

A Guide to Copywriting to Promote Your Business!



**This Special Report is brought to you by:
Elizabeth McGee**

Please visit Elizabeth @ www.homenotion.com

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1 What is Copywriting & Why Is It So Important?

Simply put, copywriting is the writing you use in your written promotional materials. This can include your advertising, website, brochures, catalogs, business cards, sales letters and more.

Copywriting is what you use to get your customers and potential customers to take a particular action. For example:

- Call you for more information
- Place an order
- Sign up for your mailing list
- Get them to refer a friend to your business

Many business owners make the mistake of thinking they can just throw their copywriting together. I congratulate you for taking the time to read this guide because the information in it will put you ahead of many other small business owners who make this mistake.

Consider this:

When someone visits your website or reads your brochure, **you aren't there** to answer their questions or to convince them how great your product is. Your words need to do that for you. In other words, you need effective copywriting.

This guide is going to show you how to do that.

2 The Basics of Copywriting: Important Terminology

In this chapter, I'll go over some terminology that will help you in understanding the principles of copywriting. Read each one in detail as I've not only included the definition of each word, but I've also added:

- Examples and further detail for deeper understanding of these important concepts.
- Exercises to apply these concepts.

This information will serve as your foundation of knowledge in all the copywriting you do for your business.

2.1 Target Market:

Your target market is the group of people you're selling your product to. You have to be very specific when you define your target market, in order to make your copywriting most effective. You can't just say "women, moms or pet owners" because that is still vague.

What women?

Which moms?

Which pet owners?

When defining your target market, there are many things to consider. We've made a small list below, but it only touches the surface. For each target market, there are so many different factors that can make up your specific target market:

- Age

- Income
- Interests
- If it's a woman, her marital status may come into play
- If it's a mom, you might want to have an idea about the age of her children; if she works outside the home, etc.
- If it's a pet owner, what kind of pet she has, what breed, etc.
- Wants, wishes and desires *
- Problems she needs solved *

*These last two are particularly important because this is what really motivates people to spend their money and buy products. Yes, they buy to satisfy their immediate needs, but desire is what drives people to spend their money readily.

The following are important human motivators that have been identified by psychologists. They will help you in understanding what motivates your readers to take action:

- Fear
- Exclusivity
- Guilt
- Greed
- Need for approval
- Convenience
- Pleasure

Some people might see it as unethical to play too hard on the emotions of their potential customer, but you can use this information to really understand what motivates your target market.

The more you understand your target market, the easier it will be to sell to them. You will understand their point-of-view, the problems they have and how much they'd like a solution.

The Problem with Being Too Vague

I've seen a number of business owners who try the vague "be everything to everyone approach" and it's really tough to make that work as a small business owner. These people may sell candles online or cosmetics or a similar product and the business owner will say their target market is simply women. The problem is if you sell those things not all women are your target as I've already said.

Let me explain further...

There are plenty of women who don't care much about candles and they're content buying the typical drugstore cosmetics or no cosmetics at all. Those women are not your target market.

Even a woman who thinks candles are lovely and wears a little makeup now and then, but doesn't readily spend her money on those items, is not your target market. You need to understand the woman who really wants to buy your product because she's the one that will buy it **over and over again**.

Imagine Your Typical Customer:

What are her wants and desires? What problems does she need solved? If you don't already know that, try surveying the customers that you already have. Ask them a few questions about themselves, why they bought the product, what they like about it and what they don't like. In return, offer them a coupon or a free gift or something, just to get that feedback. This information will be very valuable to you.

Really think about your product:

What is the single most important reason your target audience would want to buy it? You need to be able to empathize with your target market, identify their

problems and show how your product solves that problem. If you think too generally about your target market, the passion is lost in your copy and it's tough to get anyone excited about anything.

For example, if you sell acne medication and you simply talk about the embarrassment of acne, you might get some sales. But if you know that your target market for a specific ad campaign is teenagers, talking about being teased at school, worrying that they won't find a date and having a case study of a teenager who overcame that – your copywriting will be much more powerful.

Here are a few more examples to illustrate how your target market is important and how it can vary from product-to-product and ad campaign to ad campaign:

If you sell more than one product and they're related (example: skin cream and eye shadow), each product that you sell can have a slightly or even a very different market. If the skin cream helps reduce wrinkles and the eye shadow is in a sparkly blue color, it's likely the skin cream will appeal to a woman in her 30s who would like to reduce wrinkles. The sparkly blue eye shadow is more likely to be appreciated by a younger, trendier audience.

