



# INTRODUCTION

## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO COPYWRITING

### WHY DID WE WRITE THIS GUIDE?

Copywriting is critical for success online in the current digital age. Design, content marketing, SEO, and growth hacking are all parts of a complete digital marketing plan, but copywriting is the glue that ties it all together. Copy gives your design meaning and lays the foundation for your content marketing, SEO, and growth hacking. Writing better copy enables you to convert more readers into customers, and we wanted to provide a guide that would give you an advantage when writing copy both on and offline.

### WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide is for entrepreneurs, founders, marketers, bloggers, or anyone else who needs to write copy to reach a larger audience and to sell more effectively. If you're writing copy to sell more online or to get more people to follow you, then this guide is for you.

## WHAT EXACTLY IS COPYWRITING?

Copywriting is the art and science of writing copy (*words used on web pages, ads, promotional materials, etc.*) that sells your product or service and convinces prospective customers to take action. In many ways, it's like hiring one salesman to reach all of your customers. A sales team contacts customers one at a time; a copywriter reaches all of them at once through billboards, magazine ads, sales letters, blog posts, and more.

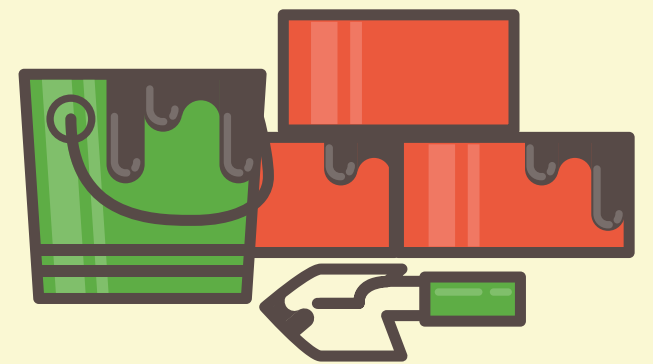
## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE?

Each chapter stands on its own and can be read separately, but to get the most out of the book, it's best to read through the book in its entirety, complete the exercises, and then come back and use the guide as a reference when needed.

### *Chapter one*

## LAYING A SOLID FOUNDATION

To begin, you need to lay a solid foundation by cataloguing your product's benefits and features and defining who your target customers are. This chapter will walk you through a step-by-step process of how to conduct the initial research that will lay the foundation for the copy you eventually write.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER ONE >](#)

### *Chapter two*

## HOW TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMERS & WRITE MORE COMPELLING COPY

In addition to defining your customers in chapter one, further research will show how you can write more compelling copy that appeals to your target customers. This involves conducting a simple survey to better understand your prospects and to learn what language they use to describe your product or service.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER TWO >](#)

### *Chapter three*

## HEADLINE WRITING 101: HOW TO WRITE ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINES THAT CONVERT

Copywriters talk a lot about the importance of attention grabbing headlines. This chapter explains why headlines are so important and walks you through the four u's of how to write attention grabbing headlines that convert.

[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER THREE >](#)



### *Chapter four*

## 4 PERSUASION SECRETS OF PROFESSIONAL COPYWRITERS

As mentioned before, there's both an art and a science to copywriting. This chapter gets into some of the techniques professional copywriters use to write persuasive copy. You'll learn the importance of benefits over features, the need to be as specific as possible, how emotions are connected to decision making and therefore selling, and how to use testimonials to increase the credibility of your copy.

[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER FOUR >](#)



### *Chapter five*

## WHY YOUR COPY SHOULDN'T BE ABOUT YOU AND SIX OTHER PROVEN TIPS FOR BETTER WRITING

To be a copywriter you don't always have to be the best writer in the room, but you do need to write well enough to clearly communicate your message and to not lose credibility with grammar mistakes and typos. This chapter teaches you everything from why your copy shouldn't be focused solely on you to why you need to get all of your copy edited.

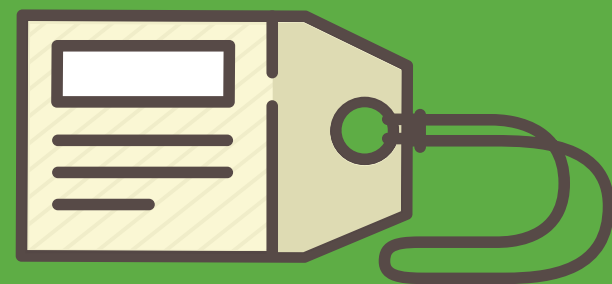
[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER FIVE >](#)



## Chapter six

# 5 MORE SECRETS OF POWERFUL COPY THAT CONVINCES PROSPECTS TO BUY

This chapter builds on the tips from chapter four and provides more techniques for powerful copy that convinces prospects to buy. You'll learn why you need to make people feel like they're part of a group, how to convince prospects they're receiving an exclusive offer, how to prove the value of your product, why you need to establish your company (*or yourself*) as an authority, and how to provide convincing reasons your customers should choose you over the competition.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER SIX >](#)

## Chapter seven

# HOW TO CLOSE THE DEAL WITH YOUR COPY

Now that we've covered so many points related to effective copywriting, we need to discuss how to close the deal with your copy. In sales this is known as asking for the sale. In copywriting it's known as using calls to action, creating a sense of urgency, making a compelling offer, and providing a guarantee.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER SEVEN >](#)

## Chapter eight

# LONG VS. SHORT COPY: WHICH IS BETTER?

One of the longest standing debates among copywriting and marketing circles is over which is better — long or short copy. The answer is that both work in different situations, and this chapter provides principles to guide you through when you should use one or the other.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER EIGHT >](#)



## Chapter nine

# HOW TO COMBINE COPY AND DESIGN FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS

The other longstanding debate is over which is more important — copy or design. The answer again is both, but only when they're combined together properly. This chapter will teach you how to use copy and design together to achieve optimum results.

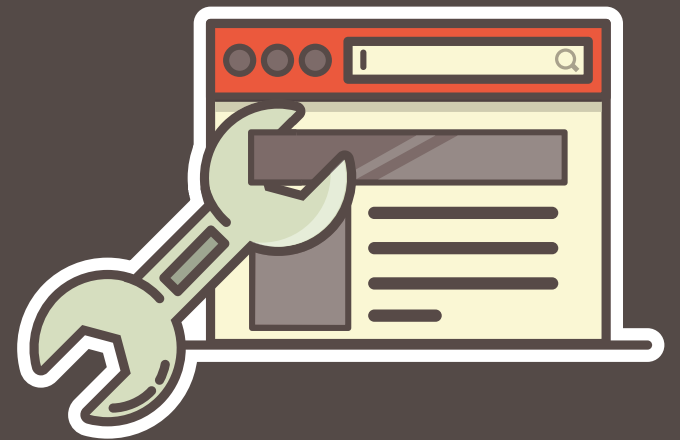


[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER NINE >](#)

## Chapter ten

# THE GOLDEN RULE OF COPY: TEST, TEST, AND TEST SOME MORE

Last but not least, in order to write persuasive copy, you need to learn to test, test, and test some more. Testing reveals which headlines or copy is more effective and which versions convince more prospects to sign up or buy. Without testing, you rely on your gut, which has been proven over and over again to be incapable of predicting how people will react to different copy versions. Read this chapter to learn why you need to test your copy and to pick up some simple formulas you can pick up right away.



[TAKE ME TO CHAPTER TEN >](#)

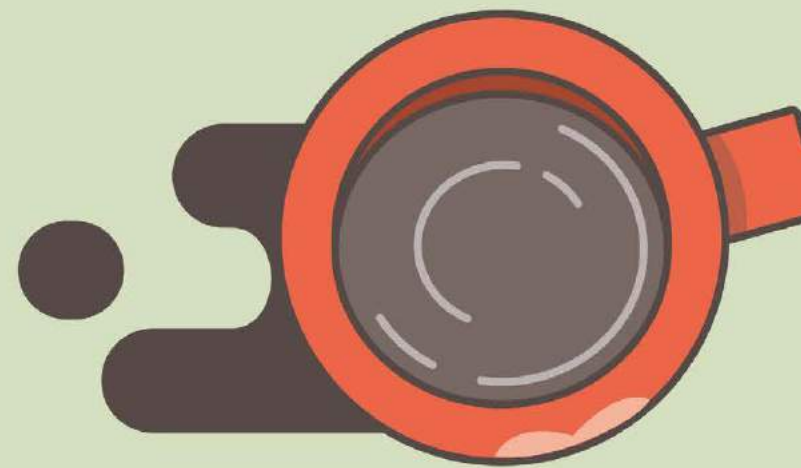
[GET STARTED!](#)





# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER ONE

### LAYING A SOLID FOUNDATION

Every product has a unique personality and it is your job to find it.

**JOE SUGARMAN**

Welcome to the first chapter of **The Definitive Guide to Copywriting**. In this chapter you'll learn how to lay a solid foundation for your copywriting by understanding every detail of your product, capturing a complete and accurate description of what you're selling, and defining who exactly you're selling to.

The notes you take in this chapter will identify the key product features and benefits that appeal to your customers. They will also define who your target customers are, which eventually will influence the language you use and how you write. Ultimately, this chapter will lay a foundation for persuasive copy that sells more of your products and services.



# Why UNDERSTANDING THE PRODUCT IS SO IMPORTANT

The first step in any copywriting project is fully understanding whatever product you're selling. David Ogilvy, a legendary copywriter, is famously known for taking three weeks of meticulous study to come up with a winning concept for a Rolls-Royce ad. The final headline read *"At 60 miles per hour the loudest noise in this Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock."* It took him that much time to find a detail compelling enough to sell a Rolls-Royce.

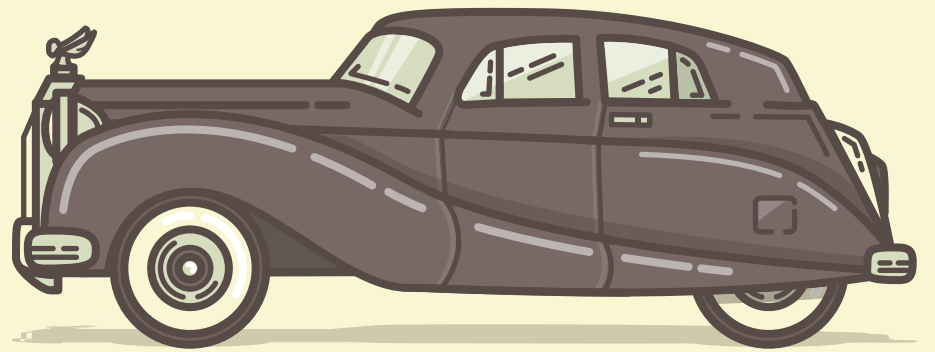
And if it took Mr. Ogilvy that long to discover such an important selling feature, it's surely worth taking some time to study your product to learn which features will stand out to your customers. That's the real goal of this chapter — to find out what makes your product unique and what benefits and features will appeal to your customers.

## This is step one for any copywriting project.

The good news is that as a business or blog owner, you already know your product inside and out. You know the features, understand how it works, and are familiar with the benefits it provides your customers. This offers a great starting point for writing copy. Instead of needing to do in-depth research, you can begin by writing down what you already know. You won't need to spend hours researching the product and taking notes.

On the other hand it's still worthwhile to follow the steps in this chapter in order to capture all of the details of your product. By writing down a complete product description along with a list of the features and benefits, you'll save this important information where you can refer back to it in later chapters. It's better to have everything saved in one place so you'll always have it available at your fingertips.

So before you start writing copy, complete the following exercise to write down a description of your product or service. After finishing, you'll know every detail of what you're selling and have a better idea about how to sell it.



## Step one CREATE A PRODUCT DESCRIPTION DOCUMENT

First, start a document titled “Product/Service Description — YOUR PRODUCT OR SERVICE NAME.” This can be a Google doc or a Word doc, depending on which you like to use (*although Google docs are better for collaboration if you need to do that any point*).

For the sake of illustrating each step of the process, we’ll create a hypothetical project we can reference throughout this guide. Our first example document will be titled “Product Description — Simple Survey Tool.” Your title should look like the one below (*if you used Google docs*).



Product Description -- Simple Survey Tool ☆ 📁  
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Next, add the following questions to your document (*questions may need to be tweaked slightly if you’re providing a service instead of selling a product*):

**How would you describe the product?:**

**What’s unique/special about this product?:**

**What big benefit does it provide?:**

**What pain does it alleviate?:**

**What features are included and what are the benefits of each?:**

- **Feature #1:**
  - **Benefit:**
- **Feature #2:**
  - **Benefit:**

Now, let’s take some time to answer the questions.

### Question 1: How would you describe the product?

For this question, provide a simple, two to three sentence description of the product. It doesn’t need to be super long or detailed and don’t worry about providing a fancy answer. Simply write down a short description as if you were describing the product to a customer.

*Sample answer:*

**How would you describe the product?:** *The Simple Survey Tool makes it easy for companies to survey their website visitors and learn more about them. Website owners can ask one question or multiple questions, depending on what they’d like to learn. The surveys pop up when visitors come to the company’s site.*



## Question 2: What's unique/special about this product?

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The goal here is to identify something unique or special about the product. What does this product offer that others don't? Is it made in the USA? Is it easy to install? Does it provide analytics that other sites don't offer?



Eventually, you'll use this to identify a unique selling proposition (USP). A USP is something unique that other companies don't offer. Is there something special about your product? Is there something that makes it stand out from the competition? Record anything here about the product that makes it special or unique.

*Sample answer:*

**What's unique/special about this product?:** *It's unique because there are multiple pre-formulated survey templates that allow site owners to create surveys based on best practices without having to first become a survey expert. It's special because the surveys are easy to implement. Companies can install them by adding a short code snippet to their site. It also stands out because it surveys website visitors while they're visiting a site.*

## Question 3: What big benefit does it provide?

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Not only do you want to know how a product is unique, but you also know what benefit it provides customers. Many companies stop at describing the product and don't go on to conveying the benefit of using it.

For example, a company may talk about how they offer web analytics software but don't tell customers about the benefit of using the service. Instead, they should tell customers that the software helps them build a more profitable site, generate more revenue per customer, or accomplish something else along these lines. The focus should be on providing a benefit, not just describing the service.

**So what big benefit does your product provide?**

*Sample answer:*

**What big benefit does it provide?:** *The big benefit is that it helps site owners learn more about visitors and how they're interacting with the site. They can identify immediately what questions customers have about the product/service, which features are important to them, and much more. This helps them change their site to match the customers' needs, ultimately increasing conversion rates and generating more sales.*

#### Question 4: What pain does it alleviate?

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People generally buy for one of two reasons — to increase their pleasure or to minimize pain. In the question above, we identified the benefit that would “*increase pleasure*;” in this question, we’ll identify which pain is minimized by using the product.



For example, a car insurance company could use a headline like this: “*Are You Paying Too Much for Your Car Insurance?*” The ad would then go on to talk about how most customers pay more than they need for car insurance, and how company X can save them more money (*which is something similar to what GEICO currently does*). The purpose of the ad is first to focus on the pain, and then to talk about how Company X alleviates that pain.

Another option is to focus the ad on the pleasure customers experience from saving money. It could use a headline like this: “*How Will You Spend the Money You Save Using [Specific Car Insurance Company Name Here]?*” Instead of focusing on the pain, it draws attention to the pleasure experienced by switching to a different insurer (*which is what GEICO did in 2008 with their “the money you could be saving” ads*).

Often, focusing on the pain eliminated is more effective than focusing on the pleasure provided, but both approaches can be tested to evaluate their effectiveness.

**So what pain does your product alleviate? Let’s write that down now.**

*Sample answer:*

**What pain does it alleviate?:** *The Simple Survey Tool makes it easy to ask questions to website visitors. A lot of times it’s difficult to know what visitors are thinking and why they do what they do. Companies are left scratching their heads and trying to read their customers’ minds. Now, with the Simple Survey Tool, they can easily ask any question they’d like to ask. In addition, there are pre-formulated surveys that help companies know which questions they should ask. Often, they don’t know what questions to ask in order to learn the most relevant information about their customers. Our pre-formulated surveys make it easy to choose questions based on surveys that have been proven to be the most effective. Last but not least, the Simple Survey Tool makes it easy to add surveys to a site without extensive IT resource use. Adding a survey is as easy as copying and pasting a short code snippet into the html for the site.*

#### Question 5: What features are included and what are the benefits of each?

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The first thing you want to do to answer this question is write down each of the product’s features. You may not end up using all of them in your copy, but at the very least, you want to record them all in one place so you have them at your fingertips if needed. Some products have a lot of features, others have less. Either way, list all of your product features here with a short description of each.



In addition to listing the features, be sure to list the benefit of each. We'll talk more about benefits later, but in short, customers care more about benefits provided by features than the features themselves (*but you still may need to list the features in your copy so be sure to record them all here*).

For example, customers care more about high speed internet that helps them watch streaming videos without interruption than internet that provides 15 mbps download speeds. The "15 mbps" is a feature, in this case, and "streaming videos without interruption" is the benefit provided by the feature. Record the features of your product and the corresponding benefit now.

*Sample answer:*

**What features are included and what are the benefits of each?:**

- **Feature #1: Multiple question formats**
  - **Benefit:** *Companies can ask questions in different formats such as short answer, paragraph, multiple choice, and checkboxes.*
- **Feature #2: Unlimited questions**
  - **Benefit:** *In addition to multiple question formats, businesses can ask as many questions as they want. Their surveys can be as long or short as they would like them to be.*
- **Feature #2: Javascript code installation**
  - **Benefit:** *Survey creators can add surveys to their site by copying and pasting a short Javascript snippet. It's super easy to install surveys and in many cases IT resources aren't even needed.*
- **Feature #3: Custom surveys**
  - **Benefit:** *Site owners can add their logo and colors to the survey. This creates a custom brand exposure that matches the company's online presence.*
- **Feature #4: Instant Notifications**
  - **Benefit:** *Survey creators get notified by e-mail or text when surveys are filled out. Businesses know as soon as soon as survey results are ready for review.*

As you can see from these sample answers, there's a big difference between features and benefits. Features are the technical aspects of the product, and the benefits are the way those features help customers accomplish something they want to accomplish. It's good to record both, but we'll talk more about the importance of benefits in a later chapter.

Now that we've taken some time to understand your product and record it's features, let's move on to the other critical step in the copywriting process.

## *The* OTHER CRITICAL STEP: DEFINING YOUR CUSTOMERS

Next to understanding the product inside and out, the most important step in any copywriting project is knowing who you're selling to. Here's why.

How you sell whatever you're selling is determined by who you're selling it to, what they want to buy, and what will convince them to make a purchase. It's all about the customer, not your company.



If you're selling to stay-at-home moms, you're going to write differently than if you're selling to high-net-worth business executives, and if you're selling to Fortune 500's, you're going to write differently than if you're selling to startups.



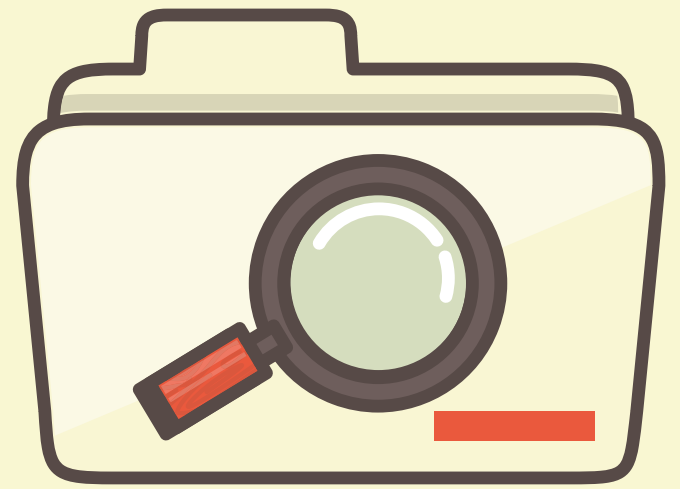
You may be wondering, “*Why is this so important?*” It's important because each group of customers has different hopes, fears, dreams, and expectations. Moms, for example, have different priorities than business executives. Saving money is more important for moms, whereas saving time is more valuable to executives.

These differences influence the way you write and how you sell the product. It also means you really need to know what appeals to your customers.

So as you can see, defining your customer is a critical part of the copywriting process. Let's go ahead and walk through how to do that now.



Start a document titled “Customer Research -- YOUR PRODUCT NAME HERE.” Our sample document will be titled “Customer Research -- Simple Survey Tool.”



Next, add these four questions to your document (*again, the questions will need to be modified slightly for service businesses*):

### Question 1: Who currently buys your product?

The first question identifies who your current customers are. You may be selling to both startups and Fortune 500's, but whatever the case may be, it's important to know who your current customers are because you need to know who pays your bills. (*If you haven't started selling anything yet, skip this question and move on to the next one.*)

*Sample answer:*

**Who currently buys your product?** *We currently sell to marketing/advertising agencies and startups. In addition to that, we've sold our product to a handful of non-profit organizations.*

### Question 2: Who would you like to buy your product?

This second question identifies who you would like to be selling to. As mentioned above, you may be selling to startups and Fortune 500's, but you'd rather focus on the Fortune 500's because they have larger budgets and are less likely to be price conscious.

It's ok to sell to both, but if you'd like to target one over the other, you'll end up writing your copy differently. That's why it's important to know exactly who you're selling to and who your target customers are.

*Sample answer:*

**Who would you like to buy your product?** *We'd like to sell to anyone interested in improving their website, but in particular, we'd like to sell to marketing agencies and startups. This is our primary target because those companies have been our best customers so far. Eventually we'd like to sell to everyone, including Fortune 500's, but right now we want to focus on agencies and startups since they make up the bulk of our current customers. Plus, if we can get some traction with this group, it will give us more credibility that we can leverage with larger companies.*



### Question 3: What does a typical customer look like?

The goal of this question is to create a detailed picture of your typical customers. The other questions create an overview in broad brushstrokes, but this question zooms in on individual customers. We're zeroing in on a handful of real customers in order to find out what's important to them.

Sample answer:

#### What is a typical customer like?

- **Customer #1: Marketing Agency Manager**
  - **Description:** *The marketing agency manager works at a small to medium sized marketing/advertising agency and is responsible for helping the agencies client's accomplish their digital marketing goals. To do this, he/she creates surveys to learn about customers and to find out what's important to them.*
  - **What's important to him/her:** *It's important to have a survey tool that's easy to work with but also enables the agency to ask all of the questions they need to ask. It's also important to be able to customize the surveys to match the branding for each of the companies they work with.*
- **Customer #2: Startup Marketing Director**
  - **Description:** *The startup marketing director works at a startup and may be the only marketing employee on staff. She's responsible for deciding the marketing strategy and which marketing tools are used by the organization.*
  - **What's important to him/her:** *Her goal is to use a survey tool that's easy to use and won't take up precious organizational resources. It's also important that the survey tool used doesn't slow down the startups website.*
- **Customer #3: Non-profit Marketing Director**
  - **Description:** *The non-profit marketing director is responsible for choosing which marketing tools the organization uses. He may be the only marketing member on staff, or he may work with a small team.*
  - **What's important to him/her:** *The non-profit marketing director is interested in using the organization's funds in the most frugal way. If possible, he'd like to get a non-profit discount because price is really important to him. Other than that, the tool used needs to be easy to implement and not require too much technical help because the IT department doesn't have much time to spare for small projects.*

### Question 4: What do customers love about your product?

In addition to needing to know who your customers are, you also need to know what delights them about your product. Why did they buy in the first place, and why do they keep coming back?

**PRIUS**

Prius owners, for example, buy because they're interested in doing their part to save the environment. That's more important to them than how the car looks. So Toyota is smart to play up that angle and not to focus on how sexy the car is (*which is good because Prius's aren't the best looking cars on the road*).





BMW owners, on the other hand, care less about the size of their carbon footprint and more about their self image. They want a car that makes them appear successful and elite. Their image is more important than gas mileage, and that's why they buy a BMW in the first place.

With both of these examples, the copy needs to focus on what appeals the most to the target customers and what they love the most about the product. This will be different for every product, even within the same industry.

So take a minute and reflect on the main reasons people buy your product. What do they love about it? Once you've figured it out, record your answer in the document.

*Sample answer:*

**What do customers love about your product?** *Customers love how easy the Simple Survey Tool is to install. IT resources are limited at nearly every organization, and they love that they can install surveys without needing to bother IT. They also love that they get instant notifications. Without them, they may forget to check new survey results, so they love that instant notifications are built in. Lastly, they love the pre-formulated surveys. Many marketing teams don't know what questions to ask and don't have time to become survey experts. The pre-formulated surveys give them a starting point and make it easier to write surveys that will be useful for their companies/organizations.*

Question four wraps up this stage of the customer research document. Be sure to save the documents we've worked on in this chapter somewhere you can easily find them at a later time because we'll refer back to them again once we begin writing copy.

## PULLING IT ALL TOGETHER

At this point, you should have a good idea of:

- *How to describe your product or service in a simple yet understandable way*
- *The main features and benefits of your product/service*
- *The big benefit, i.e. the main selling point(s) of your product/service*
- *Who your customers are and what matters to them*

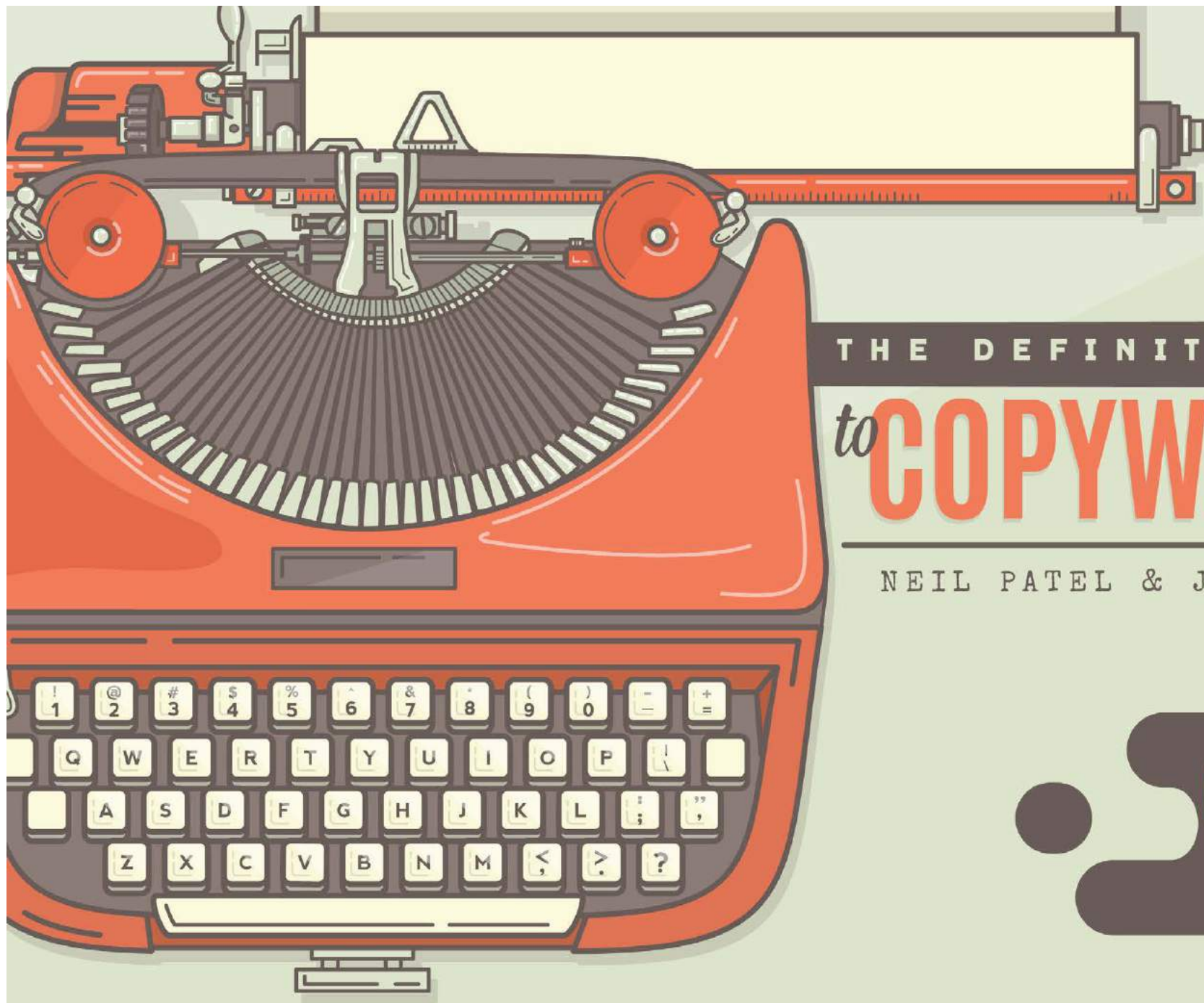
The notes you've taken up to this point will provide a solid foundation for the copy you'll write in later chapters, and you'll refer back to the documents you created in each of the following chapters.

Let's go on to chapter two to learn even more about your customers and to capture the words they use to talk about your product.

**TAKE ME TO  
THE INTRO**

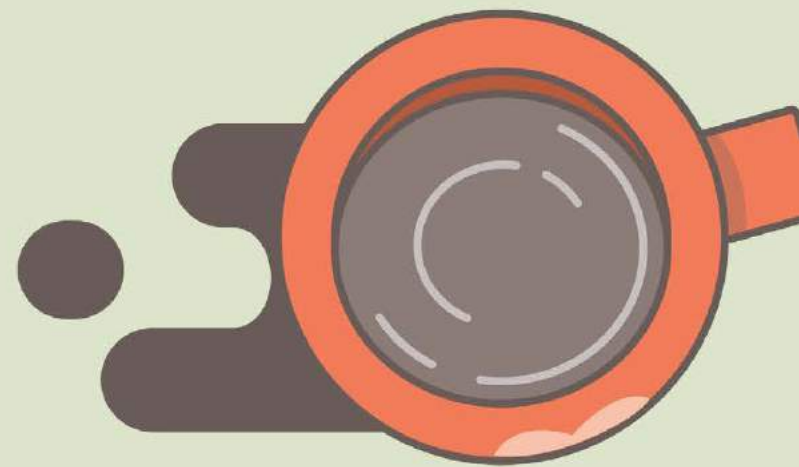


**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER TWO**



# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER TWO

### HOW TO BETTER UNDERSTAND YOUR CUSTOMERS AND WRITE MORE COMPELLING COPY

Copy is a direct conversation with the consumer.

**SHIRLEY POLYKOFF**

In chapter one we talked about the basic steps for laying a solid foundation for your copywriting by understanding the product you're selling and knowing who you're selling it to.

In this chapter we're going one step further to fully understand your customers. We want to know how they feel about your product and what words they use to describe it. In short, we want to know what matters to them.

This is a key step in the copywriting process, and a secret weapon of the best copywriters. Many people stop with the steps outlined in chapter one. They research the product and write down a customer profile. Then they start writing.



But when they do, they miss the opportunity to really understand the most important person in every copywriting project — the customer.

They don't know what matters to their customers and what convinces them to make a purchase. Decisions about how to write the copy are made without talking to the people who eventually will put their hard earned money onto the table to buy the product or service.

You can skip this step if you feel like you already know exactly how your customers think, but unless you've already had hundreds of conversations with your customers, you won't want to go on to the next chapter without finishing this one first. In the end, knowing what your customers think about your product and the words they use to talk about it will prove to be the most important part of the copywriting process.

So let's talk now about the easiest way to better understand your customers and write more compelling copy.

## *The* EASIEST WAY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS

The easiest way to learn more about your customers is with short surveys, and the good news is that there are a number of helpful tools for this. You can use Google Forms, Wufoo, SurveyMonkey, or any of the other survey tools available online.



The point of the survey is to “talk” with your customers. You could call them up individually to chat over the phone, which is great if you have the time, but surveys make it easier to have a conversation with a large number of customers at the same time and to record their answers all in one place.

Let's discuss how do that now.

## Step one CREATE YOUR SURVEY

First, choose the survey tool you'd like to use. We're going to use Google Forms for the sample project because it's the easiest to use.

Next, title your document "Customer Survey — YOUR PRODUCT NAME HERE." Ours will be "Customer Survey — Simple Survey Tool."

Customer Survey -- Simple Survey Tool ☆

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Now, start adding the eight questions listed below. The type of question to create is listed in brackets and an explanation of the question is provided in italics below the question.

