100

Copywriting
Tips

for Designers

and other
freelance artists

by Shaun Crowley

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Learn how to write the promotional material you design...

- adverts
- posters
- brochures
- catalogues
- leaflets
- sales letters
- websites
- multimedia displays
- presentations
- corporate videos

Expand your freelance business and double your income…

Copywriting tips written just for you:

- designers
- illustrators
- photographers
- multimedia programmers
- video directors

100 Copywriting Tips for Designers and Other Freelance Creatives
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Forward

If you regularly design or produce publicity materials, it makes sense that you learn to write them as well. Not only does copywriting add another string to your bow, it helps you to expand your freelance service by offering new and existing customers a complete creative package.

Writing the publicity you design also makes life easier for your existing clients because they avoid time-consuming project management, briefing, and service searching.

Take over the whole project and you'll catapult yourself beyond the reach of your competition. You'll offer a consistency of message and aesthetic look that copywriters and artists cannot achieve on their own. The result... more clients, happier clients, and greater client lock-in.

Copywriters are very much in demand, earning up to $100 per hour. A copywriting service provides you with another reliable income stream to fall back on when design jobs dry up. At the very least, you can double your income by learning how to write your clients' adverts, brochures, and websites.

So why haven't you tried writing before? Is it because you consider yourself to be an artist and artist only? Are you too busy to learn how to write sales copy? Or is it because you believe copywriting is an innate skill people are just born with?

This book lets you in to a little secret. Copywriting can be learned, and it can be learned fast. It's a craft that any novice can pick up, you don't need to be 'a natural'. Standard advertising copywriting is about selling products not writing poetic prose. It is bound by just a handful of rules. Learn them, practice a little, and you'll be writing copy that sells in as little as six weeks.

Of course, there's more to copywriting than the 100 tips I have gathered for you in this book. But if you start by putting these tips into practice you can be sure of writing persuasive copy that sells in the time it takes you to learn a new piece of design software.

Introduction

This book presents 100 self-contained tips on copywriting, written specifically for freelance creatives like you.

It assumes you have a sound knowledge of the freelance business—(after all, you have set up your own!)—so you won't find needless advice on marketing yourself, client management, or organizing your workload.

Instead, *100 Copywriting Tips for Designers* offers general guidance on copywriting which you can use to write a range of different promotional media such as adverts, posters, brochures, catalogues, leaflets, sales letters, websites, multimedia displays, presentations, and corporate videos.

The book is split into two parts, each focussing on a different stage of the writing process.

Part A   focuses on the preparation and conceptualization stage of a copywriting assignment. Here you'll find the most fundamental rules related to understanding and interpreting your client's brief. You'll learn how to plan your copy and how to find that killer idea.

Part B   looks at the writing stage in detail. It shows you how to begin writing, how to write persuasively and convincingly, how to ensure your copy really sells your client's product, and how to edit your draft.

13 themed chapters help you find the points you need fast. The chapters appear roughly in the order you will call upon them as you progress through a typical assignment. There's no need to learn every point straightaway, just refer to the chapter that best reflects the particular writing stage you are at as you go.

To make reference easier, you'll find all the key tips highlighted in red. This makes *100 Copywriting Tips for Designers* perfect for on-the-spot reference.

Final note

Throughout this book I refer to a copywriting assignment as being about selling your client's *product*. Of course, you may be writing about more than one product. You may be writing about a *service*. In some cases you may not be writing about specific products or services at all, i.e. if you are writing corporate image-building publicity. But whatever you are writing about, the same rules usually apply if the aim of your publicity is *to sell*.

This book shows you how to sell through writing. That is a very sought-after skill.

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SECTION ONE: Preparing for a copywriting assignment

Most people think you need to be a good writer to be a copywriter. This is a myth. True, you do need to be capable of writing legible sentences, but your actual writing skills account for around 20% of your success.

Your questioning skills are more important than your writing skills. Ask your client the right questions and you'll leave your briefing meeting with a clear idea what your sales message is. Know your sales message and your job is half done; you just write it in plain English.

A sales message is the one thing about the product that customers will find most appealing. In short, it is your 'reason-to-buy'. Agree a persuasive message with your client and your copy is likely to be effective—even without stylistic frills, clever turns-of-phrases, or lashings of wit.

The most well-written advertising copy is useless if the writer hasn't communicated a clear reason why the reader should buy the product. Your main objective in your briefing meeting is to agree a sales message with your client. To do that, you need to extract as much information as possible.

That's why the time you spend with your client is crucial. Only your client knows what the product's real strengths are. Only your client knows what customers are likely to find most appealing about the product. Only your client will understand what his or her brand means to customers, and how it should be presented in marketing communications. And of course, only your client knows what the aims of your copy are.

But... Your client is likely to be too busy to sit with you for hours and tell you everything you need to know unprompted. The following three chapters help you to ask the right questions before and during your client meeting, so you can make good use of your time together. You'll also find a few tips to help you agree terms with your client such as guidelines for pricing, drafting, and timing.

1. How to prepare for your client meeting

The more you know about your client before your meeting, the more time you have during your meeting to ask the really probing questions.

Know your stuff and your meeting will run smoother—you will also create a good first impression. Your client will appreciate the effort you have gone to and will treat you like a professional from the start. Here are a few ideas to help you achieve this.

1.1. **Ask your client to send you existing marketing material.**
To get the most out of your meeting, research your client's product and likely customers in advance. This allows you time to think of the key issues that should be at the heart of your enquires during the meeting. Ask your client for:

- The actual product or prototype (or illustrations and photos)
- Previous publicity (product proposals and blueprints for new products)
- The competition's publicity
- Related articles and press releases related to the product
- Product presentations
- Market research reports
- Letters and comments from users of the product
- Back issues of customer newsletters

1.2. **Check if your client has an online newsletter.**
It's always useful to subscribe to online newsletters to see how companies communicate with their customers. What tone of voice do they employ? What sort of benefits do they highlight? What could they do better? Sign up, check your emails, and make notes!

1.3. **Make a note of the key features and benefits.**
Flick through the material your client sends you and make a list of product features and benefits. This will be a good discussion point when you meet, and will get you thinking about what you'll need to say in your copy. For a full definition of features and benefits, see point 4.26. For an example of a features and benefits table, see point 2.14.

1.4. **Make sure your client allocates enough time for your meeting.**
Your client will need to allow between one and two hours briefing time, depending on how much conceptualizing work you are expected to do. For large important campaigns, you may also need to speak to sales representatives, customer service managers, engineers, or anybody who has potentially useful inside knowledge about the product or the people who will buy the product.

2. How to guarantee you leave your meeting with an idea

People often imagine brainstorming copy as sitting alone in a darkened room scribbling feverishly on envelopes. In reality, you should have your Big Idea before you even start writing. And if you don't leave your meeting with a clear idea of what to say and how to say it, you probably haven't asked the right questions during your client meeting.

The following tips help you ask probing questions so you and your client can get right to the heart of your sales message before your hour is up.

2.5. **Establish your meeting objectives with the client.**
Set out what you aim to achieve in your meeting right at the outset, so your client knows what to expect. Tell her you need to…

- *Understand the product*; agree on its unique qualities and central benefits.
- *Know exactly who you are writing to*; agree on your readers' practical and emotional needs.
- *Agree the purpose of your publicity* and how it will be read; agree on the marketing strategy behind the copy.

2.6. **Question everything about the product.**
Remember that you are not an expert on the product, so don't be afraid of asking questions that may appear overly simple. You may stumble upon false assumptions or unique aspects of the product that your client has failed to recognize:

- What is the product?
- How does it work?
- What are its features and benefits? (point 2.14. shows you how to make a complete list with your client)
- Which benefit will prospects find the most appealing?
- How does the product differ to the competition?
- How is the product positioned against the competition?
- How does the competition promote themselves?
- What is new about the product?
- What problem does it solve?
- What market research is the product responding to?
- Can you guarantee it does something better than the competition?

- What alternative mediums or technologies does the product compete against?
- What components does the product have?
- What applications does it have?
- How reliable, efficient, economical, and cost-effective is it?
- How much does the product cost?
- How much is the competition?
- Where can you buy the product?
- When can you buy the product?
- Can it be delivered? If so, how fast?
- What after-sales support is available?
- Is it guaranteed?

2.7. **Identify the *general* demographic of your audience.**

To get a general idea who you are writing for, ask your client for the basic demographic information so you can get a general picture of your typical reader.

- Age
- Gender
- Marital status
- Occupation
- Income

2.8. **Identify the *behavioral* demographic of your audience.**

If you can identify commonalities in your audience's behavior, you'll develop a greater understanding of their practical needs. This knowledge will also give you a few golden observations that you can slip into your copy, helping you to relate to your reader at a more personal level.

- What daily routines might they share?
- How do they typically use the product?
- How does the product fit into their lives?

2.9. **Identify the *psychological* demographic of your audience.**

As you'll see in the following chapter, you need to equip yourself with a sound knowledge of your reader's emotional needs in order to identify the core product benefits. Therefore you need to ask your client what psychological traits your target audience might share.

- What are their ambitions?
- What do they enjoy doing?
- What are they frightened of?
- What pressures are they under?

- Are they extroverts or introverts?
- Are they people-focused or task-focused?
- Are they logical or creative?
- Do they strive for ideas or do they prefer to focus on detail?

2.10. **Know the purpose of your publicity.**

Before you start writing, you need to be clear on the aim of your publicity so you know what kind of action your copy is asking the reader to take.

What is the publicity supposed to do?
- To sell direct?
- To generate sales leads? If so, what is the call to action? (see points 11.73 – 11.76.)
- To encourage prospects to enquire online?
- To encourage the reader to reply for more information?
- To build awareness of product?
- To build corporate image?
- To inform existing customers of changes?
- To motivate or inform sales forces or distributors?