Of course, there are exceptions and if you sell make-up, you have the opportunity to know your market best. Regardless, even within your own product line, you can identify differences in your target market and it's important that your copy reflect this.

It is also possible that you have more than one targeted market for an individual product. If that's the case, you can create different promotional materials to target those specific audiences. For example, if you sell that wrinkle cream and discover that not only are certain types of women buying the cream, but men are interested too, you can create promotional materials to target the problems and interests of each group. That way, when you have different advertising

campaigns or promotions, you can send people the appropriate marketing materials.

You will sell more to a highly-targeted group of people than trying a lukewarm approach with the public in general. Leave general marketing to Amazon.com, Wal-Mart and other huge companies.

Note – Here’s a Big Company That Does It Right: We mention Amazon.com and yes, they target a general audience overall with a wide variety of products, but a visit to their website will show you they customize their marketing right down to the individual visiting. They will show you like items based on what you are looking at on their site and they will remember this next time you visit and try to offer you complimentary items. They are about as specific in their marketing as they can get.

Exercise: Start writing a list of all the characteristics of your typical customer. Use information gathered from customer surveys, as mentioned earlier in this section, and write at least 15-20 specific characteristics. This list will help you as you make your way through this guide.

2.2 USP:

USP stands for Unique Selling Position and this is what sets you apart from your competition. Put another way, a USP is some unique thing you offer that your competition is not offering. Here are just a few examples of a USP. Your USP will likely be very different:

- Are you the only company that offers an unlimited time money back guarantee?
- Do you cater to vegetarians when nobody else in your industry does?

- Do you know the secret to a perfectly baked soufflé; what do you do that's different?
- Do you look for hard-to-find items for your clients in 24 hours or less?

USP is a concept that is often difficult for people because every business is different. You need to really sit down, brainstorm and figure out your USP because if you don't, it's hard to stand out from the crowd and compete in your market.

Warning: A lot of home businesses make the mistake of making their low price as the USP. The problem is trying to sell for the lowest price is not often a profitable business model, especially for small home businesses like you. If you're not buying and selling in huge volumes it's just not worth it. Again, let's leave this kind of marketing to large companies like Wal-Mart or Amazon. They can afford it.

Some of the best customers you can ever have, don't worry about price. In my experience, the best customers are the ones who are more concerned about quality, exceptional service or that just buy because they plain old trust you and feel you understand them. As a home business owner with a smaller budget, you don't need to deal with bargain hunters.

Here is one of the most important questions you'll ask yourself when formulating your USP:

"Why would my customer buy my product instead of a competitor's?"

Think of what information or education you can provide to people who use your products. Go the extra mile where other big companies may not. Find something different than competing on price because trying to offer the lowest price will likely put you out of business. You want to price your products to receive a

decent profit. That way, you'll need fewer sales to make just as much or more money.

Exercise: Make a list of 5-10 competitors and identify their USP. See how you compare to these companies and their USP. For example, if one company's USP is that they have the fastest delivery rates, are you able to compete with that? If another company offers the longest hours of service, are you able to compete with that? If there is a USP where you can outperform your competitor, you might want to pursue that option or you may still want to carve out your own unique position in the market.

Even if you think you've found your USP, continue the exercise, by giving yourself 5 minutes to write down what is special about your products, service, etc. You can even invite family members and friends who know your business well to join in this brainstorming. Look at the lists and see what other unique things you can find that might just help you net more customers than one of your competitors.

2.3 Features:

You probably already have some idea what this word means. It basically describes what your product looks like, how it functions, etc. It is the basic information about your product. Although features may be important to your potential customers, it's the benefits that will make them want to buy your product.

Exercise: Write down all the features of your product. Include every single detail from color to size to function. You can't write too much for this exercise so write it ALL down.

2.4 Benefits:

Benefits are the advantages your customer receives from using your product. As mentioned in the definition of features, in most cases, benefits will sell your products better than a feature does. Although successful copy combines both, the best copy for most products focuses on the benefits.

An example: You sell a ballpoint pen.

The features are black ink, a felt tip, and it comes with a lid.

The benefits are that it reduces hand cramping and eliminates smudges.

Notice how when we talked about the features of the pen, it sounds like any other pen, but when we talk about benefits, it make the pen sound more interesting. Those are benefits and they help sell your product. People have a problem and they want to solve it by buying your product. Show them the benefits of your product.

What If Your Customers DO Care About Features?

Sometimes, you might sell a product where customers heavily compare features. One example of this might be Internet service for businesses. Businesses who need an Internet connection want to know the rates, the speed, etc. Internet service is a good example of a very feature competitive and focused business. You can still set yourself apart by illustrating some of the benefits of their service.