Here are the survey questions:

- What's your job title? [short answer]
  - *This question let's you know what type of customer is providing the answers.*
- What company do you work for? [short answer]
  - *Provides more background information by letting you know which company the customer works for.*
- How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague? [paragraph]
  - *Reveals the words your customers use to describe your product or service.*
- What questions did you have before buying, i.e. what almost prevented you from making a purchase? [paragraph]
  - *Reveals the hurdles the customer needed to get over before making a purchase.*
- What ultimately convinced you to buy this product? [paragraph]
  - *Attempts to find out what aspect of the product pushed the customer over the fence and convinced them to buy.*
- Which features were the most important to you when deciding whether or not to buy? [paragraph]
  - *Identifies which features mattered the most to the customer because not every feature is equally important.*
- What did you hope to accomplish by using this product? [paragraph]
  - *Attempts to identify the benefit the customer hoped to receive by purchasing the product.*

And here’s what the sample survey looks like after it’s finished:

## Customer Research: Simple Survey Tool

What's your job title?

What company do you work for?

How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague?

What questions did you have before buying, i.e. what almost prevented you from making a purchase?

What ultimately convinced you to buy this product?


Which features were the most important to you when deciding whether or not to buy?

What did you hope to accomplish by using this product?

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Powered by



This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

[Report Abuse](#) - [Terms of Service](#) - [Additional Terms](#)

Now that you’ve created your survey, let’s talk about how to use it.



## Step two SURVEYING YOUR CUSTOMERS

After creating the survey, you need to go on to conduct the survey and learn more about your customers. But before we do, here are a few questions you might have at this point:

### Question 1: How many people should I survey?

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**A:** Even a handful of responses will help with your copywriting, but you should survey as many people as you can. Just remember not everyone will fill it out. 10 responses is better than 0, 25 is even better than 10, but 1,000 responses will probably be too much. Do what you can to get a relevant number of responses without getting so many that you won't have time to review the answers.



### Question 2: How can I get more people to fill it out?

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**A:** Often a simple incentive will help more people to fill out the survey. For example, you can tell the survey participants that by filling it out they'll be registered to receive a free iPad. Then, after all the results come in, you can use a site like [Random.org](http://Random.org) to generate a winner based on the number of responses that come in. You can also pick a winner based on which response was the most helpful. Whatever works best for you.



### Question 3: Why are so many of the questions open ended?

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**A:** The reason we use so many open ended questions is that qualitative responses provide the most insightful answers for copywriting. Instead of wanting to know the percentage of people who like feature X or Y, we want to hear how they talk about the product in their own words. Eventually, we'll use those words to write the copy we write.

Now that we have those important questions out of the way, let's conduct the survey and then evaluate the results.

## Conducting the Survey

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Begin surveying your customers by sending the link to as many of your customers who may fill it out as possible and who won't be bothered with receiving an e-mail about the survey. This could be a group of your most recent customers, or it could be the e-mail subscribers to your blog. Simply figure out which customers won't mind being asked to fill out a survey, and then send them an e-mail with the link.

Your e-mail could look like the one below.

*Subject: Win an iPad by filling out a short survey*

*Hi,*

*We're in the process of rewriting the copy for our website and would like to learn more about your experience with the Simple Survey Tool. Your answers will help us better understand our customers and learn which features are the most important to them.*

***We're also giving away a free iPad to one lucky survey participant.** By filling out the survey and entering your e-mail, you'll automatically be registered for a chance to win a brand new iPad.*

*[Fill out the survey now](#) to be entered for a chance to win.*

*Thank you for taking the time to answer our survey questions. We really appreciate your help.*

*Best regards,*

*Neil Patel  
Co-founder & CEO  
Simple Survey Tool*

## Step three **EVALUATING THE RESPONSES**

Once the responses start coming in, you need to know how to evaluate them.

First, create a new document titled “*Survey Responses — YOUR PRODUCT NAME.*” Ours will be “*Survey Responses — Simple Survey Tool.*”



Next, copy and paste each of the survey questions in bold into the document under the title you just created while leaving enough space to copy and paste answers to the question.



**Survey Responses**

**How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague?**

**What questions did you have before buying, i.e. what almost prevented you from buying?**

**What ultimately convinced you to buy this product?**

**Which features were the most important to you when deciding whether or not to buy?**

**What did you hope to accomplish by using this product?**

Finally, begin reading through the responses and pay attention to anything that stands out. You'll be looking primarily for two things: 1) Answers that get repeated and 2) Phrases that capture how customers talk about your product. When you find these types of answers, copy and paste them under the corresponding question in your customer research document.

Let's look at each question individually to see how this works. (*Note: We're skipping the background questions because those answers aren't needed at this point.*)



## Question 1: How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague?

The point of this question is to learn how your customers describe your product or service. You're attempting to find out what words they use to talk about what you do because often the way you talk within the organization doesn't match how customers talk on the street. What matters to you may not necessarily matter to them, so we want to find out how exactly they talk about what you do.

*For example, you may receive answers like these:*

**Customer #1:** *The Simple Survey Tool makes it easy to survey customers and to know what questions to ask. It provides already made surveys so you don't have to figure out what to ask each time you make a new survey. I love how easy it makes it to come up with helpful, actionable survey questions.*

**Customer #2:** *The Simple Survey Tool is awesome. It makes it so easy to survey my website visitors and learn more about them. I don't know what I ever did without the Simple Survey Tool.*

**Customer #3:** *I love how easy the Simple Survey Tool is to install. The first installation takes five minutes, and I can ask new questions without bothering IT.*

When reviewing the answers, copy and paste the key phrases into the section you just created in your customer research document. *Examples include:*

*easy to survey customers and to know what questions to ask*

*already made surveys so you don't have to figure out what to ask each time you make a new survey*

*come up with helpful, actionable survey questions*

*easy to survey my website visitors and learn more about them*

*survey my website visitors and learn more about them*

*how easy the Simple Survey Tool is to install*

*installation takes five minutes*

*ask new questions without bothering IT*

Can you see why these types of answers are so powerful? You're learning the exact phrases customers use to talk about your product and what's important to them, not to mention you're generating some awesome testimonials for your site (*so long as you ask for permission to use them*).

## Question 2: What questions did you have before buying, *i.e. what almost prevented you from making a purchase?*

---

Question two identifies the hurdles that prevent customers from buying. You're attempting to figure out what stands in the way between a customer purchasing and not purchasing.

*Sample answers include:*

**Customer #1:** *I wasn't sure I could justify spending this much for a survey tool.*

**Customer #2:** *I wasn't quite sure how the surveys worked and whether or not they were worth \$35 per month. A free trial would be nice or else a money-back guarantee.*

**Customer #3:** *Just didn't know if these types of surveys would be beneficial for our business.*

The list of potential answers goes on, but each one mentions a hurdle that prevents customers from buying. Two of these focused on price, one asked for a free trial and a money-back guarantee, and the third wasn't sure what benefit the surveys would provide for their business.

Reading these answers helps us realize the following:

- *We need to convey how valuable the survey tool is and how much of a return it will provide with a small monthly investment.*
- *A free trial and a money-back guarantee would be good, at least as an test to see if it increases sales.*
- *Something like a case study should be used to show how these types of surveys are useful to businesses.*

## Question 3: What ultimately convinced you to buy this product?

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This question gets at the root of what convinced customers to buy your product. It shows you which benefits or features are the most important to them. Do they care about price or service? Were they impressed with your client list or your track record? Or were they convinced with the free 30-day trial?

Here are some sample answers:

**Customer #1:** I signed up because I wanted to try out the pre-formulated surveys. It's so hard to choose survey questions so I was hoping the pre-made surveys would help.

**Customer #2:** My buddy uses the Simple Survey Tool and recommended it to me.

**Customer #3:** I was sold on the ease of use. It seemed like adding surveys to my website would be really easy to do which is good because I didn't want to have to use lots of our IT staff's time.

Here are the insights provided by these answers:

- The pre-formulated surveys are of interest to people because they don't always know what questions to ask. This seem to be a pain point for customers.
- Word-of-mouth recommendations are powerful for getting people to choose one company over another.
- Not being a drain on IT resources is also important for customers so this is an important selling point.

#### **Question 4: Which features of the product were the most important to you when deciding whether or not to buy?**

---

The point of this question is to identify which features are more important to customers than others. Many products have a list of features, but some are more important than others.

For example, customers could provide the following answers:

**Customer #1:** Pre-formulated surveys were the most important to me, but I also like the instant notifications.

**Customer #2:** The Javascript installation stood out to me. In addition to that, the fact that the surveys pop up when visitors are on my site are really important.

**Customer #3:** As mentioned, I really liked that the surveys could be added to my site without a lot of effort from our IT department. I also liked the idea of instant notifications and pre-made surveys.

The insights:

- "Pre-formulated" or "pre-made" surveys stood out to two customers. We'll add that to the list of important features.
- Quick and easy installation was also stood out to two customers. We'll add that to our list as well.
- Instant notifications was mentioned twice so that also gets added.



## Question 5: What did you hope to accomplish with this project?

---

This question attempts to find out what benefit customers were looking to derive from using the product or service. What exactly are they trying to do? Sell more effectively? Reach more customers? Or something else?

*Some sample answers:*

**Customer #1:** I really want to learn more about my customers. When they come to my site I have no idea what questions they're asking about our products. It's not like being in person where you can answer questions right away. Our hope is that the surveys will help us improve our website copy so we can sell more products.

**Customer #2:** We want to better understand our site visitors by learning what types of services they're looking for. Ultimately, we'd like to update our website so it offers the services our customers are looking for.

**Customer #3:** We're trying to find out who's coming to our site. We have lots of visitors, but we don't really know who they are. Our top priority right now is get a better idea who is actually visiting our site.

Some insights:

- All of the customers are interested in learning more about their site visitors. The #1 reason they signed up for the Simple Survey Tool was to learn more about who's coming to their site.
- In addition to learning more about who's coming to their site, two of them mentioned wanting to increase sign-ups or sales through surveying visitors. This shows that the top goal of the surveys isn't just to "understand" customers but to "understand" them so that they can sell more of what they're selling.

# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter we learned that surveys are an invaluable way to learn more about your customers and help to write more persuasive copy. They show you what's going on inside the head of your customers, which questions get asked over and over again, and what words they use to describe your product or service.

These words will become excellent source for copy, whether it be website content, product descriptions, headlines, or something else.

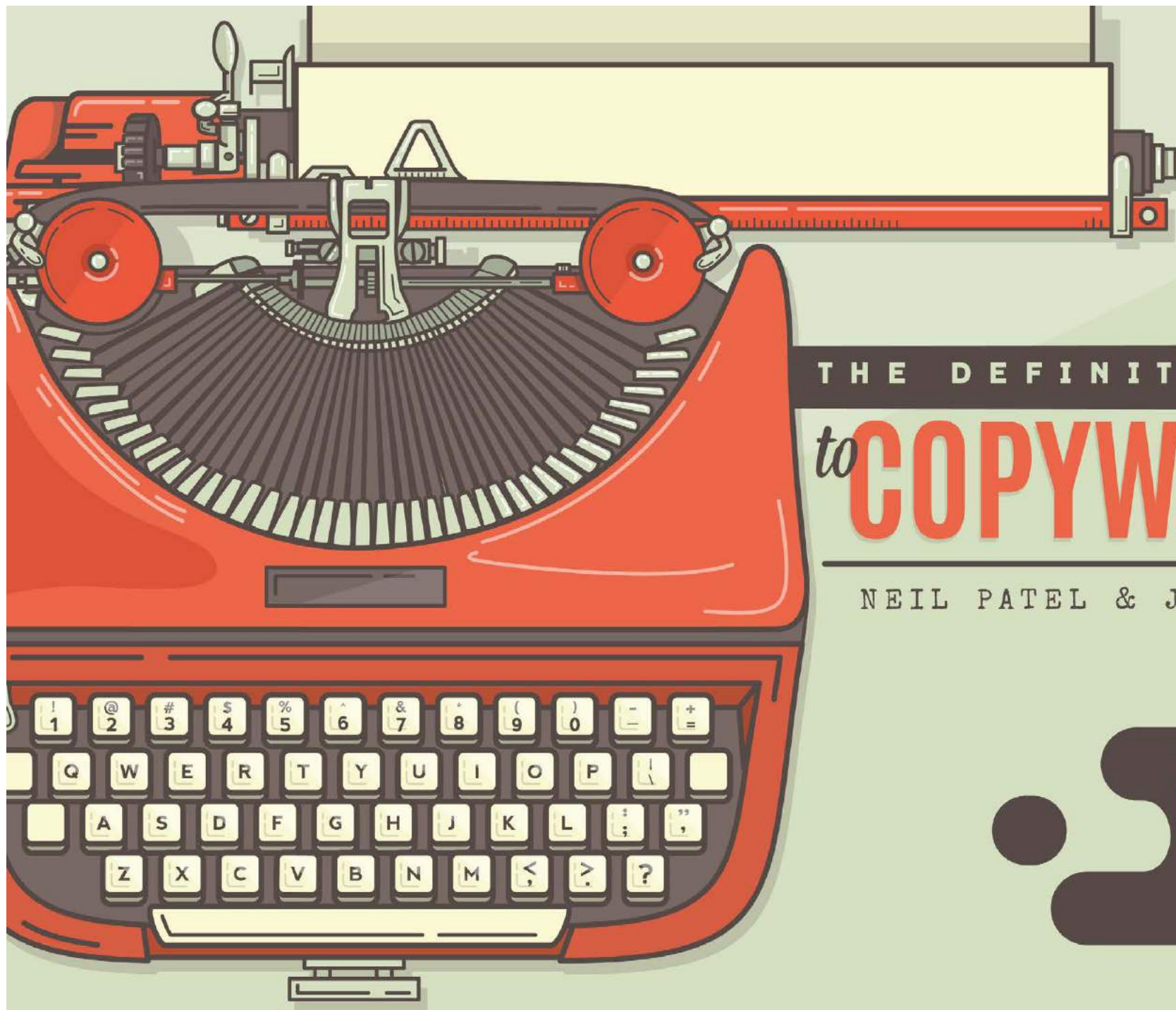
Without paying attention to the words your customers use, it's easy to slip into corporate speak and use language they may not understand. We often describe products based on buzzwords or industry phrases that our customers are not familiar with. This kind of copy may make sense to us but won't make sense to our customers. It also doesn't resonate with customers as deeply as copy that uses the exact words and phrases they use.

Beginning in the next chapter we're going to start using the answers you've painstakingly recorded to write persuasive copy that resonates with your customers and sells more of your product and services. Are you ready to start writing? Then let's move on to chapter three.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER ONE**

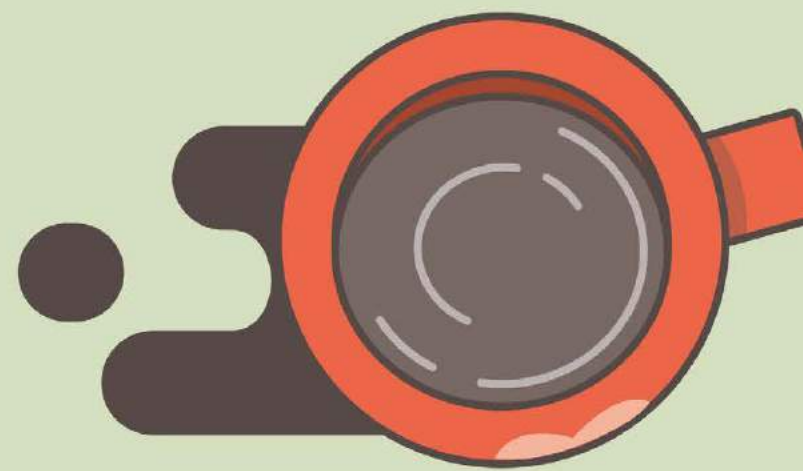


**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER THREE**



# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER THREE

### HEADLINE WRITING 101: HOW TO WRITE ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINES THAT CONVERT

On the average, five times as many people read the headlines as read the body copy.

**DAVID OGILVY**

If you talk to enough copywriters, you'll eventually hear that headlines are critical for your copy's success. David Ogilvy summarizes this quite well in the quote above. The greater majority of people who read your headline won't continue reading. Only the ones drawn in by an attention-grabbing headline will continue on to read the first sentence of your copy.

So your headline matters a lot. A great headline convinces more people to read your copy while a poor one sends potential customers searching for somewhere else to spend their money. This leads us to another famous Ogilvy quote:



“It follows that unless your headline sells your product, you have wasted 90 percent of your money...”

Ogilvy believed headlines were so important that he viewed them as being worth 90% of the money invested in advertising. Can this be true?

## *Why* HEADLINES ARE WORTH 90% OF THE ADVERTISING DOLLAR

Headlines are so important that a single word can impact a campaign dramatically. We’ve seen e-mail subject lines where a one word change increased click-throughs by 46%.

Open rates were nearly identical and the e-mail creative was exactly the same for both versions, but click-throughs went up by 46% in the second. If the ad was sent to 2,000,000 e-mails, the winning version would lead to 17,000+ more clicks, all from changing a single word. That’s a measurable difference that significantly impacts the bottom line.



So why are headlines so important? It’s because they’re the first lines of your copy that customers read. They create an initial impression that either draws readers in or pushes them away. Even if the rest of the copy is amazing and would convince 3 out of 10 people to buy, if the headline puts them to sleep, only a fraction of the customers who would have bought something will read your copy and make a purchase.

The headline alone can make or break an ad, homepage, or e-mail subject line. It sets the tone for the rest of the copy. If the headline pulls readers in, you’ll make more sales; if not, you’ll be left wondering what happened.

And that’s why we’re devoting an entire chapter to headlines. By following the points in this chapter, you’ll learn how to write attention-grabbing headlines that convert readers into buyers.

# How TO WRITE ATTENTION GRABBING HEADLINES THAT CONVERT

The first thing you need to know is the #1 rule for headline writing:

**The primary purpose of the headline is to get the first sentence read.**

If you hang around copywriting circles long enough, you're sure to read this rule at one point or another because most copywriter's view getting potential customers to continue reading as the number rule of headline writing. Convincing your customers to keep reading means the time or money you invest in your copy won't go to waste. So first, focus on writing a headline that pulls your customers in and compels them to read the first sentence.



Here are four more rules of thumb to keep in mind. They're taught as the "four u's" of headline writing by a number of copywriters.

The four u's:

- *Your headline should be unique.*
- *Your headline should be ultra-specific.*
- *Your headline should convey a sense of urgency.*
- *Your headline should be useful.*

You can rarely accomplish all four in a single headline, but if you can at least include one or two then you're bound to write a headline that's more likely to compel your prospective customers to continue reading.

Let's talk about each in more detail.

## Tip one YOUR HEADLINE SHOULD BE UNIQUE

The first thing you want to consider is how to make your headline unique. If yours is just like everyone else's, then your company won't stand out. Your customers won't have any reason to think you're different than your competitors, which means they won't have any reason to buy from you than from someone else.

Today's consumers are more savvy than customers of the past. They're used to being bombarded with commercial after commercial that says the same thing. We can all remember watching a commercial with lines like, "Buy now with three low payments of \$24.95. That's right. Only \$24.95 per month. If you buy today, you'll get a free carrot peeler valued at \$19.95."



Businesses use commercials like this because they work, at least on a subset of customers, but many people are turned off by commercial wording they've heard over and over again. As soon as they hear, "Three equal payments of \$24.95," they tune out waiting for something that seems more credible.

If you sound the same as everyone else, you're automatically going to put customers to sleep, but if you do something different, you'll stand out, your message will be refreshing, and you may delight your customers enough to get them to buy from you.

*Here's an example from Copy Hackers:*



Technically this is a tagline, but really, taglines are headlines of sorts.

What's so great about this "headline"? For starters, it's unique. It's not a boring tagline that reads the same as the thousands of other taglines that copy each other. It's also brazen. It shows personality. It stands out. It gets customers' attention.

To write headlines like this you have to be willing to take risks, but the benefit of doing something unique that stands out means you won't be placed in the same bucket as your competition. You're more likely to connect with customers who are looking for businesses that don't speak like boring corporate robots.

It works first and foremost because it has personality. People like to do business with people they like, and the same is true with businesses. If people like your business, they're more likely to want to do business with you. We'd rather give our money to someone we like than someone we don't.

Butchers and other local service providers used to differentiate themselves by being more personable, and you can differentiate yourself by giving your business a personality that appeals to customers. Gary Vaynerchuk did this with Wine Library TV, and Brian Clark did this with Copyblogger. MailChimp is another great example of a business that wins customers over with a unique, approachable personality that stands out from the competition.



## Tip two YOUR HEADLINE SHOULD BE ULTRA-SPECIFIC

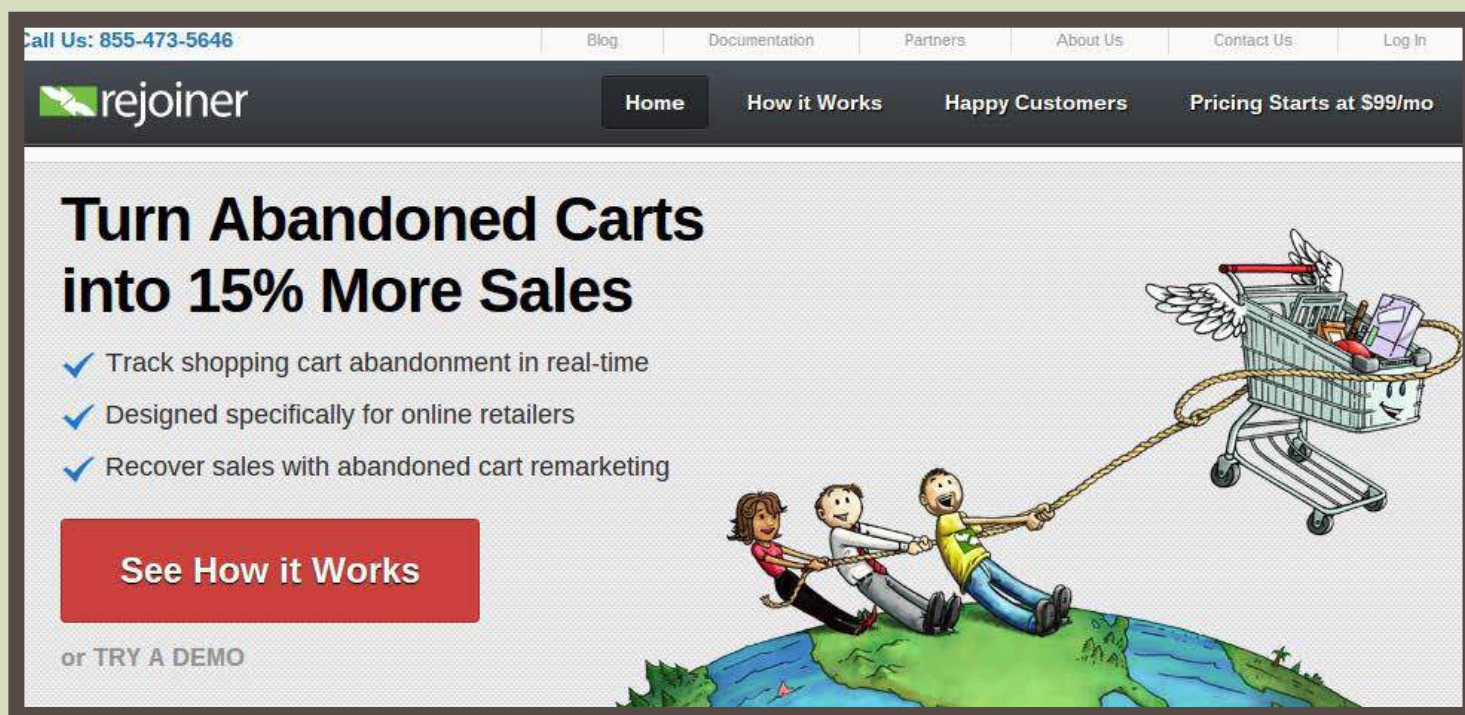
In addition to being unique, your headline should be ultra-specific. It should provide enough information to let customers know whether or not the offer you're presenting is interesting to them. If your headline isn't specific enough, customers won't know whether or not what you're selling is something they're interested in.

*Here's an example:*

*A while ago I visited a blog with this headline: "You'll Be Missed." I had no idea what it was about. Did the owner lose a family member? Did her dog pass away? Did something else terrible happen? I felt bad for her, but I had no idea what was going on.*

*When I clicked through, I found out it was a post about Steve Jobs. He had just passed away in the past couple of days, and the author was writing about how she would miss Mr. Jobs. It ended up being a well-written post, but as a reader, I had no idea what it was about until I clicked through to read.*

In cases like this, it's much better to provide enough specific information to compel readers to continue reading than to write something "clever" that doesn't give readers adequate information to decide whether or not they're interested. Here's another example:



The screenshot shows the Rejoiner website homepage. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links: Call Us: 855-473-5646, Blog, Documentation, Partners, About Us, Contact Us, and Log In. Below this is a dark header with the Rejoiner logo and navigation links: Home, How it Works, Happy Customers, and Pricing Starts at \$99/mo. The main content area features a large headline: "Turn Abandoned Carts into 15% More Sales". Below the headline are three bullet points: "Track shopping cart abandonment in real-time", "Designed specifically for online retailers", and "Recover sales with abandoned cart remarketing". A red button labeled "See How it Works" is prominent, with a link "or TRY A DEMO" below it. To the right of the text is a cartoon illustration of three people on a small island pulling a rope attached to a shopping cart with wings, which is flying away.

With this homepage headline, Rejoiner conveys a specific benefit and singles out who they're selling to. They get the attention of e-retailers with "abandoned carts" while letting them know they'll get "15% more sales." It's clear, it's specific, and it's effective.

If it wasn't this specific, e-retailers may not know the offer is targeted to them. They could read the headline, not know they're the ideal customer, and then move on. Headlines should be specific enough to get the attention of the company's target customers.



## Tip three YOUR HEADLINE SHOULD CONVEY A SENSE OF URGENCY

When possible, your headline should convey a sense of urgency. It should include something that compels readers to continue reading so they don't miss out. This isn't a rule that can always be used, but when it can, it works really well.

Here's an example:



**Are You Losing Sales By Giving Customers Too Many Choices?**

Did you know that giving customers too many choices can overwhelm and lead to fewer sales?

It's true.

I experienced this firsthand at an eye-catching gelato shop located in Santa Monica, California.

It caught my eye because of the insane number of flavors visible through the outside window. There were over 100 in all. The assorted flavor colors were so mesmerizing, I had to go in to get some gelato.

But then it happened.

210  
Like  
797  
Tweet  
101  
+1  
29  
Buffer



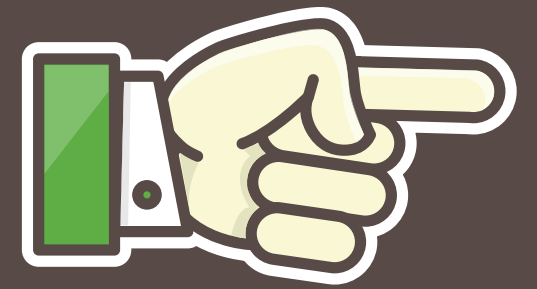
This post ended up doing well on the KISSmetrics blog. It's titled "Are You Losing Sales by Giving Customers Too Many Choices?" So why was it so successful?

One of the reasons is that it conveys a sense of urgency. When business owners read it, automatically they think, "Hmmm...maybe I am losing sales. I need to read this article to find out." And then they click through to read. The urgency of losing sales compels them to read the post.

Whenever possible, it's good to write headlines that convey a sense of urgency to convince people to continue reading.

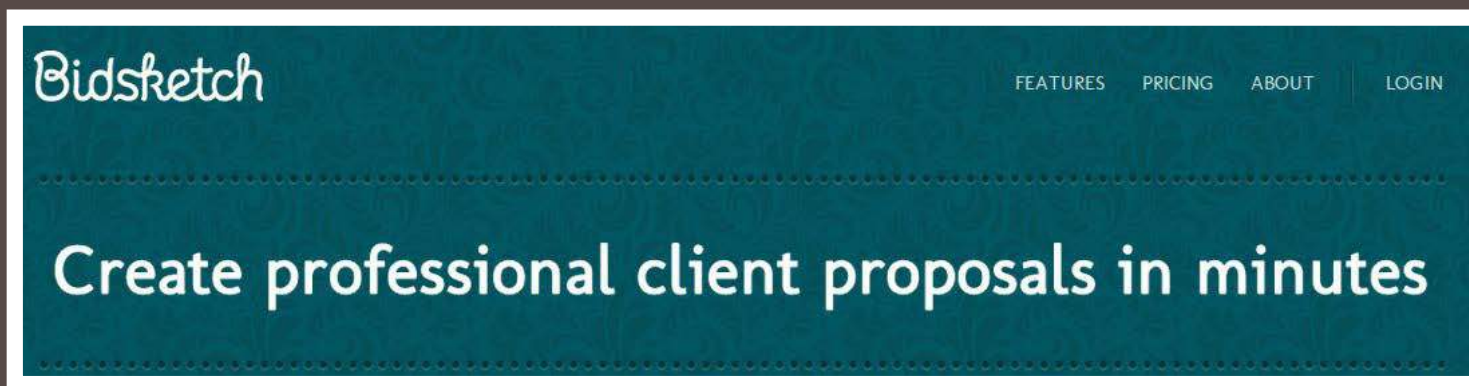
## Tip four YOU HEADLINE SHOULD BE USEFUL

This may be the most important tip of all. If your headline isn't useful and doesn't convey a benefit, then it may not give people a reason to continue on past the headline. People want to know what benefit they'll receive from reading what you've written.



This also happens to be one of the rules that companies break the most. They end up writing something clever because for some reason most people think that's the point of writing a headline. In doing so they fail to communicate a benefit and fail to give readers a reason to continue reading. Eventually, they end up with disappointing sales because no one pays attention to their copy. That's a mistake you don't want to make.

*Here's an example of a good headline that conveys a benefit:*



What benefit is Bidsketch promising? They're promising that you can create professional client proposals in minutes, which ultimately means you'll land more clients and save time in the process. **What's not to like?**



# Writing YOUR FIRST HEADLINE

Now that we’ve talked about four tips for writing attention grabbing headlines that convert, let’s practice writing a headline for your business.

First, start a document titled “Copywriting — YOUR PRODUCT NAME.” The sample project will be titled “Copywriting — Simple Survey Tool.”



Copywriting -- Simple Survey Tool ☆ 📁

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help All changes saved in Drive

Next, write down the first headline that comes to mind. We’ll use the following for the sample project:

## Headline 1: Easy-to-Use Surveys for Website Owners

This headline isn’t very good on purpose so we can learn what’s not good about it.

For starters, it conveys a vague benefit. Being “easy-to-use” is a benefit, but it’s expected that tools like this would be easy to use.

It’s also very general. It describes the tool as “easy-to-use surveys.” Instead, it should stand out from other survey tools by mentioning how this one is made specifically for surveying website visitors. There are plenty of other tools for doing general surveys. This one is special because it allows site owners to survey their visitors.

Finally, it isn’t targeted. It mentions that it’s for “website owners,” but we previously defined our target audience as startups and marketing agencies. Speaking to general website owners means that our offer won’t stand out to our target market. They won’t realize our product is targeted specifically for them.

Let’s work on improving this headline by opening our product description document titled “Product Description — Simple Survey Tool.” Scroll down to question three — What big benefit does it provide? — and read the answer. Here’s what it says:

**What big benefit does it provide?:** *The big benefit is that it helps site owners learn more about visitors and how they’re interacting with the site. They can identify immediately what questions customers have about the product/service, which features are important to them, and much more. This helps them change their site to match the customers’ needs, ultimately increasing conversion rates and generating more sales.*

Let’s write a few more headline variations based on this.

**Headline 2: Learn More about Your Visitors and How They Interact with Your Site**

**Headline 3: Find Out Which Questions Visitors Are Asking and What’s Important to Them**

**Headline 4: Optimize Your Site by Learning More about Your Customers**

**Headline 5: Gain Insights That Increase Conversion Rates and Sales**

These headlines are an improvement over variation one since headline one describes the product but doesn’t convey a benefit. These headlines focus on the actual benefit the product provides instead of merely describing the product.

Of these four options, number five seems to be the best because it goes beyond the surface level benefit and describes what people really want which is to increase conversion rates and sales. Learning more about customers is good, but the point of that is to increase conversions and sales.

It’s impossible to know which of these is the best without testing, which we’ll need to do at some point, but let’s go on to see if our survey results can help us to improve even more.

Go back to your folder and open the document titled “Survey Responses — YOUR PRODUCT NAME.”