2.11. **Find out how your publicity will it be read.**

If you know the context in which your publicity will be read, that knowledge may be useful when you think about the length, tone, and presentation of your copy. For example, a brochure that is presented to customers by a sales rep may need to be more visually demonstrative than a brochure that is mailed out.

How is the promotional literature to be distributed?
- Mailed to customers?
- Used to help sales representatives pitch to customers?
- Distributed at events?
- Handed out on the street?

Where is the advert situated?
- Which journal/magazine/newspaper?
- Who buys it?
- When will the advert appear?
- What will it appear next to?

2.12. **Ask what marketing strategies your publicity responds to.**

A basic understanding of your client's goals will aid you in your task as a copywriter. Although unlikely to inform your copy directly, you should be aware of your client's underlying aspirations as this knowledge will help you to communicate with your client more effectively as you discuss the sales message.

What is your client's current marketing strategy?
- Maintain sales of a market leading product?
- Turnaround poor sales?
- Build a successful brand?
- Update or reposition a mature brand?
- Enter a new market segment?
- Dominate an existing market?
- Maintain customer loyalty?
- Prove the company's commitment to innovation?
- Encourage new or maintained investment from shareholders?
- Motivate retailers and distributors to stock the product?
- Aid the sales force to sell the product or service directly?
- Keep employees motivated?

2.13. **Find out what has worked in the past.**
Take a few minutes to go through past publicity with your client to find out what has worked and what hasn't. If the target audience responded well to a particular type of product message, there may be no point in reinventing the wheel.

2.14. **Make a features and benefits table with your client.**
If you only take one set of notes away from your client meeting, make sure it's a complete list of product features and corresponding benefits. Here is an example of a features/benefits table for a design agency. For tips on finding benefits, see point 4.26

Features	Benefits
We specialize in print, web, 3D, and Flash design	We work across media, so you get one consistent look for your whole campaign, with everything in on time.
We use state of the art computing equipment	We have the best equipment, so you can be sure your project will run smoothly right up to finished piece.
We have international customers	Our design has global appeal, helping you to strengthen your international reputation and break new markets.
We include proof-reading as part of our service	Our free proof reading service saves you time and money, and gives you the confidence that your finished piece will be free from costly mistakes

2.15. **Gather facts, statistics, interesting stories, and testimonials.**
Your client needs to supply you with the concrete facts you need to back up all your points when you come round to writing your copy. Insist on having:

- **Statistics** to quantify all the features you discuss.
- **Factual material** that will help to support your claims.
- **Sales figures** to back up any kind of 'best-selling' message.
- **Case studies** about interesting ways the product is used.
- **Specific examples** of product content and applications.
- **Anecdotes** about the product to help you lighten the tone of your copy.
- **Testimonials** from customers or critics to reinforce your points.

2.16. **Agree on a USP.**
A Unique Selling Point (USP) is an appealing aspect of the product that is only true of that product.
> *Examples:*
> - *The world's best-selling cell phone* (unique selling point as a fact)
> - *The first cell phone with Voice Alert™.* (unique selling point as a feature)
> - *The only cell phone that works under water* (unique selling point as a benefit)

As you discuss the product's features and benefits, make a point of enquiring whether they are unique. Do this by asking your client if it is accurate to describe the product as *The first…*or *The only….*

2.17. **Agree on a sales message.**
When you have explored all the various angles of your clients' product, you need to agree on what your publicity is going to say. What is the *one* thing about the product that the target demographic will find most appealing? *(Use the concept ideas in point 5.27. for a list of messages that work.)*

Failure to agree on one core message will make brainstorming a concept for your publicity almost impossible. To demonstrate this, here is some copy for an advertisement I recently saw on a bus. It aims to recruit care workers:

Thought bubble:
Looking for something more challenging than a regular 9 to 5?

Headline:
Have you thought about a job in care?

The problem with this copy is that it is completely off-message. I have recently worked on copy aimed at care workers, and I have learnt that it is not the 'challenge' of the job that care workers find *most* appealing, it is the satisfaction of helping others who are more needy than themselves. Maybe if the copywriter had dissected the key selling points and agreed a message with his client, this advert would be very different.

3. How to agree terms with your client

What does your client expect of you as a copywriter? How much should you charge? What's involved in the drafting process?

These are things you need to know before you meet your client. Here are five tips to help you present your copywriting service confidently and professionally, so you'll impress like no other copywriter.

3.18. **Fill in a message statement sheet together.**
Signing a message statement sheet is a professional way of confirming all the key messages that your copy must communicate about the product. By getting your client to sign it you have a written guarantee that the sales message has been 100% agreed, so when you sit down to write your copy you know exactly what you need to say.

A signed message statement sheet also gives you piece of mind your client won't trash your first draft unfairly, maybe as a result of a change-of-mind about the message mid-way through the project.

A message statement should summarize all the key information from the meeting, including the agreed message, 5 top features and benefits in order of priority, a summary of the target demographic (who your reader is), a list of competition, and an agreed brief for the copy, clearly stating what the copy should achieve. Feel free to use the template at the back of this book.

3.19. **Always insist on having a week longer than you think you'll need.**
Good copy can't be rushed. When scheduling your copy you need to integrate the following stages into your diary: You need enough time to:
i.) conceptualize your publicity
ii.) write a first draft
iii.) put it down for at least 24 hours*
iv.) revise your draft
v.) edit
> *The longer you can let your copy sleep in-between revisions, the easier it will be to write.

When you have estimated how long you will need, add an extra week for unforeseen problems and for extra breathing space.

3.20. **Don't write for under $40 per hour.**
When you are working out your fees, remember that advertising copywriters generally

earn more than designers. Start at around $65 per hour (£40) as a guideline for a flat fee. After a few projects, give yourself a rise. Unless your clients appear genuinely concerned, you should be able to raise your fee to $85 (£50) per hour. Repeat clients will be prepared to pay extra if they can count on you for good copy.

3.21. Avoid the temptation to quote on-the-spot.

Take time-out to estimate the time it will take you to complete each of the copy stages presented in point 3.19. When you've arrived at a figure, round it up by around 10% to allow for any extra work. Copywriters are too in-demand to sell themselves short. If your client expresses concern at your figure, remind them of the time and money they will save in design-briefing now you are designing the piece as well.

3.22. Include meeting time and two drafts in your fee.

Most designers don't charge their client meeting time. Most copywriters do. Your client meeting is the most important and most challenging part of the project—it's only right you get paid for it.

Copywriters and designers normally work in the same way when it comes to corrections. Your client should expect two drafts in your price. If the brief suddenly changes at second revision stage, that's fine, so long as your client knows you will bill an additional hourly rate to revise the draft accordingly. Some clients will be tempted to make changes for the sake of making changes (no doubt in the same way as clients knowingly scribble over design proofs in an attempt to make them 'neater'). By keeping to the 'two revisions' rule, clients will think twice before making needless corrections to your copy.

However, be warned. If the client argues that your copy doesn't answer the original brief, you will be expected to redraft it without charge. You can easily avoid this situation by filling in and signing a message statement sheet with your client, as discussed in point 3.18.

SECTION TWO: Conceptualizing your copy

Your copy 'concept' can be defined as an engaging way of communicating your sales message through copy, design, choice of advertising medium, and format. This section focuses on the two stages at the heart of finding your concept. Firstly, identifying common traits amongst your target readers; secondly, brainstorming a general copy-visual idea that responds to these traits and that communicates your sales message effectively.

The first chapter helps you to identify your reader's needs. This is a process that directs everything a copywriter does (hence the title of 'How to think like a copywriter').

The second chapter offers specific ideas for brainstorming concepts, including a list of 13 concepts that work, 12 ways to explore your concept further, and guidelines for using visuals.

4. How to think like a copywriter

Before we get into the nitty-gritty of conceptualizing a copy assignment, let us take a look at the first thing a copywriter should do at the start of every project: *get into the mind of your reader.* Central to this is learning how to think in terms of **benefits**, an essential starting point in the conceptualizing process. As you will see in Part B, benefits are at the heart of all persuasive copy, which is why point 4.26.in this section is probably the most significant in the entire book.

4.23. **Identify the *practical* needs of your reader.**
Your copy needs to engage the readers' practical needs so you can provide a rational argument for buying the product. Here are a few examples of practical needs:

- To conserve space
- To limit risk
- To do a good job
- To improve quality
- To keep peers motivated
- To keep clean
- To stay healthy
- To save time
- To increase production
- To make work easier
- To save money
- To make money

(Point 4.26. on writing benefits shows you how to translate this knowledge of your reader's needs into your copy.)

4.24. **Identify the *emotional* needs of your reader.**
Your copy should also touch the reader at an emotional level to respond to their irrational fears and desires. A product that helps someone keep clean is one thing, but a product that saves someone the embarrassment of BO is another. Think about which of the following emotional needs are important to your reader, then show how your product fulfils that need. Here are some common emotional needs that products respond to:

- To feel attractive
- To feel fit and healthy
- To receive acclaim
- To be liked
- To be appreciated
- To feel important

- To feel secure
- To feel relaxed
- To be independent
- To have more than others
- To have fun
- To gain knowledge
- To eliminate worry
- To save embarrassment
- To avoid feeling guilty
- To stop fear

(Point 4.26. on writing benefits shows you how to translate this knowledge of your reader's needs into your copy.)

4.25. **Consider your reader's emotional needs in business-to-business marketing.**
People are generally expected to act rationally at work where every dollar must be accounted for. But it is a common misconception that business managers only have practical needs. Whether we are at home or at work, our decisions are always based on emotions to some degree. For example, if a product helps me to improve the quality of my production line, I'm interested. Why? Because if I can increase the quality of my line, I'll receive acclaim from the company director and feel like a successful manager.