If you have a great record of up-time, tell your potential customer about it and that they don't have to worry about losing sales when their sites are down as frequently as with other service-providers. In this example, the feature is the up-time, but the benefit is not losing sales and that helps your potential customers visualize why they might use your service. Someone may think up-time is just a number Internet service providers throw out there, but when they think, "Oh yeah,

if it's not up, I'm going to lose a sale," that's when it reaches your target market. That's the kind of thing you want to talk to them about.

As another example, if you respond to support tickets or calls within an hour, you can say so. You can write about how you are the "stress-free Internet service provider that ensures your business can run as it should be 24-7". Again, the feature is having the response within an hour, but the benefit is less stress and again not missing out on important business time.

Exercise: Take that list of features you just created in the previous example and then list a benefit for each feature. This list will not only help you understand your product's benefit, but once you've done this exercise, you will have a large portion of the copy for your product done. You can put that information in bullet point format onto your web page or brochure.

And speaking of "bullets"...

2.5 Bullets

Bullets are one of the greatest things you'll come to love about copywriting. They are relatively easy to write and they can also sell your product exceptionally well.

The following are examples of bullet points:

- *What exactly a transcriptionist does and why her services are in such demand.*
- *Perks of having your own transcriptionist business: Learn about the low start-up costs, how to set your own hours and work with the flexibility this business provides.*

Bullets can be about the benefits of your products or the feature and often will include both just like we showed in the previous two exercises.

Bullet points are an easy way to deliver a lot of information about your product, efficiently and effectively to your prospect. If you formatted all this information into paragraph format, they might not read it as readily.

Bullet points can also “tease” your readers into having more interest for your product. This is particularly effective when you’re selling an informational product, course or book. A good bullet point teases about what’s included and gets them excited to buy, but doesn’t give away the actual information you’re selling. You don’t want to give your product away for free, of course!

For example (This is purely fictional, of course!):

Bad bullet point:

- Passionately kiss your husband each morning and he’s sure to stay faithful.

Good bullet point:

- Do this one thing each morning and your husband’s eyes will never stray to another woman.

The first bullet point gives away what’s in your information product. The other one tells the BENEFIT of what’s included (the faithful husband), but doesn’t tell you how to do it.

2.6 Headlines:

Your headline belongs at the top of your sales letter, web page, ad or any copy you are creating. Capitalize all the words in your headline and make it nice and big and bold to ensure it gets attention.

All good copy has an attention-getting headline. People are busy and you only have a limited amount of time to grab their attention. They won't read the small print on your page if you don't get their attention. A clear, benefit-oriented headline can help you do this.

A headline that simply says "We Sell X Widgets" doesn't say enough to get a reader to keep reading. Many people probably sell X Widgets. Why should they learn more about yours?

If you are having trouble figuring out headlines to use, here are a few headline starters. These are very common ones that are proven to work and you can try them out for your copy or do something completely different. These are just a way to start getting your mind going:

- **"Who Else Wants to ____ "**

This is an easy way to start; relate to your audience.

An example: "Who Else Wants to Save Up to 50% on Their Phone Bill? Try Our Rates Calculator to Find the Best Deals on Long Distance. "

- **"How __ Made me __ and It Can Help You Too"**

An example: "How X-Brand Weight-Loss Shake Made Me Lose 37 Pounds in 7 Weeks"

- **"Are You____?"**

An example: “Are You Tired of Unsightly Bags under Your Eyes? Apply Just a Dab of X Cream Once a Day for 6 Days and Watch the Puffiness Disappear. “

- “The Secrets to_____”

Everybody loves secrets...tell them about yours.

An example: “The Secrets to Rekindling the Romance with Your Husband”

- “Give Me ___ and I’ll _____”

An example: “Give me 15 Days and I’ll turn Your Ever-Reluctant Child into an Avid Reader”.

Tell them what they have to put in to it and what benefit they will get out of it.

More Tips for Creating Great Headlines: Another great way to find good headlines is simply looking at websites, brochures and other sales copy and see what grabs your attention. You can use some of those ideas in your own headlines.

Be Specific: In one of the headlines, we talked about losing 37 pounds in 7 weeks. The headline mentioned a certain product; the subject lost a certain amount of weight in a certain amount of time. Being specific is very important in headlines and copy, in general, because that's what really grabs attention.

Being vague and saying things like "reduce eye puffiness" may grab some attention but telling them how easy it is; "a dab of cream once a day for 6 days"... that's something people will say hey, I could do that. When you don't give them that extra information right away; they may not keep reading.

