

Do you say the right things on your website?

This is an educational guide provided by Spiral Web Design to help you use language to improve the findability of your website.

At Spiral we build easy to use websites and software, with smart, simple interfaces and thoughtful features. We are focused on executing the basics beautifully and efficiently.

Ask us about other ways to increase your websites usefulness.



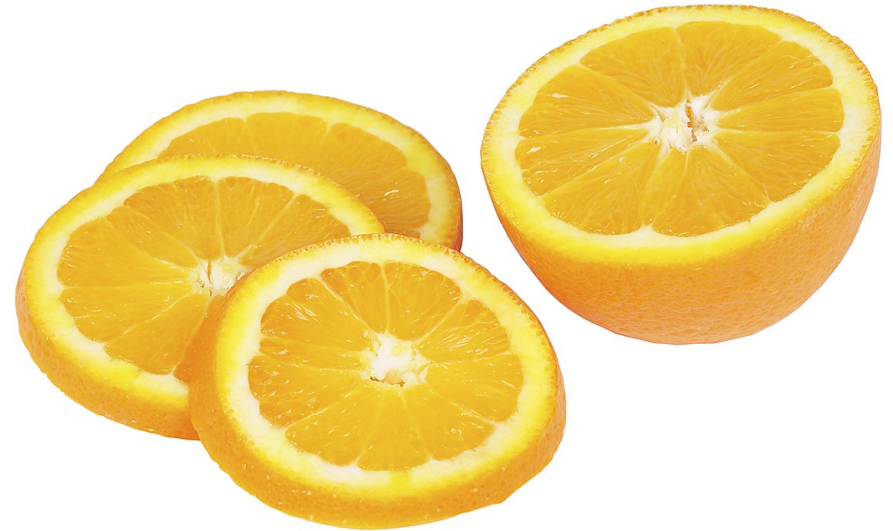
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What to write and where to start



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The Internet is an extremely visual medium and yet it's still the words on your website that will make or break it.

In this booklet I share a few tips on how to turn your website, or email newsletter into a persuasive sales tool through your use of language.

KISS—Keep it Simple Stupid

Familiar, simple, old words spring to mind when people search for stuff. If you fill your pages with fancy new words, you'll lose the most powerful tool in internet marketing: the ability for users to find you in search. Making the search listings is a crucial first step, but it's not the only step: users must also click your entry, and your site must have a good conversion rate.

Writing great copy will increase your conversion rate—the rate you convert website visitors to customers.

People don't read Web pages

Instead, they scan the page, picking out individual words and sentences.

Your scannable web pages should use

- Bulleted lists
- Meaningful headings
- One idea per paragraph
- The inverted pyramid style where you start with the conclusion
- Highlighted keywords—as links or in bold

Visitor Psychology – What's In It For Me?

Your visitor doesn't care about you. They don't care that you've spent \$10,000 building the latest release of your widget. They don't care that you have a nice company logo and a neatly designed website. When anyone visits your website or reads your newsletter they have one question in mind and that question is:

“What's in it for me?”

The best way to answer the “What's in it for me?” question is by relating to your potential customers through the benefits of your product or service.

are thirsty so 'thirst quenching fruit' may be one of your keyword phrases and this becomes the basis for a page on your website that begins. .

Oranges are nature's own thirst quenching fruit. The round, perfectly formed juicy orange is perfect for quenching your thirst etc etc

When you write, use keywords that match users search queries. You can use one of the free keyword suggestion tools, there are many to choose from. One I use is www.goodkeywords.com.

The trick to writing to be found by search engines is to

1. Consider your keyword phrases
2. Incorporate these keywords on specially targeted pages where you write to be read by people

Don't put all your keywords on one page as it dilutes their effectiveness. Instead have targeted pages for keywords or keyword groups and write as per guidelines in the rest of this booklet.

Conclusion

These are basic copywriting tips. I've only skimmed the surface - I hope they help you with writing for your website and if you have an existing website maybe you will use at least one idea for improving your site or email newsletter.

If you are interested in learning more contact Spiral to participate in a web copywriting workshop or borrow one of our books on the topic. We can also recommend web copywriters .

Oh, one last thing—remember to check your spelling.

Round Orange Fruit . . .

- **Transport easily.** They go in your bag or pocket
- **Quench your thirst.** Water and fructose makes the difference.
- **Taste Great.** Nature's own wonderful recipe.
- **Are recyclable.** Simply them in your compost.

