain more credibility.

Using Testimonials To Demonstrate Value And Results

But it's not *just* about credibility – you need to use your testimonials to demonstrate the value of your products and the worth of the results attained by using it. Inviting your customers to submit their success stories is a great idea as their testimonials will not *just* say "This product is great" – they will also get across the message that your product has a real value and produces definite and a specified level of results.

Testimonials are a very important tool in your bag to answer the questions a reader may have;

"That's great – you say your product is the best - but how do I know this?"

[Insert testimonial from a customer who's tried several products and believes strongly that yours is the best]

“You say I will get the cost of the product back within 6 months – but how do I know this?”

[Insert testimonial from a customer that has used your product and increased their profit by 20% within 2 months etc.]

Using Testimonials To Prove Relevance To Your Target Market

You should also use testimonials to demonstrate the relevance of your product to the different types of people you are targeting. If you are targeting single mothers working from home – get some testimonials from working-from-home single mothers.

If your product is targeted towards lots of different types of prospects then demonstrate this by getting testimonials from a wide cross section of people. This will convey the message that your product can be used by all kinds of people of varying backgrounds, nationalities and skill levels if this is a relevant message to convey for your product.

The trick is to use a testimonial that your reader sees and thinks:

“That could be me – I’m like that guy and look at how great his life is after he bought this product. There is no reason why I can’t achieve the same results.”

Using Testimonials To Justify Expenditure

Like it or not the main sticking factor you will be faced with is the price of your product. There will always be people that think you're charging too much even if you're actually charging too little!

Using testimonials is an excellent way to calm the nerves of your prospective buyers by demonstrating that lots of other people just like them have made the decision to buy your product and don't regret it at all.

Testimonials that use specific timelines work great for this, for example:

"I bought the product and within 7 days I'd already made my money back in savings.."

Use Your Testimonials To Give The Reader A Break From Your Sales Letter

Your sales letter will only be effective if you take care not to overload your reader with too much sales copy at a time. This may sound odd seeing as we're talking about a 'sales' letter here whose entire purpose is to sell!

But what I'm getting at is that if you try to push a sales message onto people without balancing this out with independent copy items you will meet with resistance from your reader.

Your testimonials should be sandwiched in between to the outright sales-orientated copy of your homepage.

Equally as bad would be bunching all your testimonials together in one place on your homepage – this would mean that somewhere on your page there will be too much sales letter content bunched together.

The trick is to **break up your sales letter with testimonials throughout** – not just use them in one place.

Aside from anything else – **reading a testimonial gives your reader a break from the same voice** and keeps them stimulated. You need to keep the reader interested and hooked on your homepage – too much sales copy without testimonials and you'll lose them!

My last piece of advice on testimonials is to use your best one or two testimonials right after your headline – this way virtually the first thing a reader will see is that *other people* think your product is great!

Part 15 – “Creating A Concrete Case For Credibility”

As I've touched on already – one of the biggest goals you are aiming for with *all* the content on your homepage is to establish credibility with your reader.

When they land on your homepage for the very first time it's as if you've just knocked on their front door at 7am on a Sunday morning and got them out of bed.

They're staring at you thinking:

“Who the hell is this person?!”

“What do they want with me?”

“What are they selling?”

“Are they a scam artist?”

“Are they looking to put a foot in my door or really help me out?”

If you don't establish credibility with your prospective buyer you will not make a single sale.

NO CREDIBILITY = NO SALE

Sorry to reiterate it but it is absolutely crucial. Lots of what we have covered already will help you to build a 'concrete case for credibility' with your readers:

- ☞ Headlines
- ☞ Benefits
- ☞ Testimonials
- ☞ Story
- ☞ Background

Unfortunately there is no one single thing that you can to instantly demonstrate credibility to your readers. Just like using testimonials – it's another case of drip-feeding it into the content of your homepage.

Weaving testimonials into your sales letter along with examples, short case studies, press comments, your personal background and just the over all tone of your homepage will dictate whether people feel you have enough credibility to be trustworthy.