Exercise: Visit a few websites or read ads in a newspaper or magazine. See what grabs your attention. Can you incorporate those ideas into your headline?

2.7 Subheadlines:

Sub-headlines are additional headlines in your sales copy. Usually, subheadlines won't be as big as other headlines in your copy, but they'll be bold and each word will be capitalized to get attention.

Subheadlines help break up your copy to make it easier to read. It also helps get the attention of people who are skimming, rather than reading your sales copy. Use sub-headlines to draw attention to important sections of your copy every couple of paragraphs. Be specific in your sub-headlines and use benefits too.

Example: If you have written promotional copy for your free weekly email newsletter, you'll want subheadlines to draw in the eyes to important parts of the copy.

When you are about to include some bullet points about what's included in your newsletter, you might have a subheadline that reads:

Here's What's Included in Your Free Subscription to XXXXX

Then, just before you introduce your subscription form, you can have a subheadline that says:

Claim Your Free Subscription by Completing the Simple Form Below

Those are simply examples and copy that is more than a couple of paragraphs can be broken up in that manner.

Exercise: If you have some longer copy written (or if you're about to write some) go back and see where you can insert subheadlines. Visually, you'll see how it draws your eyes in, will help skimmers find the information they are looking for and how it makes instructions clearer for your readers.

2.8 Testimonials

A testimonial is positive feedback from someone who has used your products. Testimonials can be one of your most powerful online marketing tools. When someone is looking to buy a product, she often seeks the opinion of someone else who has used the product, right? If you have testimonials from your previous customers presented in your marketing materials or website copy, you already have a head start on making the sale.

Warning: You need to make sure your testimonials are meaningful. Look at these testimonials and decide if they are believable or would make you interested in a product:

- “I love it.” - Jan
- “This is the best ever.”
- “This is going to be a great product.” - Jim Bob, Florida

As you can probably see, the above testimonials are quite meaningless and probably won't add much to your marketing message. Here are some problems:

- It's nice that Jan loves the product, but we don't know why. Nor do we really know who she is or if she's a real person.
- The second also doesn't explain why it's the best and we don't know who made these comments.
- The last example at least has a full name “Jim Bob” and we know he's from Florida, but it looks like he hasn't even tried the product. He says it is “going to be a great product.” Just asking someone to comment on what your product might be like isn't an effective use of a testimonial.

A testimonial should include concrete and believable detail:

Testimonials should include information about how your customer used the product and the specific results she achieved.

Testimonials should also provide as much information about the testimonial provider as possible. Consumers are a skeptical bunch and if you don't convince them “Jan” or “Jim Bob” are real, they might not believe your testimonials.

Where possible, include:

- Full names (first and last)
- Location (city and state/province)
- Photos - Before and after photos, if applicable, can be very effective
- Other proof of results – For example, if your product helped a child's grade improve in school. You can show photos or scanned images of reports showing the improvement.

If you think your customers won't offer this information, you won't know until you ask. You might also give them a little gift in return for their details and feedback. It can be a coupon, sample pack or anything you'd like.

Just be careful in wording your gift offer. Asking someone for positive feedback in return for a gift can be seen as a bribe and would likely be illegal. Gifts should be offered in return for any type of feedback – positive or negative.

The important thing is to get as much credible information you can for your testimonials. 10 mediocre testimonials are not nearly as effective as 3 great ones. So, if fewer people say yes to offering their personal information, that's just fine.

Exercise: Set up a questionnaire for your customers and offer them a gift of a valuable coupon or sample in return for any feedback they provide. Even if you receive some negative feedback, this is your opportunity to view it as constructive criticism and see how you can improve your business.

- How long have you been using our product?
- How has XXXX improved since starting to use the product (X being the main benefit of your product)?
- How do you use the product (ex. at work, to relieve pain, etc)?
- How much time do you invest in using the product on a weekly basis?

- What is the most helpful/useful part of the product?
- What would you say to someone who is interested in buying the product?
- What other information would you like to share with us?

A questionnaire is often more effective than simply asking for feedback. If people are happy with the product, they will say so, but don't often provide the meaningful detail you need for an effective testimonial.

If you receive positive feedback that is particularly useful as a testimonial, contact the person who gave it to you and ask if you can publish:

- Their full name
- Picture
- City and State/Province
- Any proof they have

Don't be shy in asking. You may have to explain the purpose of all the information. Tell them how proud you are of their success and you really want to showcase them a real-live success story.