4.26. **Write benefit-led copy.**
This is the golden rule for every advertising copywriter. In general, benefit-led brochures, adverts and websites are more successful than feature-led brochures, adverts, and websites—even those that are technically badly written.

Good copywriters have an eye for a potential benefit. It's not a divine skill; it's something you can pick up in a few hours. First you need to familiarize yourself with the differences between benefits and features.

Distinguishing features from benefits
A feature is factual. It describes the product by answering these questions:
- what is it?
- what has it got?
- what comes with it?

A benefit is emotional. It tells the reader what they will gain as a result of the feature.
- What does it do?
- What does it mean for me?
- It's got X. So what?

Benefits are verbs
The best way to condition your mind into thinking in terms of benefits is to approach the task linguistically. A benefit is always an action. So when you're trying to find a benefit,

start with **a verb**. Here are a few examples:

- Improve ('*Calculate* improves your child's Math results')
- Help ('The pen that helps you see in the dark')
- Stop ('Sure-dent stops decay')
- Start ('Start making real money, now!')
- Feel ('Feel like you're ten years younger')
- Be ('Be the success you always dreamed of')

It's a benefit… but is it persuasive?
To help you identify your most persuasive benefit, elaborate by using linking phrases such as *which means that…* until you have found your most persuasive benefit. The following example, although far-fetched, proves the point.

How a simple toaster can help you get that BIG promotion
1. *The new XYZ toaster tells you when your toast is just right*
2. (which means that…)
you don't need to waste time checking your toast
3. (which means that…)
you can spend breakfast preparation getting ready for work
(which means that…)
you'll be able to take that early train each morning
5. (which means that…)
you'll impress your boss with your new-found time-keeping skills
6. (which means that…)
you'll be next in line for that big promotion

The Ikea advert in the appendices proves just how far you can go with a benefit. Can a cheap kitchen really make you a better parent?

Benefits satisfy needs
To identify a product benefit, think about your reader's practical and emotional needs (explained in points 4.23 and 4.24), then say how the product responds to that need.

Emotional benefits are best
Emotional needs are more powerful motivators than practical needs. If you can only think of practical benefits, continue using *Which means that…* until you touch a nerve:

Feature: The new Vintage has rear-bumper sensors...
Practical benefit: ...which means you can park in the tightest of spaces with ease...
Emotional benefit: ...so you can park downtown with new-found confidence (need: to feel secure, to be independent, to eliminate the worry associated with driving)

Should you *always* highlight benefits?
In brochures or catalogues where the reader wants to compare features and statistics, it may not be appropriate to increase your word count with benefit-oriented copy.

However, in most cases benefits should be spelt out clearly. Even if you think your readers already know the benefits of a given feature, remind them.

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5. How to brainstorm a winning concept

All marketing communications should give the reader a reason to buy the product. Maybe you are announcing a new product range, maybe your client's company has won an award and developed a strong reputation, or maybe the product comes with a guarantee of quality.

We have referred to these Reasons-To-Buy as sales messages. By now, you and your client should have agreed on a sales message for the product you are writing about. The following tips give you ideas for presenting your message in an engaging way.

5.27. Establish your basic concept.
A common mistake made by copywriters is an insistence on bombarding the reader with unrelated messages. For a consistent, focussed, and memorable concept, ensure every headline and paragraph is borne from just one umbrella message.

Here are 13 'ways in' to help you find your concept. Use one as a starting point or use a combination.

Create a need—then show how the product fulfils it
One of the oldest and most standard ways of positioning a product is to show how it solves a need or a problem. The problem can be emotional (i.e. *Wish you were sipping Margaritas on a deserted beach?*), or it can be factual (i.e. *60% of communication breakdown is down to poor pronunciation*).
Examples:
Product: Teaching recruitment. Headline: *Children have an energy and spontaneity that just aren't found in many office jobs.* (Body copy explains how a career in teaching can be more rewarding than most office jobs)
Product: Dishwasher range. Headline: *Everyone knows showers are more efficient than baths. So why do other machines work like baths?* (Body copy introduces a new range of kitchen appliances that work like showers)
Product: Fair-trade bank. Headline: *There's nothing free about free trade* (Body copy explains how this bank is fairer than most other banks that promote 'free trade')

Focus on a particularly persuasive benefit
This is a fail-safe approach to communicating your message. Refer to your list of product benefits and focus on the benefit your reader will find most appealing
Examples:
Product: Mattresses. Headline: *Helps you turn your back on aches and pains*

Product: Sofas. Headline: *Live beautifully*
Product: Psychology magazine. Headline: *Why not change the way you feel not look?*

Focus on what is unique about the product

Uniqueness sells. But your client's product doesn't need to fill an obvious gap in the market to have a Unique Selling Point (USP). The USP might be hidden, for example, it might be a specific feature that your client has previously understated in publicity. As discussed in point 2.16., USPs can be based around a fact (sales, reputation, origination); a feature (something that no other product of its type *has*); or a benefit (something that no other product of its type *does*).
Examples:
A unique fact: *The original Swiss muesli*
A unique feature: *The only range that power showers clothes or dishes clean*
A unique benefit: *The only socks that keep your feet dry*

Associate the product with a connected idea, feeling, or emotion

Metaphor is commonly used in consumer advertising, corporate-identity, and brand-building publicity. Copywriters may draw upon abstract metaphors if their sole objective is to inspire an emotion that connects the reader with the brand.
Examples:
Product: Car. Headline: *The only experiences you regret are the one's you've never had*
Product: Cognac. Headline: *Let the conversation flow*
Product: Ale. Headline: *When you're ready, you'll find it*

Prove how popular the product is

People trust products that are popular because they are seen as reliable and imply good quality. Popularity messages also respond to a deep emotional need to feel part of a community.
Example:
Product: Telecommunications. Headline: *Thousands of people are coming back to XYZ Telecoms*

Show a case study

Case studies prove the validity of the product by showing how people have already benefited from it in the past. They are particularly useful for highlighting success stories, before-and-afters, or for demonstrating the versatility and universality of the product.
Example:
I lost 18 pounds in just one month on the ThinQuick Plan!

Endorse the product

People trust respected figures in society. Your lead copy may come from published testimonials, or your client may have the resources to pay well-known users or sponsors to put their names to the product.
Examples:
Product: DVD. Headline: *"A cinematic masterpiece", The Observer*
Product: Watch. Headline: *Team partner of D.A.R Formula One Team*
Product: Rowing machine. Headline: *The Gold Standard [signature of Olympic rower*

Steve Redgrave]

Tell the product's story
A product with an interesting background has real news value, and news makes for an attention-grabbing message. Product stories can also initiate desire for the product by developing the readers' emotional attachment to the brand.
Examples:
Product: French Beer. Headline: *When Edmund Willims created Bertillon Noir, he didn't just break the mould. He broke the law.*
Product: Australian Wine. Headline: *While Samuel McManners made award-winning wines, Martha made award-winning winemakers*

Put the product to the test
You can put the product to the test to highlight its key features such as convenience, strength, versatility—or to show how the product compares with the competition.
Example:
Product: Battery. Headline: *In tests, Duromax lasts up to three times longer than conventional alkaline batteries*

Announce something new
The word 'New' is the most powerful word in advertising copy. Sometimes the most effective message is simply to announce the product's newness.
Examples:
Product: Cat food. Headline: *Introducing new finest cuts of chicken breast from Feleba*
Product: Airline (with new in-seat internet). Message: *Now you can surf at 35,000 feet*

Guarantee the product
A guarantee quickly dissolves any scepticism your reader has about the reliability of the product. For detailed information on using guarantees, see point 10.64.
Example:
Product: Golf clubs. Headline: *Guaranteed! Cut six to eight strokes off your game… or your money back!*

Announce how much and where to buy
People are always looking for a bargain. If the product is particularly good value for money, you can't go wrong with "the three Ps": show the *Product*, show the *Price*, and show where to *Purchase*.
Example:
Product: Clothes. Headline: *Back-to-school sweat-shirts from just $4.99 at Berkleys (opposite MacDonalds)*

State the offer
People are always looking for freebies, which is why the word 'Free' is another powerful word in the advertiser's dictionary. If you have a good offer to tell readers about, lead with it.
Example:
Product: Newspaper. Headline: *Get a free Mozart CD in tomorrow's Sunday Bugle*

(For more concept ideas, refer to point 7.36 which focuses on headline copy)

5.28. **Ensure the *form* of your publicity is dictated by the *content*.**
Try to use the format of your copy and design to communicate your message in an attention-grabbing and memorable way. Here are 12 ideas to get you thinking:

Be a spokesperson for the product
As a spokesperson for the company, you will refer to the company as 'we' or 'us'.
Examples:
- At TSD we're committed to improving the structure of tertiary trade unions.
- We have just secured a direct factory supply of these 1000% high power lens, rubber armoured binoculars for an incredibly low price

Narrate the product story
As an independent narrator, you will talk about the product or company in the third person.
Examples:
- Evergreen ecological products have powerful formulas which are based on plant and natural mineral ingredients which are also kind to the environment. It's just one way Evergreen are committed to keeping you clean, and keeping the planet clean.
- TT compact photo printers are incredibly simple to use. So much so in fact, the TT boffins decided not to include an instruction manual, they're so sure you won't need one.