Next, look at the first question — How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague. *Here are the sample answers:*

**Customer #1:** *The simple survey tool makes it easy to survey customers and to know what questions to ask. It provides already made surveys so you don't have to figure out what to ask each time you make a new survey. I love how easy it makes it to come up with helpful, actionable survey questions.*

**Customer #2:** *The Simple Survey Tool is awesome. It makes it so easy to survey my website visitors and learn more about them. I don't know what I ever did without the Simple Survey Tool.*

**Customer #3:** *I love how easy the Simple Survey Tool is to install. The first installation takes 5 minutes, and I can ask new questions without bothering IT.*

Let's write a few more headlines based on these answers:

**Headline 6: The Easy Way to Survey Customers and Know What Questions to Ask**

**Headline 7: The Easy Way to Come Up with Actionable Survey Questions**

**Headline 8: The Easy Way to Survey Website Visitors and Learn More about Them**

These are three good headlines we can glean from the answers. Out of these options, #8 seems to be the best because #'s 6 and 7 convey more of a side benefit. The real benefit of using the survey tool is learning about site visitors and improving the site. A secondary benefit is knowing which questions to ask. Thus, we'll add #8 to our list of finalists.

Another survey question we can look at is number four — What did you hope to accomplish by using this product? *Here are the answers:*

**Customer #1:** *I really want to learn more about my customers. When they come to my site I have no idea what questions they're asking about our products. It's not like being in person where you can answer questions right away. Our hope is that the surveys will help us improve our website copy so we can sell more products.*

**Customer #2:** *We want to better understand our site visitors by learning what types of services they're looking for. Ultimately, we'd like to update our website so it offers the services our customers are looking for.*

**Customer #3:** *We're trying to find out who's coming to our site. We have lots of visitors, but we don't really know who they are. Our top priority right now is get a better idea of the demographic makeup of our site visitors.*

And here are some headlines we can write:

**Headline 9: Increase Sales Online by Learning More about Your Customers**

**Headline 10: Write Better Copy and Increase Sales with Actionable Customer Insights**

**Headline 11: Optimize Your Site by Understanding Your Visitors**

**Headline 12: The Best Way to Find Out Who's Visiting Your Site**

Out of these four, #'s 9 and 10 appear to be the best since they communicate a real benefit of using the survey tool. Optimizing your site and finding out who's visiting it are both nice, but the point of those is to increase sales and write better copy. Thus, we'll add 9 and 10 to our list of finalists.



Here's a screenshot of the twelve headlines with the finalists in bold:

A screenshot of a list of twelve headlines. The headlines are numbered 1 through 12. Headlines 5, 8, 9, and 10 are in bold. The text is as follows:

Headline 1: Easy-to-Use Surveys for Website Owners  
Headline 2: Learn More about Your Visitors and How They Interact with Your Site  
Headline 3: Find Out Which Questions Visitors Are Asking and What's Important to Them  
Headline 4: Optimize Your Site by Learning More about Your Customers  
**Headline 5: Gain Insights That Increase Conversion Rates and Sales**  
Headline 6: The Easy Way to Survey Customers and Know What Questions to Ask  
Headline 7: The Easy Way to Come Up with Actionable Survey Questions  
**Headline 8: The Easy Way to Survey Website Visitors and Learn More about Them**  
**Headline 9: Increase Sales Online by Learning More about Your Customers**  
**Headline 10: Write Better Copy and Increase Sales with Actionable Customer Insights**  
Headline 11: Optimize Your Site by Understanding Your Visitors  
Headline 12: The Best Way to Find Out Who's Visiting Your Site

We'll save these for now and come back to them later.

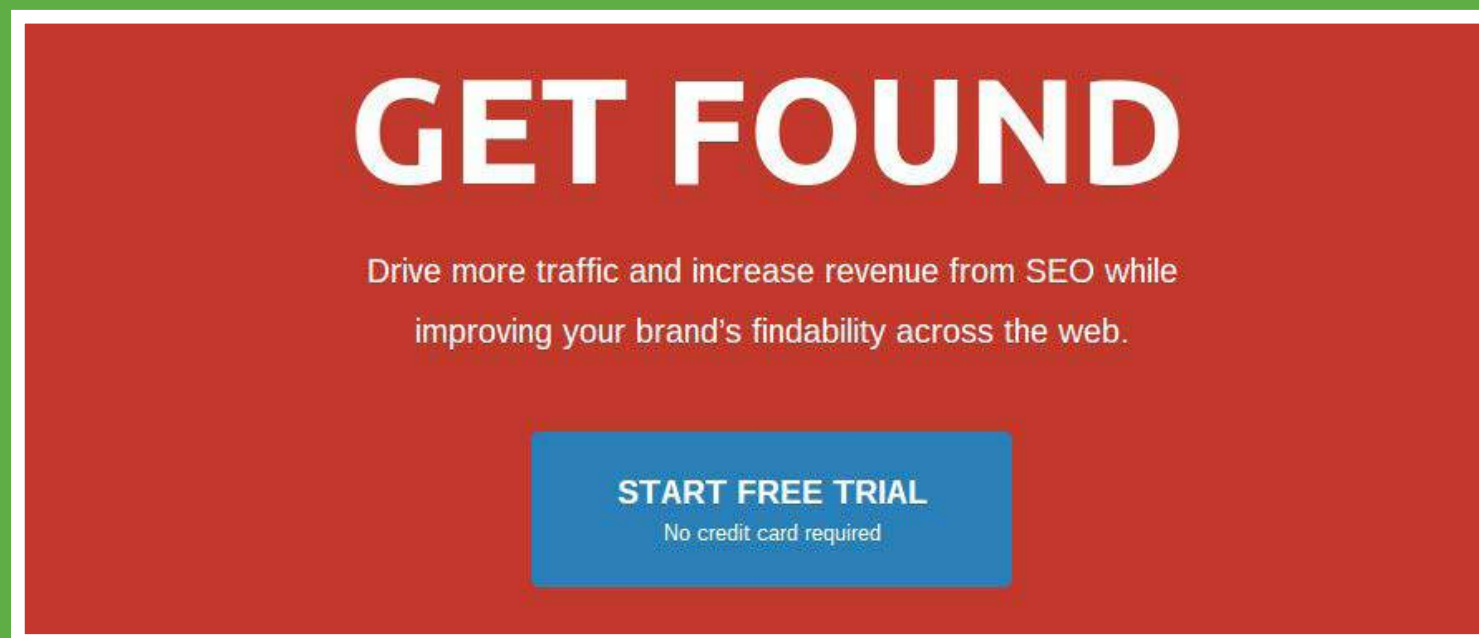
So what did we learn in this section?

- *First, we learned it's not good enough to merely describe the product in a headline. It's much better to convey the big benefit the customer will receive by using the product.*
- *Second, we learned that survey responses can be a good source for headlines because they reveal the words customers use to talk about your product. By paying attention to survey answers, you're less likely to use words that aren't in your customers' vocabulary while highlighting a benefit that actually matters to them.*

Now that we've written some practice headlines of our own, let's look at a sampling of headlines around the internet to see what we can learn.

# EXAMPLE HEADLINES

## EXAMPLE #1: GINZAMETRICS



One of the things Ginzametrics does well with this headline is start with two words in all caps — GET FOUND. This causes the headline stand out since every other headline online is somewhere between eight and fifteen words long. It gets points for being unique while effectively communicating a benefit using two simple words.

It also gets points for mentioning two specific benefits in the next line — driving more traffic and increasing revenue. Right away, customers know how they'll benefit from using the product.

The headline (*or sub-headline if you want to get technical*) is even more specific in that it mentions the traffic and revenue is derived from SEO. They don't just make a general claim but show specifically how the benefit will be generated. They also get the attention of anyone interested in improving their SEO.

Finally, they have a broad target where they mention “improving your brand's findability.” This is ok if they're targeting any and all brands, but it could be improved if their customers were specific like enterprise-level clients or startups. If not, brands is just fine.

## EXAMPLE #2: INDOCHINO





This is an example of a headline that’s not very good (*sorry Indochino*). It’s very vague and doesn’t communicate much to customers. The two lines say “ULTIMATE TECH COLLECTION” and “NOTHING STANDS IN THE WAY OF STYLE” but neither of those communicates anything of value to customers. They could be considered clever, but really they just come off as confusing and borderline meaningless.

However, once you click through, you find a more meaningful sub-headline.



This headline helps to explain what the Ultimate Tech Collection is and what it means for nothing to stand in the way of style, but without the explanation, customers are left scratching their heads trying to figure out what’s on the next page.

It’s possible we’re wrong and that Indochino gets more click-throughs with the vague headline and sub-headline on the homepage, but we’re pretty sure that the more specific sub-headline would generate more click-throughs and sales.

### EXAMPLE #3: QUICKSPROUT

QuickSprout uses the above headline in a HelloBar to direct people to a sales page. Why does it work so well?



For starters, it’s very specific. Not only does it mention the benefit of working with Neil — increasing traffic — but it shows a very specific amount in a specific period of time — 30% in 60 days. Specific results are always more impactful than general claims.

Next, it mentions a well-respected website that a lot of businesses look up to — TechCrunch. Many companies would like to generate as much traffic as TechCrunch, so by mentioning them, it’s implied that other companies can drive traffic numbers like TechCrunch’s.

The specificity of this headline makes it unique since most companies only make general claims, and it makes it effective because people respond better to specific, measurable, factual results.



EXAMPLE #4: CRAZYEGG

# The Astonishing Power of Eye Tracking Technology...Without the High Costs

All the most powerful secrets, tips and tricks that have EVER been written on Heat Maps and how you can apply them to your site now.

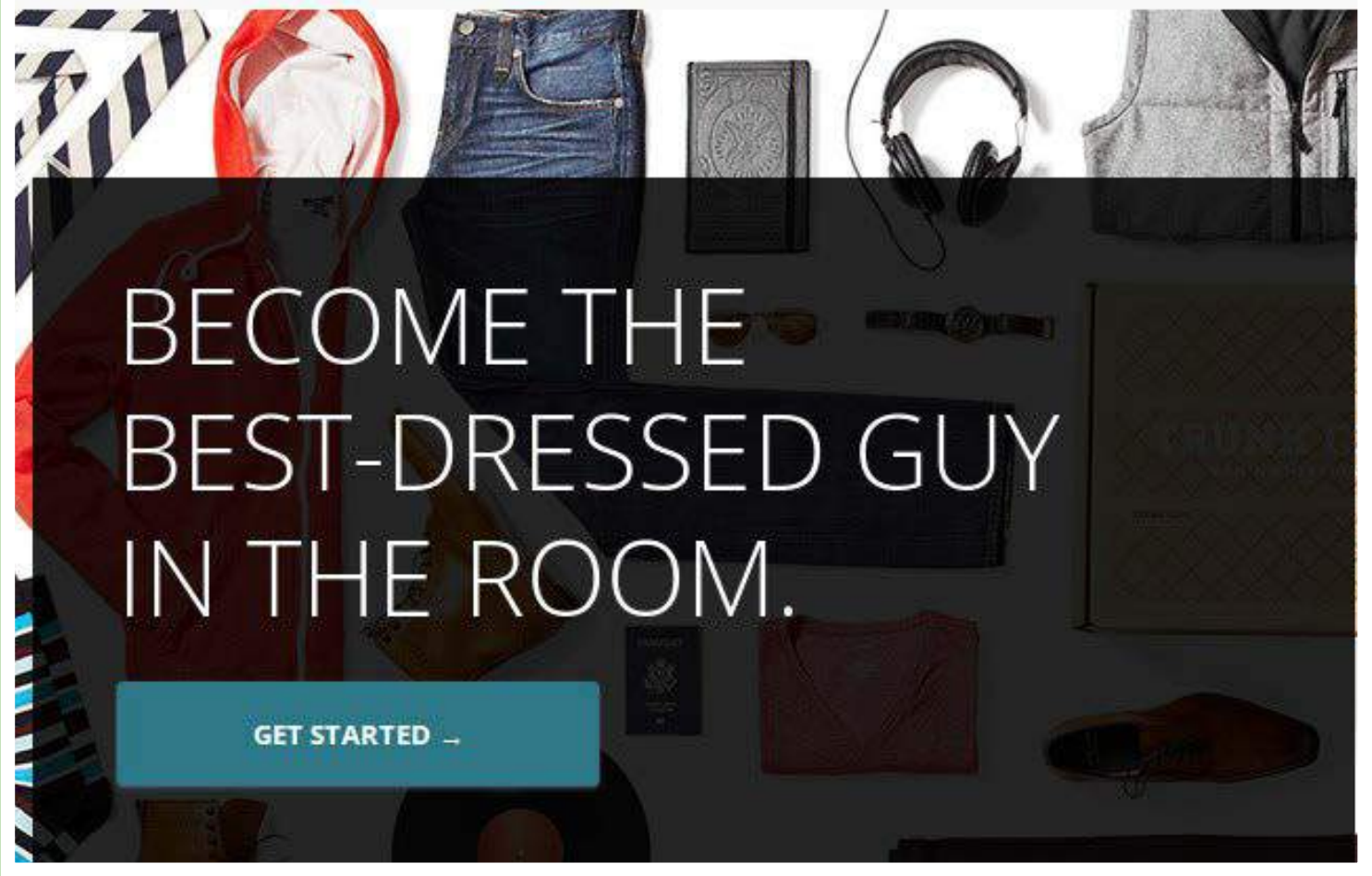
This is a great example of why it’s important to test headlines and any other web-site changes. On the surface, it may not seem like the most impressive headline, but Conversion Rate Experts used it to increase conversions by 30%. Why does it work, you ask? Great question.

The primary reason it works so well is that it communicates the real value of using CrazyEgg. Paying \$50 per month for a heatmap tool seems expensive until it’s compared to eye-tracking technology which costs thousands of dollars. Thus, the headline quickly communicates the value of using CrazyEgg by comparing it to something that costs much, much more.

It’s also a unique headline that doesn’t follow the template that most websites use. By doing something different, CrazyEgg stands out from the competition.

EXAMPLE #5: TRUNK CLUB

TRUNK CLUB  
MEN'S OUTFITTERS



BECOME THE  
BEST-DRESSED GUY  
IN THE ROOM.

GET STARTED →

This very well may be the best headline online at the moment. It goes well beyond describing the service. An amateur would write a descriptive headline like “Get a Trunk of Designer Clothes Delivered Directly to Your Doorstep.” A better copywriter would write something like “Get a Trunk of Clothes That Will Make You Look Great.” This headline goes so much further.

Instead of just describing the service or conveying a simple benefit, it digs down to the core of what men want from a service like this. It connects on an emotional level by appealing to their vanity. It doesn’t merely describe what the service does or how it works; it communicates what every man wants which is to be the best-dressed guy in the room.

Your goal should be to write a headline like this that goes beyond a simple description or a surface-level benefit. You want to figure out what customers really want to get out of using your product and communicate that in your headline. In a lot of ways, Trunk Club’s headline is the standard you should be striving for.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter we talked about the importance of effective headline writing and how to write headlines that grab your customers attention and convert them in customers. We covered:

- *Why headlines are so important*
- *How to write an effective headline that conveys a benefit*
- *How to use survey responses to craft better headlines*
- *The ultimate goal of headlines which is to connect with customers at an emotional level*

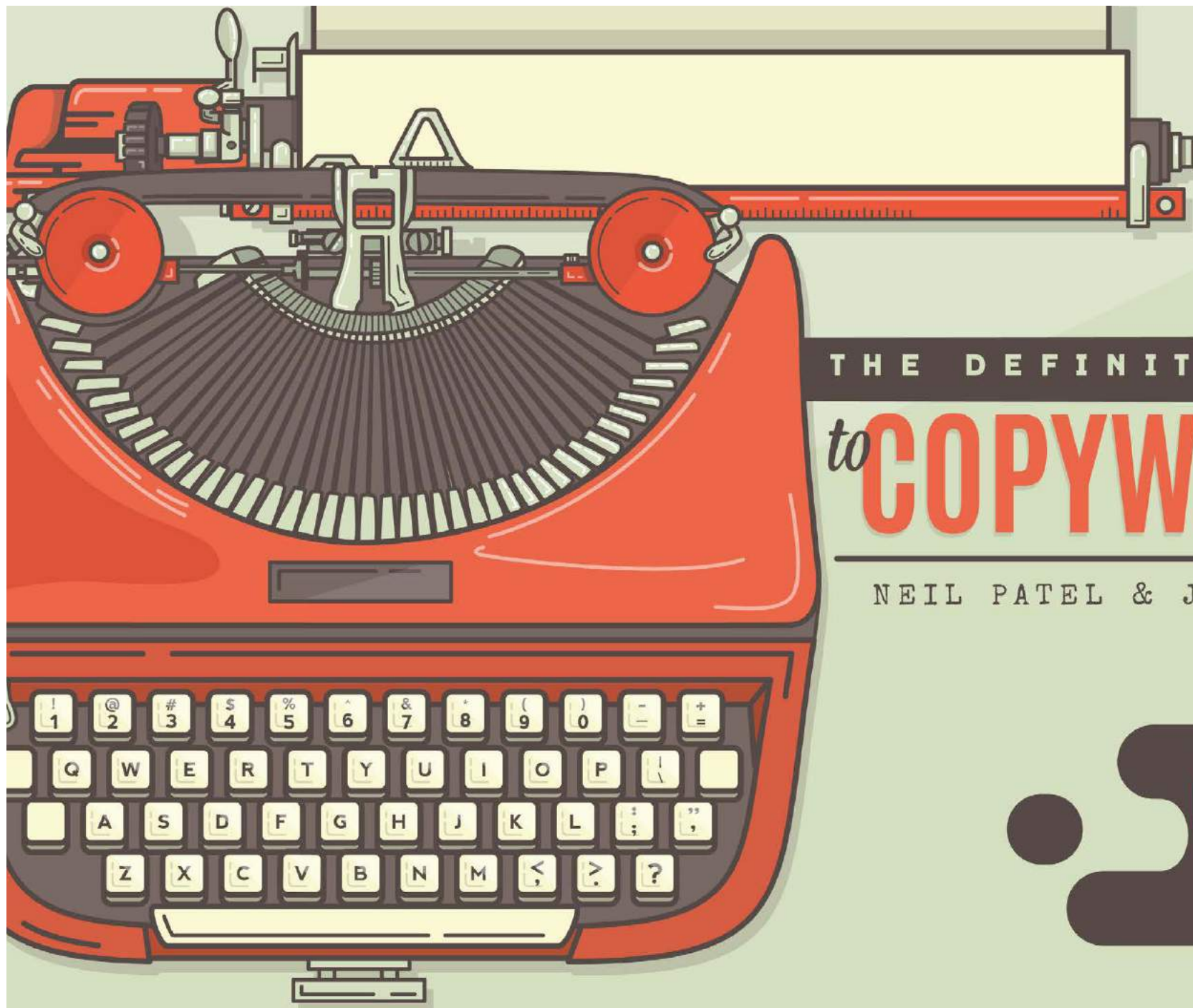
In the next chapter, we’ll discuss some basic writing principles that will help you write more effective copy.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER TWO**

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER FOUR**

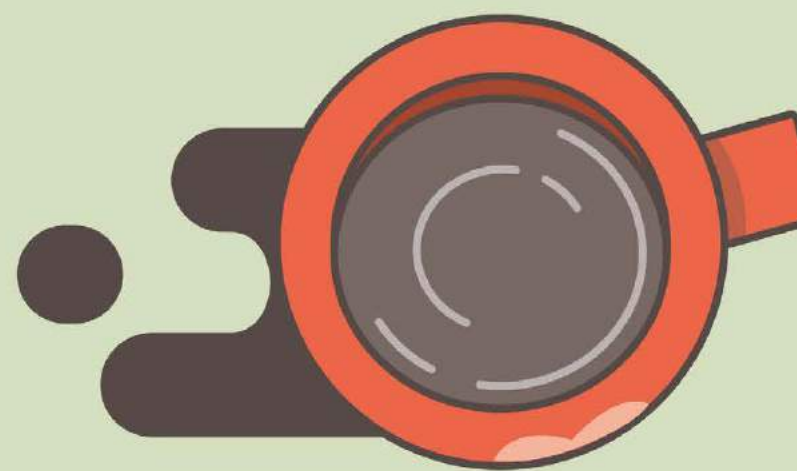






# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4 PERSUASION SECRETS OF PROFESSIONAL COPYWRITERS

We have become so accustomed to hearing everyone claim that his product is the best in the world, or the cheapest, that we take all such statements with a grain of salt.

**ROBERT COLLIER**

So far in this copywriting guide we've covered:

- *The importance of thoroughly understanding your product and the need to clearly define who your target customers are*
- *How to survey your customers to peer inside their heads and learn which aspects of your product matter to them and what language they use to describe what you sell*
- *How to write attention-grabbing headlines that convert*

These first three chapters lay a solid foundation for your copy and provide a starting point for all of the writing you'll eventually do. In this chapter, we're going to discuss four secret persuasion techniques professional copywriters use to write copy that sells.



## *Pro tip one* EMPHASIZE BENEFITS OVER FEATURES

This happens to be one of the most basic copywriting lessons in the book. Every copywriter learns early on about the need to emphasize benefits over features, but surprisingly, it's not something that comes naturally.

For whatever reason, nearly everyone has a tendency to write about features instead of benefits. With the Simple Survey Tool as an example, you might write the following copy:



### **Sign up for the Simple Survey Tool to get:**






- *Unlimited questions*
- *Multiple question formats*
- *Javascript code installation*
- *Customizable surveys*
- *Instant notifications*

What's the problem with this copy? The problem is that it's a list of features and not a product description that appeals to customers. Features are needed at the right time to show what's included with the product, but they don't convince customers to buy what you're selling. Benefits, on the other hand, are much, much more persuasive at convincing customers to buy your product.

Prospects care more about the benefit provided by the product than by the features included, and they sign up to receive the benefit, not the features. More often than not, features are technical aspects that end up confusing customers. They appeal to a select, hardcore group of customers but confuse the rest.



Let’s consider an example that’s already been mentioned — **high-speed internet**.

Max Turbo	Max Plus	Max	Elite	Pro
				
\$66/mo.*	\$56/mo.*	\$51/mo.*	\$46/mo.*	\$41/mo.*
24 Mbps	18 Mbps	12 Mbps	6 Mbps	3 Mbps

Internet companies like Cox Communications and AT&T offer high-speed internet. Speeds range from 1.5 mbps to 50 mbps (*and even higher in some cases*).

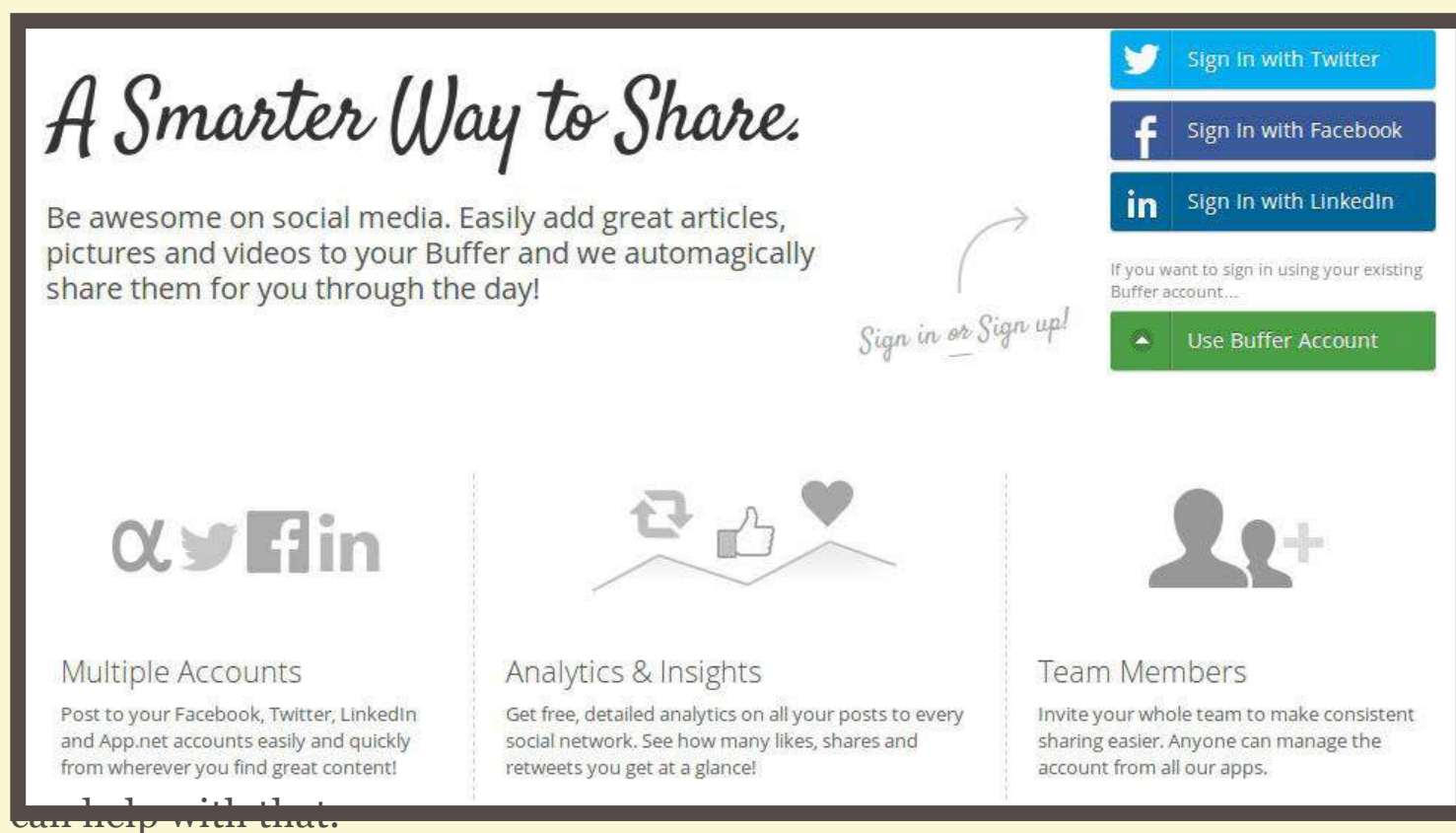
So how should these companies sell high-speed internet? One way is to emphasize the download speed. A headline could say, “Get Internet with 50 mbps Download Speed Installed in Your Home Today!” The problem is that not many people know the difference between 50 mbps and 15 mbps. How much faster is 50 mbps? Is it a noticeable difference? Is it worth paying more for?

To the right buyer it is, but for others it’s not. So what really matters to customers? What matters are things like watching videos without buffering and playing video games without lag. If your internet helps with that, customers will be willing to pay more.

Thus, instead of using a headline like the one above, internet providers should use a headline like “Get Internet So Fast Your Videos Will Never Buffer” or “Get Download Speeds So Fast You Can Watch All the Online TV You Want without Interruption.” Both of these headlines appeal to customers who are tired of video buffering much more than a headline that talks about specific download speeds.

So when it comes to writing copy, you want to emphasize benefits first. Your goal is to lead with benefits and include them at the beginning of your copy. Then, after starting with the benefit, you can go on to list the features.

*Here’s a great example:* The folks at Buffer start out by talking about how their app is the smarter way to share. If you’re looking a way to work smarter not harder when it comes to social media, you’ve come to the right place because Buffer



can help with that.

Next, they go on to talk about how Buffer will help you to be awesome on social media. Who doesn't want a tool that will help them to be awesome? The copy continues by talking about more benefits of using the Buffer app: you can easily add great articles, pictures, and videos so they "automagically" get shared throughout the day. Sign us up. We want updates that share "automatically." Seems like there's a lot of benefit to using this app.

Then, after leading with the benefits of using the app, they list the features. You can post to **multiple accounts**, get **analytics & insights**, and invite all of your **team members** to use the app. Each of the bold phrases are features included with the Buffer. They aren't necessarily reasons for signing up, but they explain what you'll get by using it. Thus, in this example, Buffer leads with the benefits of using the app and then reinforces the benefit by explaining the app's features.

Here's what you need to remember: Benefits sell the product and give customers a reason to buy; features explain clearly what they'll receive by using your product and give customers something to compare against the competition. Features are still needed, but they're not the primary selling point.

**This is pro tip #1** for copy that sells. The good news is that we've already recorded the big benefit of our product in the product description document ("Product Description — YOUR PRODUCT NAME").

We also listed benefits underneath each feature. At this point you may want to open the document to review those benefits and see if there's anything you can



## *Pro tip two* BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE

The second pro tip for copy that sells is that it needs to be as specific as possible. It's easy to make general claims about a product, but specific proof is much, much more effective.

For example, a conversion rate optimization company could say that their service doubles or triples conversion rates. That's great, but it's not very persuasive.

General numbers and general claims are too perfect to be believable to customers. "Double or triple" is an estimate that's easy to make up. How often does a conversion rate increase by a perfect 100%? Not very often.



### So what should you do instead?

You should be as specific as possible. You should tell customers that your service increased conversion rates for a specific customer by 58% or saves you customers an average of \$254 per year. Those numbers are more specific, more believable, and seem less likely to have been made up.

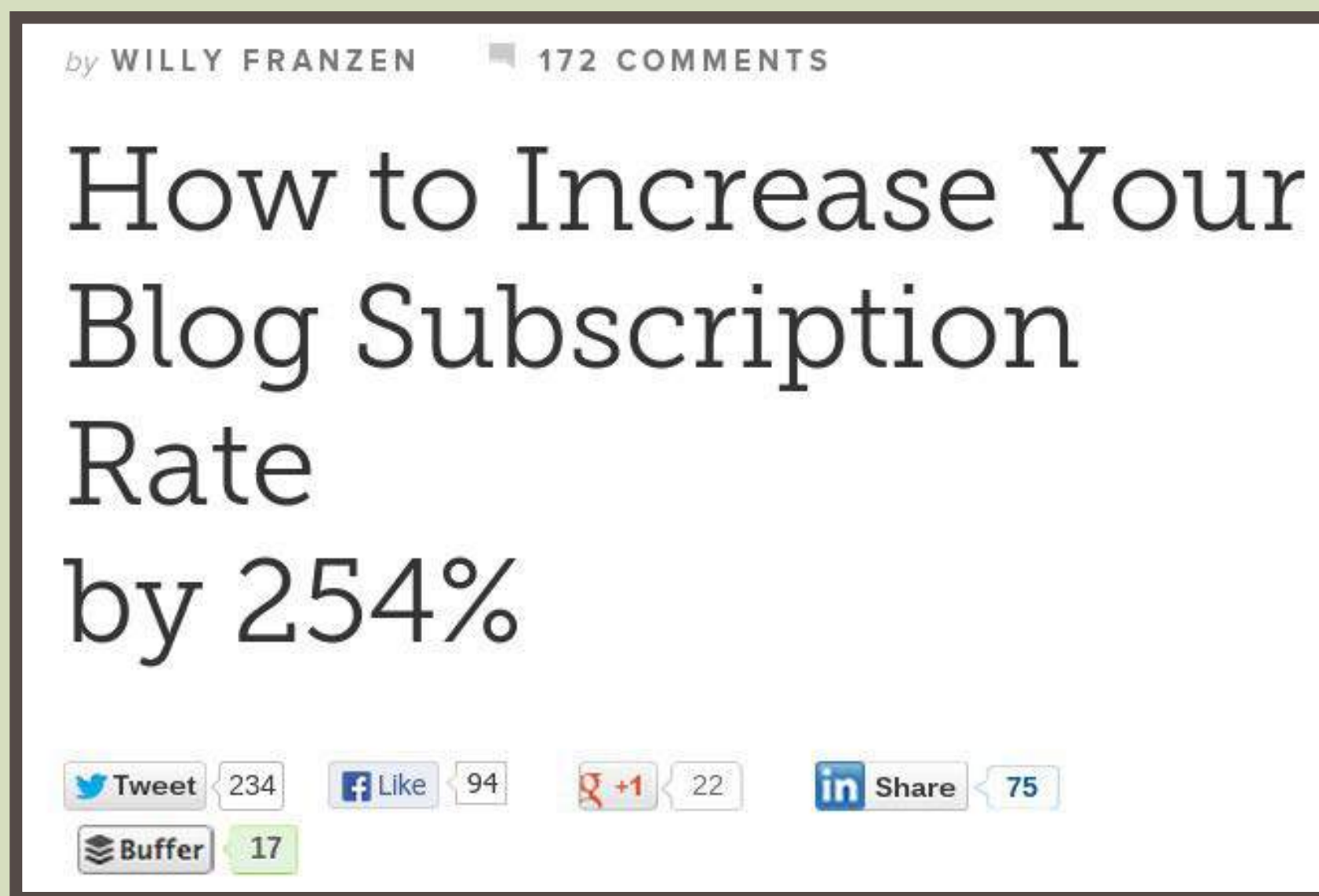
Writing specific copy is way more effective than making general claims. Here are a few great examples:

### EXAMPLE #1: BIDSKETCH

**\$193,654,896** earned by Bidsketch customers

With this headline, Bidsketch displays the exact dollar amount their customers have earned by using their service. The specificity makes the claim much more believable and impressive. \$1,900,000+ wouldn't be nearly as impressive as \$193,654,896. Either their customers have earned that much money, or they're lying through their teeth. Most customers will believe the former when a specific claim is made.