2.9 Call-to-action:

Your call-to-action is what you ask you reader to do once they read your promotional copy. It can be something as simple as calling you for more information, signing up for your mailing list or buying your product. If you don't tell people what to do, they are less likely to do it. Even if your copy implies they should buy your product, if you don't ask for the sale, you won't make it as often.

Every piece of sales copy should have a call-to-action. Whether it's a page on your website, your business card or other piece of copywriting.

Examples: Here are some examples of a call-to-action:

- Click a link to place an order
- Call a 1-800 number to place an order
- Call a number to hear a recorded message
- Fill in a form to enter a sweepstakes

Tip: You can easily put a call-to-action on the back of your business card. Invite your contacts to come to your website to sign up for your free newsletter, grab a sample or whatever you want them to do.

Exercise: Take a look at every page of promotional material you've written. Ensure it has a call-to-action. If it doesn't, fix it. If you are just getting started with your business, be sure to remember it as you design each business card, each and every page on your website, etc.

2.10 Your Offer

An offer is simply what you are selling/giving to your readers.

Example: You are selling a customized embroidered baby blanket. If your customer pays you \$35, they will get a 3' x 3' blanket in the color of their choice, design of their choice and embroidered message up to 25 letters. Additional designs have an extra charge.

Another example: An offer doesn't have to involve the exchange of money. In return for a first name and email address, you might give out a subscription to free weekly email tips on growing and caring for a garden.

Your offer is related to your call-to-action, but they're not exactly the same thing. Your offer is what you will give in return for money or whatever you're asking for. The call-to-action is the specific instruction you give for your potential customer to accept your offer.

Exercise: Take some time to write out all the details of your own offer. Get specific like I mentioned in the examples above.

That's it for the terminology portion of this guide. Before you start making offers and giving a call-to-action, you need to understand a few more things first...

3 Tips for Writing Great Copy

Now that you have an understanding of some of the important terminology involved in copywriting and how you can make the most of those elements, here are some more tips to help you craft great copy.

3.1 Speak to Your Audience

Since the sales copy you write is to promote your own products, it's easy to make the mistake of talking about yourself in your copy too much. The problem is, your potential customer doesn't really care about you. They care about themselves, they want solutions to their problems and they want to know what you can do for them. You need to focus on your customer first.

A lot of sales copy is too focused on the business that is doing the selling:

“We sell this...”

“We're great at this...”

“We believe in customer satisfaction...”

It's simple enough to change wording around to focus more on “you” and how you can help your potential customer. Turn it around and write things like this instead:

“Are you looking for...”

“If you need reliable...”

“Your satisfaction is guaranteed...”

Exercise: Go through your copy and change many of the “we’s” to “yous” and rewrite your copy based on the change in focus. When you’re done, you’ll see how much more of a connection you can make with your reader. In most cases you’ll be saying essentially the same thing (ex. Saying, “We believe in customer satisfaction” is pretty much the same as, “Your satisfaction is guaranteed”), but the focus is on your potential customer.

3.2 Avoid Excessive Adjectives

Can you see what’s wrong with the following copywriting example?:

“The biggest and best e-book that will make you the happiest person on your block.”

Here’s the problem: Outside of the fact that it’s pretty over-the-top with its claims, that sentence above is pretty meaningless. Nobody really cares if an ebook is the biggest and this sentence really doesn’t say anything about why it’s the best.

Also, the word happiest is kind of meaningless. We all want to be happy, but if we are unhappy right now we have *specific* problems we need to have solved. Telling someone they’re going to be happy doesn’t answer much for them. They want to know *HOW* you’re going to make them happy and how you’ll make their specific problems go away.

The real problem with the sentence above is that it’s filled with adjectives that don’t give specifics. Adjectives describe nouns and they don’t provide readers with good information. Make sure you answer these questions in your copy:

- How are you the best
- What makes you great
- How do you care for your customer

That's what people want to know. If you use too many adjectives, it ends up sounding like too much hype and the meaningfulness is lost.

That doesn't mean you can't use adjectives in your copy. Of course, you're still going to use them, but your copy should be able to stand on its own without all the extra words.

Exercise: If you want to see if your copy can stand up on its own, pick a couple paragraphs from your website or your entire page and remove all the adjectives. Does it still sound compelling? Is it selling your product?

If not, it's probably time to start working on being specific and we'll talk about that next.

3.3 Be Specific

I talk about this briefly when I wrote about headlines. Let's get into this more and really understand how being specific can help you sell more of your product.