Write in the voice of the product endorser
If you are leading with a product endorsement, you can add authenticity and authority by writing your copy in letter format and adding the endorser's signature at the bottom. If your message is based around a guarantee, you can add weight by writing a hand-written note from the company's managing director.
Example:
I believe Estrop Financial Consultants offer great advice for your best possible return on investment over $10,000. I should know, they helped to make me over $100,000 in three years. *Nan Yielding*

Write from somebody else's point of view
You can write from the view-point of anyone or anything that benefits from your reader buying the product. For example, if you are writing to teachers about a school text book, try writing from the students' point of view. If you are writing to mothers about a childcare product, why not write from the child's point of view.
Example:
Product: Toddlers' diapers. Headline: *[visual of toddler sitting on the toilet] Mommy, I can do it too!*

Play on words
Puns that reinforce a message can be extremely memorable. But be careful, wordplay for the sake of wordplay can appear absurd and completely incomprehensible. Make

sure your copy concept works as a sales pitch as well as an interesting idea.
Examples:
- Product: liquor. Headline: *The story of Dramanio is over 250 years old. We've just added a couple of twists. [visual of hand twisting lime juice into a tall glass of liquor]*
- Product: Car. Headline: *Forget mpg and mph. It's got mp3.*
- Product: Cell phone. Headline: *Ironic that a phone would leave you speechless*

Break the reader's expectations
When people say a particular promotion piece is 'clever', it's usually because the concept provides an element of surprise. Often a headline or visual sets up an expectation, which is broken when the product is introduced.
Examples:
- Heard the one about women drivers? They got cheaper car insurance.
- What Nut Did This?[visual of cake topped with walnuts]

Invent a fictional setting for the product
To create brand recognition many brands use a fictional location (such as Malboro Country) or characters (such as The Green Giant). Your choice of fictional icon should metaphorically reflect the qualities you wish to communicate about the product. If you decide to use a fictional location or character, it is vital that your client runs with the concept long enough for readers to recognize the icon and connect it to the product. A short-lived brand icon is a waste of publicity.

Make the publicity interactive
Concepts that reward the reader for thinking about the product can be very effective. The most common approaches are: i.) present the reader with a quiz to determine whether he or she is a prospect for the product;. ii.) encourage the reader to work out the product's benefits for themselves; iii.) challenge the reader to find a better or more value-for-money product.
Example:
Drop a jean size in just two weeks with a bowl of Real J every day

Write in a different medium
If you want to root your message in an everyday context, you can try communicating in the form of an everyday medium. Your message can be presented in the style of a magazine, text message, email, or even imbedded into a photo.
Example:
Product: Woman's lifestyle magazine. Headline (Written in telegram font): `Models wanted for fashion shoots. Must be visible when standing side on. Please contact She magazine. Thank you.`

Make it newsy
You can base the format and style of your copy around the concept of a news report. This is particularly effective if the product has been developed on the back of some interesting research, if the message coincides with a timely news story, or if the product has been eagerly awaited in the market.
Example:

<u>Use printing techniques to accentuate your message</u>
You can use printing methods to help you reinforce your sales messages, such as spot varnishes, holograms, die-cuts, unusual folds, indented pages, additional pantones, and pull outs.

Be careful not to play around with format for creativity's sake, your format must be consistent with your message. For example, if you are writing a leaflet for a bus company that has just introduced three new destinations, maybe include three string-tabs to hold the leaflet closed, each labelled with the new destination. If you are writing a brochure about a cleaning product, you could give it a transparent plastic cover to show how clean it is. Or if you are presenting a range of product features, you could encourage the reader to unfold to reveal the next feature. In short, if you are producing printed publicity, ask yourself how you can reinforce your message through an interesting format.

<u>Use advertisement positioning to accentuate your concept</u>
Quite often it is the relationship between advert content and advert positioning that makes it memorable. For example, if the advert is printed on a busy newspaper page, a solitary line of copy set in white space may grab more attention than an intricate visual. You may wish to stagger your advert over two or more pages, encouraging the reader to turn the page of the magazine to read the complete message.

5.29. **Always conceptualize the copy and visual together.**
Your copy and visual should work together to communicate your message. A concept will succeed if the copy explains the visual, the visual explains the copy, and the overall concept is kept simple. The concept will fail if there are too many elements or if the idea requires the reader to think about what you are trying to say.

5.30. **Use a visual to whet the readers' appetite for the product.**
If your reader can see himself using the product, he is more likely to buy it. That's why effective copy-visual concepts involve demonstrating the product in some way.

- If you're highlighting a benefit, show somebody benefiting (as demonstrated in the Ikea advert at the back of the book).
- If you're highlighting a feature, show it (for example, if it's a small hand-held, show it to scale in someone's hand; if it has lots of components or is part of big package, take a collective pack shot.)
- If you're highlighting the product's popularity, show people using the product.
- If you're guaranteeing the product, give it a guarantee stamp.
- If you're offering a money-back guarantee, show cash or a check.
- If your product is endorsed, show the endorser using the product.
- If you're leading with an impressive statistic, show it visually in a table or

graph.
- If the product solves a problem, show a 'before' and 'after'.

5.31. **Never be creative for creativity's sake.**
The aim of your publicity is to sell, not to win a design award. Always think about the message first and the aesthetic look second. Great publicity has a great look—but without a persuasive concept, your publicity won't get the results your client is looking for.

PART B

SECTION THREE: Writing your copy

People are often surprised when I tell them that only 25% of the time copywriters spend on an assignment is spent writing. The other 75% is spent researching, conceptualizing, and formatting ideas about what to say and how to say it.

So before you sharpen your pencil, ask yourself the following questions to determine if you are sufficiently prepared to write:

- Do you know what the key selling points are?
- Have you and your client agreed on a central message?
- Do you know exactly who you're writing to—and what will appeal to them most?
- Have you listed the product's key features and benefits?
- Are you clear on the aims of your publicity?
- Do you know what action you are asking your reader to take?
- Have you established a 'concept' or an 'angle' to direct your copy?

Are there any questions listed above that you can't answer? If so, go back and review the key points in Part A.

If you're ready to start writing, refer to the following tricks-of-the-trade for writing persuasive, impressive, sales-boosting copy.

6. How to overcome writer's block

Your first obstacle: you know what you want to say—but where do you start? Here are four tips to get you writing.

6.32. **Start with the basics.**
- What is the **product** and **who** is it for?
- What is **unique** about the product?
- What are the product's most **appealing features**? What are the **benefits** of those features?
- What is the **overall benefit** of the product? What does it all mean for the reader?

6.33. **Think about your reader**

If your copy is looking uninspiring, try writing from your reader's point of view. Think about who your readers are and what their needs are. Start by pretending to be a typical reader. Use your meeting notes to create a picture of his daily routines, motivations, aspirations, and fears. Then start writing your copy to the following formula:

- Identify and recognize the need
- Convince the reader that your product can fulfil that need (by talking about the relevant features and benefits)

6.34. **Use A.I.D.C.A.**

AIDCA is the industry-standard format for structuring a sales pitch. It stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Conviction, and Action.

Attention	Draw the reader into your body copy with an arresting headline and visual
Interest	State the Unique Selling Point and show how the product meets the reader's needs
Desire	Communicate benefits to whet the reader's appetite for the product
Conviction	Prove the product's superiority with statistics and testimonials to close the sale and make the reader feel she has no alternative but to act
Action	Create a sense of urgency to encourage the reader to respond to the publicity right now

6.35. **Don't judge what you're writing—just write!**
The first stage of writing is to go into free-writing autodrive. Strive for quantity over quality. Don't worry about whether your copy is good or not—the only way to get 1000 sparkling words is to start with 3000 muddled words. Starting with short text and filling it out with unnecessary sentences will make for woolly copy.

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7. How to grab the reader's attention —and hold it!

You can assume that most of your readers will not want to read your publicity, or indeed feel they have time to read your publicity. That's why your copy's first job is to catch their attention with a killer line and a well-chosen visual that forces them to take notice of what your publicity is saying.

The following tips reinforce what you already know about creating attention-grabbing visuals, by showing you how to achieve attention-grabbing copy, as well as guidance on helping you to achieve copy and visuals that work together.

7.36. **Use headlines.**
Your headline has three functions:
- grab attention
- select your audience
- draw the reader into the body copy

Here are 9 headlines that are proven to grab attention and draw the reader into the copy.

> Ask a provocative question
> Questions address the reader at a personal level, eliciting their agreement and creating a need for the product. Well-targeted questions draw the reader into the body copy by arousing curiosity.
> *Example:*
> *Do you make these mistakes in English?*

> Begin a story
> A headline that promises an interesting or emotional story is guaranteed to catch the eye and encourage the reader to read on. For maximum effect, end your headline on a cliff-hanger so the reader has no choice but to find out what happens next.
> *Example:*

They laughed when I sat down at the piano but when I started to play!

Make a controversial statement
Controversial statements arouse curiosity and give your publicity news-value. If you have an opportunity to make a controversial statement in a manner that is consistent with your product's message, make sure the claim is a) true, b) not offensive in any way, and c) fully explained in the body copy.
Example:
There's nothing free about free trade

Reveal an intriguing fact
Factoids satisfy the readers' natural thirst for knowledge. Make sure the fact you choose is up-to-date and relevant to your target audience.
Example:
60% of communication breakdown in learners of English is the result of bad pronunciation

Promise a reward for reading on
Headlines such as *How to…*, *5 reasons why…*, and *10 top tips for...* promise the reader nuggets of useful information when they read the body copy. These headlines can be extremely effective, as long as you deliver on your promise in the text.
Example:
How to cut your home insurance bill in half

Command the reader to do something
Commands grab attention because they are direct and help you to communicate the product's benefits up-front. For this reason, I recommend that you consider using a command headline as your standard headline of choice.
Example:
Eliminate foot odor with ShoeGuard

Be startlingly frank
People don't normally expect promotional literature to be straight-talking. That's why headlines perceived as being frank and honest never fail to grab attention. Use this approach if your message can be reinforced by forfeiting a trade secret or confronting a taboo or sensitive issue head-on. (Make sure your target audience will welcome your treatment of the issue you are confronting).
Example:
Cash if you die, cash if you don't

Lead with a testimonial
People treat publicity with natural scepticism. Testimonials grab attention and encourage the reader to read on by immediately validating your message.
Example:
"I'm so sure you'll love my Frying Machine, I put my name on it"

<u>Say how many people have bought the product</u>
Popularity headlines grab attention and draw readers into the body copy by
evoking a feeling of curiosity: there must be a reason why people are buying the
product.
Example:
Over two million people go further with Headway each year

7.37. **Support headlines with a visual.**
As you already know, images attract more attention than words, so always look for
visual ways to reinforce your headlines. Even if your reader glances over the copy only
looking at the pictures, your choice of visuals should leave them with a fair idea of what
the product messages are.