A very powerful question to ask when creating copy for your homepage and attempting to establish credibility is this:

“What would happen if you told the truth?”

People are very perceptive – they will know if you are withholding certain items or if you are exaggerating things. One of the easiest ways to start establishing credibility with your readers is to be as open as possible and not dress anything up.

Just tell the truth, be yourself and talk to them as you would a friend.

You can start to establish credibility in this way as you work towards gathering glowing testimonials from world-famous celebrities and collecting thousands of customer success stories!

Part 16 – “Verify Value”

One of the things I first noticed about sales letters on the web is that one particular item is always very hard to locate. Do you know what it is?

That’s right! The price of the product!

At first I used to think this was the website owners being sneaky and hiding it but there is a more important reason and method to this technique.

As all great salesmen know – the last thing you want to discuss with a buyer is the price.

Once you have covered absolutely everything else the last thing you discuss is the price. The reason is simple – **it is only after hearing your proposition in full, with all the benefits, doubt-killers, testimonials, case studies and**

background that the prospect can adequately appreciate the value of your product.

If I told you right now that I have a hairbrush I want to sell to you for \$150 you'd laugh in my face right?

Well, to be honest, it is actually a used hairbrush! I want to sell you this used hairbrush for \$150 – do you want to buy it from me?

What's that? You're not interested? Okay, well let me tell you a little more..

This hairbrush used to belong to Elvis. It was the hairbrush he used right before he went on stage for his last ever performance. It is diamond encrusted, hand-crafted in solid gold and has bristles made from white stallion hairs. Still think \$150 is expensive?

Okay – so the hairbrush is a figment of my imagination but you get my point!

Until you have presented the buyer with all the information just giving them the price is a pointless exercise as they will not be in possession of all the information they need to make an informed decision. This is why you need to 'verify value' towards the end of your sales letter.

Commentaries, Comparisons & Costs

As I mentioned above – using testimonials is a superb way of demonstrating the value of your product. Notice here that I am talking about **value not price** – value can be things like time saved, savings made, usefulness, improvement to quality of life etc. It is crucial though that you build up the **value of your product first and only talk about price afterwards.**

Comparisons are another excellent way of demonstrating value. You will have seen examples of this, usually in magazines where companies use comparison tables to show how many more additional features their product has than a competitor is offering or how much more cost effective it is. If you can use a similar method for your product and clearly demonstrate that yours is better than the competition – go for it!

Costs can be used to demonstrate value. Now I'm not talking about the cost of the product – I'm talking about **the cost of not buying the product right now**. This is a very effective technique to whip buyers up into a frenzy! Tell people about the money they will be wasting by not taking action right now.

Demonstrate to them the lost money that they would make in savings if they bought your product right now. Adding up the potential savings your product will bring them over a year is a superb way of demonstrating the value of your product:

“You will lose X in the next 12 months if you don't buy now”

After you have clearly demonstrated the real value of your product you need to tell the reader how much your product costs. **Don't harp on about the price – just mention it once or twice and then follow it with an additional piece of content that demonstrates value.**

Now it's time to move onto the next element of your winning sales letter..

Part 17 – “Building A Bonanza Of Bonuses”

Okay – so you’ve demonstrated the value of your product and then gone on to show the readers how much your product costs. If you’ve stuck to the plan you will now have a lot of interested readers looking for their wallets but lots of them will still be wavering a little.

So this is where you hit them with your ‘bonanza of bonuses’. You need to show them a list of free, additional bonus items that will be **so enticing, so value-packed and so exciting that they will not be able to resist the full package.**

“Isn’t Using Bonuses Cheesy?”

No! Using bonuses sells you more products! FACT!

The only time that using bonuses is cheesy is if your bonuses themselves are cheesy!!!

You need to offer free bonus products that are **supremely valuable, excellently targeted and totally relevant to your audience.** Offering anything else is just pointless. A great way of offering bonuses is to provide electronic products of some kind.