It is much easier to read a list of bullet points than a paragraph of text. Notice the three dots I added after the opening sentence? - *Round Orange Fruit . . .*

This is a copywriting trick you can use. It says to the reader "HEY! Keep reading, there's more information below".

Things to Avoid

Here is a list of things to avoid when copywriting for your web site:

- **Massively large fonts.** Don't make your headline massive just because you saw it on another web site. It's true that a killer headline will make or break you, but when you can read the headline from the other side of the room it's too much.

- Avoid text background colours. I'm sure you've seen text like this all over the web. While you may think it's attention grabbing, it's really just annoying and there's no proof it works.
- **Don't underline for emphasis.** Underlines are reserved for links and links only. It's confusing for visitors to your web site.
- Be true to your word. If you promise a 30-day refund, do it.

What about the search engines?

Yeah, yeah, you want to be #1 on Google, everyone does. The trick is not to be #1 for everything but to be #1 for what you do and what you do best.

Keywords are well, key! Think about how your customers will search for you and then use those words. For example your customers may be people who

Features VS Benefits

If you want your website to be a 24/7 sales machine it's critical that you can translate your list of product features into benefits. Benefits sell because they appeal to people's emotions. Features do not. For example, look at this feature list for an orange:

1. Orange skin
2. Grows on trees
3. Contains Vitamin C
4. Juicy

Boring! Now let's translate this list of features into benefits:

1. Easy to transport and carry, with its built-in wrapper.
2. Quenches your thirst
3. Wards off colds
4. Available at supermarkets and greengrocers
5. You can even grow your own

The list of benefits make an orange much more appealing than the plain features.

Prove you are trustworthy and reliable

Credibility is important for web users since it is unclear who is behind information on the web and whether a page can be trusted. Credibility can be increased by

- Good writing
- Customer referral stories
- Case studies
- Customer testimonials

By showing your visitors that people have already purchased and are using your products or services you eliminate most of the pre-conceived doubt and scepticism they may have about you and your company.

Headlines

The best way to come up with a headline is to put yourself in your visitor's shoes. Ask yourself "If I were one of my potential customers, what words, features, benefits, etc would make me want to keep reading and eventually order my product?"

Test different variations of your headline because if you have a weak headline very few people will continue reading, thus resulting in lost sales.

Here are a few tips to get you started on writing or rewriting your own headline:

- Social proof headlines work well. Use phrases such as "Who else wants to [have whatever your product does]", "Learn how thousands of people have [done whatever your product does]", "Here's how to [get the benefits your product provides]", etc.
- Your headline should stress the top benefit of your product. It should be short and to the point and should make visitors want to keep reading to learn more.
- Avoid headlines that sound too good to be true or include too much hype, such as "With only one hour a day you too can become a home-based-business millionaire in only 4 weeks".
- Do research. Look around the Internet for headlines that grab your attention and copy their format, or think back to recent purchases you've made online and note down the headline or web content that persuaded you to buy and use it on your own site.
- 3-12 words are optimal for catching a persons attention

Formality Not Required

Think of your customers as an extension of you and your company. Formality in web copy or

TIP: Google indexes web pages not web sites so group your keywords and use a group of similar keywords on a single page to increase the effectiveness of your copy.

email only adds awkwardness so try to avoid it.

Most people buy from small companies because they prefer personal interaction and appreciate the attention to detail. Here's an example of formal copywriting:

The Round Orange Fruit is ideal for small businesses. It includes dozens of new features perfect for anyone looking to start and grow a business.

Bland, boring, no benefits, and it does not speak to the visitor. Try and use the word "you" as much as you can. Here's a partial reworking of the formal copywriting from above:

*Are you looking for an outstanding fruit that will increase your revenue, put you way ahead of your closest competitor and make your clients worship you?
If so, the Round Orange Fruit is perfect for you. We understand busy people like you and have created a thirst quenching package you'll find so easy and useful. . . .*

This is a simple example but you get the idea.

Bullet Lists

It's not easy to read paragraphs of text on a screen. You need to break up your copy as much as you can. One of the best ways to catch the attention of people who simply scan over your web site is with bullet points.

Consider this paragraph:

The Round Orange Fruit makes it easy to quench your thirst anywhere. They fit right in your bag or pocket. They have that great orange smell and taste and the elements of water, fructose and flavour mean you get a balanced health drink.

Now let's reformat it with bullet points: