

Simple Tips and Strategies To  
Create  
**Compelling**  
Web Copy



## ***SIMPLE TIPS AND STRATEGIES TO CREATE COMPELLING WEB COPY***

Remember when the term “Web 2.0” was all the rage? Everyone had his or her own perception of what it was. Some people believed that it was a technology. Some people believed it was a made up phrase – a buzzword so to speak used only for falsely enhancing a company’s image. Others believed it was specific software, and still others believed that it was a ‘theory’ of operating on the web.

In reality, Web 2.0 was a set of principles and practices that tie together a veritable solar system of a site such as Wikipedia, Google, Amazon, YouTube and other websites that offer users a rich experience. Those same principles are still being used today.

By the way, if you’re new to online business and aren’t familiar with the phrase “Web 2.0” it’s become a bit outdated because it’s the interactivity of the web has become the norm and there is no need to label it anymore.

Using an online bookstore as an example, it’s the difference between going to an online store and only being able to purchase a book and going to a store and being able to read reviews, leave reviews, participate in a chat room or blog, create favorites lists, and even communicate with the author. In many cases for websites that use this concept, the users define the content.

So if users are defining the content, how does an online marketer create content for the web?

### **Content Goals**

With any website you have a few goals:

- You want to drive traffic to your website
- You want to keep people at your website
- You want to encourage people to return to your website
- And you want them to make purchases.

These tasks are all still accomplished by the content that you provide. Whether it is in the form of an advertisement placed on another website, information in the form of articles, tutorials, ebooks, reports, or blogs, or it is sales material you want to accomplish two main goals.

1. You want to grab your prospects



attention. This is most often accomplished with a compelling benefit driven headline or subject line.

2. You want to provide them a benefit. This means that the content must provide quality information.

The ability to interact with your customers makes marketing, and marketing copy easier, more interesting, and significantly more effective than offering your prospects a standard brochure and hoping that they buy.

## How to Use These Principles to Your Company's Advantage

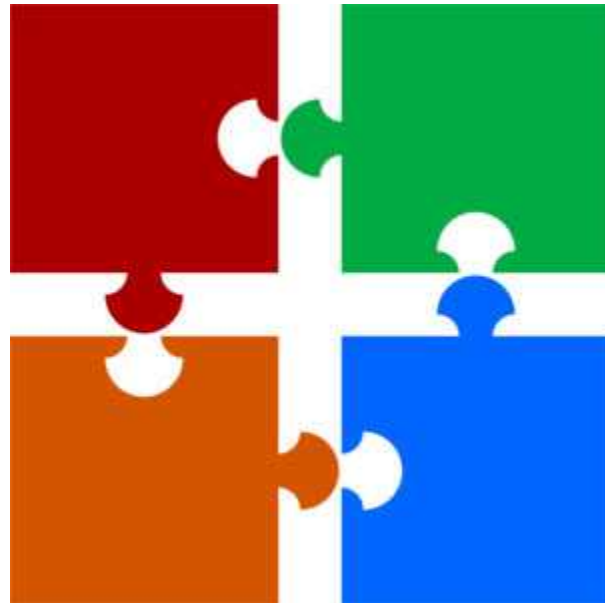
With any website, the more you can make it interactive and user friendly the better it will be. Take a moment and consider your favorite website. When you're sitting on the couch in the evening watching television, what website do you surf? Why do you surf it?

Conversely, when you're looking for information on the web, what sites turn you off? What websites do you leave immediately?

Chances are the difference between a website that causes you to linger and spend hours of your time exploring and a website that is forgotten as soon as you click away, is the level of interactivity available.

You can add this type of interactivity to your own website in a number of ways:

- Blogs
- Social Media
- Reviews
- Forum or chat room
- Articles with embedded links
- Testimonials
- Quizzes, surveys, and even newsletter subscription forms
- Searchable index of content
- Tutorials
- Interactive web pages



We'll look at some of these content tools to see how they can improve your traffic and conversion rates and how you can craft content for maximum results. But first, let's review some copywriting basics. It doesn't matter how modern and interactive the web gets, you still need to know this stuff.

- **Use attention-getting, benefit-driven headlines:** What is the one thing your prospect really wants from your product? Highlight that in your big, bold headline.
- **Subheadlines:** Break up your copy further by using bolded subheadlines to show separate sub-sections of your sales page. It makes it easier to read and can grab the attention of someone who is scanning and about to leave your page.
- **Bullet points:** Bullet points are also your copy's best friend. Bullet points are easy to scan and read. Use bullet points to tap into the pain your prospect may be facing, illustrate benefits and more.
- **Write directly to your audience:** When writing copy for a sales page, email or anyone else, imagine your ideal prospect on the other side of the screen. Say "you" and focus on your reader more than yourself.