7.38. **Include captions next to photos.**
People normally scan publicity before they decide whether to read it or not. Your reader
will look for sound bites in the same way she might when scanning a newspaper. Picture
captions give you an opportunity to get your message across fast and encourage a
reluctant browser to read more thoroughly. So when you include a photo or visual, ask
yourself if it's appropriate to complement it with a caption.

7.39. **Order your messages 'top heavy'**
Needs-based or benefit-led copy attracts the most attention—so put it first! Below are
two examples of copy that say the same things. The first is 'bottom heavy', the second is
'top heavy'. It's clear which one grabs the most attention.

<u>Bottom heavy copy</u>
*For over ten years, we have provided educational support services to the
business community*
*With a proven history of excellence, you are guaranteed quality when you
choose Markup for your in-house training needs. You'll find your load lightened,
your days freed, and your company more organized so you can spend your time
increasing sales instead of training your staff. Leave the training to us, so you
can focus on making money!*

<u>Top heavy copy</u>
Markup in-house training lightens your load
*Tired of losing sales because you're constantly training staff? Have too much to
do and not enough time to do it? Those are the situations where Markup
professionals can help you regain control. Use Markup and you'll find your load
lightened, your days freed, and your company more organized—so you can
spend more of your time increasing sales.*

*For over ten years we have provided educational support to the business
community. With a proven history of excellence, you are guaranteed quality*

when you choose Markup for your in-house traing needs.

7.40. **Show the need and 'get the nod'.**
If your reader is agreeing with you from the very first sentence, she is more likely to read the rest of your copy. That's why copywriters often create a need in the opening lines that target customers can identify with.

Example:
Unwanted noise is everywhere. The engine roar inside an aeroplane cabin. The blaring sounds of city streets. The annoying din of the office. Our new PeaceComfort Acoustic Noise Cancelling headphones let you escape it all. Put them on and slip into a safe haven – where you can relax and enjoy peace and solitude or listen to your favorite music.

7.41. **Highlight the magic words.**
There are certain words and phrases that are proven to catch attention. Use flashes and highlighting techniques with the following:

FREE
NEW
IMPROVED
EXTRA
MONEY OFF
SALE
MORE
TWO FOR ONE
BUY ONE GET ONE FREE
COMING SOON
GUARANTEED
WINNER
HOW TO…
DID YOU KNOW…?

8. How to talk to your reader—and keep them hooked

If you're not a born writer you may find the prospect of writing continuous prose a little daunting. But don't worry. The following tips reveal a few tricks-of-the-trade for writing in an engaging style and an appropriate tone.

8.42. Write like you are talking to a friend—address the reader as 'you'.
Friendly-sounding copy really makes people want to read on. The easiest way to make your copy friendly is to address the reader personally as 'you'. Pretend you are talking to just one person, someone you know who fits the description of your target audience.
Example:
You don't need thousands of pounds to start investing with SureBank. You can open a lump sum or regular investment from as little as $20. And when you do, there are no upfront fees reducing your initial investment before it's even started.

8.43. Avoid passive statements.
Being direct isn't just about using the word you, it's also about using the words *we* and *us*. Publicity that speaks in the first person can make the brand or company feel accessible and welcoming.

Passive	Direct
Your reservation has been booked.	*We have booked your reservation.*
A free bottle of wine will be given to everyone who opens an account.	*Open an account with us and we'll give you a free bottle of wine.*
XYZ was presented with a prestigious award.	*The Trading Commission presented ZYZ with a prestigious award.*

8.44. Write in a chatty style—use spoken expressions.
Spoken sentence-linkers make for a chatty style. You can integrate them into your paragraphs to break up your sales pitch and hold the reader's interest. Here are a few examples:

You know the score.
So here's the deal.
On the one hand… On the other hand....
Yes, that's right:
And that's not all.

That's just the start.
Here's how it works.

8.45. **Use exclamation marks sparingly.**

Never use exclamation marks in an attempt to raise the emotional value of your copy.
Use exclamation marks when your copy is 'shouting loud'.

8.46. **Direct the reader—use commands.**

Command verbs are direct. They urge the reader to take action, and they also help you to get straight into the product's benefits.
Examples:
Make sure your home looks stunning this Christmas with a seriously cool sofa …

Select from over 400 entertainment options, including blockbuster movies …

Imagine a camera that reached out to wherever your creativity took flight …

8.47. **End with a preposition.**

Ending a sentence with a preposition may not sound like good written grammar, but it reflects the way in which most people talk.
Examples:
This is one vacation you'll want to make the most of.
The kind of person you want to talk to.
What are you wasting your money for?

8.48. **Write the way the product would speak.**

Imagine your client's brand is a person. Would it be male or female? Sophisticated or no-nonsense? Understated or extroverted? Wise or enthusiastic? Once you've established *who* your product is, try writing the way it would speak.
Examples:
Seductive: *With 34% cocoa in each piece, one is almost enough on its own. Almost.*
Understated: *Quality speaks for itself*
Fun-loving: *Pop a pack in your pocket*
No-nonsense male: *It does exactly what it says on the tin*
No-nonsense female: *Models wanted for fashion shoots. Must be visible when standing side-on. Please contact She magazine.*

8.49. **Get straight to the point.**

Your reader will give your copy around 5 seconds before deciding whether to read on or put your publicity down. Your first few lines must introduce the product and get into your sales pitch. A common mistake made by copywriters is spending too long 'warming up' the reader before attempting to sell the product. Take a look at this example for a polythene printer:

Today's packaging floors handle far greater numbers of machines including baggers, sealers, labellers and printers.

So many machines need constant check-ups and on-going maintenance. Urgent orders may need to be waved off if one machine in the line goes down.

Today's small packaging companies work under the constant threat of new, international competition, and need to think about how to integrate all areas of their business into one manageable floor space.

All this maybe true, but the person reading the copy will already know this. The 'threat of international competition' informs their daily activities, so reading statements like these is a waste of time. Chances are, the publicity will be trashed before the reader even reads gets to the product. This is what the copy should say:

The new T-900 is a table-top machine that will increase your output and cut labor costs at the same time. It can pack, seal, and label products in one simple operation—all at the touch of a screen panel—guaranteeing the most accurate packing and printing.

8.50. **Flatter the reader.**
Flattery will get you everywhere, as long as you use it appropriately. It is best used to select your audience; by suggesting that your target reader will recognize the fine qualities of the product because they themselves share similar qualities. In the case of the two following examples, those qualities are wealth and wit:
Examples:
Quite frankly, the Corpex Platinum card isn't for everyone….
Walk-dry waterproof footwear. Your feet will match your sense of humour. Dry.

8.51. **Address your reader as an intelligent individual.**
Flattery doesn't always need to be used so overtly. All good copy subtly makes the reader feel special. Your copy should address the reader as intelligent, important, honest, popular, or shrewd, so your reader feels confident in their decision to buy the product.

Instead of:
You probably don't know that the new KTW3 is available interest free credit …
Say:
Most people don't know that new KTW3 is available interest free credit …

Instead of:
Try our new headphones for 30 days and you'll see how dramatically they reduce noise, how clean and full they sound and how comfortably they fit.
Say:

We don't expect you to take our word for how dramatically our new headphones reduce noise, how clean and full they sound or how comfortably they fit. So we invite you to try them for 30 days.

8.52. **Be positive.**

People respond to positive statements. If you sow the seeds of doubt before you introduce your product, your copy may come across as defensive and your reader will feel uncomfortable. That's why it is important to make your reader feel good about the product's environment before you introduce the product. There are certain positive words that can help you, such as *simple, free, fast, success, easy, will, more, do,* and *can.* Try putting a positive spin on everything you say, as demonstrated below.

Negative	*Positive*
You won't feel trapped.	*Free your mind.*
Less calories than other brands.	*Lose more pounds than with any other brand.*
It's not hard to assemble.	*It's easy to assemble.*
Giving blood is a small sacrifice	*Do something amazing; give blood*
Courses don't have to be taxing.	*Course you can!*

8.53. **Consider negative advertising—but always present the product positively.**

There are particular instances when 'fear-factor' selling is appropriate. For instance, you may want to encourage your reader to doubt the effectiveness of the product they currently use in order to show how your product is superior. It may be appropriate to implant a fear that your product responds to, such as a smoke detector or any other preventative product. If you are promoting a charity, you obviously need to draw the reader's attention to the negative side of life.

Nevertheless, while frightening the reader into buying your product can work, it can sometimes install a feeling of contempt in readers (no one likes to feel threatened into submission). It is often safer to make readers feel positive about buying the product, so in the case of a smoke detector, sure, your reader needs to know what might happen to him and his family if he doesn't fit one. But that doesn't mean you can't leave him with a benefit and a message of reassurance ("fit a smoke detector and you'll be protecting your family in a responsible way"). In the case of a charity, you'll need to highlight the positive aspect of giving money, by demonstrating what a significant impact a relatively small donation can make or by suggesting how good it will make the donator feel.

