



An Introduction to Copywriting

Venture Accelerator Partners

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DID YOU KNOW?
The average web user only reads 20% of the words on a web page.

Source: CMS, 2013

INTRODUCTION

At VA Partners, we continue to increase our successes in our marketing efforts and brand awareness by staying up-to-date with our copywriting. Our copywriting strategy focuses on writing compelling content for all our communications tools (website, newsletter, and social media). We also have specific plans in place to enable our team to stay up to date with our efforts. Copywriting plans also make it easier for us to make any necessary changes as we go.

WHAT IS COPYWRITING?

Copywriting is produced content about a company that is used to communicate the benefits of their products/services. It's a tool to educate your audience and move them toward completing an action. Copywriting is key to all marketing assets such as websites, white papers, blogs, social media updates, email newsletters and brochures.



ART OF PERSUASION

Copywriting is all about encouraging the reader to perform a certain action. So, all copywriting is about persuasion. This could be the title of your products page, a new offer, or social post; all with the intent to get a click from the reader. Here are six ways to persuade, according to [Robert Cialdini](#), author of [Yes! Scientifically Proven Ways To Be Persuasive](#).

Type of Persuasion	How it Works
Reciprocity	Give to get back. Give your prospects education and value with your copy, and they are likely to reciprocate the action.
Liking	Be human with your copy. The more your audience connects with your words and interacts with your company or brand, the better.
Social Proof	We examine how others react to a company to build our own opinions on it. Write copy that's inclusive of customer comments and testimonials.
Authority	Build trust and show your your authority by demonstrating your industry and product expertise
Scarcity	Opportunities that are limited may seem more valuable. In your copy, state special offers, promote dated content.

IMPORTANCE OF STORYTELLING

Storytelling is powerful, and is beneficial in capturing your audience's initial interest, but to also remain memorable. Storytelling serves a number of purposes such as building anticipation and evoking emotions. Storytelling also provokes a response from the reader, which is the ultimate goal of copywriting. To write successful stories to support your copy, make sure your story is relevant, and interesting. Think of anecdotes and examples that help explain your offers and benefits to pique your audience's attention.

A great way to structure storytelling in your copywriting is to follow [Buffer's](#) formula

1. What I've got for you?
2. What's it going to do for you?
3. Who am I?
4. What you need to do next



UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

When planning your copywriting, consider what your audience is looking for and what it will take to convince them to get it from you. When you understand your audience, you will be better equipped to present the benefit of your company's products/services in a way that resonates with their needs. To do this, determine who your target audience is, by reviewing your buyer persona(s). Figure out what questions, problems and other pain points they may encounter. This will help you determine what types of topics, vocabulary and speech style your audience is interested in. When you write your copy, consider what actions and reactions you want your audience to undertake.

DEVELOP YOUR BRAND'S VOICE

Your brand's voice will drive your copywriting style and tone. Develop this tone with your audience in mind. Is your audience professional, casual or goofy? Think about where your audience hangs out and what types of communications is appropriate in those areas. Your brand voice will also help you remain consistent in your communications across all your marketing efforts. A unique brand voice will help you craft your best copy.



QUICK TIP:
“There are no dull subjects. Only dull writers.”
Source: H.L. Mencken

SELECT YOUR MEDIUM

The medium you are writing copy for can heavily influence how you write. No matter what platform you're writing for, the first thing you need to do is to figure out the process of each marketing tool. Below are some key tips to keep in mind when writing copy for websites, newsletters and social media.

WEBSITE

Your website is a central part of your marketing plan. It is likely the place where most of your audience will discover your services/products, and where you will generate leads. To entice people to visit your site, your copy must be both educational and unique. Keeping your website's goals in mind, note down appropriate keywords to include in your copy (in an organic way). Use these keywords to create direction for your writing and improve your SEO strategy. You have a very short time frame to capture and keep your reader's attention so be clear with your web copy. Make sure the copy on your website allows your reader to follow a series of steps that leads to a conversion, like filling out a lead form, or buying a product.

NEWSLETTERS

A newsletter is usually an email that is sent to individuals who have subscribed to content curated by your company. The opt-in component of a newsletter ensures that those subscribed are interested in your products/services, company or industry news. The goal is for subscribers to open the email and to click links within the email.

Write a strong headline for the email subject line as well as for content within the email newsletter. The following are parts of a typical email newsletter that require copywriting; introduction, blog summaries, tools and resources, and a send-off (thank your subscribers and ask to share your content). Carefully consider the length of the email newsletter.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Different types of people frequent different social media platforms. The pace of social media platforms also vary. For these reasons, each social media platform requires unique discourse and copy.

TWITTER

Twitter is a fast-paced and causal social media platform. There is a lot of information being pumped out on Twitter, so aim for copy that is eye catching, such as asking a question, providing an interesting statistic or discussing a controversial opinion. The unique property of Twitter will restrict copy to be under 140 characters. Use hashtags to be found by other Twitter users.