Instead of saying you ARE the best, say WHY you are the best. Instead of saying you're fast; explain how fast and in what specific ways. Let's say, if you are a printing service and you provide fast printing, tell them on average how much time you need to finish a project. If you aren't willing to say how quickly you can complete a project, then you're probably not that quick and shouldn't be using that angle.

When we're talking about copy we're giving people as much detailed information as possible so people can make an informed decision about a product, newsletter, or whatever our call to action is.

Have you ever been to a website and thought about buying a product, but you weren't 100% sure it had the features/benefits you needed? It happens all the

time. A lot of product-sellers think they can slap up a picture and add a few words and watch the sales roll in. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way.

You simply can't give too much information about your product. Yes, you can be too wordy and put your reader to sleep, but if you're giving people information that they need to make a buying decision, there is no such thing as too much information. You want them to have all their questions answered and get them to buy.

Another good way to be specific is to quantify things. If you have an ebook, that has 37 ways to reduce your cholesterol, tell them there are 37 ways. Don't say there are "plenty of ways" or "this ebook is packed with ideas to help you lower your cholesterol". A specific number like 37 as opposed to a round number like 30 also tends to generate a better response. It's not completely clear why this occurs, but it's likely because round numbers might seem made up or estimated, but when you say 37 it puts a specific picture in their mind.

Exercise: Look at things you've written for your business. Where can you be more specific? What can you quantify?

3.4 Don't Worry So Much about Grammar

As you continue with your business, there will be people that tell you that proper grammar is very important to maintain a professional image. Some of your websites visitors may even take the time to email and tell you about the spelling and grammar mistakes that completely outraged them. Don't let this worry you too much. Correct the spelling and if the grammar is outrageous, fix it – but keep reading to find out why grammar isn't as important as it's cracked up to be.

The most important thing about your sales copy or articles is to sound natural and to relate to your target audience appropriately. Write the way you speak.

Naturally, if your audience is PHD students studying literature, then you might have to have a more formal tone and pay more attention to more grammar rules. If your audience is race-car enthusiasts or those interested in fashion trends, you might be more relaxed in your writing and speak more casually.

Most markets are going to be more casual, so you want to create a friendly and real image with your copy. It's okay to start sometimes sentences with "and" and "but" now and then because it's how we speak and when you write how you speak, it's how you relate to your audience. It's ok to end a sentence with a preposition because, again, that's how we speak.

Exercise: Look at your copy and see how formal or informal you are. Can you see how you could make it sound more friendly, appealing and create a connection with your reader? If you're too formal, you might just lose your audience all together. You don't want to sound uneducated but you want to be natural. Most of your grammar is going to be correct, but there are some rules you don't necessarily have to worry about for the sake of readability.

Final Note: If you're going to have someone proofread your copy, whether it's a friend, virtual assistant or professional proofreader, make sure they understand what you are looking for; that your spelling is correct, the language flows well and the copy sounds intelligent but friendly.

3.5 Keep it Simple

Write in short sentences to make things easy to read. Break up long paragraphs to ease eye-strain. Again, it's okay to break grammar rules – especially with paragraph formatting because reading long paragraphs can be fatiguing. This is particularly true online and where people are reading on a screen. Don't tire your potential customer out before they read about your product.

You can also use bullet points, as we mentioned earlier, and these may include incomplete sentences. Luckily that is actually acceptable in grammar rules! The key is to make it easy to read.

Don't use complicated language and make the level appropriate for your target audience. The average reading level of the general public is quite low. If you feel a more advanced word is more appropriate always define the word, in case your readers don't know what it means.

3.6 Keep Layouts Simple

It's easy to get excited about your product and when crafting your brochure or website design, it can be tempting to include so many things. Add photos to accentuate the copy, but don't allow them to take over. Pictures are important in creating visuals, but it's your words that will make your copy sell.

On the Internet, keeping it simple is especially important. Web surfers only give you a few seconds before they decide to click away and never to come back to your website again. If you don't grab attention or you confuse them with a busy website, they are more likely to make that decision to leave.

Here are some important tips for your website layouts:

- Keep your website navigation to a minimum. Create sub-categories to your website sections if necessary to minimize menu distractions.
- If you're selling your own product on a particular page, it's usually best to remove all banners or graphics going to outside pages.
- Keep your page header or logo simple and small. Don't let it take over the whole "above-the-fold" space on your website. "Above-the-fold" simply means the space on your web page a visitor can see without scrolling down with her mouse.

A logo or page header can help with branding and can convey a more professional image, but it doesn't have to be huge to do that. Most of the above-the-fold space should be reserved for selling your product.