8.54. **Give the reader a reason to read on.**

You need to sell you're the benefits of reading your copy in order to complete your sales pitch and sell the *product.* That's why one of the goals of each sentence is to persuade the reader to read the next.

There are three common ways copywriters do this:

    <u>Throw in teaser questions.</u>

    Example:

Kiln told us their new carving knife can actually clean itself after use. Our first reaction…Surely that's not possible? Is it?

<u>Promise an interesting nugget of information.</u>
Example:
How can intermediate learners become better communicators in English? Ruth Gairns and Stuart Redman put their views to the test on 200 students from 20 different countries. Their results were remarkable.

<u>Whet the readers' appetite for the following material.</u>
Example:
Over the page: How to double your turnover before you even switch your computer on...

8.55. **Focus the reader's attention on the product, not your writing style.**
Always remember that you are writing to sell, not to be clever, funny, zany, or entertaining. Humorous *concepts* can work very well if the humor is consistent with your message. But as a general rule, avoid writing your entire copy in a humorous style. Funny copy is only appropriate if:

- The humor reflects the product's brand image (see point 8.48. 'Write the way your product would speak').
- Your target audience will identify with the content and style of the humor.
- The humor is not likely to offend.

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9. How to whet the readers' appetite for the product

One of the keys to writing persuasive copy is to approach the task like a cold-calling salesperson would talk to a customer on the telephone. Next time you receive a sales call at home, resist the temptation to hang up immediately, listen to how the caller pitches her product instead. You may notice how sales-callers communicate benefits in an attempt to whet your appetite for their product.

Benefits are essential to writing persuasively because they pull emotional triggers. For detailed tips on how to think in terms of benefits, refer to point 4.26.—then read the tips below for additional rules that lie at the heart of all persuasive copy.

9.56. **Demonstrate how the reader can benefit from the product.**
The key to being persuasive is in helping readers to picture themselves using the product. Do this by spoon-feeding contexts where the product would be desirable or

beneficial. This advert for kitchen furniture proves that even mundane objects can be simulated desirably.

> *Example:*
> *It's where there's always space for an unexpected guest.*
> *It's where you'll spread out the maps for your next adventure…*
> *…and where you'll reminisce over the last one.*
> *It's a hot bed of family gossip.*
> *It's much more than simply a table.*

Before you are able to demonstrate your product you need to do some thorough preliminary investigation to find out how the product can be used:

If you're selling a thermos flask…
Give examples of what the flask can hold (iced tea, hot chocolate, coffee) and when or how the reader would use it (lunch pales, picnics, fishing trips, camping).

If you're selling headphones…
Give examples of where and when the reader would use them (on planes, connected to home stereo, mp3s, at work on a laptop computer)

If you're selling a Teach Yourself product…
Give examples of when the reader can find time to learn (in lunch hour, on the commute, an hour after dinner each day).

> *Example:*
> *Don't have the time to learn a new language? Wylatt CD-ROMs help you fit language learning neatly into your working day. Simply load onto your office computer and make the most out of your lunch hour. Plug into your laptop, and you can spend that tedious commute home learning a language instead of wasting precious time. Or just one hour for a month each evening and your friends and colleagues will think you've had a whole semester of lessons!*

9.57. **Be specific—use examples.**
People respond to specific facts, concrete examples, and details of content. People tend to ignore anonymous opinion, empty expressions, and meaningless phrases. Every time you find yourself giving 'opinions' about the product, ask yourself if you can cut them out or reinforce them with facts or concrete benefits.

Opinion	*Specific*
Great writers	*From Shakespeare to Hardy.*
Informative articles	*Articles include our obsession with celebrity, Rastafarianism, and three very different islands.*
Stylish dresses	*Dresses designed by Jackobson, Ralph, and Lorreine*
Innovative kitchen appliances	*Automatic bottle-openers, voice-*

	activated microwaves, and solar kettles.
Experienced staff	*Our staff have a collective 120 years of experience working with brand managers like you.*
Efficient machines	*Our machines will pay for themselves in just 5 months.*

9.58. Be specific—quantify where possible.

Your product will look more desirable if you can quantify its features and benefits. For example, a product that has brand new components will be desirable, but a product that has *over 10 brand new components* will be even more desirable.

Here are four ways you can quantify your points:

- Say how many people have bought the product.
  National best-seller—over 1,000,000 copies sold!
  Thousands of secretaries all over the USA recommend the ZX hole-punch
- Put a figure to your product's features.
  550 new words
  A new low: only five patients to each ward
- Quantify and elaborate on words such as NEW, MORE, and EXTRA:
  100% NEW!
  50% Extra!
  10 NEW chapters!
  MORE guidance, MORE practice, MORE reference
- Tell the reader how long it will take for them to benefit from the product.
  Self-sufficiency in as little as 6 months
  A prize is won every 3 seconds

9.59. Use the rule of three.

Three is the magic number when it comes to listing examples—it is usually enough to whet the appetite or get your message across without overlabouring the point.
Examples:
- Includes new features such as touch-screen controls, two-speed conveyers and titanium sealers.
- No money? No job? No opportunities? We're here to help.

9.60. Use understandable words instead of jargon.

Try to explain technical terms in short, simple words. Only use jargon if all your readers will understand, if the term communicates a general meaning, or if there is no simpler way of defining the term.
Examples:

New Vissell Shampoo contains neutrobiotics (communicates a general meaning: scientific innovation.)
A massive 200 Gigabits of memory! (The term gigabits is widely understood)

9.61. **Use vivid words instead of clichés.**
Novel words are more effective at conjuring an image than hackneyed words. Get into the habit of using a thesaurus—a good thesaurus will help you to be more inventive with your choice of words.

Cliché	*Vivid*
Money	Cash
Clean	Immaculate
Clear	Crisp
Cool	Frosty
Strong	Rock-solid
Slim	Slender
Fitted	Snug
Innovative	Breakthrough
Successful	Blockbusting
Includes	Packed full of / Bursting with

9.62. **End your copy sections with benefit statements.**
The final sentence in each paragraph has particular significance, as it may be the last thing your reader reads before he or she loses interest in your publicity and puts it down. One way to sign off is to state a reason for reading the next paragraph as discussed in point 8.54. Another way to sign off is to wrap up the points imbedded in the paragraph with a final summarizing benefit statement—what does it all mean for the reader?

Example without benefit statement:
If you need treatment you will be given a choice of nearly 270 quality-assessed hospitals nationwide. Their facilities include private rooms, en-suite restrooms, personal telephones, radio and television.

Example with benefit statement:
If you need treatment you will be given a choice of nearly 270 quality-assessed hospitals nationwide. Their facilities include private rooms, en-suite restrooms, personal telephones, radio and television. Wherever you are you can rest assured you're always within easy reach of comfortable care in pleasant surroundings that feels… just like home.

10. How to gain the reader's trust and prove your product's superiority

You've written a few paragraphs of mouth-watering copy—but the selling process isn't over yet. You may have aroused your reader's desire for the product, but she is likely to have certain questions, objections, and reasons not to bother responding.

Most of these concerns are based on an unwillingness to spend precious money or time, Some of your reader's concerns may be emotional, often irrational, such as a fear of being 'ripped off' or 'taken advantage of'.

To dispel these concerns, you need to convince your reader that your product does what you say it does, and that the product really is value for money. You need to prove to your reader that every one of your claims is genuine. The following tips help you to do just that.

10.63. **Back up your points with facts.**
Specific, fact-based copy not only whets the readers' appetite for the product, it also helps you to validate your product. Over-claiming points that you cannot prove will make your reader suspicious—so refer back to your meeting notes for facts and examples (as explained in point 2.15), and be as specific as you can, (as explained in 9.57. and 9.58).

10.64. **Offer strong guarantees where possible.**
Nothing is more trustworthy than a set-in-stone promise. Guaranteeing your claims limits your reader's perceived risk of purchasing the product.

Guarantees can be based around results, quality, durability, strength, customer satisfaction, a commitment on behalf of the company, fixed price promises, and lowest price claims. You and your client must be sure your promise can be administered, as your client may be legally bound to adhere to it. Customers are not usually the people who challenge guarantees, the product's competitors are, and they will be quick to complain if they feel your guarantee is unsubstantiated. For maximum safety, it's a good idea to include full guarantee terms (or directions to them online) in small print inside the publicity.

10.65. **Incorporate the guarantee into your concept.**
Guarantees are often used to make advertising concepts more memorable. Adverts for fitness machines, healthy foods, and beauty products often guarantee some kind of result (i.e. 'One-a-day for a month and feel noticeably younger or your money back'.)

When you make a guarantee statement, you and your client need to think about any

reparations that would be paid in the event of a customer challenge. You may want to be upfront about the reparation—your guarantee may offer money back or a reward that is somehow related to your concept.

10.66. **Use testimonials.**

Copywriters' own opinions don't count—but the opinions of others do. That's why testimonials from trusted sources can be an effective way of backing up your claims.

Integrating testimonials from customers or piloters into your copy will help to reinforce your points. Better still, your client may be able to supply you with copies of published reviews or professional endorsements, which usually carry more weight.

10.67. **State the company's or product's reputation.**

People tend to trust products from reputable, successful companies, whereas purchasing products from newcomers may involve an element of risk. If your client has a previous success story, try to drop it into your copy.

- From the makers of the award-winning TWK40
- NEW from the company that gave you LetroLite… If you liked that you'll love this!
- From the best-selling author of TextBook

10.68. **Emphasize age and experience.**

People trust companies and products with experience. This is partly down to a rational decision—longevity brings continual improvement. It's also down to an emotional decision based on the perception that 'old' means 'wise' and 'trustworthy'. Unless you are trying to present your product as being modern and fresh, it is worth stating experience.