## EXAMPLE #2: COPYBLOGGER



In this headline example, Copyblogger uses a specific subscription rate increase to get their readers' attention. They could have used a headline like "How to Significantly Increase Conversion Rates," but that wouldn't be nearly as effective. The specific number grabs people's attention and makes them feel like the advice is proven to be effective and will provide a real benefit.

So as you can see, being as specific as possible makes your copy more effective. Is there anything specific about your product that will help you sell it to your customers? Are there any case studies where customers saved \$X number of dollars or grew their business by X%?

Go ahead and open your product description document again ("Product Description — YOUR PRODUCT NAME"), and add new line in bold: **Specific results**. Underneath this line, create a bulleted list of any specific results your product has been proven to produce. It will look something like this:

### **Specific results**

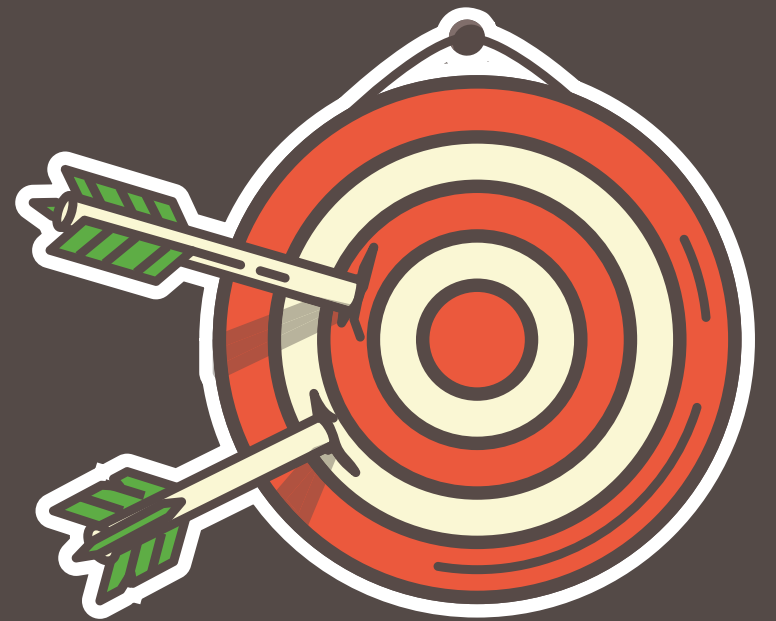
- Helped Friendifyly increase sign ups by 72% after surveying their customers.
- Assisted CharityWater to increase donations by 23%.
- Helped Madewell increase average orders by \$22.

Now that your specific results are recorded, let's move on to to the third pro tip for copy that sells.

## *Pro tip three* TARGET EMOTIONS

When it comes to making a purchase, people are heavily influenced by their emotions. We think we make decisions based purely on logic, but really, most of our purchases are based on emotions.

The simple reason is that our emotions are tied more closely to our decision making than most of us realize. Antonio Damasio, a professor of neuroscience at the University of Southern California, has studied this extensively and has written about his research in a book titled *Descartes' Error*.



In the book, Damasio talks about cases where patients suffered damage to their pre-frontal cortex, the part of the brain associated with emotions. The result is that they end up having difficulty making simple decisions.

In many ways, they maintain the same intelligence they had before the damage, scoring well on numerous intelligence tests, but with their emotions impaired, they have trouble making simple decisions like where to eat for dinner or what food to choose. They can list the logical benefits of each option but ultimately have trouble making a decision.

So what does this have to do with copy? Everything, really. If your copy only makes a logical appeal, you'll miss the most important part of the brain connected to decision making — emotions. You can make a very logical argument only to miss the most important part of the brain you need to target.

Selling a product isn't just about making a case for why customers need what you're selling. It's creating a scenario where people want what you have for sale.

Apple is a great example of this. The logic behind buying an Apple product is quite poor. You end up paying more for a product with worse technical specifications than those from another company. Ten times out of ten you can get more computer for less than when you buy one from Apple.





So why do people pay more for Apple products like a MacBook Pro? The reason is that customers want them. Apple knows how to push the desire button and make people want their product.

Customers line up to buy the new iPhone, not because it makes so much sense to pay the highest price for the latest phone, but because they have to get it before their friends do. They have to get the latest phone because they want it so badly.

You need to do the same with your copy. Instead of just listing features and checking off reasons to buy your product, you need to increase the emotional appeal of using it and create a desire in your prospects for what you're selling.

# Leave Lane Behind

*Tools and Training for Smarter Content Marketing*

Copyblogger does a good job of this with their homepage headline.

They don't just make a logical appeal. They target their customers' emotions.

Do prospects want to leave lane behind? Sure they do. Is that a logical reason to sign up for Copyblogger? Not necessarily but it definitely makes you want to sign up for their programs. Why? Because you don't want to be lane.

Let's apply this lesson now. Go to your copywriting document ("Copywriting — YOUR PRODUCT NAME") and write a handful more headlines that target emotions.

Headline 13: Boost Your Sales Online: Survey Your Site Visitors and Start Selling More Today

Headline 14: Survey Your Site Visitors and Find Out Where Your Website Is Leaking Sales

Headline 15: Turn Your Website into an Online Sales Machine

## Pro tip four **LEVERAGE TESTIMONIALS**

In addition to the tips listed above, pro copywriters know how to leverage testimonials to get the maximum credibility with customers.

The reason is that prospects take everything you say with a grain of salt. When you say, “We’ve got the fastest internet in the universe!”, even if it’s true, prospective customers will assume you’re biased, because, well, you are.

But when you share a client testimonial, you instantly gain credibility. Words from a customer’s mouth are much, much more trustworthy than a similar statement from a business owner or salesman.

You can use testimonials to increase the believability of your copy and to say things you otherwise wouldn’t be able to say. This is the main reason why so many websites use testimonials on their site. They’re leveraging the believability of customer testimonials.

Testimonials can be used anywhere in your copy, but they’re particularly useful when used in the following ways.

### **TESTIMONIAL USE ONE: TO SAY THINGS YOU CAN’T**

Testimonials come in a lot of different forms. One of those forms is an extremely flattering recommendation of your company. Customers may talk about how your service was so amazing that they wish they could join your team, or something else equally flattering.

These are things you can’t say yourself. You can’t say, “We provide service so amazing you’ll wish you could work with us.” Thus, you can use customer testimonials to say things you otherwise couldn’t say.

Here’s an example where a customer provides an extremely flattering recommendation of WP Engine’s hosting service.

“My site loads ridiculously fast, my page views are up, and my business is seeing the results. I rest easy at night with the level of support.

**My only regret: that I didn’t move to WP Engine sooner.”**

– PHIL SIMON, AUTHOR OF *THE AGE OF THE PLATFORM*



## TESTIMONIAL USE #2: TO STRENGTHEN KEY ASPECTS OF YOUR COPY

Some testimonials are general, but some talk about specific parts of your product or service that you'd like to emphasize within your copy. In this way, not all testimonials are created equal. Some are more strategically important than others.

Your job is to figure out which testimonials match specific parts of your copy. Some of them might talk about how much they love instant notifications. Others may talk about how much they appreciate pre-formulated surveys. The key is figuring out which ones will strengthen your copy the most and to use them at the appropriate time.

For example, if you have a service business, you might have a testimonial that talks about how effective your process is. You may also have a section on your website that describes your proven process. Instead of adding the testimonial randomly somewhere on the site, you want to match it with the section that's the most appropriate so it strengthens key aspects of your copy.

Switch Video does this on their website. Part of their homepage talks about their proven, 5-step process as seen below.



Directly underneath, they use testimonials that talk about Switch Video's process as a way to reinforce the copy listed above.



Both testimonials (*in case it's difficult to read them in the screenshot*) speak highly of Switch Video's process and support the 5-step, proven process listed above.

### TESTIMONIAL USE #3: TO HIGHLIGHT KEY CLIENTS

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You can also use testimonials to highlight key clients and customers. Often, there are companies you work with that prospects aspire to be like. Maybe it's a larger company or a well-known entrepreneur.

Your goal is to leverage these testimonials to show off your work for these clients. A testimonial from an impressive, big name client can be worth hundreds from regular clients. Thus, you want to leverage your biggest clients to impress the rest of your prospects.

Neil does this on QuickSprout with the testimonial from Michael Arrington in the sidebar ad shown above. Michael is someone that a lot of people in the publishing and internet marketing community look up to. Using his testimonial not only provides credibility for Neil, but also highlights a customer that a lot of prospects look up to.



### TESTIMONIAL USE #4: HEADLINES

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Headlines can be used in the three ways mentioned above, and they can also be used as a headline. In doing so, you lead with words from your customer's mouth which means your headline is extra credible. Instead of seeming like a hollow claim, it will read as a trustworthy review from a client.

Angie's List uses this technique on their homepage as seen below.



Angie's List uses a customer testimonial as a headline on the homepage where customers will read it right away instead of saving it for a place later in the copy where customers may not end up reading it at all. This provides a believable, meaningful headline that's carefully selected to say exactly what they want it to say.

No matter how you end up using them, testimonials are a powerful way to increase credibility, strengthen key aspects of your copy, say things you otherwise couldn't say, highlight key customers, and capture the benefit of using your product in your customers own words. Even though they aren't written directly by a copywriter, they're important pieces of copy that can be placed strategically to achieve the maximum impact.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

This chapter presents four powerful techniques professional copywriters use to write copy that sells. You've learned:

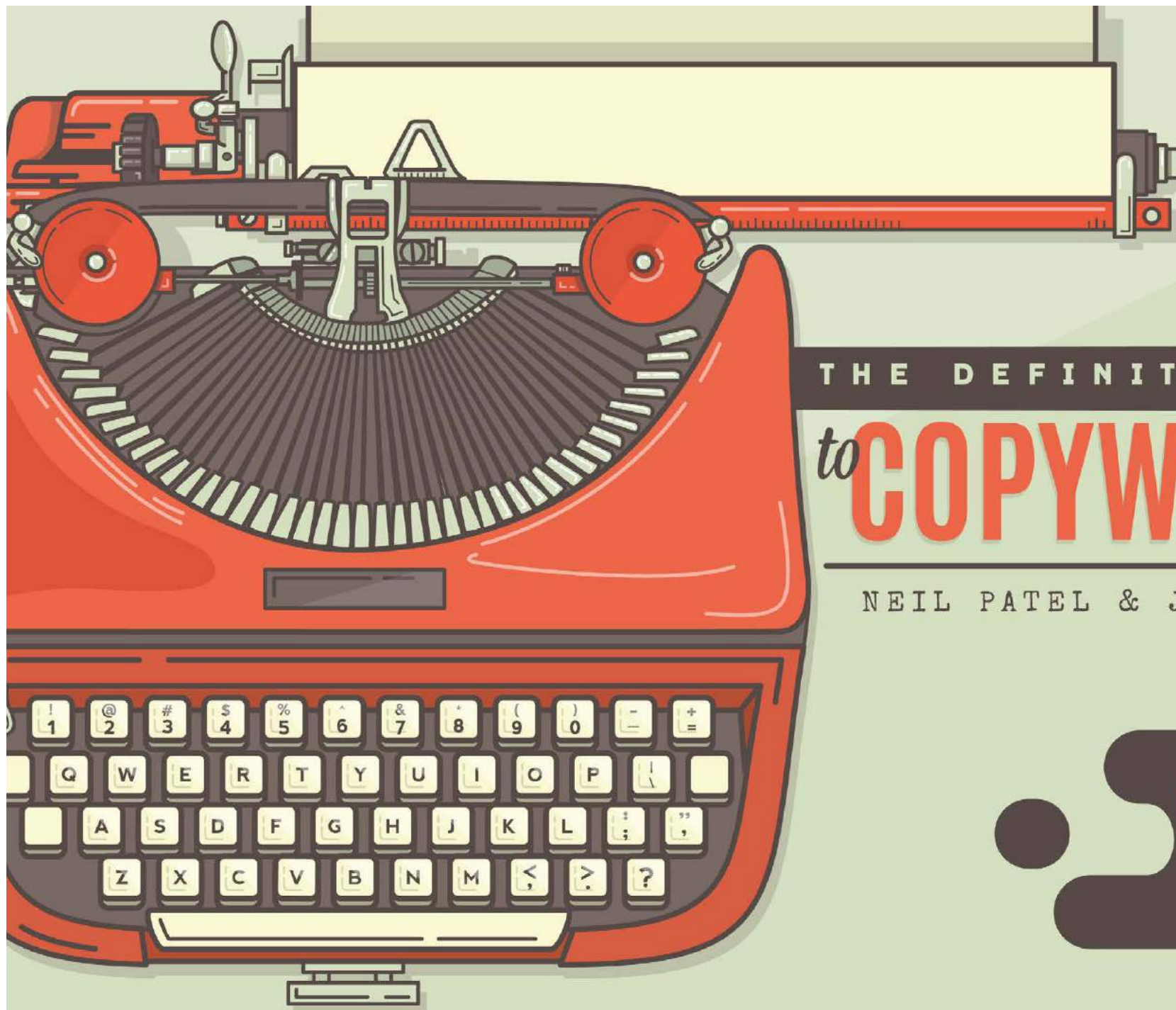
- *The importance of emphasizing benefits over features.*
- *The need to be as specific as possible.*
- *How emotions are connected to decision making and therefore selling.*
- *How to use testimonials to increase the credibility of your copy.*

In the next chapter we'll discuss more tips for writing copy that sells, including, what may come as a surprise, why your copy shouldn't be about you or your business. Continue reading to learn more.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER THREE**

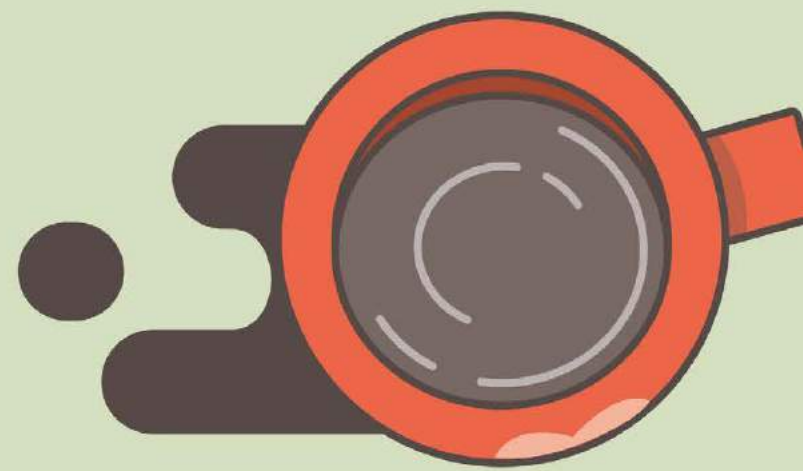
**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER FIVE**





# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHY YOUR COPY SHOULDN'T BE ABOUT YOU AND SIX OTHER PROVEN TIPS FOR BETTER WRITING

**If you can't turn yourself into a consumer, you probably shouldn't be in the advertising business at all.**

**DAVID OGILVY**

In this chapter we're going to dive deeper into the writing aspect of copywriting. We've mainly covered research and persuasion techniques up to this point. Now, we'd like to look at the writing side more closely by answering this question: How good do your writing skills need in order to write persuasive copy?

The good news is that you *don't* need to be the world's foremost grammarian. Perfect grammar and straight A's in English aren't required to write copy that sells.

But on the other side of the coin, you do need to be a good writer. You need to be able to write copy that connects with your audience and clearly communicates your message. Sometimes this means breaking a grammar rule or two to get your point across, but if you break rules unknowingly, you'll lose credibility.





photo credit: Gez D via Photopin cc

*You need to write well enough that you don't lose credibility with your audience by using poor grammar and not catching typos.*

On one hand, you don't have to be the world's absolute best writer to write persuasively. On the other hand, you do need to improve your writing skills as much as possible in order to clearly get your point across and effectively sell your product in print.

**Let's talk about how to become a better writer now.**

## *Rule one* WHY YOU COPY SHOULDN'T BE ABOUT YOU

This may seem counterintuitive, but an important rule for writing better copy is to not focus your copy on yourself. It's also a rule that a lot of people break.

Most businesses break this rule by writing business-centric copy instead of customer-centric copy. They write about how awesome they are and how great their product is, failing to focus on their customers and selling them what they're looking for. This is a bad way to write and a bad habit a lot of companies have.

Fortunately, there's an easy way to spot this kind of writing. Company-focused copy uses "we" much more than it does "you."

Here's an example of company-focused copy (*a style you've probably seen before*):

### **Welcome to Our Site**

*We're a professional house cleaning service based out of Austin, TX.*

*We serve the greater Austin area and have the best rates in town.*

*Our cleaners are professional and punctual.*

*We offer the highest level of service to all of our customers.*

Can you see the problem here? All of the copy is focused on the company. It uses "we" and "our" over and over again. Everything is written as a description about the company.

Here's what's wrong with this type of copy: **customers don't care enough about you and what you do**. They care about themselves and what you can do for them. They care about you in the context of how you can help them accomplish their goals.

Thus, all of your copy should focus on the customer. Everything you write should be something that appeals to them and shows how you can meet their needs. That's the point of your copy, and that's really the point of being in business in the first place.

The secret is that you can write about yourself so long as it's in the context of providing value for your customers. It's ok to write about yourself if you're providing information that's useful to the people who may want to do business with you, but it's not ok to write about yourself just for the sake of writing about yourself.

Here's an example of the right way to write customer-centric copy for the same cleaning service described above:

***Are you tired of cleaning your own home? Do you have better things to do with your time?***

*We're glad you stopped by.*

*Our cleaning service specializes in helping busy professionals like yourself. We promise to get your house squeaky clean so you have more time to do the hundreds of other things you need to do.*

*Interested in getting your house cleaned by an experienced team that knows how to make a house shine? Give us a call today and free up more time for yourself and your family!*

Can you tell the difference? This copy replaces the use of “we” and “our” with “you,” “your,” and “yourself.” This simple change of perspective makes the copy much, much more customer focused. Instead of merely describing the cleaning company, it explains what the cleaning company offers in the context of the customer and how the service helps busy professionals free up more time for themselves.

This version is much more interesting to prospective customers, and it’s exactly how you need to write all of your copy. You need to write about your business in the context of how it helps your customers by focusing on their needs, by using “you” more than “we,” and by making sure your copy explains how you will help the customer instead of only providing a boring description of your business.

**This is the first writing rule that will make you a better copywriter.**

## *Rule two* WRITE CONVERSATIONALLY

The next rule is to write conversationally since that’s the whole point of writing anyway. The act of writing is a conversation between the author and the reader. It’s not the act of getting ideas onto paper; it’s a conversation that takes place after a piece of writing gets completed.

In a normal sales process, a salesman talks with customers in person. He shows up, greets the customer, and proceeds to talk about the product or service he’s selling. The only difference with copy is that it doesn’t take place in person.

Copy ends up being a conversation between your company and your prospective customers. Your company has a message to get across so it’s talking with customers online or in print.

Thus, you want your copy to be as conversational as possible. You should use words and phrases you would use in everyday conversation and write in a very similar way to the way you speak. Don’t feel like you need to sound important or erudite when you write. This will put your readers to sleep and make you seem arrogant and self absorbed. You’ll end up seeming boring and stodgy.







The Digital Telepathy “Hire Us” page is a great example of this. Here’s what the top half looks like:

## ARE WE A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR PROJECT?


Our service starts at \$20,000/month. Compared to hiring your own internal team, you get a lot of bang for your buck. We take a comprehensive approach to increasing the performance of your online business.



A balanced team of UI/UX designers & front-end developers



A senior strategist to lead your team and focus on your success.



Ongoing iteration that aligns with your business objectives.

---

**GET IN TOUCH & GRAB THE DT PLAYBOOK.**

It provides the delicious details about our design philosophy, process and team. If you feel that we're a good fit, just reply to our email or give us a call to start the conversation.

Here are a few standout points from this copy:

- *The section begins with a question: “Are we a good fit for your project?” Asking a question is a great way to start a conversation. The copy that follows answers the question in a simple, straightforward, conversational manner without attempting to use extra big words to seem important. It uses phrases like “bang for your buck” which are very conversational.*
- *The second headline is also simple and straightforward: “Get in Touch and Grab the DT Playbook.” “Grab the DT Playbook,” for example, is a phrase that would easily come out in an everyday conversation. It doesn’t sounds stiff or formal and adds a touch of personality to the page.*

Keep this in mind when writing your copy: Your customers want to have a conversation with you. They’re not interested in talking to a faceless organization. They want to talk to a person. Your copy should make them feel like they are.

## Rule three CREATE A SLIPPERY SLIDE

In addition to writing conversationally, you need to write your copy so that each sentence compels the reader to continue reading until all of your copy gets read.

Legendary copywriter Joseph Sugarman called this creating a “slippery slide.” He talked about writing copy so compelling that readers couldn’t stop reading until they arrive to the end. Here’s what he had to say about it:

***Your readers should be so compelled to read your copy that they cannot stop reading until they read all of it as if sliding down a slippery slide.***

As mentioned before, this rule starts with the headline. You need to write a headline so compelling that prospects have to read the sentence that follows. Next, your first sentence should compel them to read the second sentence, and so on.

Each section of your copy, each new sentence and new paragraph, should work together to draw the reader in and keep him reading until he gets to the end. None of the copy should be unnecessary. Every sentence should function to propel the reader forward.

### So how exactly do you write copy like this?

First, keep the reader in mind at all times. Consider things like, “Would the reader be bored at this point? Would he be interested in what I’m saying? Is this sentence confusing? Is this paragraph necessary? Am I going to lose anyone with this point?”

Always consider how the prospect will respond as you’re writing the copy. If it’s boring, she’ll go on to read something else. If it’s confusing, she’ll stop out of frustration. You want to constantly be thinking about the reader’s needs, desires, and interests. You need to always write copy that keeps each and every prospect reading.

Second, only write as much as you need to write and no more. Does your point strengthen your copy and bring your prospect one step closer to buying? Good, then make sure to include it. Or is it tangential, and is there a chance that the prospect will get lost and move on to something else? If so, leave it out.



Copy Hackers provides a great example of this type of copy. Their homepage headline and sub-headline reads as follows:

## NEW! Introducing Easy Beach Reading That Won't Turn Your Mind to Mush

Copy Hackers ebooks are bite-sized guides created for small business owners & start-up founders who want to know how to write amazing Web copy — without becoming a copywriter. Check out the 2 new additions to the fam.

Can you tell what's so effective about this headline? It almost requires you to keep reading. After finishing, you pretty much have to continue to find out what comes next. It's a cliffhanger that forces you to go on. There's enough information and context to get your interest, but they hold enough back that you have to go on to read the next sentence to learn more about the offer.

That's exactly how you want to write your headlines and copy. You want to write them so your prospects have to go on to learn more about what you're offering.

### Rule four **WRITE QUICKLY**

This rule may seem counterintuitive to good writing, but one thing you need to learn to write copy more effectively is to write quickly.

The first reason is that when you write quickly, you use more of the emotional side of your brain. Instead of stopping to rethink everything and to rewrite on the spot, you let the copy flow from the way you feel about the subject you're writing about. This is good for writing persuasive copy that appeals to your customers emotions (*something we talked about in chapter four*).

The second reason is that it's much easier to improve words that are on paper than it is to write a perfect draft the first time around. Rewriting, i.e. editing, improves your copy much more than taking hours to write a first draft. Actually, rewriting is the number one secret of professional writers. They don't always have the most polished first draft, but they're excellent at editing their prose until it's nearly perfect.

Don't worry too much about your first draft. Take a stab at the copy and get something onto paper. Once it's there, you can take the time needed to edit it and get it ready for publishing. Most writers consider this to be the most important part of the writing process. The first draft is just a way to get a rough draft that's ready for editing. The second, third, fourth, and fifth drafts are when the writing gets polished and turned into a gem.





## *Rule five* USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE

The next rule to follow for better writing is to use simple language in order to make sure your copy isn't too technical or too complicated for your readers.

Here's one the main reasons: It's widely believed that the average reading level is between the 7th and 8th grade. It's likely that the majority of your customers read at this level.



If you end up writing at a level that's too high, it's possible that your copy will be lost on your customers. They may not understand your vocabulary and may have trouble with your complex sentence structure.

Take the previous sentence as an example. It could have been written with "diction" and "syntax" instead of "vocabulary" and "sentence structure," but the former would be understood by a much smaller audience. Some customers will understand, but a large percentage will not.

Instead of showing off your extensive vocabulary and making yourself feel important, it's better to choose words that reach the largest number of people because you don't want to write in a way that alienates a significant percentage of your customers.

Writing for a highly educated audience is an exception to this rule. If you're writing a sales letter to recent Harvard grads, then you have full right to flex your well-defined vocabulary muscles. But if you're not, it's better to use words that everyone will understand.

## *Rule six* USE SHORT PARAGRAPHS

This rule works for online copy because shorter paragraphs are easier to read online.

There's a study from 2004 to back this up. The Eyetrack III study conducted by the Poynter Institute revealed that shorter paragraphs received twice as many eye fixations as long ones. What does this mean exactly? It means that readers read text with short paragraphs twice as much as text with longer ones.

Short paragraphs end up being a lot less intimidating online. We can deal with long paragraphs in print, but online it's daunting.



This can end up being a hard rule to apply since we were all taught to write longer paragraphs in grade school, but online it just won't work. If you want to create a slippery slide that keeps readers engaged, then you've got to use shorter paragraphs.

If you end up writing a traditional print sales letter, you don't have to worry about this tip as much. You can write longer paragraphs and not be as worried about losing your readers. But if you're writing a blog post or website content, remember to use shorter paragraphs to break up the text and make your copy less intimidating.

## *Rule seven* **ALWAYS GET YOUR COPY EDITED**

The last rule, but possibly the most important, is to always get your copy edited.

Here's why: It's nearly impossible for you to find every mistake in your own copy. Even if you've put it aside for a few days, which is a great idea, it's too difficult to find every error in copy you've personally written. You're too close to the copy, too subjectively involved.

But are typos and grammar mistakes really a problem? **Yes, they are.**

They're a problem because they erode your credibility. You can get away with a mistake here or there in a blog post, but if your homepage copy or sales brochure has typos, people won't be able to take you seriously. They'll question your credibility. If you can't write an error-free piece of copy, can the rest of the work you do be trusted?



I,ve  
Been  
bleached

Please stand  
With Your pump  
While fueling it  
Is mandatory.  
Sorry for any  
Inconvenience.

*photo credit: squareintheteeth via Photopin cc*

**Grammar mistakes cause you to lose credibility with your target audience.**

As a general rule, you always want to get your copy edited by someone else. Preferably this will be a professional writer or editor who has experience with proof-reading and copy editing. Someone who has experience with editing is much more likely to catch your mistakes.

At the very least, you need to have someone else at your business read your copy over. Preferably it will be someone who has a good eye for clear writing and an understanding of grammar. The simple fact that someone besides yourself edits your copy means mistakes are more likely to get caught. Thus, to avoid having your credibility undermined, you need to make sure someone always edits your copy.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter we talked about seven ways to improve your writing. Once you begin writing copy, you don't have to become a grammar genius, but you do need to improve your writing enough to connect with your audience and write compelling copy. To do so you need to remember to:

- *Write copy for your customers and not simply to talk about yourself*
- *Conduct a conversation with your prospects*
- *Create a slippery slide that compels readers to continue*
- *Write quickly to engage the emotional side of your brain and to not overthink your copy*
- *Use simple language your customers will understand*
- *Write short paragraphs that break up your text online*
- *Get your copy edited so you don't lose credibility with your prospective customers*

By following these rules, you'll become a better writer and be better prepared to write copy that compels your customers to take action.

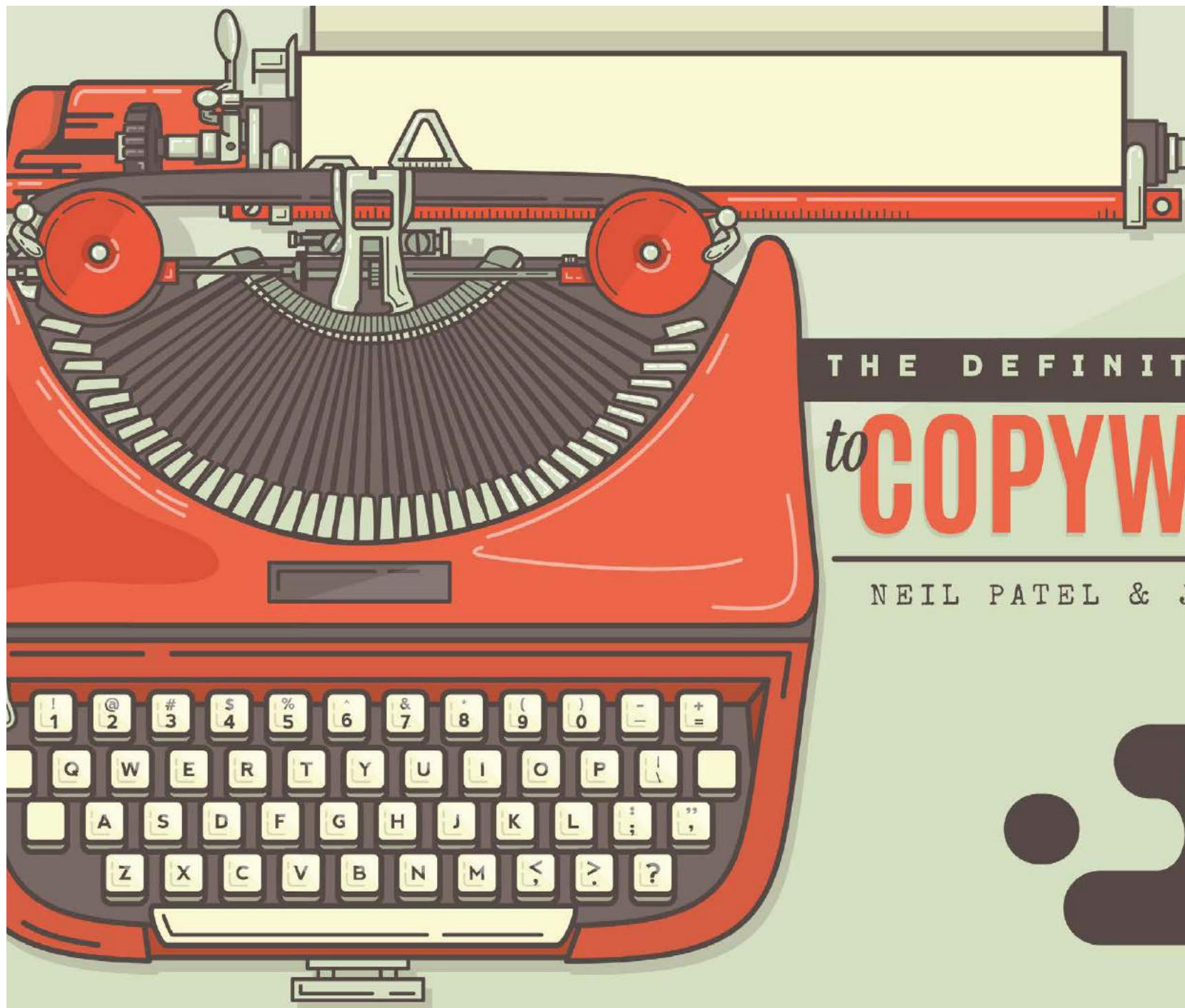
In the next chapter we'll talk about more pro tips for writing persuasive copy. Let's go on and talk about that now.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER FOUR**

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER SIX**

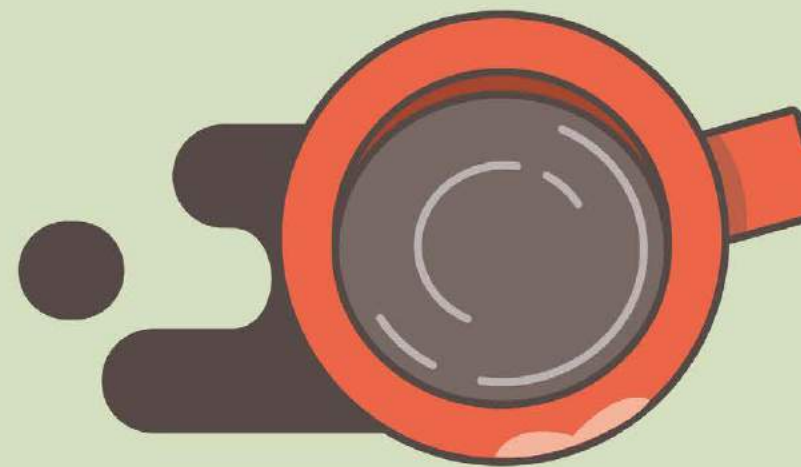






# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to COPYWRITING

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER SIX

### 5 MORE SECRETS FOR POWERFUL COPY THAT CONVINCES PROSPECTS TO BUY

A copywriter should have an understanding of people, an insight into them, a sympathy toward them

GEORGE GRIBBIN

In chapter four we discussed 4 persuasion secrets of professional copywriters. We learned to:

- *Emphasize benefits over features*
- *Be as specific as possible*
- *Target emotions*
- *Leverage testimonials*

All four of these are techniques you can employ to write persuasive copy that sells.