We all know Internet users have a short attention span, so it stands to reason, if you're talking about yourself...they will just tune out. But if you're talking to them and about them, they're more apt to listen.

- **Know and continue to learn about your target:** Even though we think we have a good understanding of our target market, there is always so much more to learn. Keep studying them, asking them question and tracking subjects and products of interest to them to grow your knowledge.
- **Include enough information to make a purchase decision:** Sometimes we might worry about copy being too long, but it's not length that's important. It's about providing enough information on your sales page that fully illustrates the benefits of the product, answers many of the frequently asked questions and even overcomes many of your prospect's objections. Don't be wordy as that's not necessary...be useful and complete.
- **Be casual:** Obviously, there may be some markets where a casual approach is inappropriate, but you'll generally find that if you write how you speak, you can connect with your audience effectively. Avoid jargon in most cases and speak in plain old simple English.
- **Short, non-complex sentences, short paragraphs:** Just as you want to avoid jargon, you want to keep your sentences simple and break up your paragraphs as well. Short chunks of text are easier to read, scan and grab the attention of your visitor.
- **Transitions:** Keep your visitor reading through your sales page by including transitions between paragraphs and sections of your page.

Some examples of transitions:

- And most importantly...
  - As you may already know...
  - As you may have noticed...
  - Aside from that, one thing's for sure...
  - Bottom line is...
  - Here's exactly why...
  - I'll let you in on a little secret...
  - I'm sure you'll understand...
  - In fact...
  - Just imagine...
  - Let me ask you this...
  - Let me explain...
  - The next step is...
  - Today, more than ever...
  - To prove it, here's...
  - You're gonna love this
- 
- **Power Words:** Power words are part of an emotionally-charged language that is used to influence your reader. People react and buy with emotion, and these are words that help elicit emotion. They are often action words and create a mental picture for your reader.

Power words can be used everywhere in your copy. Here are a few examples:

- action-oriented
- advanced
- all-in-one
- amazing
- breakthrough
- complete
- easy to understand
- free
- important
- improved
- latest
- limited
- low-cost
- no strings attached
- on demand
- proven
- responsive
- save
- time-tested
- transform

Of course, how you put this together on a page is very important. Pages need to be well-designed to keep the user's attention.

- **Keep Design Simple:** The more information, ads, bells and whistles you display, the less likely your reader is to take action. Keep them focused on one topic and a specific

conversion goal at one time. Whether it's to sign up for your list, grab a freebie or a buy a product, keep it focused.

As much as possible, keep the items on each page relevant to the actual topic of that page. This generally means keeping a tidy side bar or not having one at all. For sales pages, you may find your best choice is to remove sidebars.

- **White Space:** Give a generous portion of your web design to nothing at all...white space. Having a clean design and plenty of space in margins makes it much easier for readers to concentrate on your content and sales message and content.
- **Limit Navigation:** It's natural instinct to want to showcase all our great content and information, but excessive navigation simply causes confusion and lack of action. If necessary, use sub-categories to eliminate the need for large and complex navigation systems. Navigation is important and people want interactivity on the web, but use it wisely and never overwhelm.

If you are trying to create navigation that makes it easy for search engine spiders to make their way through your content, use a site map or place the more complex navigation at the bottom of the page, where it doesn't serve as a distraction for your visitor.

And don't forget the extras. These are becoming more crucial elements to modern-day copy and content.

- **Images:** Use images to illustrate content and images. If they are virtual products, create virtual cover images or use other images that illustrate the benefits of the product. Images can create visual appeal, draw the eye in at key points of your copy and more.
- **Video:** Whether it's a slide show presentation, demonstration or you talking to the camera, video is everywhere. It can demonstrate things text can't and can also create a more personal connection with your visitor who can see you as a flesh and blood person. If you're using it with sales copy, test different lengths, but you'll likely do well with a short introductory video that gets your visitor interested in learning more about the product. Content videos can be longer, but experiment to see what keeps your visitor's attention best.
- **Audio:** Audio can also provide an introduction and create familiarity with your audience. Try a short introductory audio recording that invites your reader to learn more about your product or explore your website further. You can also use podcasts and webinars to deliver content-rich information.

Now let's get back to those tools and your modern-day approach to those...

