



Proven Tips for Writing Copy That Sells

By

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About Neil Sagebiel

I'm a freelance copywriter and blogger who specializes in B2B marketing communications and university fundraising and writes extensively about professional golf. I write and edit two blogs: HEADLINES FROM FLOYD, B2B copywriting tips with a dash of small-town flavor, and the ARMCHAIR GOLF BLOG, a top independent golf blog.

Useful links:

What I write, clients and industries: <http://headlinesfromfloyd.com/about-me>

Samples: <http://headlinesfromfloyd.com/samples>

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Blogs:

HEADLINES FROM FLOYD: <http://headlinesfromfloyd.com>

ARMCHAIR GOLF BLOG: <http://armchairgolfblog.blogspot.com>

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COMPILED FROM my various articles and reports on copywriting, the following tips will help you write copy that builds awareness, generates leads and increases sales.

Why 66?

It's a good number. There are certainly more, but this handy collection of tips covers the basics and will help you on any writing project you face.

To plan your project, answer these basic questions:

1. What is the piece?
2. What is the subject?
3. Who is the audience?
4. What is the purpose?
5. How will the piece be used?

To prepare to write copy, gather useful online and offline source materials:

6. Web sites and blogs.
7. Ads.
8. Brochures.
9. Newsletters.
10. Annual reports.
11. Articles.
12. Catalogs.
13. News releases.
14. Speeches.
15. Videotapes.

16. Marketing research.
17. Marketing plans.
18. Reports.
19. Competitors' ads and marketing materials.

To write effective copy:

20. Loosen up and make writing fun.
21. Be personal.
22. Be interesting.
23. Use humor with caution.
24. Always make things easy on your audience.
25. Have the you's far exceed the we's.
26. Write strong noun-verb combinations.
27. Write short sentences and paragraphs.
28. Use simple words.
29. Write to express, not impress.
30. Write the way you talk.
31. Use personal pronouns.
32. Use contractions.
33. Use the active voice.
34. Begin sentences with conjunctions.
35. Use subheads.
36. Write subheads that tell the story to those who skim copy.
37. Use bullets.
38. Stop after saying what needs saying.
39. Capture attention in an appropriate way.

To get attention:

40. Use a headline.

41. Tell the audience something they know.
42. Ask a question.
43. Offer an anecdote.
44. Say something timely.

To connect with your audience:

45. Do your homework.
46. Walk a mile in their shoes.
47. Make them feel important (and do it sincerely).
48. Talk in terms of their interest.
49. Arouse in them an eager want.
50. Begin in a friendly way.
51. Get them saying yes, yes immediately.
52. Dramatize your ideas.

To persuade and motivate:

53. Identify the need or problem.
54. Provide a solution and its benefits.
55. Provide proof with facts, statistics, opinions and testimonials.
56. Tell the audience what to do next, including how and when.
57. Keep the call to action simple and specific to avoid confusion.

To write clearly and correctly:

58. Always let clarity be your guide.
59. Make sure subjects and verbs are in agreement.
60. Don't overload copy with modifiers.
61. Put modifiers near the words they're modifying.
62. Use a dictionary, thesaurus and stylebook.

To complete the copy:

- 63. Keep approval levels to a minimum.
- 64. Read copy from your audience's viewpoint, not as an editor.
- 65. Provide specific comments.
- 66. Let the copywriter do the rewriting.

Help others. Pass it on.

Forward this report to your friends, colleagues, clients and customers. They might just thank you. I definitely will. Thank you.