In this chapter we'd like to talk about five more secrets of powerful copy that convinces your prospects to buy. These secrets will empower you to write copy that more effectively entices your prospects to take action and buy what you're selling.

## *Secret one* **MAKE PEOPLE FEEL LIKE THEY BELONG**

You may not have noticed it before, but most people want to feel like they belong to a group of some kind. Everyone, in some way or another, is looking for a group to belong to and that gives them a sense of community.



Universities in the U.S. are a great example. Attending a university makes you feel like you're part of a larger community. Everyone who attends becomes a “Longhorn” or a “Red Raider” or a “Titan.” The longer you're there, the more you identify with the community. You start to wear the same shirts and say the same things like “Hook ‘em horns” and “Wreck ‘em Tech.” You feel like you belong. You feel like you're part of a community.

Interestingly, the same thing happens with brands. People purchase a product, and then they feel like they're part of a community. They feel like they're part of a larger group who uses those products.

Mini Cooper owners, for example, are known for identifying with the larger Mini Cooper community. When you buy a Mini, you aren't just buying a car; you're joining a community of Mini owners.

Apple products are the same way. People continue to buy Apple products, not solely because they are superior to other products (which is true in some cases and not in others), but because they become an Apple person. Their identity is tied to Apple. They can't buy a PC because all of their other products are from Apple.

Whenever possible, you want to create a sense of community or belonging with your products. You want people to feel like they're a [enter your company name here] person and not a [enter your competition's name here] person.

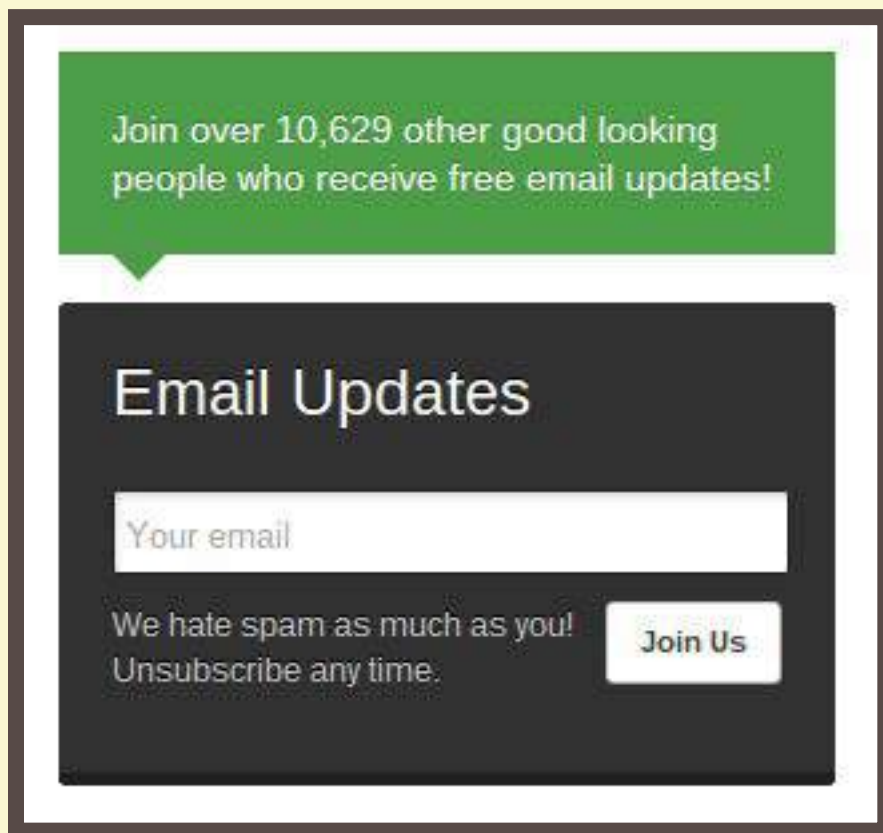
So how do you do this? Here are some ways:

## #1: ASK PEOPLE TO JOIN

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The first way is to use words like “join” or “become a member” on your website or sales material. This gives people a sense that they’re joining something larger and won’t just be carrying on by themselves.

Buffer does this on their blog. The copy above their sign-up form says “Join over 10,629 other good looking people who receive free e-mail updates.”



Instead of using the standard wording to ask customers to sign up for an e-mail list like “Sign up to get free updates,” they add a sense of community to signing up for e-mail updates. They also use “Join Us” for their call to action instead of a more standard “Sign Up Now” button.

We don’t have any statistics on this, but it’s our guess that they’re using it because it’s more effective.

## #2: CREATE A COMMUNITY

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Another way to generate a feeling of community is to create an actual community. Shocking, we know.

Copyblogger does this with their membership community. At the top of their page, they have a “Member Home” link which offers a community for people to be a part of.



Another option would have been to just create courses and offer them for students to take, which is one way to do what they do, but it doesn’t create the same sense of belonging that a community provides.

So building a community is one way to give customers something to belong to.



### #3: DISPLAY CLIENT/CUSTOMER LOGOS

Another way to make your customers feel part of something is to display logos from your top clients or customers.

Here’s why: the logos create a group of companies your clients can join. By signing up to use your service, customers can use the exact same service that [enter big company name here] uses. If the company logos you show are for industry leading organizations, then new customers can join the ranks of these leading organizations and use the exact same tools and services they’re using to get ahead.

The internet is full of examples of companies displaying their clients’ logos, so feel free to look around to get some ideas. Here are a few examples to start you off:

#### Switch Video



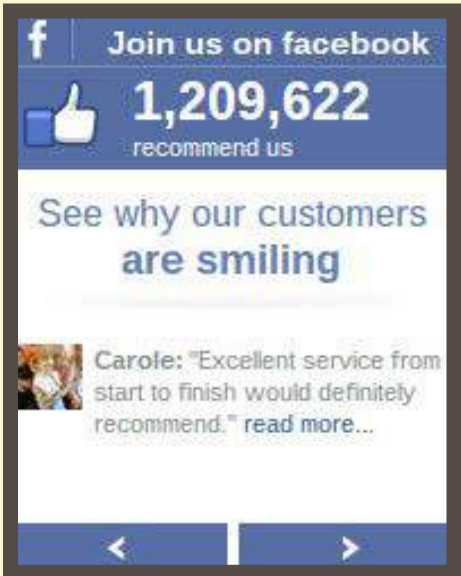
#### CrazyEgg



### #4: SHOW OFF SOCIAL MEDIA NUMBERS

Still another way to create a sense of belonging is to show off your number of social media followers. By displaying a large number of followers, you’re showing people that they’re not the only ones using a product or service, and that they’re joining a community of users by doing so.

Appliances Online from the UK does this on their homepage. They show that they have 1,209,622 Facebook fans (*as of the time this chapter was written*). This gives customers a sense of community and shows that they’re not the only ones to choose a certain product or service.



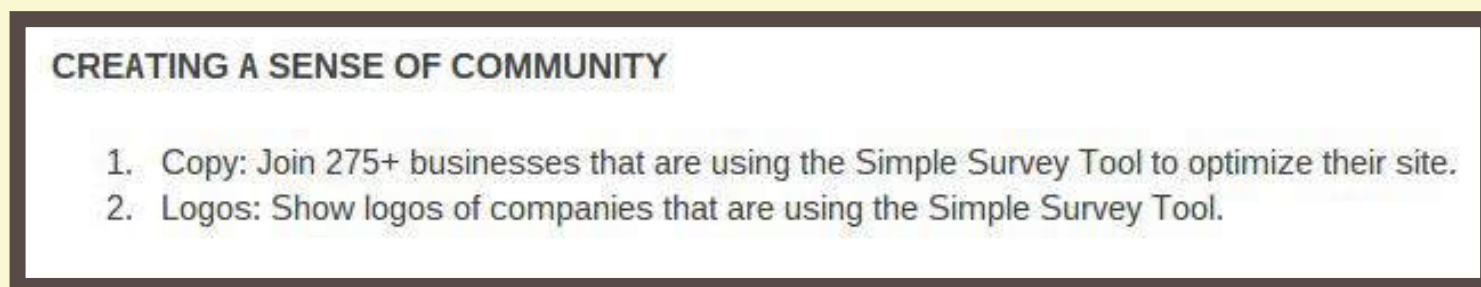
## THE APPLICATION

So how do you apply this to the copy your writing?

First, open your document titled “Copywriting -- Simple Survey Tool.”



Next, add a section titled “CREATING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY” underneath the headline ideas, and then add some copy suggestions for implementing this tip. Here’s what ours looks like:



And there you have it: a simple way to generate a sense of community on your site and to make customers feel like they belong.

*Note: You’ll want to keep the copywriting document open because we’re going to use it throughout the rest of the chapter.*

## *Secret two* CREATE A FEELING OF EXCLUSIVITY

Another persuasion secret copywriters use is to create a feeling of exclusivity. The goal is to make prospects feel special by being part of an exclusive group.

This is one reason why phrases like “secrets” and “insider information” work so well. They make people feel like they’re part of an inside group that knows information other people don’t have.

It’s also why companies frequently use phrases like “exclusive offers” or “become an insider.” They want you to feel like you’re part of a special, exclusive group by signing up.

We’re suckered in because we like to feel like we’re on the inside getting offers and information other people aren’t getting. There’s just something in our nature that makes us want to feel part of an exclusive group.



JCrew and Banana Republic both use this technique on their sign-up form copy for their e-mail newsletters. JCrew’s says, “Like being first? Then get our can’t miss style news before everybody else.” Banana Republic’s says, “Sign up for emails and be the first to hear about covetable new arrivals and exclusive promotions at Banana Republic.”

Here’s what their sign-up forms and links look like:



## THE APPLICATION

Let’s go back to our copywriting document and make notes about how we can apply this tip.

Underneath the section we just created, add the heading “CREATING A FEELING OF EXCLUSIVITY,” and then add some notes on how you can apply this point. Here are ours:

**CREATING A FEELING OF EXCLUSIVITY**

1. Copy: Sign up for email updates to get exclusive deals and special offers only available for our subscribers.
2. Copy: Sign up today to become one out of only 100 people to receive free, one-on-one, personal training for the Simple Survey Tool.

**Voila.** We’re now making people feel like they’re receiving something exclusive.



Secret three

# PROVE THE VALUE OF YOUR PRODUCT

The third persuasion secret is to prove the value of your product because customers nearly always want to get a good deal or at the very least feel like they’re spending their money wisely.

So one of your main goals is to prove the value of your product. Your job is to show prospects why they’ll be getting a good deal when they buy what you’re selling.

The good news is that there are a few proven ways to do this.

First, you can make a comparison to a similar product or products. You can show prospective customers what they’ll get with your product and what they’ll receive if they purchase from the competition. This allows them to make a feature to feature comparison which they can then compare against the prices for each.

CrazyEgg uses this on the homepage to show what you receive by using CrazyEgg, ClickTale, and Google Analytics. Here’s what it looks like:



### Crazy Egg vs. Clicktale vs. Google Analytics

we offer all of the features below

	CRAZY EGG	CLICKTALE	GOOGLE ANALYTICS
Heatmap	✓	✓	
Confetti	✓		
Overlay	✓	✓	✓
Scrollmap	✓	✓	
Version Testing	✓		
1 Click Sharing	✓		
Scheduled Reports	✓		
Multiple Link Tracking	✓	✓	✓

Another way to prove the value of your product is to compare it to something similar that isn’t a direct competitor. This provides a different benchmark against which customers can compare the value of your product.

Digital Telepathy, for example, does this on their “Hire Us” page. The price for their service is \$20,000, which is a lot of money, but not when you compare it to hiring and managing your own team of designers and developers.

## ARE WE A GOOD FIT FOR YOUR PROJECT?

**Our service starts at \$20,000/month.** Compared to hiring your own internal team, you get a lot of bang for your buck. We take a comprehensive approach to increasing the performance of your online business.

With one sentence Digital Telepathy proves the value of their service by comparing it with hiring in-house designers and developers. That makes \$20,000 seem like a bargain compared with paying salary and benefits of an in-house design team.

CrazyEgg also does this kind of comparison with their homepage headline. It reads as follows:

## The Astonishing Power of Eye Tracking Technology...Without the High Costs

In this headline, they compare heatmaps with eye-tracking technology. The former is a significant bargain compared to the thousands of dollars that eye-tracking technology costs. This headline helped to show the real value of using CrazyEgg and assisted in increasing conversion rates by 30%.

When it comes to proving the value of your product, you can do it in one of two ways:

- *You can compare it with your competitors' products to show how yours is a good deal, or*
- *You can compare it to a similar product that's not a direct competitor to show how your product in comparison is a good deal.*

Ultimately, the goal is to show your customers that they're spending their money wisely while changing the conversation going on in their head. You want them to debate whether they should pay for your product over the competition and not whether or not they want to pay \$X for your product.

## THE APPLICATION

Once again let's go back to the copywriting document. Create a section titled "PROVING THE VALUE OF YOUR PRODUCT," and make some notes about how you can prove the value of what you're selling. Here are our notes:

### PROVING THE VALUE OF YOUR PRODUCT

1. **Note:** The Simple Survey Tool is a good deal because you get more features for the same price. Other survey tools offer a lot of similar features, but none of them provide pre-formated surveys based on best practices. Thus, you get more for your money with the Simple Survey Tool.
2. **Copy:** The Simple Survey Tool is a heck of a deal compared to the cost of hiring a full-time marketing guy or gal who knows as much as we do about surveys.

Are you an authority in your field? What about someone on your staff? Are they an authority in the subject matter you work with?

If yes, you should use some of your copy to establish yourself as an authority because people have a tendency to look up to experts in any given field. The more authoritative you seem, the more seriously your customers will take whatever you have to say.

Here are a few ways your company can establish itself as an authority:



## #1: HIGHLY TRAINED STAFF

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Does someone on your staff have a PhD or are they highly trained in your field? If yes, that's one way to establish your authority.

Cream.hr is a great example of this. One of their co-founders, Dr. Jordan B. Peterson, is a clinical psychologist who has done a lot of research with modern personality tests. He's also taught as an Assistant and Associate Professor at Harvard, which is quite impressive.

Since Cream's company is based on personality tests that evaluate potential employees, it makes sense to emphasize Dr. Peterson as an authority in clinical psychology in order to gain more credibility with potential customers. They do this on their About page with a detailed bio of Dr. Peterson.



### Behind the science of Cream.HR

[Learn more about Dr. Peterson](#)

Dr. Jordan B. Peterson is a clinical psychologist whose psychological laboratory is at the forefront of the development of modern personality tests. Jordan does experimental work on achievement, creativity, personality, narrative, and motivation. His assessments can predict intelligence, political beliefs, academic achievement, managerial ability, entrepreneurial capacity, creativity, ambition, assertiveness, propensity for depression and anxiety, sociability, aggression, empathy, and more.

His broader interest is in the formal assessment and theoretical nature of self-deception, construing it as voluntary failure of exploration rather than as repression.

Dr. Peterson taught at Harvard University as an Assistant and an Associate Professor before returning to Canada and taking a tenured position at the University of Toronto. He is licensed in Massachusetts and Ontario, and offers therapy and career coaching to clients on a regular basis.

## #2: EXPERIENCED STAFF MEMBERS

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Another way to establish authority is to highlight the experience of your team members.



For example, have any of your employees worked in an industry for a long period of time or worked for top companies within the industry? Both can be used to establish authority.

This is a technique that's used a lot. You'll frequently see signs that say things like "15 years experience as a tax accountant" or "25 years experience as a trial lawyer."

Copy Hacker does this on one of their sales pages. They describe one of their consultants, Lance Jones, in this way:

Retain veteran CRO pro Lance Jones - of Intuit, Adobe Test&Target and Conversion Rate Experts fame - to optimize your site each month.

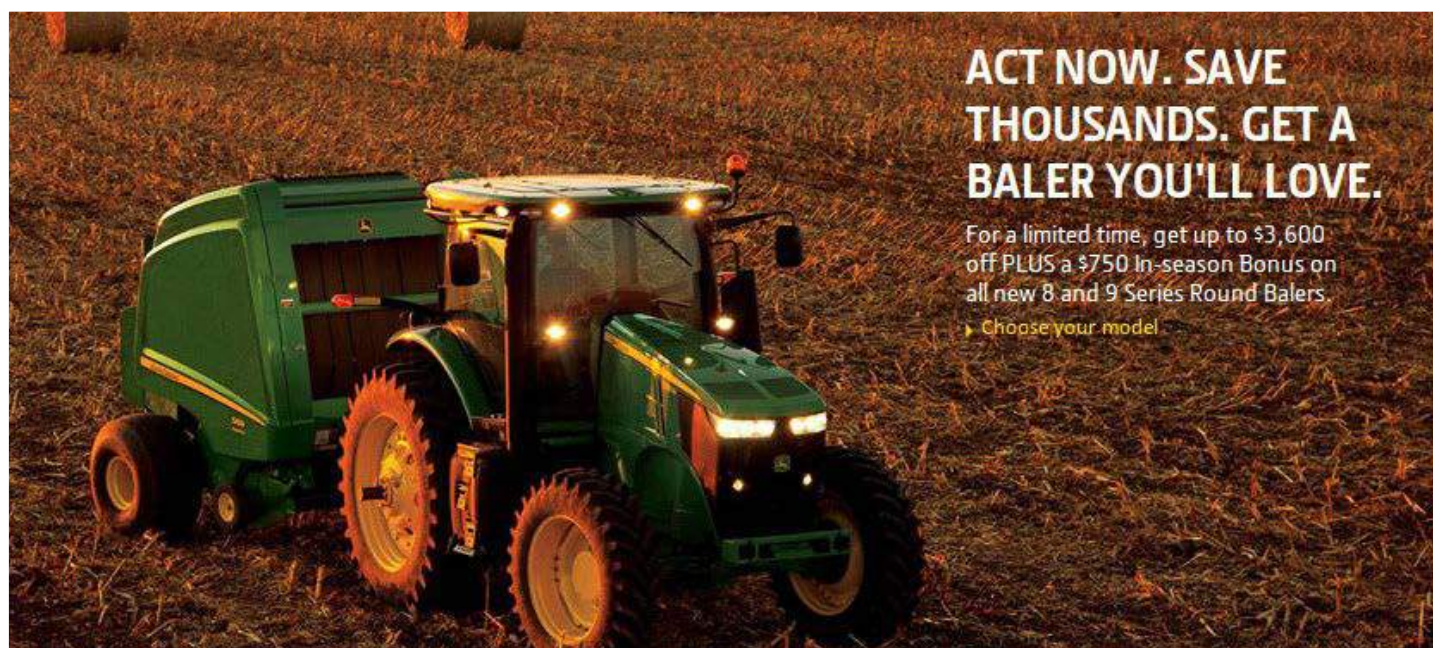
This short segment of copy helps to establish Lance Jones as an authority in CRO which in turn establishes Copy Hackers as an authority since he's one of the co-founders.

### #3: COMPANY HISTORY

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Another oft-used way to establish your business as an authority is to stress the number of years it's been in business. Companies frequently use phrases like "established in 1941" or "Serving our customers for over 100 years."

John Deere, for example, is an iconic American business and has been around for over 175 years, but you can't find that stat on their homepage (*although they probably use it elsewhere*). It would make sense to display copy such as this: "We've been proudly building farm products for over 175 years" (*or something along those lines*).



These are three easy ways to establish your company as an authority in its field.

## THE APPLICATION

Let's go ahead and take some notes on how you can apply this for your company. In the copywriting document add a section titled "ESTABLISHING AUTHORITY," and make some notes underneath. Here are ours:

*Note: The Simple Survey Tool was not founded by ex-Googleers because it's not an actual company. However, the fact that it's a fictitious company means we can make up really cool facts like this that make it seem like an extra special company.*

## Secret five PROVIDE "REASONS WHY"

Providing "reasons why" is another way to write powerful copy that convinces prospects to buy.

Robert Cialdini, a Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Marketing at Arizona State University, is famous among copywriters for his book *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. It's had a significant impact on how copy is written.

He also talks about the effectiveness of giving people a reason why when we ask them to do things. Here's what he has to say about that:

A well-known principle of behavior says that when we ask someone to do us a favor we will be more successful if provide a reason. People simply like to have reasons for what they do.

He goes on to discuss a study where participants were asked to cut in line to make copies at a Xerox machine based on one of three scenarios.

- **Scenario 1:** *The participants were instructed to cut in line and to say, "Excuse me, I have 5 pages. May I use the Xerox machine."*
- **Scenario 2:** *In the second scenario, the participants were instructed to provide a reason for cutting by saying, "I have 5 pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I am in a rush."*
- **Scenario 3:** *In scenario three, the participants were instructed to provide a nearly meaningless reason for cutting by saying, "Excuse me, I have 5 pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I have to make copies."*



Which do you think was the most effective?

Not surprisingly, the second scenario led to the best results. 60% of people allowed the participant to cut in scenario one while 94% allowed the participant to cut in scenario two. That’s an increase of 34%.

But it gets really interesting in scenario three. Even though a nearly meaningless reason was provided, 93% of people still allowed the participant to cut, which is only 1% less than when an actual reason was given.

The conclusion from these results is that people are conditioned to comply more frequently when a reason is given, even if the reason is basically meaningless. The fact that a reason is provided is enough to convince more people to comply with what you ask.

So how do you use this for copy? You can use this by making sure you provide reasons why people should use your product or service. Below are some examples.

EXAMPLE #1: HARRY’S

Harry’s is a purveyor of high-quality razors for men. They have a beautiful website and impressive copy.

But Harry’s faces a significant challenge: How do they convince men to switch from a more traditional razor like Gillette that they’ve been using for years? Should they focus on price, quality, looks, or all of the above?

They do all three, but quality ends up being one of the most persuasive elements. On one of their pages, they have the following copy:

# GERMAN ENGINEERING

90 years ago, our engineering partners in Germany began molding steel into razors for high-end barbers throughout Europe. Nearly a century later, their dedication to precision engineering and focus on continuous innovation are realized in Harry’s blades.

• • • •



The copy is simple, but it provides a reason why you should buy their razors over someone else’s. This reason alone is enough to make some customers make a purchase who otherwise would not.

**EXAMPLE #2: PORTOLA COFFEE LAB**

Portola Coffee Lab is a high-end coffee shop based out of Costa Mesa, CA. They’ve earned the distinction of being one of only a handful coffee shops with higher prices than Starbucks.



Any idea why they’re able to get away with it? If you guessed that they provide a reason why they’re coffee is worth more, then you’re correct.

The answers rests with the lab portion of their name. The Portola Coffee Lab charges more because their coffee is “scientifically prepared” to a higher standard. Their baristas wear lab coats and are coffee preparation “scientists.”

One could argue that there are other reasons why they’re able to charge more, which there are, but a significant part of their ability to raise their prices is justifying the reason they charge more with the fact that their process is scientifically founded. And apparently it’s working because they seem to be doing quite well.

**THE APPLICATION**

Once again, let’s take some notes in the copywriting document. Create a section titled “REASONS WHY,” and make some notes on why people should pick your product or service over someone else’s. Here are ours:

**REASONS WHY**

- 1. Because we have preformulated surveys that other people don't have.
- 2. Because our company was founded by two ex-Googleers who really know their way around creating surveys and online apps.
- 3. Because we offer coaching to anyone who needs help implementing their surveys.

# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter we discussed five more secrets to persuasive copy and took notes for each that will eventually help us in our writing our first copy draft. We learned that copy can be used to:

- *Make people feel like they're part of a group.*
- *Convince people they're receiving an exclusive offer.*
- *Prove the value of your product.*
- *Establish your company as an authority.*
- *Provide convincing reasons why customers should choose you over the competition.*

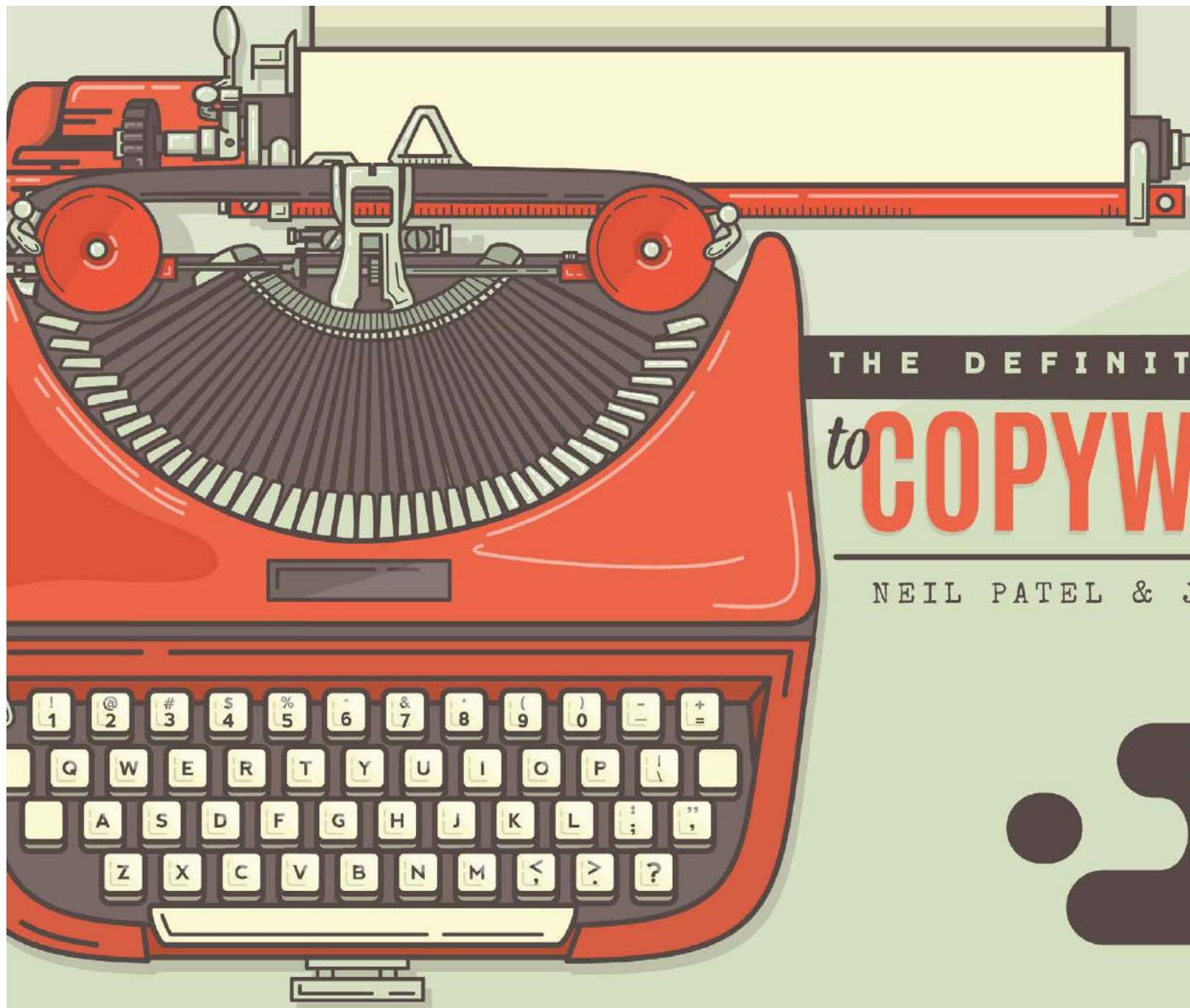
Each of these techniques will help you to write persuasive copy that sells.

In the next chapter we'll discuss four tips that are critical for your copy's success and that will empower you to close the deal with your copy.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER FIVE**

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER SEVEN**

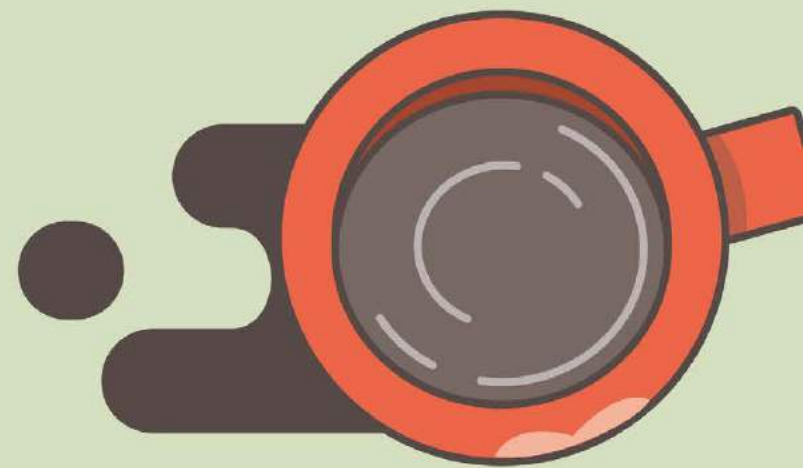




THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE

# to COPYWRITING

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### HOW TO CLOSE THE DEAL WITH YOUR COPY

Advertising is salesmanship mass produced. No one would bother to use advertising if he could talk to all his prospects face-to-face. But he can't.

**MORRIS HITE**

We've spent the last six chapters discussing important principles for copywriting to teach you how to write copy for your blog or business. This brings us to a very important question.

#### How do you close the deal with your copy?

This question is important because you can end up writing excellent copy that gets your customers attention, draws them in, and then pulls them down a slippery slope to the end of your copy, but if you don't know how to close the deal, all of your hard work will be to no avail.



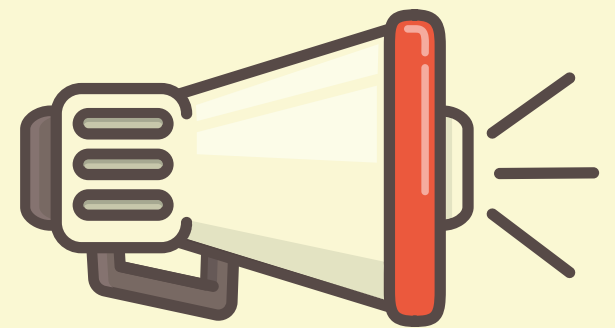
In sales terms this is known as asking for the sale. Every salesman worth his salt knows that at some point you have to ask the customer to buy what you're selling. If you talk too much, you can talk yourself out of a sale, and if you don't ask customers whether or not they're ready to buy, they may never decide to make a purchase.

An important step in any sales transaction is getting to the point where you ask for the sale. It can be as simple as saying something like, "Which option would you like to go with for your first purchase?" or "How many would you like to order today?"

This takes place in a regular, face-to-face sales transaction and is known as asking for the sale. When it comes to copy, there's something similar — a call to action.

## *The* EVER POPULAR CALL TO ACTION

A call to action is very similar to asking for the sale but in print form. You've also likely seen it in one of many ways.



On a sales letter, you may have read a line like, "*Order your copies today!*" On a website, you may have read, "*Start Your Free Trial Now!*"

Both of these are examples of calls to action. So what are they?

A call to action is a simple command that directs customers to take some sort of action, whether it be to buy, sign up, or start a free trial. At this point, however, you may be asking another question: "Why are they needed?"

The reason they're needed is that they've been proven as the best way to compel prospects to take action. Even though they may seem direct or potentially smarmy, simple, direct, and clear calls to action are proven to be the most effective way to get your customers to act.