## How to Write a Blog



The first rule of any interactive site is that the higher the quality of content already on the site, the more likely other people will want to contribute. The more people want to contribute, the higher the quality of the site. It's a circle of success, if you start with good, quality content.

The goal of any website utilizing the philosophy of enabling your customers to contribute to the content of the site is that you need to create a desire to contribute to your site.

An easy way to begin providing quality content, that motivates people to contribute, is by adding a blog to your website. A bit of a warning

– blogs take time to catch on. Don't expect replies to your first post, or even your tenth post. Just keep posting and offering quality information and it will catch on.

The secret to writing a blog is to first establish a theme for the blog. If you have a website that sells beauty products then your blog could address beauty emergencies, beauty remedies, beauty 101 and so on. Your blog must have a theme. You don't want to be talking about how to eliminate frizzy hair one day and then discussing how to get a raise the next. So establish a theme for your blog.

Next, make sure you have a compelling headline for each blog. Your headline will want to be SEO optimized so that people searching for your information may come across your blog and your website. Just make sure your keywords are in your title and if your blog software enables you to tag it then use those tools to help the search engines find you.

Now to the writing part...an effective blog, meaning that it is compelling to read, offers a statement and a benefit and invites comment, is generally written with a conversational tone. Don't be afraid to interject personal experiences and stories into the content. General Motors has a great blog called Fastlane where executives talk about their experiences with cars, their favorites, and so on. It's personal, it's informative and people are compelled to check it out regularly and contribute.

Keep the content of your post focused on one simple idea. Blogs that wander and lose focus are not interesting to read. Amplify your posts with active verbs, a little story telling and of course a point that invites people to comment. Don't be afraid to take risks with your blog. One last note of caution: while it is okay to post-personal stories in your blog, be careful to keep most of your personal information out of it. You don't want people to know where you live or be able to invade your personal life.

## How to Write a Sales Page

Sales pages in theory cannot be interactive. You don't want to imbed links and send your prospect to another website and you don't want them to be distracted by activities. But you can use tools like video, allow social sharing and other interactive elements. You want your sales page to engage your reader and compel them to purchase. Sales pages, regardless of the type, have the same goals – to generate a sale.





- You need to have a compelling headline
- You need to stress benefits instead of features
- You need to establish credibility
- You need a call to action

As users become more savvy, the standard “but wait, there’s more” kind of copy won’t work. They don’t have time or patience for long drawn out sales pitches. They want their benefits bulleted, organized by quick and compelling subheads, and stressed early in the copy. They want the headline to make a promise and provide a benefit.

They want to know exactly what they’re reading and what they’re expected to do.

This means that your copy must be tight and not ‘look’ like a sales page. Copy that converts readers into buyers provides a benefit right in the copy. Copy that sells online in today’s market informs.

Assuming that you’re selling a software product that creates sales pages, here’s a quick example. “How to Write Copy That Converts The Savviest of Online Shoppers – Use Our Simple Blueprint and Increase Profits Today.” The headline makes a promise “Increase Profits Today.” It also offers a benefit “Learn how to write copy that converts savvy shoppers.”

Your goal for the rest of the article/sales page is to educate your consumer, giving them a few simple tips about how to convert savvy shoppers. This way you’re offering your readers a benefit right in your sales page. You’re educating them and establishing your credibility.

The main difference between today’s sales page and an old fashioned sales page is that you acknowledge the intelligence of your consumer. Your sales page is quick and to the point, it uses bullet points and easy to follow formatting, it offers information upfront that provides a benefit, and it tells your prospects exactly what they need to do to buy.

## How to Write Other Web Pages

The other pages on your website can be more interactive.

Here are a few interactive elements that are fairly easy to add to your website pages:

- You can welcome your visitors with a guest book
- Invite them to subscribe to your newsletter
- Embed links in your copy that link to other pages on your site and to other relevant websites.
- Offer a links page with links that you know your visitors will be interested in. Make sure that the links open in a separate page so they can stay on your website too.
- FAQ page
- Testimonials and reviews
- Case histories/studies
- Videos and audios
- Articles, free content, and information pages





As you write each page of your website, consider what other pages you can promote or link to. For example, your articles page can quite easily link to your blog however you may not want your contact us page to link to your articles and free information area.

Keep in mind that each individual page needs to be formatted so that your reader can quickly assess the contents. This is best done with compelling headlines and subheads as well as bulleted or numbered lists, bold print, and underlined copy. Use these tools to draw your reader's attention to the important keywords on the page.