As with your main product – your bonus products should be assigned a *realistic and honest monetary value* so that your readers can see that they really are getting a great bargain. I recommend you include at least three bonus items with your offer.

Examples Of Cool Bonuses

Here are some real-life examples of bonuses that other companies are offering to give you some ideas for your own.

A company selling a guide on how to manage your Pay Per Click campaigns offers these bonuses:

- ➡ Free website template
- ➡ Free graphics for your website to accompany your ad campaign
- ➡ Free advertising banners to use in parallel campaigns

A company selling an auto responder service that can manage your email newsletters and broadcasts offers these bonuses:

- ➡ Free DVD interview with the owner of the business for insights on his success
- ➡ Free Ebook about advertising in Ezines
- ➡ Free Report about how to create your own products
- ➡ Free advertisements – they give you 1000 free ads to promote your newsletter on their network

A company selling a software programme that teaches you how to type offers these bonuses:

- ➡ Free Resources Report of the best online forums and websites to find other learning typists
- ➡ Free audio CD that teaches more advanced typing techniques
- ➡ Free Product Guide – review of different keyboard styles provided by professional typists

Part 18 – “How To Order”

You now need to tell the reader how to place their order. Make it as simple as possible without being patronising – it’s not easy! The last thing you want after spending all this time and effort encouraging people to buy your product is to confuse or insult them with the buying process!

Depending on how you are delivering the product and how your ordering system works it might be useful to include brief instructions on this and to pre-empt any questions about delivery times and costs.

I have also seen a great idea on some websites that tell you, just before you place an order, how many seconds or minutes it will take to complete the process. This is a clever idea as it lets the reader know what they are engaging in when they decide to order.

Part 19 – “Psst! Don’t Forget The PS!”

You should use a PS in all your written materials if you can. Studies have shown that the two most-read items of a letter are the opening headline and the PS. I guarantee that now you know this the next time you get a letter you will catch yourself doing it!

In relation to your homepage sales letter the PS acts as a safety net. It is there to catch any prospective buyers that are on the verge of leaving your website.

They have read all your hard-crafted headlines, benefits, testimonials, background, credibility building content, value verifications and bonanza of bonuses but are still not sure.

The job of your PS is to push these readers over the edge and quickly condense the biggest, most powerful reason you have as to why **they need to act right now and buy your product.**

I have often seen some sales letters that conclude with a link stating:

“Decided you don’t want to buy? Click here”

To be honest I think these are flat out a bad idea. Firstly because they open up a new page – one without all your powerful sales letter elements on it. Secondly – a person clicking on the link is affirming to themselves that they have ‘decided not to buy’ so your job instantly becomes harder.

You’ve changed the proposition from not just trying to get the reader to make a decision but trying to get them to change an existing decision – even more difficult!

Check out these real life examples of great PS usage:

P.S. DON'T FORGET -you also receive two valuable Ebooks, and you have three months to test out my report for yourself. If you decide that my plan is not for you, then just write for a refund. No questions asked. We want you to know that you can order our report risk-free!

P.S. This is your chance to overcome all the barriers that block you from a fulfilling life of success.
P.P.S. This is a turning point in your life... the point at which you take charge of your life. But it all hinges on you taking action now. Will you [click here now](#) to order or will you sabotage your success once more?

So – use your PS wisely and use it to promote your product's biggest benefit. Give the reader the most compelling reason why clicking away from your site without buying would be the worst decision of their lives!

Michael Cheney

PS – Do you want to get your salesletters written automatically? Yanik Silver is an online legend when it comes to writing salesletters, he knows more than anyone I have ever come across and he's developed a cool bit of software that automates the entire process for you. Unless you have many, many hours to spend honing and perfecting your own skills I highly recommend you check out Yanik's simple tool "Instant Sales Letters" – it does what it says on the tin:

<http://www.websitemarketingbible.com/instant/>