**HASSLE-FREE  
WORDPRESS HOSTING**  
SPEED, SCALE, SECURITY, AND SUPPORT, FULLY MANAGED

**SELECT A HOSTING PLAN »**

The orange “SELECT A HOSTING PLAN” button is an example of a website call-to-action button.

Another option would be to ask customers to take action. You can say something like, “Would you like to sign up now?” or “Are you ready to sign up for our service?” Both are valid ways to ask for a sale, but neither are as effective as a direct command when it comes to copy.

Whatever the reason, it’s been proven that calls to action are the most effective way to get customers to take the next step in print and online copy, and it’s something we’ll practice in an exercise at the end of this chapter.

## *Creating* A SENSE OF URGENCY

In addition to using a clear call to action, you also want to create a sense of urgency with your copy.

Often, customers are close to making a purchase, but they’re not quite ready to hand over their money. They’re nearly convinced, but they’re not quite ready to buy.

One technique used by marketers the world over is to create a sense of urgency which compels prospects to take action. Some simple ways to do this are by using copy like “buy now” or “order today.”

Both of these short phrases use either “now” or “today” to create a sense of urgency. They’re both subtle, but they help to compel customers to take action.

Another strategy is to find a way to provide a real reason why customer’s shouldn’t wait to take action. These reasons include limited quantities and limited time offers.

Have you noticed how clothing stores always have sales during holidays? They advertise with copy like this:

*Macy’s Labor Day Sale: Get up to 50% off this weekend only!*

Providing limited time offers is one way to create a feeling of urgency.



Another way is by selling limited quantities, either because the quantities are in fact limited or because you restrict quantities on purpose (*although you should never lie about limited quantities to increase demand because that would be unethical*). Copy examples include:

*Get 50% off while supplies last!*

*Limited quantities available! Buy now!*

*Limited edition dinnerware. Only 1000 sets ever made!*

*Free popcorn for the first 100 customers!*

*Limited-time offer! Buy now!*



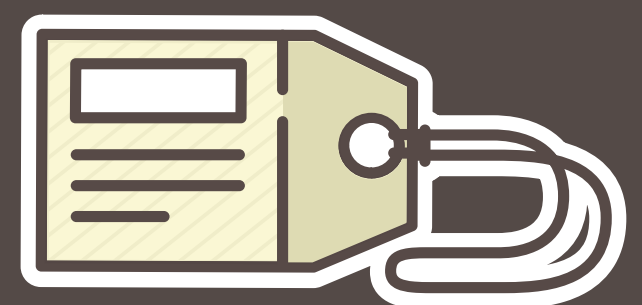
The advertisement features a light gray background with a dark brown border. On the left, the title "How To Make Your First Dollar" is in a large, bold, black serif font. Below it, a smaller italicized serif font asks, "Have you failed at starting a business or failed at trying?". Underneath is a paragraph: "Learn to find the right idea and start a profitable business you'll enjoy without spending more money. How To Make Your First Dollar is interactive and designed for action." At the bottom left are two buttons: a yellow "Get It Now" button and a light gray "Learn More" button. On the right is a portrait of Noah Kagan, a smiling man with short brown hair and a goatee, wearing a light pink button-down shirt. A dark blue ribbon banner with white text "Only 340 spots remaining!" is overlaid on the bottom of his portrait.

Noah Kagan creates a sense of urgency for his course “How to Make Your First Dollar” by advertising a limited number of available spaces.

All of these examples reveal ways to communicate limited quantities or availability in order to compel customers to take action, and if your product or service is in fact limited in some way, it’s an excellent way to push some customers over the fence who may already be sold but may need a little extra prodding to immediately take action.

## *Make* A COMPELLING OFFER

Another important part of the copywriting process is making a compelling offer. Not only do you need to write persuasive copy that effectively presents your product and clearly communicates the benefits of using it, but you also need to create the most compelling offer possible.





For example, if you're selling alarm systems for homes, you can advertise your service with copy like this:

*Protect Your Home before It's Too Late*

*Get a top-of-the-line alarm system installed in your home to protect your loved ones and valuable possessions.*

*Most people fail to get an alarm system until it's too late. Don't make that mistake.*

*Homeowners lose an average of \$1675 per burglary, not to mention the lost sense of security and the potential danger for family members, but it doesn't have to be this way.*

*An alarm system decreases the likelihood a burglar will target your home. You'll also receive discounts on your homeowners insurance from most insurers.*

*Protect your home with an alarm system from A1 Alarms. Call to learn how you can get your home protected starting this week.*

This copy is pretty good, but it could be even better. Can you tell how? Yes, it's by sweetening the deal and making an offer your customers can't refuse. Here's some add-on copy that does the trick:

*Act today and get free installation valued at \$850. That's right. All installations during the month of September come with free installation. Save \$850 on your home protection system from A1 Alarms by calling today!*

Do you notice a difference? Free installation was added to make the offer more compelling. It's a tactic companies use frequently with copy such as:

*Order today and get free shipping.*

*Free shipping on orders over \$50.*

*Free installation included with all premium packages.*

*Purchase a TV + internet bundle today and receive a \$300 gift card.*

*Order now and get a free carrot peeler valued at \$19.95.*

All of these copy examples provide something to make the offer more compelling. Potential deal sweeteners include bonus materials, free shipping, free installation, and much, much more.

The question when it comes to your copy is this: How can you make the offer more compelling? What can you do to make what you're selling more attractive to your customers? Can you include bonus features or free shipping? What about a risk-free 30 or 60 day trial? Is there anything you can do to make your offer more compelling? If yes, make a note of it because we're going to use it in the exercise at the end of the chapter.

## Don't **FORGET A GUARANTEE**

Another copywriting staple is the tried and true guarantee. Thousands of companies provide guarantees for their products.



But they're kind of interesting when you stop and think about it.

Nearly every product has a guarantee or warranty. You commonly see copy like this:

*Try risk-free for 30 days.*

*If you're not completely satisfied, we'll give your money back. No questions asked.*

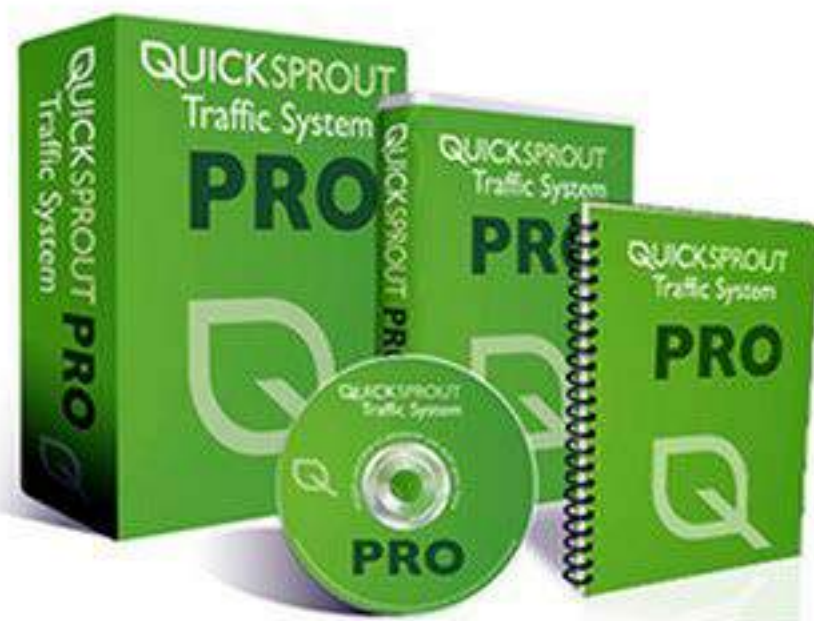
*1 year limited warranty.*

*Return within 90 days for a full refund.*

All of these options make the purchase seem less risky. They also instill more confidence in the product. If a company's willing to guarantee it for 5 or 10 years, it must be pretty good. And if they're willing to give your money back in 90 days if you're not completely satisfied, then there's no risk to making the purchase.

But how often do customers take advantage of these warranties or guarantees? Not very often.

Here's an example from right here at QuickSprout:



# START MY FREE TRIAL

Free for 7 days then 3 payments of \$67

Over a period of two years, Neil tested the effectiveness of a free trial versus a money back guarantee for the QuickSprout Traffic System priced at \$197. Here's what he found:

A 30-day money back guarantee increased sales by 21% and only 12% of people asked for their money back. With a hypothetical number of 100 traffic systems sold per month, the monthly revenue would be \$19,700 per month without the guarantee and \$23,837 per month with the guarantee but before refunds. After needing to give money back to the 12% of customers who asked for it, revenues would go down to \$20,976. This led to a final revenue increase of 24%.

### **What about free trials? What impact do they have?**

The difference was quite drastic. Nearly twice as many people signed up for a 7-day free trial that required a credit card up front than for a money back guarantee. If the money back guarantee generated 100 sign ups, the 7-day free trial would generate 200. That's significant on the front-end conversions, but what about the back end?

Interestingly, the 7-day free trial led to more cancellations. The guarantee had 12% of people ask for their money back, but the free trial offer had 33% of people cancel their order. That means that out of 200 initial sign ups, only 132 remained.

Combined with that, of the remaining 132 people, only 79% had cards that were successfully charged, meaning 29 cards were declined. Yet in the end, even with the cancellations and the declined cards, the 7-day free trial increased revenue by 15% over the money back guarantee alone.

So now what about when both were offered together?

When a 7-day free trial was offered along with a 30-day money back guarantee, the front end conversions stayed the same, and nobody asked for their money back, meaning a 7-day free trial with and without the guarantee generated the same results.

To give you a better idea of the final tally, here's a list of results for each offer:

- *\$19,700 per month for the initial free offer with no free trial and no money back guarantee.*
- *\$20,976 in revenue when a 30-day money back guarantee was added.*
- *\$24,428 in revenue when a 7-day free trial was included.*
- *\$24,428 in revenue when the free trial was included with a money back guarantee.*



Ok, ok, I know what you're thinking: "Wouldn't it be best to just offer a free trial with no money-back guarantee since revenues stayed the same both times?" In some ways yes, but in other ways no.

The money-back guarantee did increase revenues by 24% over the offer without a guarantee or a free trial. So compared to the original offer, the money-back guarantee offer performed significantly better.

So in this specific example on QuickSprout, the free trial offer performed just as well as the free trial offer that included the money back guarantee which means in that sense the money back guarantee was not needed, but in other cases, this may not hold true. It's possible that with your product or service a free trial isn't applicable and a money back guarantee would help to increase sales. In the end testing is the only way to know and universal conclusions shouldn't be drawn from the test with this one product.

So as mentioned before, you may be wondering what happens if too many people ask for their money back. A lot of companies worry about this, and it's something to take into consideration. It's possible that a money back guarantee can lead to a decrease in revenue if a high percentage of people do ask for their money back.

But more often than not, this isn't the case. As with Neil's example on QuickSprout, money back guarantees nearly always increase revenue. Only a small percentage of people ask for their money back in most cases. It's worth testing to make sure this is true for your business, but you shouldn't be afraid to test since guarantees are used for a reason and that's because they work to increase revenue for most businesses. At the very least, it's worth trying it out with your product.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

In this chapter, we covered four important ways to close the deal with your copy. We've shown you how to increase your sales by:

- *Using a call to action*
- *Creating a sense of urgency*
- *Making a compelling offer*
- *Providing a guarantee*

These are four key steps for driving the point home with your copy and closing the deal. Make sure to commit the four tips in this chapter to your memory.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE

Now that we've covered so many points related to writing persuasive copy that sells from chapter one to this one, let's take some time to write our first practice copy.

*(It's the moment we've all been waiting for!)*

To begin, create a new document titled, "Copy: Draft One."



Once that's open, we need to pick a headline. For the sample project we'll use the last one we came up with since it's one of the more risky options and bigger risks lead to bigger rewards. Here's the headline we'll use: Turn Your Website into an Online Selling Machine. *(We changed "Sales" to "Selling" after deliberating a bit more and deciding that "Selling" seems more appealing.)*

Next, let's open up all of the documents we've taken notes in. That includes:

- *Product Description — YOUR PRODUCT NAME*
- *Customer Research — YOUR PRODUCT NAME*
- *Survey Responses — YOUR PRODUCT NAME*
- *Copywriting — YOUR PRODUCT NAME*

Now, let's write some copy! *(And don't forget to refer back to your notes and use everything we've learned up to this point. You can strikethrough a note or section once you've used it in your copy so you know which benefits, features, or tactic you haven't used yet)*

Here's the example copy from our sample project:

### *Turn Your Website into an Online Selling Machine*

Are you frustrated with not knowing what visitors want on your site? Do you feel like you're left guessing how to generate more sales from your website?

*Our Simple Survey Tool can help.*

The Simple Survey Tool allows you to survey visitors as soon as they land on your site. You can ask your customers questions like:

- *What are you looking for on this page?*
- *Is there anything you can't find?*
- *Do you have any unanswered questions about this product?*
- *Is there anything confusing about this page?*

Answers to these questions enable you to learn more about your site visitors and figure out how they're using your site. You'll immediately know how to optimize your site to match your customers' needs and increase conversion rates to generate more sales.

All of our plans include:

- *Unlimited questions: Ask as many questions as you need to get the results you're looking for.*
- *Pre-formulated surveys: Our pre-formulated surveys make it easy to know which questions to ask in order to get the best results.*
- *Multiple question formats: Every possible question format is available including multiple choice, short answer, paragraph, checkboxes, scales of 1 to 10 and more.*
- *Easy Javascript installation: Add surveys to your site by copying and pasting a simple Javascript snippet. It's simple, fast, and easy to do.*
- *Customizable surveys: Customize your surveys to match your branding and create a positive brand impression.*
- *Instant notifications: Receive instant e-mail or text notifications as soon as you receive new survey responses.*

The Simple Survey Tool is perfect for advertising and marketing agencies, startups, and nonprofits who are looking to learn more about their visitors and to optimize their sites. The insights you gain will help you to convert more of your traffic into revenue.



Here are some of the results our customers are getting:

- Friendifyly increased signups by 72% after surveying their customers.
- CharityWater improved their donation rate by 23%.
- Madewell increase average orders online by \$22 per purchase.

With results like these, the Simple Survey Tool pays for itself in a matter of weeks. It's like hiring a new employee to survey your visitors to learn more about them without the cost of bringing a full-time, competent employee on board who knows how to conduct surveys.

Our pre-formulated surveys make it super easy to know which questions to ask in order to get the best results, and the copy and paste Javascript installation means you can conduct surveys without needing to bother your IT team.

Sign up for a free, 30-day trial and join 2700+ businesses that are using the Simple Survey Tool to optimize their sites.

[SHOW COMPANY LOGOS HERE.]

Special offer this week only: The first 100 people who sign up will receive one-on-one, personal training to learn how to use the Simple Survey Tool to optimize their site. Sign up today to reserve your spot!

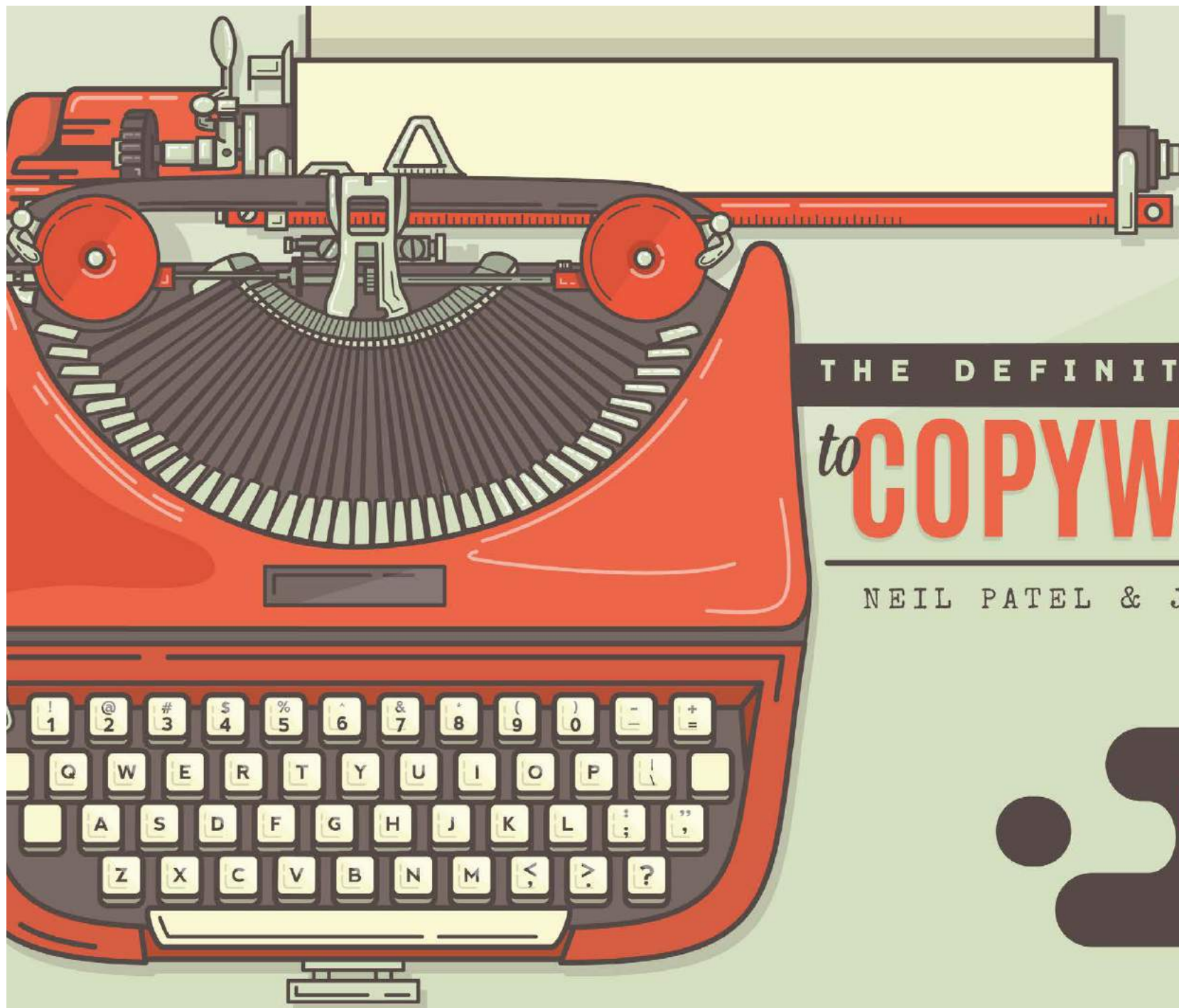
[Button: Yes, Let's Turn My Website into an Online Selling Machine]

[ADD RELEVANT CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS HERE]

TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER SIX

TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER EIGHT

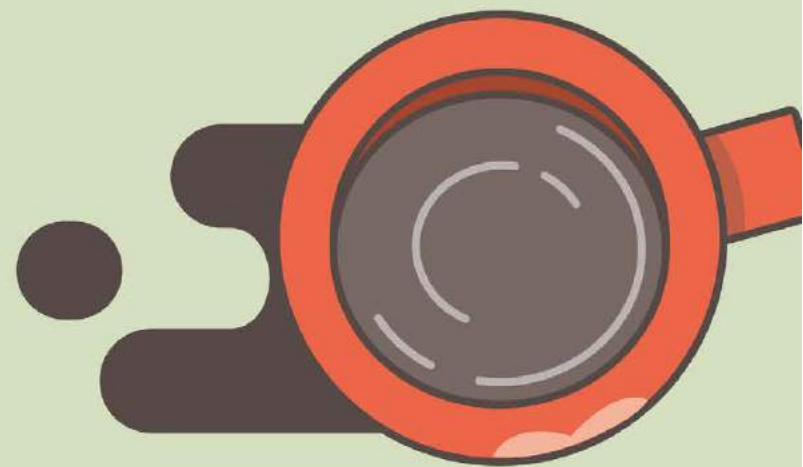




THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE

# to COPYWRITING

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### LONG VS. SHORT COPY – WHICH IS BETTER?

“Nobody reads ads. People read what interests them. Sometimes it's an ad.”

HOWARD GOSSAGE

One of the longest standing debates in copywriting and marketing circles is over what's better — long or short copy.

The group following the short copy gospel says that people don't like to read, especially in the modern age, so there's no reason to write long copy. They believe that long sales letters and web pages will get ignored and never be read. Instead, it's better to use pictures and graphics to get customers' attention.

The long copy adherents, on the other hand, believe that copy is the secret to any sales success. More copy to them means more sales.

These are both generalizations, but they summarize succinctly the two different schools of copy length. **So who's right?**

In a way, both are because in some instances long copy is much, much better, and, in others, short copy is better. The only way to know for sure is to test the response rate your copy receives to see which converts at a higher rate — long or short copy.

The good news is that there are some rules of thumb you can follow. These rules provide guidelines to indicate when it may be better to write longer or shorter copy.

## *Guideline one* **ONLY WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU NEED TO WRITE AND NO MORE**

The first rule of thumb is to always write as much as you need to write but no more.

Does a point need to be made in order to convince people to buy your product? If yes, then be sure to add it to your copy. Will another section make your copy more persuasive? Then by all means make sure that section is added to your page as well.

Some points only serve to make your copy longer and don't strengthen your argument. Those are the ones you want to leave out. Others make your copy too long and end up talking prospects out of a purchase instead of helping them to buy. Those should be left out as well.

When you're writing copy, remember to write it as long as it needs to be in order to make a persuasive presentation, but not to make it so long that your readers get put to sleep and go on to do something else.

You should always test the response rates for your copy (*at least whenever possible*) Sometimes, a sales letter will be the most effective, and other times, a postcard is the way to go. Sometimes a long e-mail is best, and sometimes a concise e-mail is much better. It's really difficult to know without measuring the response rate your copy achieves, but no matter what, you always want to write however much copy needs to be written in order to increase sales.





# LONG COPY ANSWERS MORE OBJECTIONS

The next point to keep in mind is that long copy allows you to answer more objections.

Every time a customer is considering an offer, different objections pop into their head and stop them from making a purchase. Potential objections include:

- *The company may not seem trustworthy so customers decide not to buy.*
- *The product may seem too expensive, and the customer may feel like he can't afford it.*
- *Customers may not understand the product and walk away out of confusion.*

Whatever the case, there's a long list of objections for every product. Customers aren't ready to buy for one reason or another.

As a copywriter, your job is to identify these objections and help get the prospect over the fence. This is where long copy can help.

One of the most important benefits of long copy is that it allows you to answer more objections which eventually can lead to more sales. The Crazy Egg homepage provides an example of this.

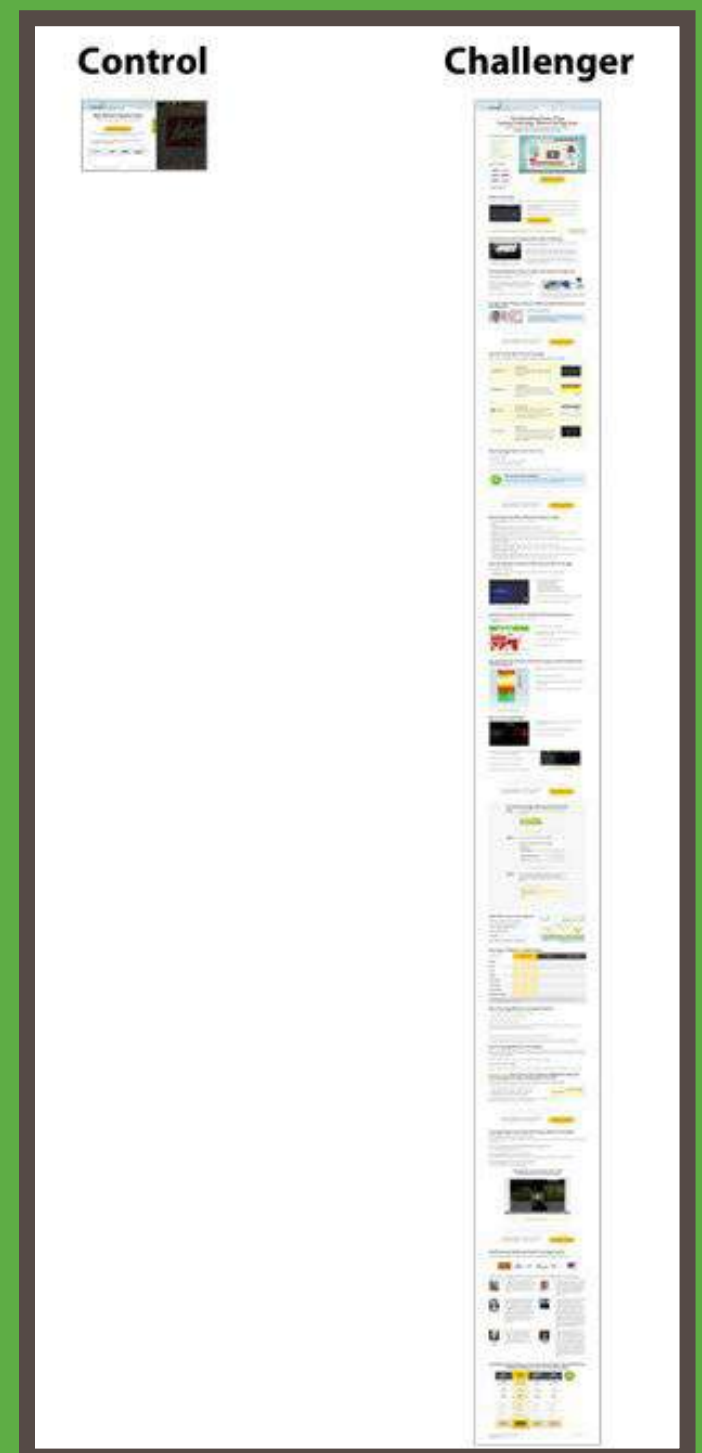
Conversion Rate Experts worked on improving conversions at Crazy Egg and ended up making the home page around 20 times longer by adding more copy than was originally included. The result? Conversion rates increased by 30%.

The short copy school would say this is impossible because people don't read anymore, but the long copy school would say it obviously worked because the longer copy allowed Crazy Egg to answer more objections. In this particular case, the long copy school wins.

## Here's a visual comparison of the two pages:

Why did the second version work so much better? The most likely reason is that it allowed Crazy Egg to answer more customer objections. With so many extra sections and with all of the additional copy, Crazy Egg has more of a chance to answer their customers' questions at one point or another. This allows them to convince prospects no matter what their different reasons for not buying

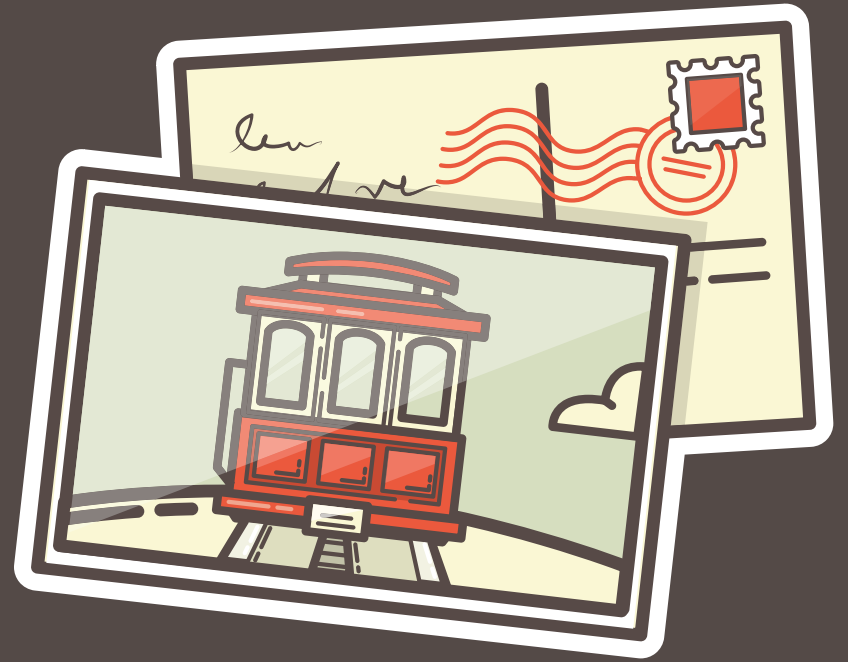
So does this mean that copy should always be extra long? No, not necessarily.



## Guideline three SOMETIMES SHORT COPY IS BETTER

As with anything, there are two sides to the copy coin, and sometimes, short copy is better.

Generally speaking, longer copy is best for technical products that need a lot of explanation and for higher value items. In the first case, longer copy is needed so customers understand the product and learn why they need it. In the second case, longer copy is helpful to provide more reasons why customers should make a more expensive purchase.

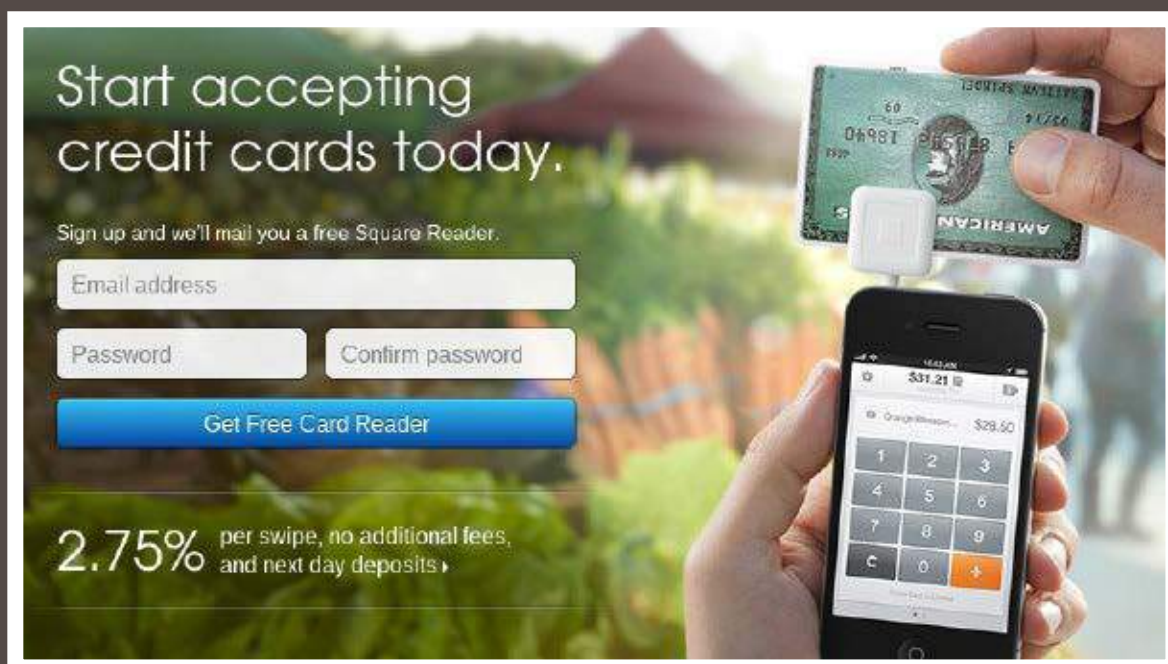


These are two examples where long copy comes in handy. But sometimes short copy is better, or at the very least necessary.

Take a postcard as an example. There's only so much you can write on a card since the space is limited. In cases like this, it's the copywriter's job to condense the copy into the most effective short form to get the message across and convince prospects to take action.

In other instances, short copy just ends up working better. There are tests that show long copy works better for some pages, and there are tests that show short copy outperforming longer versions. Sometimes copywriters fall in love with their own writing too much and need to be shown that a shorter version works better.

Square provides a great example of this. Their homepage features a signup form, a beautiful picture, and extremely short copy. Here's what it looks like:



It's possible that more copy would help this page perform better, but it's also possible that in this instance less copy is better. The question to ask is whether there's enough information provided to convince people to take action. If yes, then more copy isn't needed and could possibly distract people from taking action.

Groupon is another great example. Here's what their homepage looks like:



With this kind of offer, more copy would likely just get in the way. People for the most part know how the offer works and don't need to be convinced to take advantage of an opportunity to save 50% to 90%. It's also easier to ask people to hand over their e-mail for discounts than it is to convince them to pay \$100 per month for a service.

There's always the outside chance that more copy would increase conversion rates for this page (*only testing provides the answer*), but it's more likely that this type of offer doesn't need as much copy as a site like Crazy Egg where a technical service is being sold. It's easier to sell an offer where people receive free discounts than it is to convince people to pay for a service.

So sometimes long copy is better, but sometimes it gets in the way and distracts customers from taking action when they're ready to make a purchase already.

