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COPYWRITING

From "A" to "Z"



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Copywriting From "A" to "Z"

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, I read that one way to remember a large quantity of information was to make an alphabetical list out of it.

I tried it with some things I wanted to remember and keep in mind about copywriting, and found it extremely useful.

For the past two years, I've refined the list.

Recently, I turned that list into this Special Report that I hope you'll find useful.

Of course, feel free to refine it, make substitutions, and customize it for yourself.

— David Deutsch

A – Attack

Think through what you want to say first. But when you start to write, attack. Attack the page. Attack the reader's passivity. Attack the reader's skepticism. Attack the reader's imagination.

Attack so fervently that you don't let up or stop until you reach the end. (*Do not edit as you write—it's like driving with the brakes on.*)

B – Be the Prospect

One of the most important things you can do to help your writing is to be able to step into your prospect's shoes.

Know your best prospect's attitudes, beliefs, concerns, hot buttons and deepest desires.

When you're done writing, read the copy while you "be the prospect".

How does it make you feel? Are you convinced?

What questions do you have at what points? What's missing?

C – Curiosity

Curiosity is a very powerful human emotion, and people will go to great lengths to satisfy it.

Use it to make your prospect read and continue reading your copy.

Use it to make your prospect want your product—either because they are curious about some information contained in the product, or because they are curious as to what life will be like if only they possess what you offer.

Find the aspect of what you're writing about that you can portray as a "secret." (*People have ordered books from my clients just to satisfy their curiosity about a single "secret" they just had to know.*)

D – Dimensionalize

Don't write one-dimensional copy.

Always dimensionalize what you're trying to say, for example, by showing how problems cause your prospect pain, how benefits will help your prospect, and the consequences of not responding.

Don't just say your product makes you thin or rich. Dimensionalize everything that means, all the implications, and all the ways your product helps your prospect attain it.

E – Energy

Energetic copy gets read and acted on. How do you give copy energy?

First, make sure you are overflowing with energy—well-rested and raring to get your ideas onto the page. (*Run around the block if you need to get your blood flowing.*)

Then fill your writing with colorful, energetic words and phrases and plenty of active verbs.

Make sure your copy shows people doing things (*which helps avoid the unenergetic "passive" voice*).

Add conflict between people or ideas. Use plenty of emotion.

Show instead of tell.

(This sentence is devoid of energy. This one packs a punch!)

F – Fresh

Good copy is fresh. Fresh ideas. Fresh ways of looking at things.

Interesting. Different. Not boring.

You never want your reader to say: *"I've seen or heard this before."*

Be the news!

G – Gun to the Head

Write copy as if your life depended on it.

Would you use that clever headline if your life depended on it, or would you go with a more compelling one?

Would you pack more urgency into your copy?

And envision your success!

H – Heart

Don't just use logic. Write with emotion. To your reader's heart from yours. Talk about your feelings. Talk about their feelings.

Stir up what Denny Hatch calls "the emotional hot-buttons of copywriting: guilt, flattery, anger, exclusivity, greed, fear and salvation."

I – Impressive

Be ruthless about requiring that your copy be impressive.

Is the offer, the headline, the copy itself impressive to you?

Will it make your prospect say "Wow" or turn to their spouse and say, "Honey, look at this?"

Do not settle for less. (*Remember: There's a gun to your head!*)

J – Judge

Picture a judge. He's isn't swayed by your claims and promises. He wants proof—lots of proof. (*Along with the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.*) Give it to him.

Substantiate every fact and opinion. Be authentic or he'll see right through you. (*One trick: Use the word "because" as much as possible.*)

K – Keep Converting

You're not a copywriter, you're a converter!

Keep converting features into benefits. Keep converting benefits into deeper benefits (by asking: What's the benefit of the benefit?).

Keep converting claims and opinions into proof, patter into persuasion, the commonplace into exciting drama, what's old into what's new, generalizations into specifics, statements into analogies, facts into stories (*everybody loves stories, and if 'S' weren't taken already, I'd use it for 'stories'*).

L – Lead

People want a leader. So lead! Don't be wishy-washy.

Give definitive advice. But don't command people about.

Take them by the hand and lead them gently to the conclusions you would like them to arrive at, to the order you would like them to place, or to the idea that you're the one to follow.

M – Mindset

Your mindset may be the single most important determinate of how good your copy is.

Are you enthusiastic about the product?

Do you believe in and are you fired up about your own abilities?

Are you envisioning the inevitability of the copy's success?

Have you cleared your mind of extraneous concerns?

Do you genuinely care about the prospect and want to help him or her arrive at the best decision?

N – Name

There's tremendous power in giving something a name.

Listerine made a fortune by naming bad breath "*Halitosis*."

The "*12-cent cure*" for back pain sounds more specific and intriguing than "*a cure for back pain*." "*The Lazy Man's Way to Riches*" is light-years ahead of "*How to Get Rich*."

So when possible, give names to your prospect's problems, your solutions, your techniques, your methods, your ingredients.

O – Overboard

Go overboard in almost everything.

Most copywriters err on the side of too little rather than too much—too little emotion, too little persuasion, too little energy, too little proof, too little urgency.

Go overboard in getting your prospect's attention, in your promises and benefits (promise quantum leaps, not small steps), in creating urgency, in your guarantee, in your enthusiasm, in dramatizing the problem and your solution.

Then go back and adjust your copy where necessary. (*After the copy is written, it's a lot easier to edit down overboardness than to add it.*)

P – Paint Pictures

Paint pictures for your prospect: Of the problems caused by the lack of your product or service. Of what it will be like when they have your product or service.

