



BEGINNERS' GUIDE TO COPYWRITING



KEEP WRITING

Can you remember your first driving lesson?

I was shocking – I remember nearly hitting the lamppost outside our house on many occasions, and let's not talk about the time I drove into a field.

The fact is, the more driving lessons I had, the more confident I became, and I was a better driver as a result.

The same goes for writing: the more you write, the easier it will become.

LOVE YOUR UGLY DUCKLINGS

You have to learn to love your ugly ducklings – the first drafts.

Your first draft is where all your ideas explode onto paper; it doesn't matter if it's well structured, or has spelling or grammatical mistakes. Like all ugly ducklings, it will turn into a swan once you begin to edit.



BECOME NORTHERN

A friend of mine introduced me to a new website she was working on. The introduction was great, but I knew that by cutting out some words it would be even more powerful.

I'm a Northerner, we're the masters of missing words in a sentence. The point is, we get our message across using fewer words than someone from other parts of the country.

You want to grab the reader's attention – waffle isn't clever, it only weakens your message.

DOWN WITH THE LINGO

Every industry has terminology and jargon that they use, but before you set about showing off your expertise in your niche, think about who the reader will be.

I often see estate agents using phrases that they use in their daily professional life.

What's wrong with that?

Well, that's just it, these are phrases that **THEY** use – not their clients. Does someone selling their home describe themselves as a 'vendor' or a 'seller'?

A quick and easy way to lose your reader is by assuming they are down with your lingo!



GO THE EXTRA MILE



AHHHHHH please, please, *please* ditch the clichés!

You may 'go above and beyond' for your clients, but tell them exactly how you add value.

Example:

When we write a blog post for our clients, we also upload the post onto their blog and find them a copyright-free image to use alongside it.

How do you add value to your clients?

USE THE B WORD

One of the UK's leading independent B2B copywriters, [Andy Maslen](#), suggests that you need to get used to using the B word rather than the F word.

What he's talking about is benefits, not features, as "it's the benefits that make the sale happen".

In other words, don't focus your content on what you are selling, but what benefits your clients will derive.



DON'T START AT THE VERY BEGINNING



Spending hours pondering a headline before you have even written a sentence? Stop right now.

Your headline is extremely important, but you don't have to start there.

I tend to have a topic idea, a key point, or working headline before I start writing. Often, the headline will come to me mid-post, or when I have finished editing.

Focusing on the headline before you start can hinder your progress and give you writers' block.

SPEAKING OF HEADLINES...

Take the time to make sure your headline rocks!

Did you know that 80% of people will read your headline, whilst only 20% will continue to read your content?

Improve that ratio by creating a headline so amazing, alluring, and astonishing that your readers just *have* to read on.



I'M GUILTY...

Contractions. I'm terrible for not contracting, it's a really bad habit.

Contractions make your content more conversational and engaging.

What do I mean?

I am = I'm

Here is = Here's

You will not = You won't

Are you guilty?





IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU

If nearly every sentence on your website or post starts with WE, then 'we' need to get happy with the delete button.

Your copy isn't about bragging rights.

Your focus should be on your clients, so swap your 'We' for 'You' and 'Your' and you will create copy that your clients want to read and engage with.



THE MYTH ABOUT LENGTH

“Google loves long posts”, or, “Your posts need to be under 350 words”. Have you heard either of these myths?

Ian Cleary from [RazorSocial](#) says, “A blog post doesn’t have to be long to get ranked well on Google. It has to be valuable, and valuable blog posts are generally long, but not always...”

If you set out to write a 1,000-word post because you hear that long posts get ranked, then you’re starting on the wrong foot.

Write a valuable post instead...”

Google representative John Mueller has stated that [Google](#) doesn’t count the number of words within a post, and that instead of focusing on length, you should “make sure that your content is really unique... and of high quality.”

DON'T SAY IT ALL AT ONCE

In an effort to give as much information as possible we can sometimes suffer from verbal diarrhoea and bombard the reader with several key messages at once. Be careful: you don't want to confuse or overwhelm them.

Keep it simple and stick with just one or two messages per article. You want your reader to have clarity after reading your post and be ready to take action.





THIS LEADS US NICELY TO.....

The CTA, or Call to Action, which basically means what you want your reader to do next. Do you want them to read another blog post? Visit your website? Book a course? Give you a call?

Your CTA is just as important as your headline; never assume that your audience will automatically take action, you need to ask.

EMOTION STILL MATTERS

But my business is B2B, not B2C? So? Is the person you're writing to a robot?

It doesn't matter if you are writing for B2B or B2C, you're always writing to a human, and humans respond to emotions.

The decisions we make are influenced by emotional responses; use your storytelling skills to draw the reader in.



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CONTENT

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