## Guideline four PEOPLE READ WHAT'S INTERESTING TO THEM

The fourth and final rule for this chapter is that people read what's interesting to them. If an article or ad is interesting and well written, people will stop what they're doing and read.

Take your own reading habits as an example. What type of articles or books do you read? Do you read blog posts or ebooks? What about feature articles in Inc. or Entrepreneur?

No matter what your tastes are, it's likely that you read content in some form or another. And in most instances, you'd be surprised how much people read, even if it's just blog posts or news articles on Yahoo.com.





Imagine you're sitting at a doctor's office waiting to be called in and start looking at the different magazine options available on the end table next to you. You lean over and begin thumbing through the stack, flipping past copies of Newsweek and Car & Driver, looking for something interesting. **Ah ha!** Fast Company, something worth checking out.

Then you start skimming the headlines looking for something to read. You eventually find an article titled “*Instagram's Formula for App Success*.” Your interest is piqued so you flip over and read as quickly as you can through the lengthy, 5,000 word feature article. Just when you finish, the nurse comes out and says it's your turn. You put the magazine down and go in to see the doctor.

Did you notice what happened in this story? You skipped past magazines and articles that weren't interesting to you until you found something that caught your eye. Then you took the time to read a lengthy, well written article on a topic you enjoyed.

This happens all the time. We read articles that are interesting and ignore others that are not. The same is true with books, sales copy, or whatever else might come our way.

If we visit a website that's relevant to what we do, we'll stop, investigate, and read all of the copy if it's interesting and useful enough. If it's not, we'll go on our way and find something else to read.

So the argument that people don't read simply isn't true. What is true is that people don't read things that aren't interesting to them — whether that's a magazine article or an ad. If something's interesting and written well, people will read it; if it's a topic that doesn't matter to them, they won't read it. It's as simple as that.

This is something you should take into consideration when deciding how long your copy should be, and you should remember that you're not writing for everyone. It's ok if 90% of people don't read your long copy. You're not writing it for them. You're writing it for the 10% of people who are interested in what you have to write about. If they're interested in the product you're selling, they'll devour your copy looking for more information on the subject.

# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Now that you’ve read this chapter, you should have learned the following:

- *Long copy is often better than short because it allows you to answer more of your customers’ objections.*
- *Short copy is sometimes necessary because of the nature and size of the medium you’re using.*
- *Short copy can also be better if customers will be convinced with less copy and more words will only distract them from the offer at hand.*
- *Customers will read long copy about topics that are interesting to them.*

If you’re writing copy for a website, you have room to write as you’d like. You can intersperse calls to action throughout the text and don’t have to worry too much about dragging on and not giving customers an opportunity to respond.

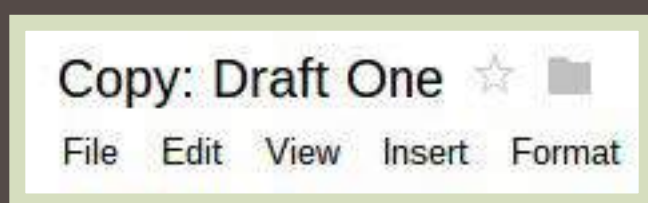
But if you’re writing a sales letter, you’ll need to be more judicious with your copy since you’ll be limited to the amount that will fit on one page.

## APPLICATION FOR THE SAMPLE PROJECT

We’re going to assume at this point that the copy for our sample project is being written for a homepage. Since it can be as long as we’d like it to be, we think it’s smart to lengthen the copy in order to answer more objections our customers may have.

To do this, we’re going to add a section below the copy we’ve already written that’s titled “*Frequently Asked Questions*.” There are other ways to answer objections, but in this case, we think this is an easy way to answer questions our customers may have about the product.

Let’s open the “*Copy: Draft One*” document now and add some additional points to answer our customers’ potential objections.



Here's our copy to add at the bottom of the site:

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How do I add surveys to my site?

To add a survey, you'll first create one within the Simple Survey Tool. This should take you between 15 and 25 minutes, depending on the type of survey you're conducting.

Next, you'll copy a code snippet and paste it into your site underneath the <Head> tag. If you know how to do this, you can do it yourself, otherwise it will take someone on your IT team less than 5 minutes to add it to your site.

### Do I need my IT department to add new surveys to the site?

No, you don't. Once the code is installed, you can conduct new surveys without changing any code on your site. The initial Javascript snippet will update the surveys to match the new one you created.

### Is there a limited number of questions I can ask for each survey?

You can ask as many questions as you'd like. We recommend keeping the survey short so more people will complete it, but you're welcome to make them as long as you'd like them to be.

### How do I use the pre-formulated surveys?



The pre-formulated surveys are built into the Simple Survey Tool and are easy to use. Our Question Recommendation feature will suggest questions for each survey you create. In addition to that, we have full surveys that can be created with the click of a button. The pre-built options include customer satisfaction surveys, conversion rate optimization surveys, and many more.

**Do you have any other questions? If yes, send us a message, and our customer support team will be in touch with you shortly.**

Start your free trial now to begin optimizing your site and to turn it into an online selling machine.

**START FREE TRIAL NOW**

**TAKE ME TO CHAPTER SEVEN**

**TAKE ME TO CHAPTER NINE**





THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE  
*to* **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM

## CHAPTER NINE

### HOW TO COMBINE COPY AND DESIGN FOR OPTIMUM RESULTS

“Any copy that runs on a billboard should fit on the back of a business card.”

**JOHN PAVAO, CLEAR CHANNEL OUTDOOR**

We’re nearing the end of The Definitive Guide to Copywriting which brings us to an important question:

**How do design and copy work together to achieve optimum results.**

Both are needed to produce effective campaigns, and both need to be done well for ads and websites to get the best results possible. Great copy with terrible design will lead to a bad campaign, and conversely, great design with poorly written copy won’t perform well either.

Both need to work together to achieve the optimum result, and there’s an art and a science to making that happen. Here are some key points to keep in mind.

# Design SETS THE STAGE FOR THE OFFER

First and foremost, design sets the stage for your offer. The goal for design is to set the right mood for the copy and to help get your copy read.

Joseph Sugarman talks about this in his book *The Adweek Copywriting Handbook*. In chapter four he writes:

***All the elements in an advertisement are primarily designed to do one thing and one thing only: get you to read the first sentence of your copy.***

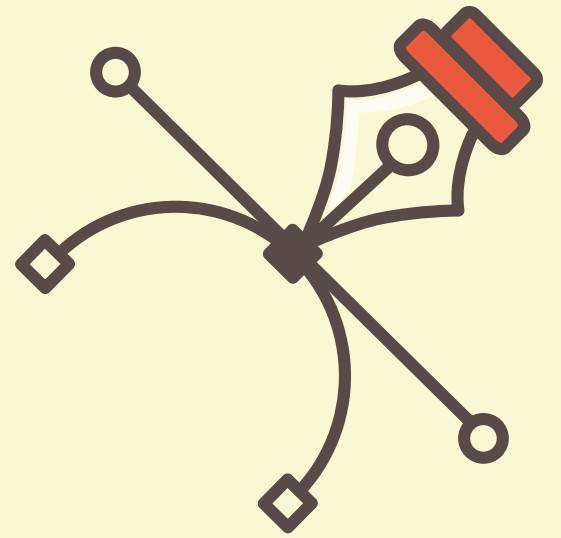
Later in chapter six he writes:

***Your ad layout and the first few paragraphs of your ad must create the buying environment most conducive to the sale of your product or service.***

As you can see from these quotes, the function of design is to get your copy read and to create the right “*buying environment*” for your offer.

If you’re a creative company, then your website design should present your business as a professional, modern, creative company. The colors, fonts, and layouts you choose will position your business in one way or another.

If your design looks like it’s from 2001, you’ll be perceived as being behind the times, even if you’re not, but if it follows current design trends, then you’ll be perceived as up to date, etc. Your site’s design affects how your copy will be read and how your company will be perceived.





***Epipheo's design sets them apart and positions them as a creative organization.***

Another example is a sale sign. A sale sign's goal is to get people into a store to buy items that are on sale. The point of the sign is to indicate clearly that a sale is taking place. Thus, the design choices selected influence how the copy is perceived. These types of signs don't have to be as meticulously designed and usually use red or yellow generously to trigger the realization that items are on sale.

In both of these examples, design is used to create the right mood and setting for the copy.



## *The* POINT OF YOUR COPY IS TO GET READ

On the other side of the coin, the point of writing copy is for it to get read. You don't write copy just to take up space on a page. If you think your copy won't get noticed, then it shouldn't be included in an ad, letter, or web page. **It's as simple as that.**

The reason it needs to get read is that the copy ultimately sells your product or service. Every headline, sub-headline, and caption explains what's being conveyed through the design. A picture's worth a thousand words, but copy is the intro sentence that causes the 1,000 words to make sense.

Think about it this way. If you see an amazing picture of a coastline with no words, what are you going to think? You're going to think, "*Wow, that's a beautiful coastline,*" and that's it.

Now what if you add copy that says, "*Get beachfront property with the best views in LA County.*" At this point you understand what's going on. The ad makes sense. It has meaning.



So design doesn't work by itself. It takes great copy to get your message across and to cause the picture to make sense. If there's no copy, there's no chance to make a sale.

Yet designers often don't place the right emphasis on copy. Maybe they fall in love with their design a little too much, but whatever the case, design can end up obscuring the copy you invested good money for a talented copywriter to write (*or that you painstakingly wrote yourself*).

This happens all of the time. A website will have a design that makes it difficult to read the main headline, or a subway ad will have a complicated design that blends in with the text, making it difficult to read and comprehend the point of the ad.

Every element of a project should work together to achieve the optimum result, and design and copy end up both being equally important. Amazing copy with terrible design will ineffectively get the message across because you'll lose credibility with your target audience. On the flip side, beautiful design that hides the copy will decrease the effectiveness of a campaign. Both are equally important to set the right stage and to ensure your copy gets read and your message gets across.

## Getting COPY AND DESIGN TO WORK TOGETHER

While working on projects, designers and copywriters both need to work together to make a concept work.

Sometimes a design needs to be tweaked so that it's less distracting and focuses the reader's attention on the copy. A billboard, for example, may need a really simple design that clearly displays the copy. If there's too much going on in the way of design, the copy will get lost.

Other times, the copy needs to be edited to fit the design better. A headline may seem perfect for a webpage, but once it's seen in context, it's obvious that it needs to be shorter or longer to fit into the design.

Both sides need to be willing to work together to get the best end result. Designers need to realize the importance of creating designs that focus the reader's attention on the copy, and copywriters need to be flexible enough in certain instances to write headlines and copy that fit in with the design concept.

There's a give and take needed on both sides, but copy should never be the overlooked stepchild. If you're going to take the time to write copy, your designer should take the time to create a design that ensures that it gets read.

So how do you do that? Let's discuss now.



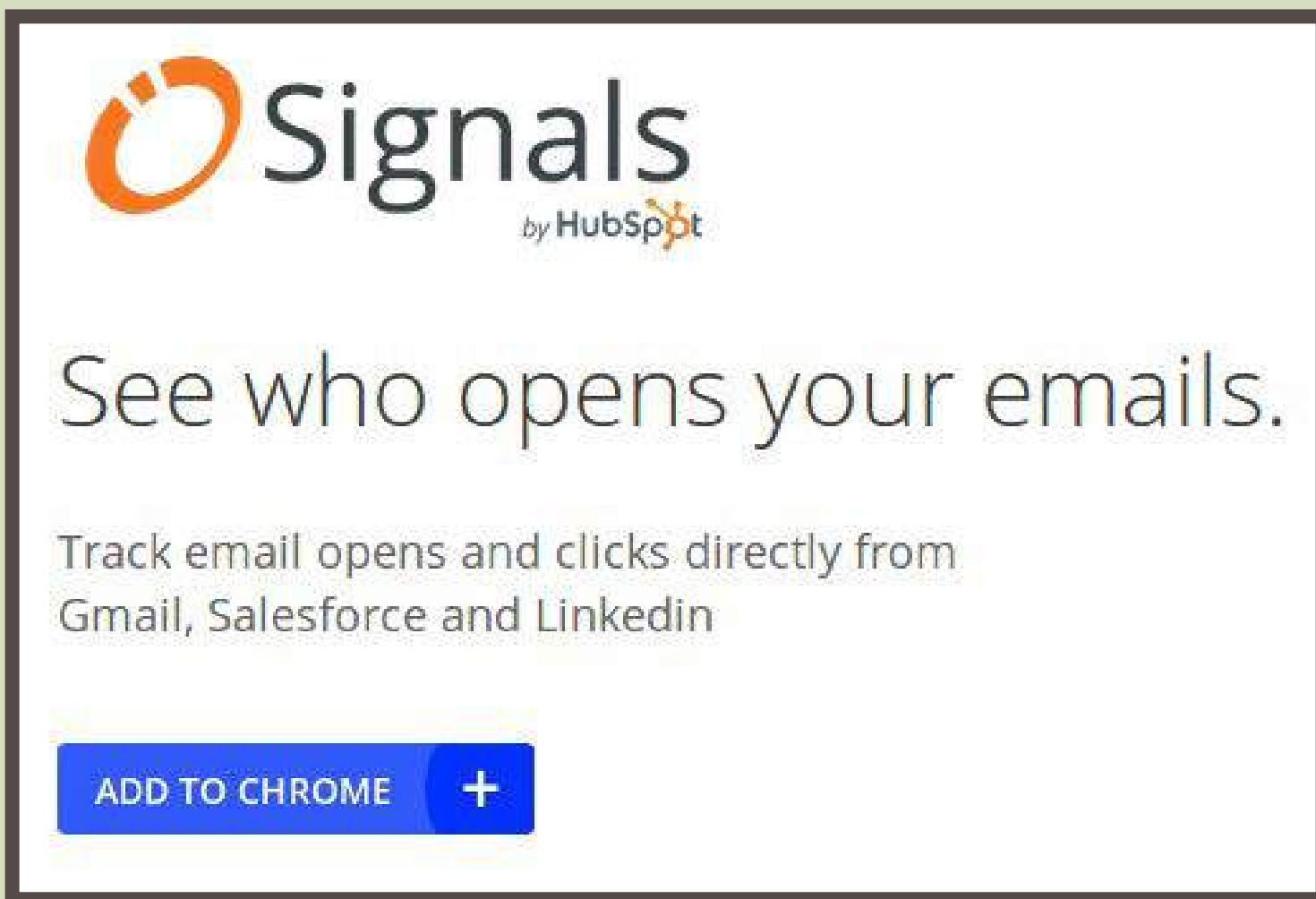
### *Tip one* ALWAYS USE HIGH CONTRAST FOR FONTS

First, make sure there's a high contrast between your fonts and the background behind it. Dark fonts should always be used on light backgrounds, and light fonts should be used on dark backgrounds. This should be common sense, but for some reason people often forget this very important rule.



Let's Look at some examples.

#### EXAMPLE ONE: SIGNALS



The design for the Signals by Hubspot homepage offers an excellent example of high contrast. The dark font and a white background and the white font on the blue call-to-action button both provide high contrast, easy-to-read text.

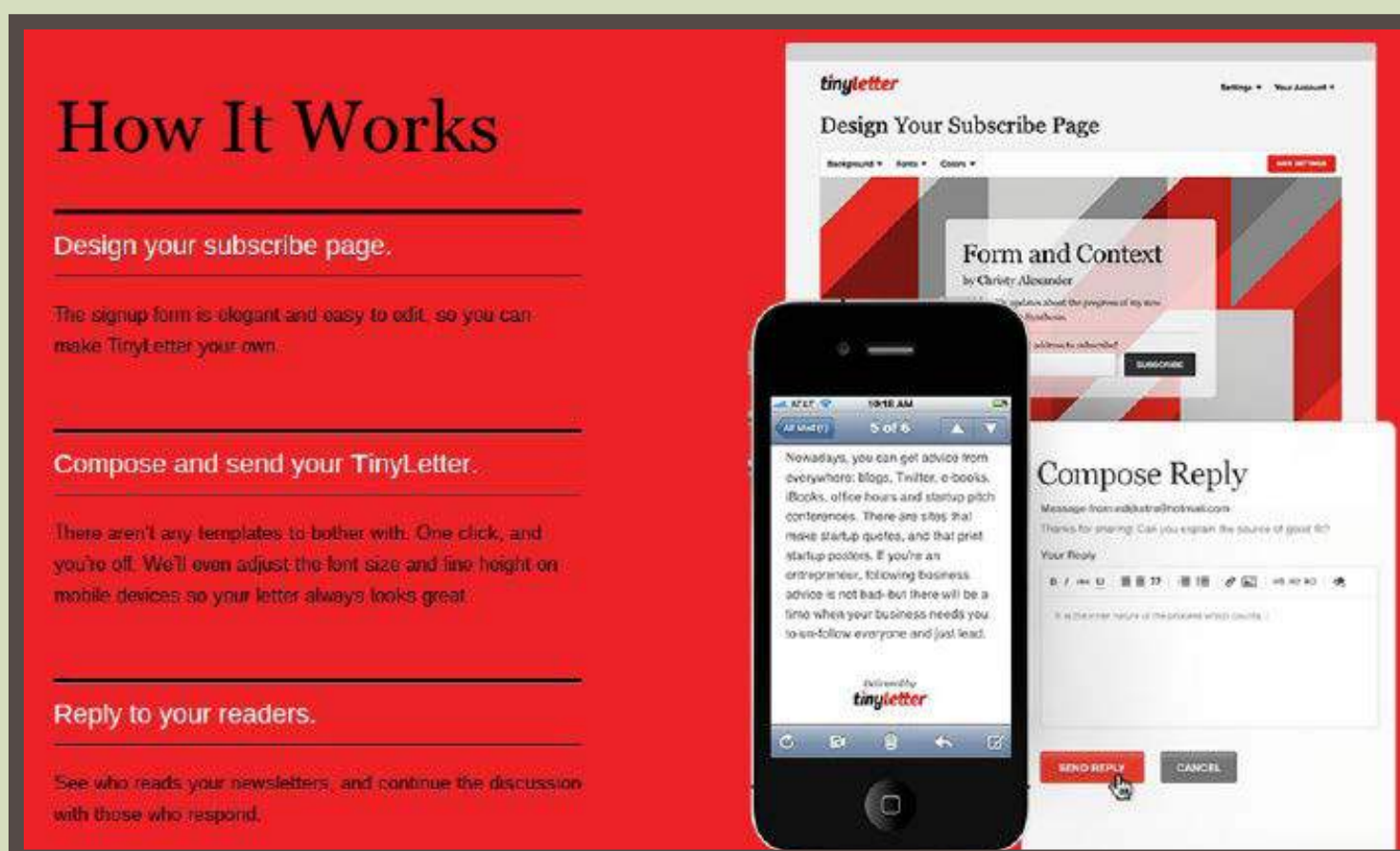


## EXAMPLE TWO: 5 NORTH MARKETING



But your background doesn't have to be white and your font doesn't have to be white or black to have a high contrast. 5 North Marketing uses a white font on a green background in the header and other parts of the site and green and charcoal fonts on a white background to achieve a high contrast between the backgrounds and the fonts.

## EXAMPLE THREE: TINY LETTER



Tiny Letter, on the other hand, could use more contrast for their “How It Works” section. The combination of the small black body font on a red background makes the text difficult to read.

## Tip two MAKE SURE YOUR FONT DOESN'T BLEND INTO A BACKGROUND IMAGE

The next thing to do is make sure your font doesn't blend into a background image. This is similar to the point above, except that it usually has to do with images. More often than should happen, fonts get placed on an image background and then blend in.

To fix this problem, imagine your design as a magazine cover. Magazines are excellent at placing headlines over a background image while keeping the text extremely easy to read. Why? Because people have to be able to read them while standing in line at a grocery store or when browsing a magazine rack. You want your designs to have the same level of readability.

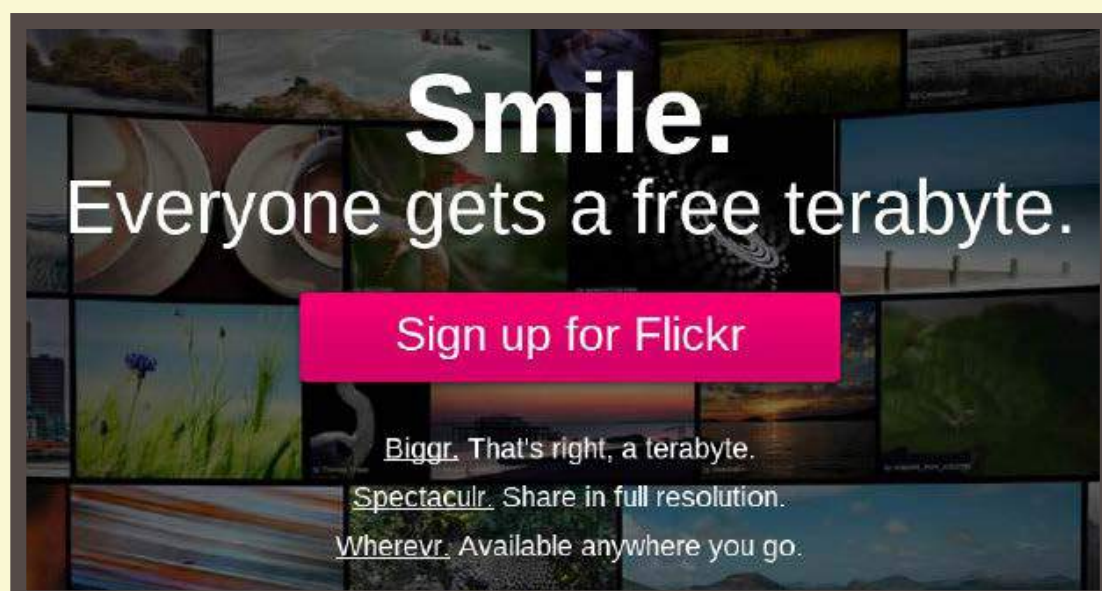


### EXAMPLE ONE: REAL SIMPLE



The Real Simple magazine cover below is a great example of headlines that stand out from the background image without blending in. It's easy for headlines to blend in to an image like this, but they make sure there's a high contrast between the headlines and the background to make sure all of the copy is easy to read.

### EXAMPLE TWO: FLICKR





FlickR recently did an excellent job redesigning their homepage, including maintaining a high contrast between the fonts and the image background, a task that's not easy to do. All of the text stays very readable and stands out from the image behind it.

### EXAMPLE THREE: INDOCHINO

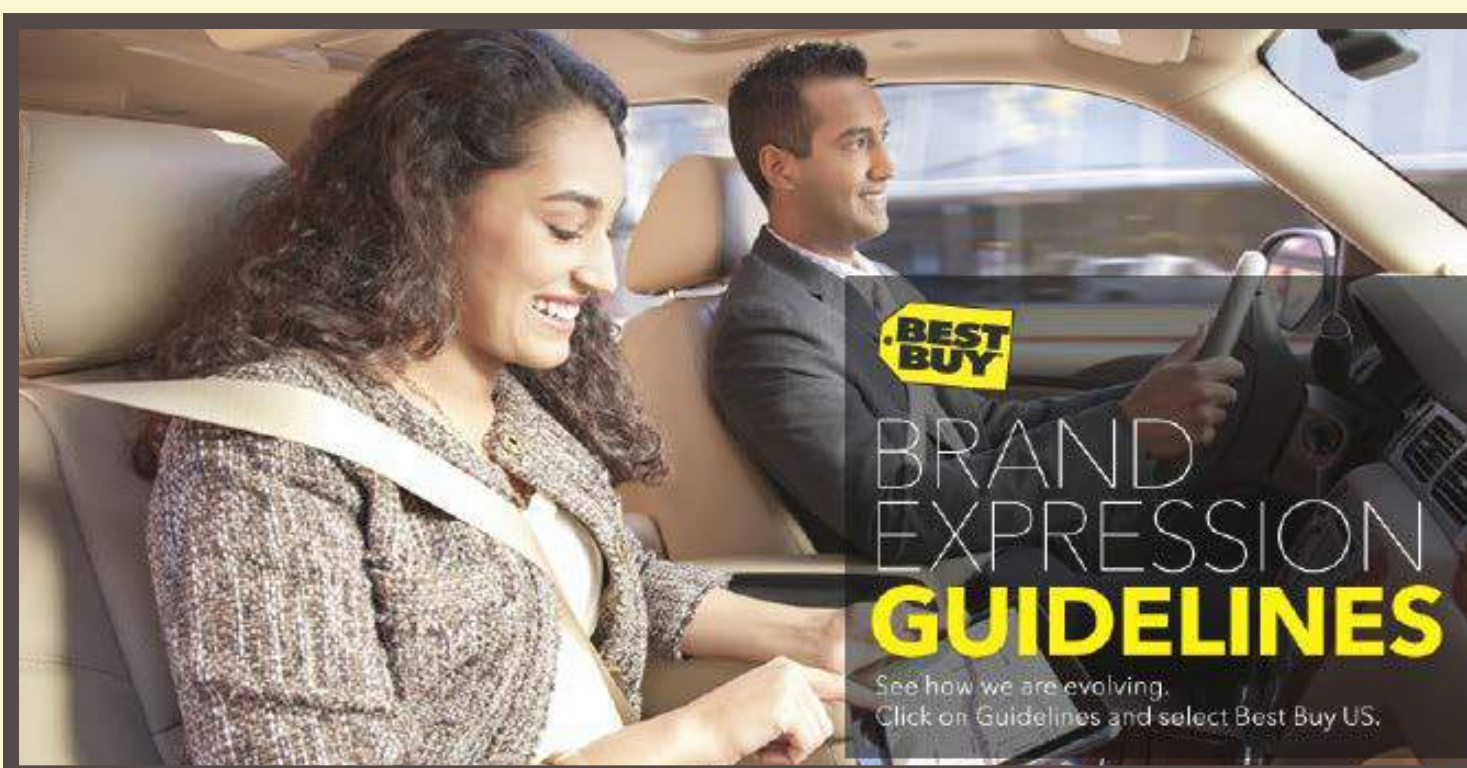
---



We hate to pick on Indochino again because they're a really cool company, but the copy on their homepage could stand out a little more from the background image since some of the letters blend in.

Adding a containment box like the one used in the Best Buy picture below is one way to solve this problem. The picture can be viewed just fine and the text stands out a bit more.

This is a sample image taken from Best Buy's Style Guide.





## Tip three USE EVERY ELEMENT TO DRAW THE READER'S ATTENTION TO YOUR HEADLINES AND COPY

Speaking of Best Buy, their style guide has an excellent explanation of how to properly use design elements. It says:

**Graphic elements should be used to draw attention to headlines and make typography more legible.**

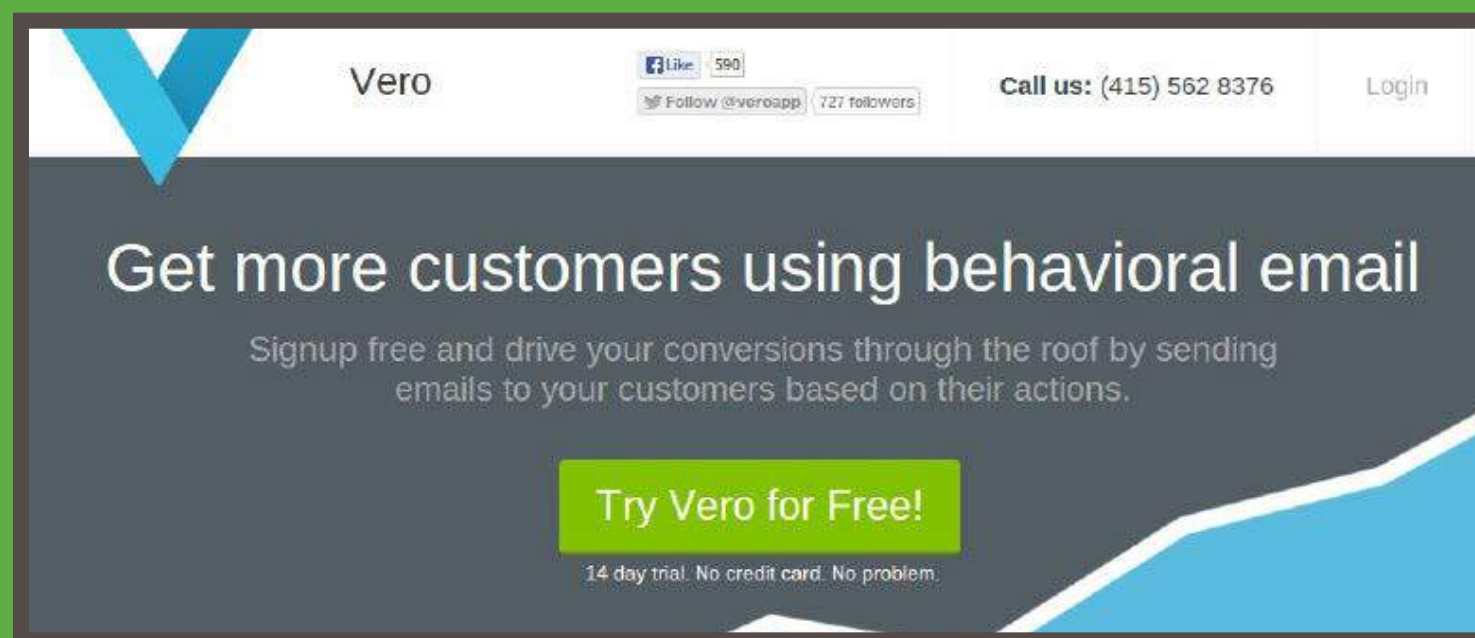


Brilliant, isn't it? Shouldn't graphical elements help to draw attention to your headlines and make typography more legible? The answer is yes, and this should be your strategy for every graphic element. You should use every element to draw the reader's attention to headlines and lead them into your copy. *(Unfortunately, as obvious as this is, it's a rule that gets broken more frequently than most people would like to admit.)*

This means you need to evaluate every graphical element you add to your site and make sure it helps to get your copy read. It's very possible that the picture you just added of a beautiful, smiling model is distracting customers from your headline or call to action.

Here are some examples:

### EXAMPLE ONE: VERO



The Vero homepage does a good job of using graphic elements to draw readers into their headline and text. As seen below, the top of their homepage uses minimal graphics so their headline and copy stand out more.

## EXAMPLE TWO: SINGLE GRAIN



Single Grain also does a good job of using graphic elements to focus visitors on their headline and to lead them down a path to read their copy.

### *Tip four* EMPLOY REVERSE TYPE SPARINGLY

Last but not least, you need to employ reverse type sparingly. David Ogilvy, one of the most legendary copywriters of all time, was notorious for despising reverse type. He was known to cite studies that proved it was harder to read and made it more difficult to retain information.

**So is it true? Yes, it is.**

An Australian editor named Colin Wheildon conducted a test to see what impact reverse type had on reading comprehension, if any. Here's a summary of the most relevant results:

- Black text on a white background led to 70% of participants achieving good comprehension, 19% achieving fair, and 11% achieving poor.
- White text on a black background led to 0% achieving good comprehension, 12% achieving fair, and 88% achieving poor.

That's kind of a big deal, right? Yes, yes it is. Not a single person achieved a good comprehension level when white text was used on a black background. These results were nearly identical when white text was used on other colored backgrounds such as blue and purple.