Example:

[picture of middle-aged man] "I've managed Watertight for over 20 years... and it's been 20 years of watertight business solutions. Let me tell you how it all started..."

10.69. **Show how the product is better than competing products.**

If your client's product does something better or offers better value than the competition, demonstrate it in a checklist or table, or drop it into your copy. Although this does not break advertising codes of conduct, you must be sure your comparison is fair. Comparisons should:

- Only compare products that are intended for the same purpose.
- Only compare relevant and verifiable features, such as price.
- Not select information in a way that is misleading, giving the product an artificial advantage.
- Not unfairly attack or discredit other businesses or their products.

10.70. Incorporate a "Questions and Answers" section.

Frequently Asked Questions sections help you to gain readers' trust by confronting their objections head-on. FAQs are also useful copy-features to include in brochures for technical products and services, or publicity directed at getting a direct sale.

10.71. Use trade marks for prestige.

Trade marks are associated with exclusivity. If your product has named features that you consider to be unique or innovative selling points, add a ™ symbol after them. Even if your product doesn't hold a patent, copyright, or registered rights, there's nothing to stop you from signifying it does. Unorthodox, but legitimate and effective.

10.72. Conform to the standard codes of advertising practice.

All your claims should be legal, decent, fair, and truthful. (Before you raise an eyebrow, adding a Trade Mark symbol, as discussed in 10.71., does not constitute as a claim!)

Before you send your draft off to the client, ask yourself:

- Can you prove all your claims? Does your client hold documentary evidence to support them?
- Have you been careful not to exaggerate the value, accuracy, scientific claims, or usefulness of the product?
- Have you ensured that any obvious untruths or exaggerations will be perceived as obvious untruths and exaggerations, and will not mislead the reader?
- Have you included all the necessary information to communicate the product in an honest and truthful way?

11. How get a response

The most important function of marketing communications is to stimulate sales. Your copy should ask the reader to take some sort of step in the buying process, be it returning a reply-card to request free information, calling for a quote, or buying the product directly. In short, it's the very reason why you are writing in the first place.

It's easy to get so focussed on writing about the product and its benefits that you forget to incorporate a 'call to action'. Yet without a call to action, your reader will soon forget about the product and your publicity will be wasted.

The following chapter offers general tips for writing copy aimed at getting a response.

11.73. Call the reader to action.
All marketing communications should encourage the reader to take action in some way. If your publicity aims to sell directly, ask for the order. If there is more information available to your reader, whet their appetites for it and tell them how and where they can get it. If you want your reader to look out for the product in the shops, say where and when they can purchase it.

11.74. Make it safe, easy, and rewarding to reply.
Copywriters are constantly looking for new ways to encourage readers to reply. The most successful devises are those that are quick (allowing readers to respond on impulse), offer an incentive (so readers feel they benefit from replying), and assure the reader that it is safe to reply (they will not be charged, treated unfairly, or their privacy disrespected).

Here are a few popular reply devises and features to facilitate a reply:

- Reply coupons – or perforated postage-paid replies in brochures.
- Easy-to-use tick boxes – with little or no open fields that require writing/typing.
- Toll-free numbers – so the reader can find out more for free.
- Money back guarantees – if the customer isn't completely satisfied.
- Bonuses – a value-for-money offer the reader won't find elsewhere.
- Free trials – so the reader doesn't have to part with his money until he is convinced the product offers value.

11.75. Create a sense of urgency to encourage a quick reply.
Once you have persuaded your readers it is safe, easy, and rewarding to reply, give

them a reason to reply *now*. If you don't, interested readers will passively say to themselves *'I'll think about it'*, and consequently forget about it. Common devises to initiate urgency include:

- Time limits… *Hurry! Offer ends Christmas day!*
- Stocks limited… *75% already sold!*
- Reserved items… *We know you won't want to miss this great offer—which is why we have reserved your free demo pack until 12/12*
- Sale… *Sale! Up to 50% OFF! Everything must go by January 1st*
- Forthcoming price increase… *These low prices stay low until 20. April*

11.76. **Say exactly what you want the reader to do.**
Make readers feel confident about replying. They'll need simple instructions to guide them through the response process, and the slightest complication may dissuade them from continuing. Your readers will want to know:

- What should I ask for when I phone or email?
- What do I have to fill in on the reply card / application form?
- Is the postage paid for?
- What address should I send the reply coupon to? Do I need to include anything else in the envelope?
- How long will the reply process take?
- What happens next?

12. How to make your copy easy to read

Copywriters have their own preferred ways of drafting out their copy. I like to write a very rough version, making sure to include all the key points and examples, then go back and revise the draft to make the sentences trip off the tongue. That's why I have included this chapter towards the end of the section.

The following tips help you to simplify your copy so it can be scanned easily by a casual reader, and so you can improve the fluency of your copy so it is easier to read.

12.77. **Stick to one idea per sentence; one point per paragraph.**
Copy is easy to read when sentences and paragraphs focus on just one thing at a time. Copy is difficult to read when sentences and paragraphs 'fire multiple tennis balls'—the reader doesn't have time to take in one thing before being asked to digest another. Try to break up longer sentences and paragraphs into shorter ones that deliver the message

step-by-step, like this copy does:

Free trade sounds like a great idea. But if it's not between equals it doesn't work. Yet free trade is often forced onto poor countries through trade agreements and as a condition of aid and debt relief. This means their growers and producers are overwhelmed by powerful international competitors and unprotected fledging industries are destroyed.

Trade justice is a better way. Put simply, it means the world's poor nations should have the right to choose for themselves the policies that will help them trade their way out of poverty. (…)

12.78. **Split up longer sentences.**
You'd be surprised how many sentences you could split in two by adding a period/full-stop. Don't worry if you have to start sentences the way you were always told not to do. Starting sentences with *But*, *And*, *So*, and *Yet* is permissible because advertising copy follows the patterns of speech more closely than it follows the rules of written grammar.

If you can't split a sentence with a full stop, use dashes to do a similar thing—they allow you to elaborate on an idea whilst keeping your utterances to a digestible length.

12.79. **Break up your copy with bullet points.**
Bullets make copy easier to read. Here are some pointers for using bullets effectively:

- **Keep to a consistent style of writing.** If your first bullet point starts with a command verb like this one, your following bullets should also start with command verbs. If your first bullet demonstrates what a feature does, all your bullet points should do the same.
- **Start with a short, bold summarizing sentence.** In longer bullet copy, this technique ensures your copy can be scanned easily.
- **Use bullets to present facts and figures.** Statistical bullet copy can be easily sectioned off as a 'stats section'.
- **Try tick-bullets.** If your bullet copy is intended to look like a check-list, tick points can be more eye-catching than regular bullet points.
- **Number your points.** It is often effective to use numbers instead of bullets and introduce the bullet copy as '5 reasons to…' or '5 ways to…'. For instance, I could have introduced this bullet copy as *5 pointers for effective bullet copy.*

12.80. **Use simple words.**
Multi-syllable Latin-based words can usually be replaced with shorter Saxon words, as shown in the following list:

Complicated	*Simple*
Information	Facts
Demonstrate	Show
Regarding	About
Immediately	Now
Construct	Make
Regulation	Rule
Conversation	Talk
Discover	Find
Commence	Start
Gratis	Free
Continue	Keep
Encourage	Help
Majority	Most

Go through each word of copy with a fine-tooth comb, and ask yourself if any word can be simplified to cut down on syllable length. Do this, and your copy will roll off the tongue quicker as your reader vocalizes it in her head as she reads.

12.81. **Use simple tenses.**
Avoid using complicated syntax. Phrases that use advanced tenses tend to feel clunky and read more slowly. Pretend you are writing for a learner of English, and try to avoid over-using sophisticated grammar structures including continuous past tenses (*You've been doing*), conditionals (*If you had an X would you be looking at a Y?)*, and past modals (*You might have made the wrong decision*).

<u>Clumsy syntax</u>
It wasn't until we had filtered through your comments did we realize what we needed to do to improve X.

<u>Simple syntax</u>
We looked at your comments. We saw how to improve X.

12.82. **Vary the length of sentences and paragraphs.**
Very short sentences in between longer sentences can help to break up your copy and make for a chatty style. Likewise, the odd one-sentence paragraph helps you to vary the pace of your copy and hold the readers' interest.
Example:
If you wanted to find a good Indian restaurant, you'd probably start by looking through your local directory. Of course. It lists hundreds of restaurants all over town—but how do you know what's hot and what's not?

Simply log on to E-by-us.com.

It's the first online directory that allows browsers to chat about their local amenities.

Simply key in the name and (…)

12.83. Break a line in mid-utterance to encourage the reader to read on.
Utterances are the continuous parts of sentences that are not disrupted by punctuation. When you are setting the line breaks in your copy, it makes good sense to break a line mid-utterance to encourage your readers to read the next line. For example, this sentence:

It's full of goodness, not

goodness knows what

… is more likely to be read in its entirety than this:

It's full of goodness,

not goodness knows what

12.84. Write in an informal style.
Don't get obsessed with grammar. Break the rules if it makes for a flowing style. The attentive reader may want to correct your copy, but your target readers won't care if your prose isn't 100% correct—they simply want the product to *speak* to them.

Don't be afraid of lightening the tone by using conjunctions like *it's*, *I'm*, and *you'll*, or of making up a new word if it does the job of two existing words, or of repeating the word 'or' like I have just done. In short, if it's chatty (the way your product would speak), keep it in.

Punctuation doesn't have to follow the rules either. For example, you'll notice when I list examples I place a comma after the word *and* (to make reading lists of examples easier). Some of my sentences are missing commas (so they read slightly faster). Your aim is to make the copy easy to read, so do what you need to do. I'm not saying you can be *sloppy* with your grammar and spelling. Bending the rules is one thing, but being ignorant of them is another.