Showcase your expertise in your Twitter bio. Ensure your Twitter bio also includes your company's services/products and link to your website within the allocated 140 characters.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a professional social media platform so it requires professional discourse. Copy is needed for your personal profile and your company page statuses (up to 700 characters). Unlike Twitter, there is a much larger character limit, so there is the ability to write more in-depth copy. To optimize your company page you will also need to include a company description (up to 2000 characters).



COMPONENTS OF COPYWRITING

Now, we'll go over some essential parts of copywriting and best practices to make your copy as effective as possible.

HEADLINE

A good headline is crucial for copywriting success because it's often times the first thing your audience reads. A good headline should grab your reader's attention and entice them to continue reading. A headline can be the title of a blog post, the header of a landing page or a social media post linking to your content.

Keep your headlines clear and state exactly what the reader can expect from the rest of the content.

Example:

The 7 Principles of Conversion Centered Design

You can also employ a sense of urgency in your headline to probe readers to take action.

Example:

Mistakes you Need to Avoid on Social Media, Right Now

QUICK TIP:

Use an active voice in your copywriting.

YES

"We created a helpful guide about copywriting."

vs.

NO

"A helpful guide about copywriting was written by our company."

Source: Writtent



CONTENT

As far as the rest of the content goes, ensure that you highlight your company's benefits as opposed to the features. Aim to incorporate the appropriate keywords into your copy as it naturally fits. Make sure your content is accurate to what the headline promises.

Example:

Our new device is smaller and more compact.

vs.

Our new device fits in your pocket for easy access.

CALL TO ACTION

A call to action (CTA) is very important component in a copywriting package. It is the copy that provides instruction to readers about what action to take next.

Begin your CTA with a strong verb, such as download, buy or subscribe. Make sure your CTA provides a good reason for someone to click. What value adding benefit can you give to your reader? Finally, don't be afraid to be enthusiastic with your CTA. If you are excited about your offer, your audience is likely to also be excited.

DESIGN AND IMAGES

Copy can be greatly enhanced by the way it is presented. Design and copy elements cannot work well without the other. The purpose of design is to get your audience to read the copy, so consider using images to complement your copy to make your overall message more impactful and memorable. Types of images can include product images, high-quality stock photos, photos from events and infographics.

Do not forget to include captions for each image to frame your context.

Example:

Image of a beach – could be for vacation company, for an environmental company or for a nature photographer page. Use a caption to bring meaning to the image.



MEASURING RESULTS

CONTENT CALENDAR

Updating and keeping track of your content can be overwhelming, which is why we recommend using a content calendar. Our team uses an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of content. There are also a number of other programs that manage your content. If you choose to go with an Excel spreadsheet, consider making multiple tabs for different types of content (blogs, videos, infographics, social media).

A content calendar is important because it gives you a broad overview of your content tactics. This is beneficial because you can draw inspiration from older content, ensure you aren't repetitive and keep everyone on your team accountable for content production. Your content calendar will help you plan ahead to remain consistent with publishing fresh content.

TESTING

Copywriting is a continuous process and its results should be measured by experimenting with different strategies. Test out different types of headings and call to actions. Try out a different layout or design for your copy. Measure the impact of small changes in your copy for the best results.

QUICK TIP:
When testing, only make one change at a time so that you can understand which tactics work and which don't.



RESOURCES

Here are some great resources if you want to learn more about copywriting and digital marketing:

[FRESH PERSPECTIVE COPYWRITING](#)

Rachel Foster, the brains behind Fresh Perspective is a Toronto-based freelance copywriter. She can be found on Twitter as [@CopywriterTO](#).

[MARSDD LIBRARY](#)

The MaRS library contains articles, templates, reports, workbooks, reference guides and videos covering a range of topics, including marketing and copywriting

[MARK EVANS](#)

Mark Evans helps startups and fast-growing companies tell better stories.

[UNBOUNCE BLOG](#)

The team at Unbounce writes regular blogs to provide expert advice to help you crush your next online marketing campaign.

[VA PARTNERS BLOG](#)

Check out the VA Partners blog for posts on marketing, social media and sales, including a number of posts on copywriting best practices.



ABOUT VENTURE ACCELERATOR PARTNERS

Venture Accelerator Partners provides B2B sales, marketing and inbound lead generation services to startups and fast-growing organizations. Our clients range from mobile start-ups, large industrial companies, to major financial services companies.

Since starting in 2008, VA Partners has helped drive millions of website visitors, hundreds of qualified meetings, and millions of dollars in revenue for clients.

Our team is passionately committed to growing revenue for growing companies. Some of our recent accomplishments include:

- Generated \$500,000 in new revenue for an oil and gas provider in the first year of the engagement
- Helped create a \$2 million annuity stream for a financial services company
- Closed \$300,000 in incremental revenue working six days per month for a client
- Boosted website traffic and inbound leads by 300% over six months for a growing enterprise sales training company
- Secured partnership meetings with Fortune 500 companies like RIM, Microsoft, ADP and more

Companies work with us to establish sales processes, revamp marketing, build and optimize websites for lead generation, leverage social media, build a sales funnel of qualified leads, close deals faster, and save money with experienced resources.

To learn more about our sales and marketing services for growing B2B businesses, contact us at info@vapartners.ca or (647) 401-7156.

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