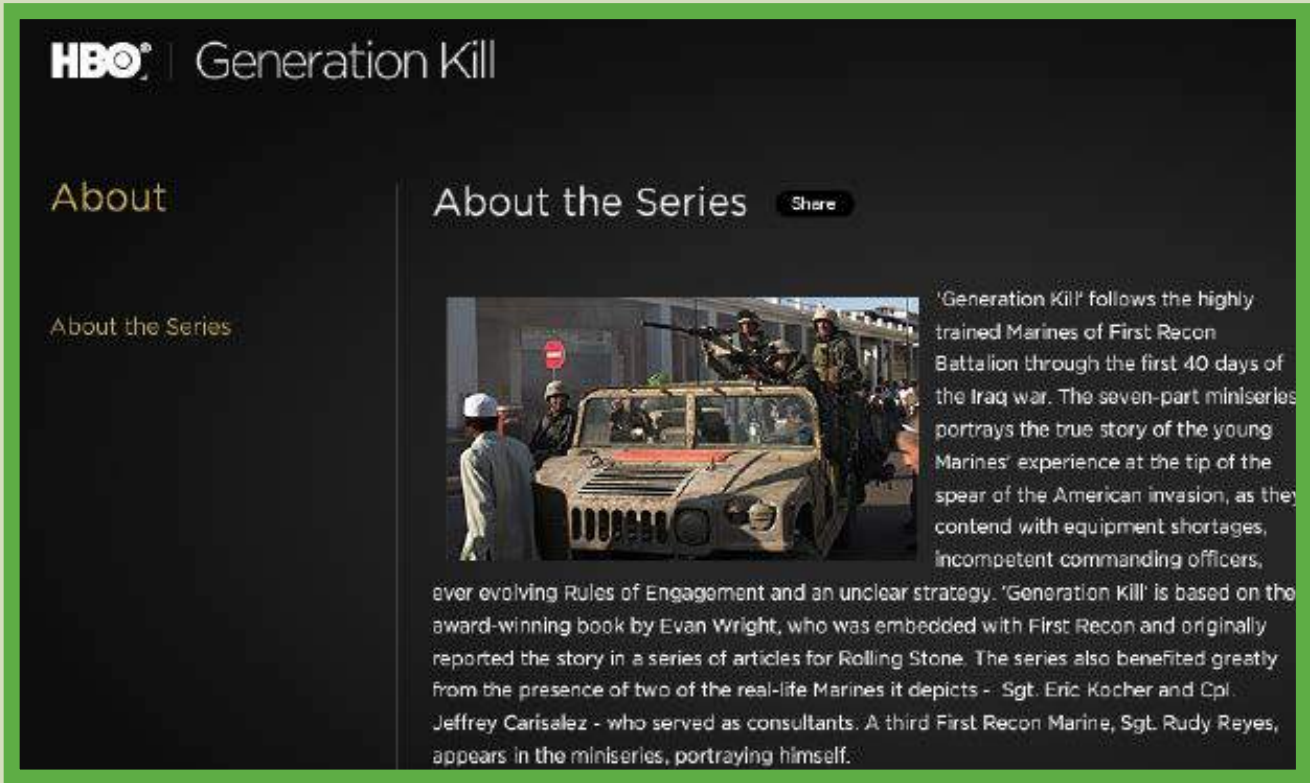
So should you never use reverse type? Actually, there are cases where it's ok to use such as secondary elements. But if you really want to increase retention on parts of your pages or ads that are really critical, then you'll probably want to spare reverse type for sections of copy that aren't as critical to your campaign's success.

EXAMPLE ONE: KISSMETRICS



The KISSmetrics blog is a good example of the proper use of reverse type. The main blog section uses black text on a white background to increase readability. Reverse type is used for the button copy and the tagline, both elements that are secondary copy on this page.

EXAMPLE TWO: GENERATION KILL



The HBO page for the Generation Kill miniseries is an example of bad use of reverse type. It uses a small white font on a black background for large portions of text which never is a good idea.



# BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

With all of these examples we've learned that design and copy are both critical for a campaign's success. Expertly written copy on a distracting design won't achieve the same results as the same copy placed on a design that draws readers in and focuses their attention on headlines and copy.

To achieve this, you should remember to:

- *Always use high contrast between fonts and backgrounds*
- *Make sure your font doesn't blend into a background image*
- *Use every element to draw readers' attention to your headlines and copy*
- *Employ reverse type sparingly*

Following these rules will send you on your way to an excellent design that works synergistically together with your copy to get optimum results.

**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER EIGHT**

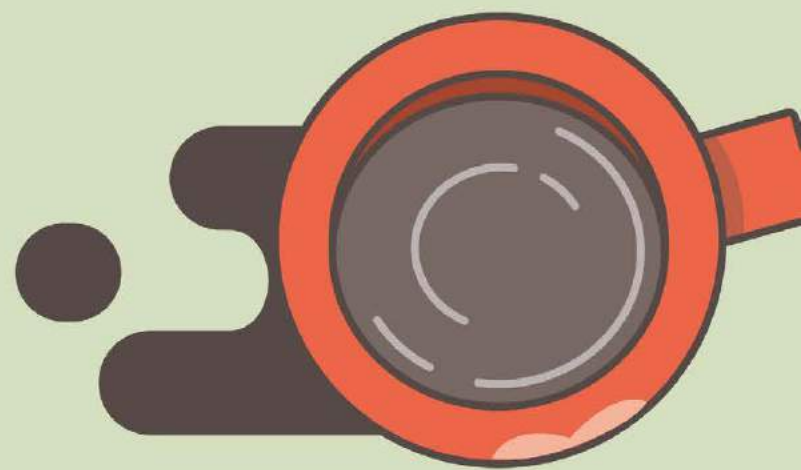
**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER TEN**





# THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE to **COPYWRITING**

NEIL PATEL & JOSEPH PUTNAM



## CHAPTER TEN

### THE GOLDEN RULE OF COPY – TEST, TEST, AND TEST SOME MORE

Some people, perhaps most people, think words are not really important, but I am a word man and I attach the very highest importance to words.

**E.B. WHITE**

It goes without saying that it's critical to test all of your copy because it's impossible to know how customers will respond to what you've written.

Something you write may be unknowingly offensive or confusing. Other lines may not be as appealing as you thought they'd be.

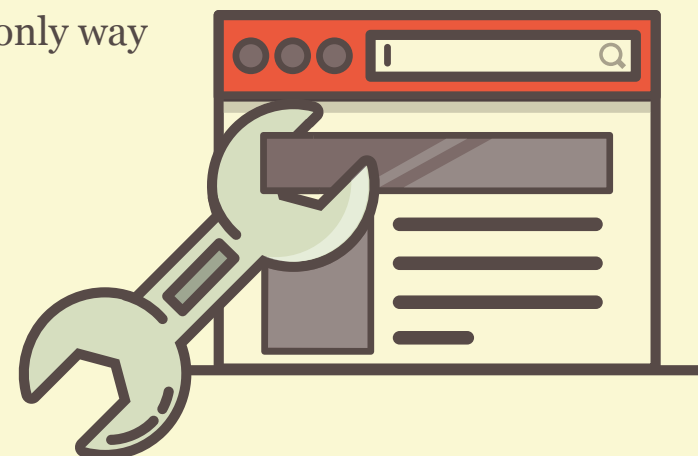
The only way to know for sure is to test.

But that's also become a cliché. You hear people talking about “*testing this*” and “*testing that*,” but not many are doing it. A lot of people are talking about testing, but not as many are actually testing. The goal of this chapter is to show why you need to be testing, and then to show how you can do it for your business.

# Why YOU NEED TO TEST, TEST, AND TEST SOME MORE

First, let's talk about why you need to test. The reason is that testing is the only way to know how well your copy actually works.

When you're sitting in a boardroom talking about a campaign, everyone has an opinion. Some people think you should use this picture and others think you should use another one. Some people think you should use larger fonts and others think you should use smaller ones.



Often, when you're coming up with an initial design, you have to just choose one option or another based on the best information you have available, and then move forward. Then, when possible, you need to test because you never know how your design and copy will actually perform.

In chapter three, for example, we talked about how a one-word change increased click-throughs for an e-mail campaign by 46%. Extrapolated over 2,000,000 e-mail sends that results in 17,000 more clicks for the same amount of advertising dollars spent. If you want to get more for your money, testing obviously provides big returns.

Here's another example. Switch Video recently tested a one-word copy change on their call-to-action-button copy and increased conversions by 228%. That's right, you read that correctly. A one-word change increased website conversions by 228%.

How'd they do it, you ask? First, they surveyed their customers to learn more about them. From the surveys they learned that site visitors were most interested in learning more about pricing, so they changed the button copy from "*Get a Free Consultation*" to "*Get a Free Quote.*" This one-word change increased form submissions by 228%.

That's a really big improvement from changing a single word, yet without testing, your team could argue for days trying to decide which word is better. Three quarters of the team might like "*Free consultation*" more than "*Free quote,*" so you decide to go with that. The result? You get 228% fewer form submissions.

## Delivering Simplicity

Use the Brain Science of Video to Tell Your Company's Story ... and Make the Message Stick. The dual-coding theory of cognitive psychology reveals that stimulating both auditory and visual senses increases retention by 58%. Watch the video below to learn more.

We are **switch**video

First Name

Last Name

Your E-mail

Phone Number

**Get a Free Quote**



Switch video changed one word on their call-to-action button and increased conversions by 228%.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure out that these small changes can make a big difference. Here are a few ways you can begin to test your copy.

Test one

# E-MAIL SUBJECT LINES

The first thing you can test are e-mail subject lines. The good news is that most e-mail marketing clients make it easy to A/B test subject lines for the e-mails you send out.

MailChimp, for example, makes it super easy to A/B test your campaigns. After sending two versions to 20% of your list, it will send the winner to the remaining 80%. Here are some screenshots that show how this works.



Example: MailChimp

To conduct an A/B test in MailChimp, first select to start a new campaign, and then click on “A/B Split Campaign.”

### Choose a type of campaign to send:

Regular ol' Campaign

Send a lovely HTML email along with a plain-text alternative version.

Select

Plain-Text Campaign

Send a simple plain-text email with no pictures or formatting.

Select

A/B Split Campaign

Send to two groups to determine the best subject line, from name, or time/day to send campaigns.

Select

RSS-Driven Campaign

Send content from an RSS feed to a list.

Select

E-mail marketing clients like MailChimp make it easy to test your subject lines.

Next, choose how you would like to set up your test. You can select a winner based on “*open rate*,” “*click rate*,” or “*manual*.” Most of the time click rate is the best option to choose, but you can decide what makes the most sense for your e-mail.

How should we split the campaign?

We'll run your test on a segment of the list. When the winner is determined, we'll send it to the remaining portion of the list.

A

B

Remainder segment

**Test segment: 20%** **Send the winner to: 80%**

How should a winner be chosen?

After sending the test segments, the remaining 80% of your list will be sent the best performing version.

By open rate

after

1

Days

Finally, you'll conduct your test by entering two different subject lines, and then setting up the rest of your e-mail campaign.

For our sample project, we could enter two subject lines such as:

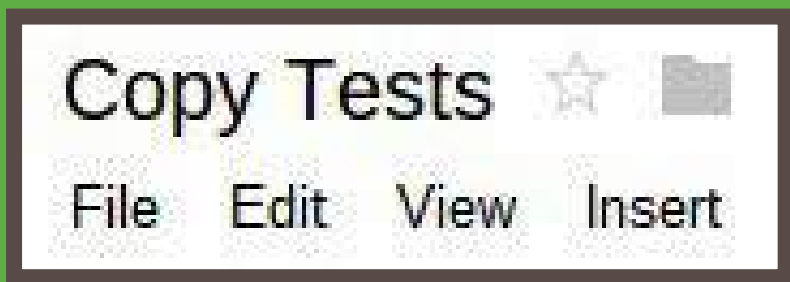
- *Sign up for a free Simple Survey Tool trial today*
- *Find out why everyone's talking about the Simple Survey Tool*

Both of these subject lines are different enough to provide relevant testing results. After sending them to 20% of your list, you'll know which one is most likely to perform better across the final 80%.

As this example shows, setting up an A/B test in most e-mail marketing clients is as easy as clicking a few buttons and coming up with two different subject lines.

## Practice Exercise

Let's go ahead and practice this now. Start by creating a document titled "*Copy Tests.*"



Next, create a heading in all caps titled "*E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE VARIATIONS.*"

For the sample project, we're going to come up with subject line variations for a blog post we're writing to announce a new service we're offering — complementary survey consultations. Since the goal is to let more people know about the new feature in order to generate more awareness, we're going to test for open rates instead of clicks.

Here are the variations we came up with:

### E-MAIL SUBJECT LINE VARIATIONS

1. Announcing complementary survey consultations
2. Improve your surveys with a complementary survey consultation

The final step is to put these subject lines into your e-mail marketing client to test and see which performs better.

As you’ve seen in this section, testing your subject lines is as easy as coming up with two or more versions for the same e-mail and testing to see which generates the most opens, click throughs, or orders.

## Test two E-MAIL CREATIVE AND COPY

In addition to testing subject lines, you can also test your e-mail creative and copy. As we mentioned in chapter 10, the design and copy of your ad or website work together to get the optimum result.

To test this, you can send an e-mail to one group of recipients and a different e-mail to a different group of recipients. The difference between e-mails can be the design and/or the copy that’s used.

First, you’ll need to come up with the hypothesis you’re going to test. Are you going to test two different color schemes, two different layouts with different font sizes, or two different copy versions?

You could, for example, test two versions for the call-to-action-button copy. One could use “*Buy Now*” to get people to click through and the other could use “*Learn More*” as the call to action.

You could also test the length of the copy. You could use more copy for the “*Buy Now*” version and less copy for the “*Learn More*” version since you’ll need to say more to make people willing to “*Buy Now*” than you will to get them to click to learn more “*Learn More.*”





You may be wondering what you’re testing in this scenario. With a test like this, you can measure the following:

- *Click throughs*
- *Orders*

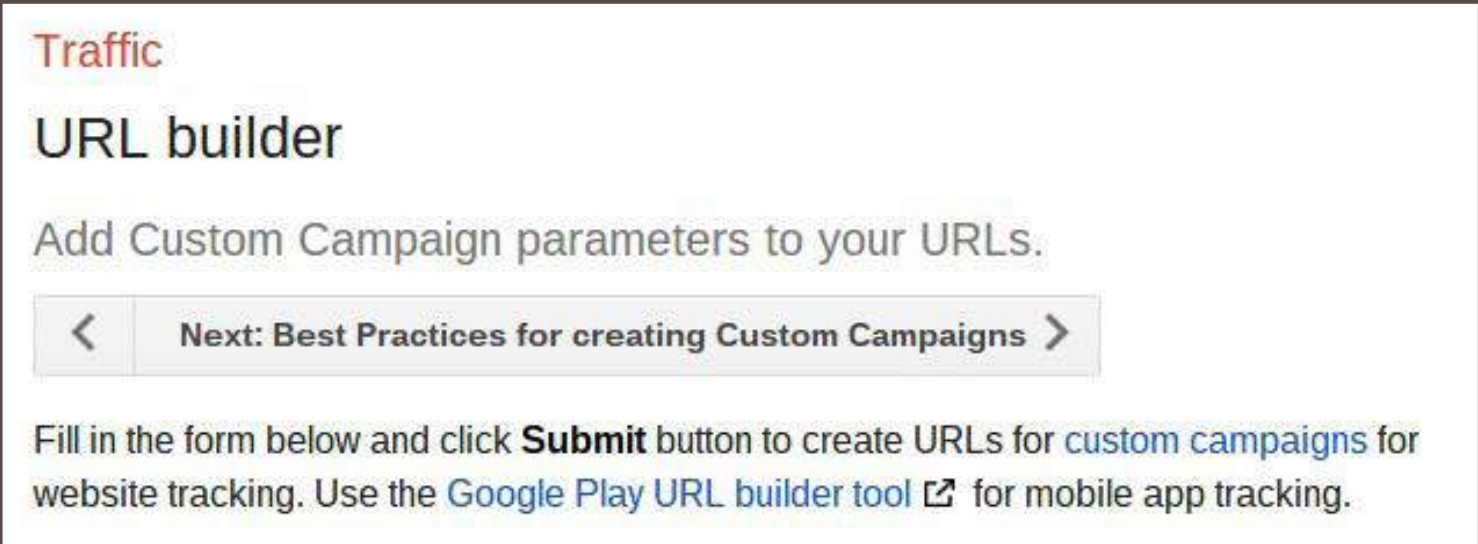
It’s ok to measure both, but in most cases, it’s much more important to measure orders because it’s possible that one version will lead to more clicks while the other will lead to more orders.

So how exactly do you compare order numbers with a test like this? One way is to set up campaign links with the Google URL Builder. Let’s look at how to do that now.

## Setting Up Campaign Links with Google URL Builder

To measure the performance of different campaigns, you can set up campaign links for different ad variations.

First, go to the [Google URL builder](#).



Once there, begin entering the information for your different campaigns. For ours, we’ll be testing “*Buy Now*” vs. “*Learn More*” and will enter the information accordingly.

Here’s the information for version 1:

**Step 1:** Enter the URL of your website.

**Website URL \***

(e.g. http://www.urchin.com/download.html)

**Step 2:** Fill in the fields below. **Campaign Source, Campaign Medium and Campaign Name** should always be used.

**Campaign Source \***

(referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter4)

**Campaign Medium \***

(marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)

**Campaign Term**

(identify the paid keywords)

**Campaign Content**

(use to differentiate ads)

**Campaign Name \***

(product, promo code, or slogan)

\* Required field

And here's the information for version 2:

**Step 1:** Enter the URL of your website.

**Website URL \***

http://5northmarketing.com

(e.g. http://www.urchin.com/download.html)

**Step 2:** Fill in the fields below. **Campaign Source, Campaign Medium and Campaign Name** should always be used.

**Campaign Source \***

newsletter

(referrer: google, citysearch, newsletter4)

**Campaign Medium \***

email

(marketing medium: cpc, banner, email)

**Campaign Term**

(identify the paid keywords)

**Campaign Content**

Learn More

(use to differentiate ads)

**Campaign Name \***

Newsletter

(product, promo code, or slogan)

Submit

After hitting submit, we get the following tracking URLs:

```
http://5northmarketing.com/?  
utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Buy+Now&utm_  
campaign=Newsletter
```



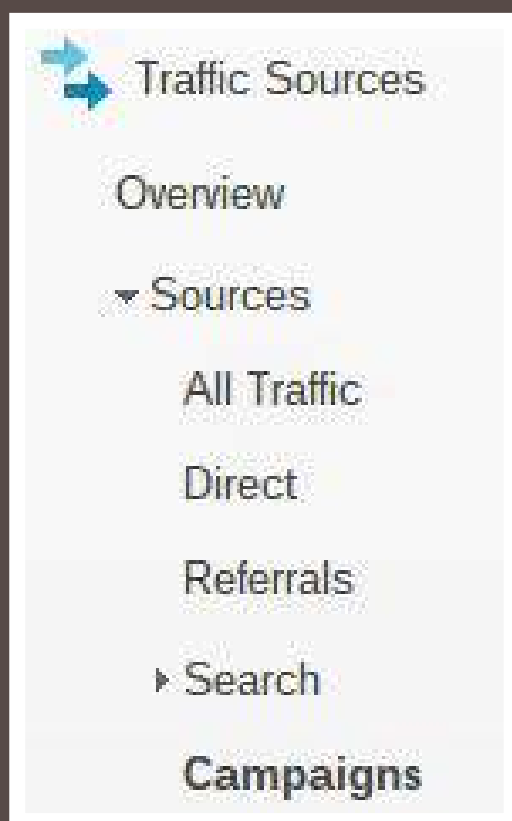
```
http://5northmarketing.com/?  
utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Learn+More&ut  
m_campaign=Newsletter
```

So how do you use these urls?

First, add them into the appropriate places in your e-mail campaign such as “*Buy Now*” or “*Learn More*” links and call-to-action buttons for the corresponding e-mail campaigns.

Once you’ve done so, Google Analytics will start to track visits and conversions from those links. The conversions are particularly useful to show which e-mail led to the most signups or purchases. (*Note: You’ll first have to set up conversion goals in Google Analytics in order to track conversions.*)

To view the campaign results in Google Analytics, click on “*Traffic Sources*” and then “*Campaigns*.”



Now that you’ve set up campaign URLs whose conversions will be tracked within Google Analytics, you can send them out as part of an A/B test to see which e-mail version converts better.

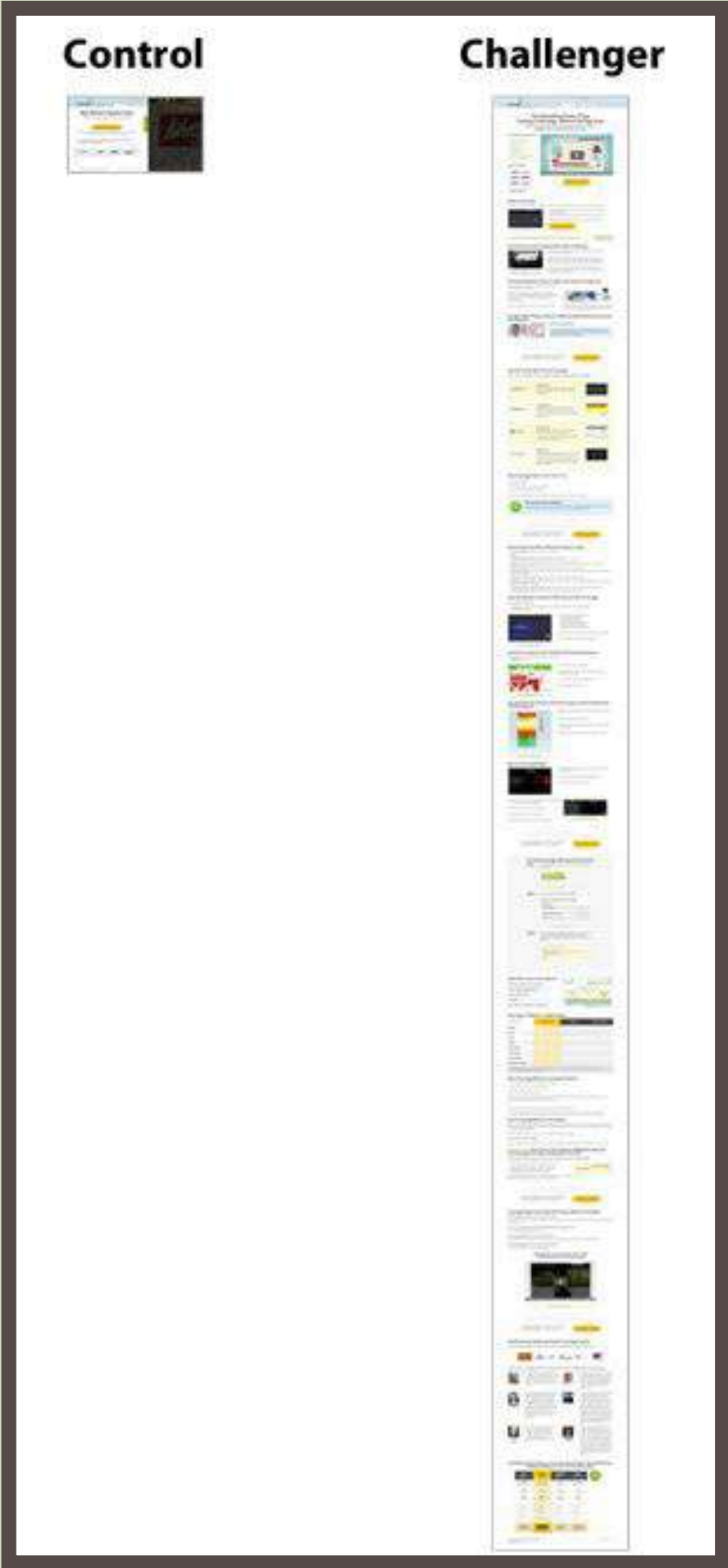
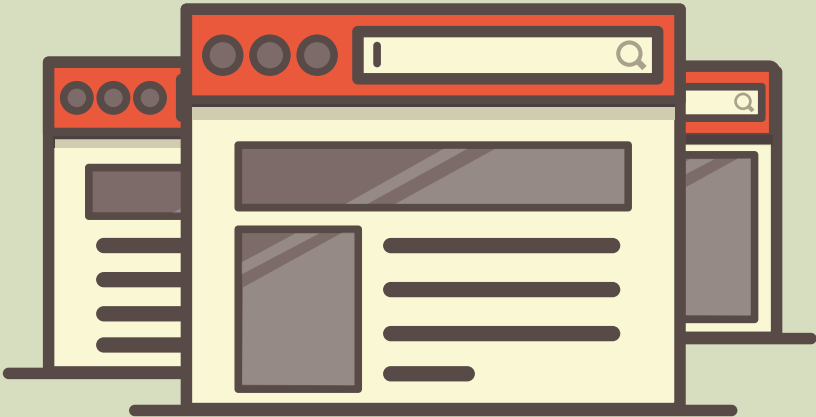
With an example test, we could send the “*Buy Now*” to 10,000 e-mails and the “*Learn More*” version to 10,000 more e-mails. After evaluating the results, you’ll know which one generates more clicks and sales, and you can send the winning version to the rest of your list.

Setting up conversion goals in Google Analytics and setting up campaign URLs in the Google URL Builder enables you to measure different campaigns to see which one gets the best results.

In-depth tests for different design and copy versions make more sense for campaigns that require a significant investment. If you're just sending an announcement to your blog subscribers, it's easier to simply test your subject line to see which gets the best open or click-through rates, but if you're paying \$50,000 to send to a rented list of 2,000,000 e-mail subscribers, then it's worth testing your subject line and your copy and creative to find a version that's the most effective.

Test three **WEBSITE HEADLINES AND COPY**

Another testing option is website headlines and copy. You can test to see if one headline leads to more signups than another, or if longer copy leads to more purchases.



As mentioned before, Conversion Rate Experts conducted a headline and copy test for CrazyEgg to see if a longer or shorter page with different headlines would be more effective. The control used CrazyEgg's original length and headline, and the challenger used a headline that compared CrazyEgg's heatmap software to eye tracking technology and used much longer copy. The challenger increased conversions by 30%, and the rest is history.

*This comparison shows how much more copy the challenger (right) used than the control (left).*

So how do you conduct an accurate test for website headline and copy? The best way is to use a tool like Optimizely, Visual Website Optimizer, or Google Analytics Content Experiments. Since Optimizely is the easiest to use, we'll talk about how to conduct a test with it now.

## PRACTICE EXERCISE

First, go to Optimizely, enter your URL, and click “*Test it out.*”

Next, decide what makes sense to test. Some key areas to test are:

- *Headlines*
- *Page copy*
- *Call-to-action-button copy*



Since we know that headlines are the first item that people read, we'll test that as a sample project. (*Note: Since there isn't a website set up for the Simple Survey Tool, we'll have to test Joseph's site—5 North Marketing.*)



The current headline for 5 North Marketing is “*Convert Your Traffic into Paying Customers.*” We’re going to test that against “*Take the Stress Out of Your Content Marketing and Conversion Optimization*” to see which one leads more people to fill out the contact form.

In order to know which headline version converts better, we’re going to test contact page visits (*the number of people that click to view the contact page*), engagement (*which version leads to more clicks overall*), and home form submission (*the number of people that fill out the contact form on the home page*).

Once you add the tracking code to your site, Optimizely will begin keeping track of the results and help you to identify a winner.



## Experiment Goals

These are the goals for this experiment.

### Contact Page Visits

The percentage of visitors who visited <http://5northmarketing.com/contact/> (exact match).

### Engagement

The percentage of visitors who clicked on any part of the experiment page.

### Home Form Submission

The percentage of visitors who clicked on a tracked element.



Add a Goal

Close

This practice example used Optimizely, but you can use Visual Website Optimizer, Google Content Experiments, or any of the other tools that are available. You can use them to test headlines, website copy, or other changes you'd like to make to your website pages.

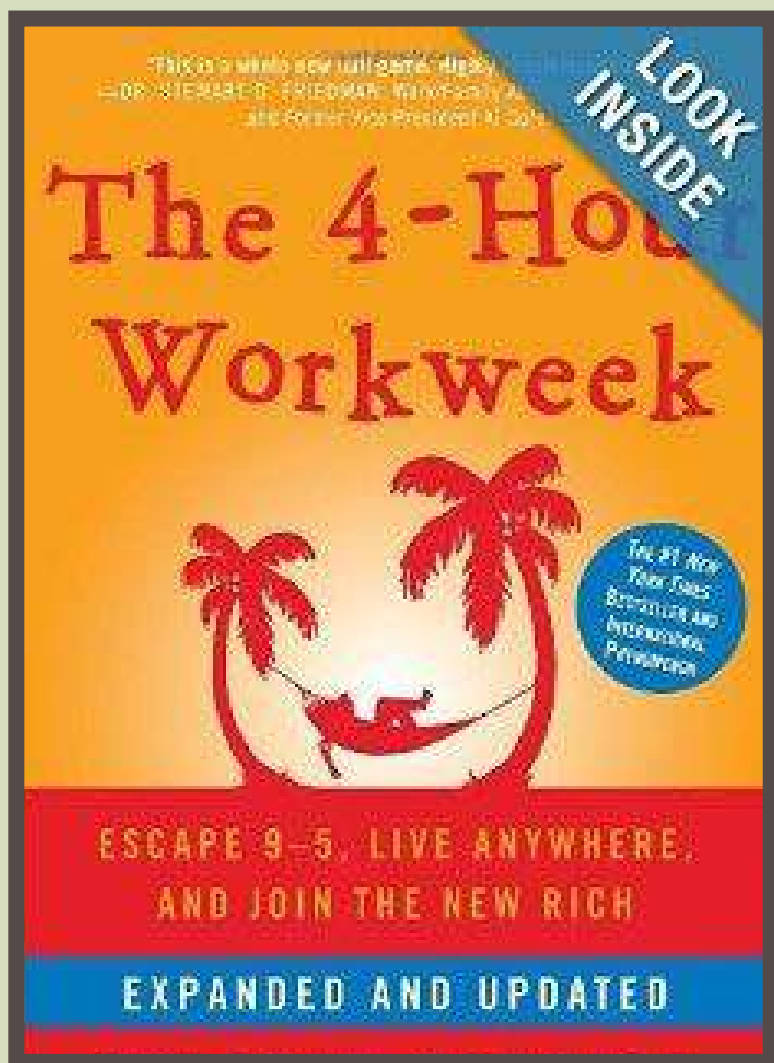
## ADDITIONAL COPY TESTING OPTIONS

In addition to the tests mentioned above, you can test any kind of copy you'd like. You can test copy on a direct-mail postcard by mailing two versions with different URLs on each, or you can A/B test Google display ads by creating two versions and testing to see how people respond to different headlines and designs.

The number of tests you conduct is really endless once you know how to setup a test and measure the results. One famous example is the testing Tim Ferriss did with his book *The Four Hour Work Week*.

When selecting a title for the book, he didn't rely on his gut. Instead, he ran Google text ads with different book title variations. He eventually chose "*The Four Hour Work Week*" because it received the highest number of click throughs. The result? The book went to become a New York Times bestseller.

This is a great example that shows how testing can be carried out for more than just e-mail subject lines or website copy. You can A/B test nearly any piece of copy to see how people respond and to see which version gets the best response.



## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

One of the things that's really cool about testing is that you start to learn how your audience responds to different pieces of copy. They may respond well to words like “*free*” or “*special*” or “*powerful*.” No matter the case, each time you conduct an A/B test, whether it's a headline test, a Facebook ad, or a Google ad, you learn something new about your business and how people respond to different wording or different offers.

The amount of testing you do is up to you, but you can continue honing all of your campaigns by continually testing new elements. The good news is that the internet makes it really easy to conduct A/B tests, and there are ways to test offline as well.

To end the chapter we'd like to mention that we understand resources are limited. Sometimes people talk about testing, but they don't have the time or the resources to carry it out. Other times you're limited in the number of tests you can conduct. We understand, and this is totally part of any businesses operation.

But what you need to realize is that testing can unleash revenue and profit potentials you never realized were possible. If changing one word in an e-mail subject line can lead to 17,000 more clicks, just think what that will do for your bottom line.

Testing can be a challenge, but once you figure it out and commit to doing it, the opportunities are endless. We highly encourage you to add A/B testing into your copywriting and decision making in order to improve your results.

## WRAPPING UP THE GUIDE

We're now at the end of The Definitive Guide for Copywriting. We've learned everything from how to research your product and customers to how to test your copy to increase response rates and conversions.

To help tie everything together, we'd like to provide a checklist you can use for all of your copywriting projects. This checklist will help you to remember what we've learned and enable you to employ all of the tactics included in this guide.

### HERE'S THE LIST:

**Start by researching your product and customers to catalogue the benefits and features of your product and to identify who your customers are. Answer the questions below before moving on.**

#### Product Research

- *How would you describe the product?*
- *What's unique/special about this product?*
- *What big benefit does it provide?*
- *What pain does it alleviate?*
- *What features are included, and what are the benefits of each?*

#### Customer Research

- *Who currently buys your product?*
- *Who would you like to buy your product?*
- *What is a typical customer like?*
- *What do customers love about your product?*

**Survey your customers to learn more about them and to find out what words they use to describe your product or service. Create a survey and ask the following questions**

*(and any other questions you think are relevant for your product/service).*

- *What's your job title?*
- *What company do you work for?*
- *How would you describe our product to a friend or colleague?*
- *What questions did you have before buying, i.e. what almost prevented you from making a purchase?*
- *What ultimately convinced you to buy this product?*
- *Which features were the most important to you when deciding whether or not to buy?*
- *What did you hope to accomplish by using this product?*



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**TAKE ME TO  
CHAPTER NINE**

**TAKE ME BACK  
TO THE START**