12.85. Use sub-headlines.
Sub-headlines help you to expand upon your headline to communicate a general message. People tend to glance through publicity only reading the headlines, so adding sub-headlines increases the number of words the casual reader is likely to read before flicking over. Headlines that are reinforced with sub-headlines are more likely to suck the reader into the following body copy. Point 13.95 shoes you how to break up your copy with sub-headings without repeating yourself.

12.86. Use visuals and captions instead of copy whenever possible.

Let visuals do the hard work if you can. Why increase your word count if you can replace a paragraph of copy with a visual demonstrating what you're saying?

Sometimes it is appropriate to add captions by visuals. Captions can be a handy way of exploiting the attention created by the visual to flag up a key selling point. Like headlines and sub-headlines, captions are more likely to hold the attention of a casual glancer.
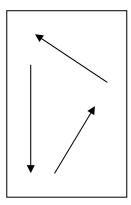
12.87. **Use flashes, copy boxes, and different fonts to highlight key messages.**
You can make your important sales message shout out by highlighting key sentences in attention-grabbing flashes and copy boxes. Flashes are particularly useful ways of isolating high-impact words such as NEW, FREE, COMING SOON, and others summarized in 7.41.

There are other mechanical devises at your disposal to help you pull out the key messages in your copy, such as highlights, italics, capital letters, underlines, quotation marks, bold words, and reverse-outs. But… be careful not to overuse these features:

- One or two underlines or bold sentences will stand out in an advert, use more and you'll compromise the clarity of your message.
- Black text on a white background is much easier to read than white text on black, so keep reverse-outs to a minimum.
- Lower-case letters are easier to read than capitals. Instead of presenting headlines in upper-case, copywriters often start each word with a Capital Letter As An Attention-Grabbing Alternative To Using Capitals Throughout.

12.88. **Give your copy an interesting layout.**
Research suggests that people often subconsciously scan a page of publicity momentarily before they decide to read it properly. The eye naturally settles on the top-left section of a page (be it a page of a leaflet, a magazine page advert, or web-page window), then wanders down to the bottom-left part of the page, then up and across to the middle-right.

It is worth bearing this point in mind when you are laying out your text. A few well-placed

sub-headlines, flashes, and visuals can catch the eye and encourage the reader to move back to the top of the page to read your copy linearly.

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13. How to assess and edit your copy

Your final writing stage is all about evaluation and reduction. Your aim is to assess if your copy does its job, then to make it as succinct as possible. The next section gives you some tips to ensure your draft is on-message, punchy, and easy to read.

13.89. Check your publicity gets the message across.
Are you being absolutely clear about what the product is and what it does? Have you explored the *one* aspect of the product your target reader will find most appealing? Most importantly, does your copy communicate the message you and your client agreed on in your meeting?

13.90. Use the A.I.D.C.A. model to assess how well you pitch the product.
The AIDCA model (introduced in point 6.34.) is a good tool to help you evaluate how well your copy gets the message across. Effective copy captures the reader's *Attention*, provokes their *Interest*, develops their *Desire* for the product, *Convinces* the reader that the product is genuinely good value, and calls the reader to *Action*. Here is a checklist to help you:

    A   Do you have an attention-grabbing headline?
    I   Is your opening sentence gripping?
    D   Does your copy quickly introduce the benefits?
    C   Have you backed up your claims with proof?
    A   Have you made it easy for your reader to reply?

13.91. Check your copy is long enough to do its job.
As a general rule, copy should be short if you are raising awareness of a product, long if you are going directly for the sale, and somewhere in-between if you are generating enquiries.

If you are selling direct…
Nobody buys straightaway without being reassured they are making the right decision—whether it's a $2000 computer or a $2 pencil sharpener. If your copy aims to sell directly, it must do a complete selling job: igniting the readers' desire for the product and confronting all their objections head-on, before closing the sale and encouraging the reader to buy now. All this will probably require several paragraphs of copy.

<u>If you are generating leads…</u>
If you are asking the reader to enquire now and buy later, your reader doesn't need to be 100% convinced about the product in order to respond. You're simply asking the reader to ask for more information, a free trial, or a gratis copy to help them decide whether or not to buy. Therefore your copy should include just enough information to whet their appetite and convince them it is worth responding.

<u>If you are building product awareness…</u>
Building awareness of the product requires a memorable message so your reader remembers the product, what it does, and where to find it. In this case, short copy that simply arouses the readers' curiosity may be appropriate, depending on the marketing context of your publicity.

13.92. **Ensure your reader is left thinking about the product.**
Copywriters sometimes fall into the trap of getting carried away with their concept without giving readers a logical argument for buying *the product*. It's an easy mistake to make. The quest to find a memorable and thought-provoking concept can result in copywriters losing touch with their client's objective—to *sell the product*.

If your copy doesn't get the reader thinking about the product you are selling, your publicity is not doing its job. You need to constantly bring the reader's attention back to your reason for writing to them. Ensure your reader can recall the product by checking your concept gets across its most appealing aspects, showing visuals of the product as much as possible, repeating the name of the product as much as possible, and by repeating your sales messages.

13.93. **If your message doesn't stand out, knock it back.**
Ask yourself how quickly your copy gets to the point. If you have embedded your message in surrounding copy, move the message to the top. If it takes a paragraph before you get to the crux of the message, ask yourself how necessary that initial paragraph is. Be ruthless. If you don't need a section of copy, remove it; no one will miss it.

13.94. **Ensure you cover one point per paragraph.**
Here's a useful technique to ensure you maintain a zippy, flowing style. Read over your copy and ask yourself if you can summarize each paragraph in one simple point. If some of your paragraphs include more than one point, they are too complicated and need to be split up or stripped down.

13.95. **Avoid repetition.**
Point 12.85. explains the benefits of integrating sub-headlines into your copy. If you use sub-headings, make sure your headline summaries don't repeat existing sentences of copy. You can edit out repetition (and ensure your sub-headlines are kept punchy) by

replacing your current sub-headings with hard-working phrases from your body copy, as demonstrated in the following example.

Example with too much repetition:
> *The new Stevenson pen does it all...*
> *The new Stevenson pen does it all. It writes, draws, highlights by simply adjusting the color and tip-width. Now you'll always have the pen you need handy. And when you're done, it's small enough to clip into your jacket pocket, so you can take it anywhere.*

Example with no repetition and a more hard-working sub-heading:
> *Write, draw, and highlight—with the pen that does it all.*
> *Simply adjust the Stevenson pen's color and tip-width, and you'll always have the pen you need handy. And when you're done, it's small enough to clip into your jacket pocket, so you can take it anywhere.*

13.96. **Cut out the dead wood—remove unnecessary adjectives.**

Adjectives, adverbs, clichés, and other hackneyed terms should only be included in your copy if they do something dramatic. Imagine 1% of your fee comes off your bill with each one you use. If you can't justify keeping them, get out a red pen and mercilessly remove each one; *contemporary*, *flexible*, *hands-on*, delete them if you can, they will not be missed.

13.97. **Read your copy out loud to ensure a chatty tone.**

Ensure your copy is easy to read by reading it to someone. If you stumble over words as you read, then your reader is likely to do the same. Fix any clunky phrases by simplifying your grammar (discussed in 12.81.), simplifying your words (discussed in 12.80) or cutting out the phrases you can do without.

13.98. **Let your copy sleep—come back to it with fresh eyes.**

It could take several drafts before you are ready to submit your copy. So when you come to a natural stop let your copy sleep for a minimum of 24 hours, ideally a week, then go back to it. You'll see it in a totally different light. You may notice some odd-sounding phrasing that you didn't notice before, or even deeper problems with how you are communicating your message. A rest will also help you to evaluate your copy with fresh perspective and a new enthusiasm to try again.

13.99. **Ask someone you know to give you feedback.**

It is always useful to run your copy past a friend before you handover to your client. If you have a volunteer handy, make sure you ask open questions to elicit the best feedback. Questions like *What would you do to make it better?* are more likely to provoke constructive criticism than closed questions like *Would you buy the product I'm writing about?*

13.100. **When your copy is succinct, hand it over.**

Don't fuss over your copy, you could be rewriting it forever. As soon as it gets the message across persuasively and succinctly, email it to your client and wait for feedback. Your first draft is done.

Appendices

This advert for Ikea demonstrates just how far you can go with a benefit: Ikea kitchens cost less… which means that you can work less… which means you can spend more time with your family. Tricks of the trade to note in this advert:

- Simple concept focuses on a core emotional benefit of buying an Ikea kitchen (See *5.27. Establish your basic concept*.)
- Hard-working visual demonstrates the benefit clearly (See 9.56. *Demonstrate how the reader can benefit from the product*.)
- Headline and visual reinforce each other (See *5.29. Always conceptualize the copy and visual together*.)
- Sub-headline gets straight to the point (See *8.49. Get straight to the point*.)
- First line of the body copy identifies a potential need (See *7.40. Show the need and 'get the nod'*.)
- A final benefit statement summarizes the message at the end of the body copy (see *9.62.. End your copy sections with benefit statements*.)
- Second visual shows the product (See *5.30. Use the visual to whet the readers' appetite for the product*.)

Message Statement Sheet

Client name

Company

Aim of publicity

State what the publicity should achieve

Key message

Give one reason why the product will sell in 20 words or less

Key selling points

Identify 3 top features and benefits

1.

2.

3.

Target demographic

Who is the target audience?

Competition

List key competitors

Signed (client)

Signed (copywriter)

Date

The client confirms that he/she has agreed to the above promotional messages, and that these messages will inform content for subsequent publicity. The copywriter agrees that the first submitted draft must communicate the promotional messages agreed above.