Exercise: Review your web pages and promotional copy and try to view it from the eyes of someone who is unfamiliar with you, your company or your product. Are you immediately able to receive the intended marketing message or are there other distractions on the page? Try to clean things up and then ask others for honest feedback.

3.7 Be Succinct & Edit

Earlier, I told you how important it is to provide as much information about your product, so that your customer can make an informed buying decision. I still stand by that, but I want you to also be as succinct (using only as many words as necessary) in your copy as possible.

There's a difference between summarizing your offer and just repeating yourself over and over again. Although it's true that detail is what really sells your product, you want to make sure your copy is succinct and receives proper editing attention.

Exercise: Go through your copy and make sure that you're not being repetitive or adding extra information your potential customer doesn't need. If you start out with really long copy, go over it over and over again, until you've fine-tuned it into a well-oiled selling machine. It's not the length that can be a problem, but the message you are sending with your copy.

3.8 Sense of Urgency – Get Them to Buy Now

Even though people may be excited about your product after reading about it, they may just decide they'll buy later. Problem is, most times when they decide to buy later; they never get around to it. They'll lose your brochure, throw out the newspaper with your ad or forget where your website is.

To prevent this, you need to create a sense of urgency. In other words, make them feel like they need to buy now. Here are some ways you can make them feel like buying now:

- Offer a time-limited discount
- Limit the distribution of your product
- Offer them extra bonuses or goodies with your product, but only for a limited time.
- Show them how serious their particular problem is and why they should find a solution now.

Whatever you can do to make them purchase now, the more likely you'll make the sale.

Exercise: Go through your promotional material and make sure you've added a sense of urgency to everything. Whether it's to encourage them to find a solution to their problem now or to offer a time-limited discount, you can always add a little sense of urgency.

3.9 Close the Deal – Call-to-Action

Never forget to ask for the sale. Or if you want people to call you for more information, fill out of a form or sign up for a mailing list, tell them exactly what you want to do. I defined the call-to-action in the previous section, but it's definitely worth mentioning again.

Your call-to-action can include:

- A summary of your offer.
- Your price and why the price provides good value.
- Specific instruction on how to complete the call to action.

In the previous 2 chapters, I've provided you with the foundations of what it takes to write effective sales copy. If you already have an established business, you have plenty of opportunities to go back and improve your sales messages. If you are just getting started, you are already ahead of much of your small business competition. Most small businesses don't really understand copywriting and rely on more person-to-person selling and follow-up. You will still likely be involved with person-to-person selling, but as a busy mom with great copywriting skills under her belt, you can reduce plenty of legwork with great copy that sells! If saving time is your thing, you'll want to continue onto the next chapter, especially if you don't have your own website. Keep reading to find out how your own website can further help you increase your sales and reduce a lot of your work time, so you can have more time with your family.

4 Why a Marketer Needs a Website for Their Copywriting Plan

As home business owners, sometimes we feel at a disadvantage because we don't have an actual storefront where our customers can visit and examine our wares. Often we have to get out there, demonstrate products one person at a time or to a small group of people at a time.

The good news is, there is a virtual storefront available to you and you can have it open 24 hours per day 7 days a week. Yes, I'm talking about your website and in today's virtual age, more and more people are readily turning to the Internet for information and products.

As I mentioned before, effective copywriting often reduces our workload. It allows us to sell our product without customers having to contact us with follow-up questions or turning away because they don't have enough information. A website can help you with this even further.

Benefits of Having Your Own Website:

I highly recommend having your own website. It's not that hard to create one, the hardest part is finding a reliable site builder, one that is easy to use and helps you with search engine optimization so you'll be noticed faster. The benefits of having your own site are:

- 24/7 storefront
- You can post pages that answer questions from potential customers, post information about you and your business, etc.

- It will help you build your mailing list. Use simple forms on your site to collect email addresses and follow-up with your prospects, so they will buy later.
- Targeted landing pages for your advertising. For example, if you advertise in a men's magazine, you can send them to a specific page on your website that addresses their concerns.
- Business card marketing. Make a special offer on your business card and send people to your website to claim it. You can easily advertise and promote other offers as well.
- You can only offer a few products in a brochure; your website can let your prospects know about your whole product line.
- Up-to-date and cheaper catalog of your products. If you are doing off-line marketing, you'll still want a printed catalog, but your online catalog is very convenient to keep current.

A few words about creating your website

You don't have to know HTML (the language used to build websites) or use a highly technical site builder such as DreamWeaver. I've used DreamWeaver and it's one of the best site builders out there but there is a learning curve.