Dramatize: With picturesque stories and analogies. And remember to make your pictures as specific as possible. (*Don't expect your reader to do your picturizing work for you.*)

Q – Quash Objections

Buying your product involves risk. Which is why if a prospect can find a reason not to buy, he will. So leave no objection unquashed!

Make a list of every objection your prospect might conceivably have and be sure your copy addresses them—by raising and dealing with them outright, or in more subtle ways (*such as by implication, or with a testimonial that deals with it*).

Remember that objections aren't just standard ones such as "*the product is too expensive*." They're also: "*I should get this from the competition instead*" Show them that it's not even close.

Or: that they should do nothing (*show them the pain that will cause*).

Objections can also be more subconscious, such as the fear of ridicule if they make the wrong decision (*give them enough ammunition to convince their spouse and friends*).

Or objecting to being told what to do (*make them feel like they're selling themselves*).

Objections are like doors. Once you've closed off all of them, the only door that remains for a prospect is to go through is the one that leads to the sale.

R – Royalty

Envision your prospect as a king.

Do as you would do for a king: Serve and represent him (*even over your client or your company*).

Adore. Flatter. Make him look and feel good. Bestow gifts. Show concern. Make his enemies your enemies.

If you make your prospects feel like royalty, don't you think they might be more inclined to buy from you?

S – Salesmanship

People who are good at writing don't make the best copywriters.

People who are good at selling make the best copywriters.

Study salesmanship. Be a salesperson when you write by doing what salespeople do, such as bonding with your customer, continually closing, and not taking "no" for an answer.

T – Time

Think about time in relation to your prospect and your product.

Include more dimensions of time in your copy.

What happened in the past? What's happening in the present? What will happen in the future—if they use the product, or if they don't?

U – Unique

Have you convincingly portrayed your company, your product or service, or yourself as unique in some way?

If not, why should anyone elect to use that product or service?

V – Very Simple

Simple sells. Very simple sells very well.

Scientific studies show that what is simple is more convincing than what is complex.

So kill all gobbledegook and flab.

Use simple words, simple sentences, and simple logic.

And keep your offer simple as well, because a complex decision is often a delayed decision.

W – What Are You Really Selling?

Cosmetic manufacturer Charles Revson said: *"In the factory, we make lipstick. In the drugstore, we sell hope."*

Marketing guru Ted Levitt said: *"People don't buy quarter-inch drill bits, they buy quarter-inch holes."*

What are you really selling—what end result or state of mind?

Many information products are bought not just for the information, but because of how they make the buyer feel—like they're action-takers, protected or knowledgeable.

Cars, of course, are often bought because of how they make the buyer feel. Dig deep and find out what you really sell.

X – Expose

Show your readers what they usually don't see: a new way of looking at something, insights and revelations into themselves, their world, their problems, possible solutions.

Give order to their chaos. (*If you want something that begins, with "X", x-ray their world and reveal it to them.*)

Y – "You" and "Your"

Your copy should be less about you and your company and your product than about your prospect.

Talk about them—their wants, their needs, their hopes, their dreams.

What would you rather read: A page of copy all about you, or a page of copy all about some other person or company?

Take note of how many times your copy says "I" or "we". Make sure that falls in comparison to the amount of times it says "you" or "your".

Z – Zero in

Focus is a wonderful thing. Like a magnifying glass that focuses the sun's rays and can burn through paper, copy focus burns through resistance, objections and inertia.

So when you write, zero in on a single, specific prospect.

Zero in on that prospect's biggest problem and zero in on the biggest benefits you have that solve that problem.

Don't try to shotgun your message to everyone who might possibly be interested. Don't try to be all things to all people.

Don't dump a laundry list of benefits in their lap hoping they'll find the ones that will appeal to them.

Zero in on your best prospects and your best benefits.

About David L. Deutsch



David is one of the top direct response marketing consultants and copywriters in the country, and the author of *"Think Inside the Box!"*, a book that reveals a revolutionary new way to generate ideas.

His writing has sold hundreds of millions of dollars worth of his clients' products—which include everything from books, seminars, and newsletters to Maxwell House Coffee and American Express cards.

David started his advertising career at the renowned Ogilvy & Mather advertising agency on Madison Avenue, and has the unique distinction of having been a creative director at both a traditional ad agency, as well as a direct response agency.

He has worked with all types of companies—from Fortune 500 companies such as Merrill Lynch, General Foods, and American Express, some of the top colleges and universities in the country, and many small businesses.

Today, David writes for and consults mainly with companies and entrepreneurs who sell information and advice—in print, online, or through seminars—including Boardroom, Inc., Rodale, Healthy Directions, and Lifebook.

In addition to *"Think Inside the Box!"*, David is also the author of *Million Dollar Marketing Secrets*, as well as a program on memory improvement. He is currently working on a copywriting course.

For more information on Copy Quick-Start, David's interviews with 18 of today's top copywriters and copywriter/entrepreneurs:

<http://www.CopyQuickStart.com/special>

For more information on "Think Inside the Box!" and David's acclaimed creativity course, "*The Million Dollar Idea System*":

<http://www.CopyQuickStart.com/creative>

For more information on working with David or speaking engagements:

<http://www.DavidLDeutsch.com/contact/>

To get on David's VIP notification list (*if I sent you this report directly you're already on it!*):

<http://www.DavidLDeutsch.com>

Until we speak again,



David L. Deutsch

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