Another important feature for compelling and interesting web copy is to break it up occasionally with a photo, graph or chart. Give the reader a break and provide them with a visual example or even a cartoon to liven things up.

The goal of your website is to offer value and keep people visiting and exploring your content, services and products. Update your copy often and provide as many opportunities as you can for your visitors to participate in the content - whether it is through a blog, forum, video or audio message, or even a guest book.

## How to Write an Email

Today's market has a few basic demands from their email messages:

- They must not look like spam
- They must be easy to read, their point must be clear and concise
- They must be at the right frequency, but that is something you'll have to discover for yourself
- They must have a point...don't just send email because you usually do on that day
- They must provide a clear benefit to your reader

Taking the first demand, SPAM is fairly easy to avoid. Don't send an email to people that haven't requested that you do so. Additionally, make sure that your "From" line is clear. Send your emails from your business name or from you personally.

Making an email easy to read, and with a clear and concise point can be handled a number of ways. First, make sure that your subject line is compelling. Subject lines that offer a benefit are more frequently opened than those that don't. The only job your subject line has is to get the recipient to open it.

If your email is a promotional message then state the offer in the subject line. "10 Days to Save More than 50% off Everything".

You can also create a little curiosity with your subject lines, but use the technique sparingly. Ex. "This made my blood boil" or "You never know until you try this."

The body of your email then must be easy to follow. Format it so that the reader can quickly decide if the email is relevant and beneficial to them. Bullet point your benefits, make a promise, and don't forget to include a call to action. Keep the email focused on one thing at a time and you'll get much better results.



Remember to include links in your email back to your website or offer page. If you're emailing a newsletter or ezine, don't forget to offer a forward to a friend option and give your readers the ability to comment on your newsletter or contact you.

## **How to Write an Autoresponder**

Autoresponders are the email messages that are sent to customers or people that have expressed an interest in your website products or services. They can be used to send transactional emails – thank you for your purchase, attached is your download etc.

They can also be used to deliver classes, lessons, or tidbits of information broken up over a series of emails.

The main thing that you have to remember about autoresponders is that they enable you to immediately contact your prospects and customers. They are an immediate response to an action that your customer has taken.

In effect, autoresponders are an integral part of this concept. Your customer makes a purchase; they get an immediate thank you response. Your customer makes a return; they get an immediate 'we're sorry' response. Your customer asks for more information and 'bam' they have it in their inbox before they can leave your website.

Autoresponders are instant need based communication tools.

How do you write an autoresponder? That depends on its goal. Like any communications your reader wants them to be professional, to the point and easy to follow. An online course delivered via auto responder is generally about 400-500 words long. If the course is any longer, you run the risk of losing your audience before they get to your call to action. If you have more to say than 500 words, put it in a book or report that your reader can download.

Again, make sure the copy it is formatted to be easy to read. That your headlines and subheadings offer a benefit and that each paragraph sticks to the point. You can use your content to embed links to your website, products, services, other articles and even other relevant sites. This will make your copy more interactive. As with all embedded links, design them to open on a separate page. This way your reader doesn't leave your website or auto responder message.

## **Build a Good Foundation**

Regardless of your website's mission, the products or services you sell, or even your target market you absolutely must have a good foundation.

As a business owner, adding new marketing strategies to your website cannot be done effectively if you do not already have a solid website to build on. Focus on getting your website's foundation, navigational structure, search engine optimization and traffic generating strategies down before you implement any new technologies.

Adding a blog, forum or content exchange area will further enhance your website and help improve your brand's strength and image if they're handled professionally and well monitored. Rather than adding several user-friendly tools to your website at once, add one at a time. Get your blog up and running and receiving favorable comments before you venture to add a chat room, forum or content exchange area.

Remember that you can use other sites to network and enhance your brand too. Forums and chat rooms are a great tool, not only to help other members solve their problems, but to enhance your brand. The key to positive forum and chat room posts is to provide quality information, no sales pitches and to offer a benefit to the reader. Use your forum or chat room signature to promote your website and company name.

The content that you provide for all copy mediums will be compelling, to the point, easy to read and follow, and when possible will offer your reader an action - whether they're making a purchase, filling out a survey, providing feedback or asking a question.

If you've been doing business online for any length of time, you're probably already incorporating many of the ideas and tools discussed. If you're just getting started, take the time to work them into your website plan. Then continue to grow your business and brand image by adding features that enable your website visitors to learn grow and contribute and you'll have the online success you desire.



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