Site builders come in all sizes and flavors. Some come with hosting and will register a domain name for you, some supply a domain name for you (not recommended) some are just the standalone site builder software.

Beware of super cheap or free site builders, they are usually hard to use and have terrible customer support.

If you want quality, easy to use, quality site builders I have only two suggestions. I've used several site builders but most of them aren't worth recommending, so I'll spare you, but those I do recommend I completely stand behind:

[SiteBuildIt!](#)

This is a highly recommended complete all-in-one site builder, hosting and domain name and full training package. If you are just starting with a website and aren't sure about the steps, tools and basics of setting up a website SiteBuildit is perfect.

You can promote your own products, affiliate products, incorporate a shopping cart, create forms, newsletters and more. But the best part is Sitebuildit gives you the training on how to do all this. Most site builders just hand you the software and wish you luck. Sitebuildit offers world class support and training documents to get you up and running quickly.

[XSitePro](#)

I've used XSitePro since it first came out and still use it today for many of my sites. It's easy, fast and has more tools than I'll ever use, but unlike DreamWeaver the learning curve isn't so steep. I can't possibly cover all the tools and benefits of XSitePro but take it from someone who does very well with it; it's a great site builder with great support. XSitePro requires a one time fee and you can build as many websites as you like.

Website Hosting:

If you use a site builder like XSitePro you will need a hosting service to host your website. Unlike Sitebuildit who hosts your site for you.

Just as with site builders, I've also used several hosting companies, some of which are no longer in business, however from personal use and word of mouth colleague use, I recommend only two hosting companies:

[Hostgator](#) – I use them myself and you can get your first month free here.

[Bluehost](#) – Used by several of my top marketing colleagues.

Both come with excellent customer support, Cpanel, Fantastico and more disk space and user tools than you could hope for. But more importantly they both provide the most reliable and affordable hosting you'll find anywhere online.

In addition, you will need a shopping cart for your site if you plan to sell products.

[WAHMCart](#) has an extremely affordable option that not only includes your shopping cart, but will also manage your mailing lists for you and allows you to create your very own affiliate program.

<http://wahmcart.com/x.php?adminid=2&id=6791>

Domain Names:

A domain name is the online name for your website. When choosing your website name, you might want to secure the domain name at the same time. A lot of domain names are taken, so you'll want to make sure yours is available and buy it right away. As an example, I have a domain name that is homenotion.com and eBay's is ebay.com.

You can purchase your domain name through Godaddy or secure it from your favorite domain registrar service. Sitebuildit, mentioned above, will register your domain name for you. If you use other site builders such as XSitePro you will have to register it yourself.

Having your own website is a valuable tool for your business that will serve as your 24 hour storefront and it's your best chance for the media to learn about you.

5 In Closing

Copywriting helps you clinch a sale when you're not there to do it. When people visit your website, you aren't there to personally greet them. When someone looks at your business card a few weeks after they meet you, how will they remember you? If you hand-out brochures, make sure they're effective enough that people will want to buy from you.

Use the copywriting basics to guide you in crafting all your marketing messages. The words on your page, on your business card or brochure convey a lot about you and your business. Make sure you're sending the right message.

With a little thought, practice and perseverance, your copywriting will be a success!

Top Influential Resources

In addition to the above information these are high performance recommendations for helping you write and create persuasive copy that will dramatically turbo-charge your sales.

[Headline Swipe File](#) – Turbo-charge your headlines with this convenient headlines swipe file. These are 1000+ powerful headlines that will get you noticed even in the most competitive market.

[Salesletter Generator](#) – If writing sales letters just isn't your thing and you dread the thought, *don't panic*, all is not lost. Here is a dramatic, easy to use software that automatically creates salescopy for you. If you're nervous about writing your own copy it can save you hours of frustration, just plug and play, *it's that easy*.

[Instant Niche Emails](#) – Love Your Subscribers, but hate to write newsletters or emails to your subscribers? Instant Niche Emails will help you create a year's worth of emails in Less than one day! If you use email marketing, *and you should*, this can be a lifesaver.

[The Ezine Queen](#) – Alexandra Brown is the “*Ezine Queen*”. If you have an ezine or thinking about creating one, Ali is your best professional resource for creating ezines that not only get read from cover-to-cover, your subscribers will come to rely on them. *Tell Ali I sent you!*

[Hypnotic Writing](#) – This is one of my very favorite guides for giving you the know-how for writing copy that truly sells. You'll find out in just a few hours what the most successful internet marketers use to mesmerize their readers and achieve explosive sales. It's actually helped me increase my online sales by more than 50%. *I loved it!*