

Copywriting from the Heart



Almost everyone has a story about how they felt tricked or coerced into buying something. Sometimes these experiences turn into subconscious fears about marketing that can sabotage the success of your work. That's why it's important to identify these negative feelings and understand how they may be influencing you. Ask yourself:

- When you think of the word "marketing," how does it make you feel? What physical sensations do you experience?
- Has bad marketing ever made you feel manipulated or pushed into doing something? If so, describe the experience.
- Can you recall a positive experience with marketing that led you to purchase something? If so, describe. How did it differ from other experiences?
- When growing up, what messages did you receive about bragging? About being in the spotlight?
- How do those messages affect your behavior today? How do they affect your business?
- Have you ever had any bad experiences when marketing your own business? If so, write them down. What didn't work? How did it make you feel?
- What kind of marketing *has* worked for you in the past? Why?

Telling Your Story

One great way to find your voice is to start telling your own story. For one thing, no one knows your own life better than you. You'll probably find your story plays an important role in your written marketing materials, too: from your elevator speech to your personal biography, your story is a huge part of your personal brand.

As you answer these questions, pretend you're writing to a close friend. Feel free to joke around, curse, get off-topic, or do whatever feels most natural and authentic to you.

Then, put your writing away for a few days. This is an important part of the process, because having distance gives you a fresh perspective on what you've written. When you finally revisit your writing, you'll probably find some interesting anecdotes that you can work into future copywriting projects.

- How did you arrive at your current job, and what do you love about it?
- What education, training and/or unique experience do you have?
- What would you or your friends say are your personality strengths?
- How do you use these strengths in your current job?
- What set you apart from the competition?
- What are your biggest dreams, goals and aspirations?
- List three to five memorable compliments you've received about yourself or your work?
- What are the three biggest challenges you've faced in your lifetime, and how have they made you a better person?
- What three accomplishments are you most proud of, and why?
- How do you make a difference in people's lives?

Getting to Know Your Audience

Understanding your audience is the *single most important part of writing good copy*. Once I've researched the audience for a copywriting project, I start jotting down notes about a single person. First, I describe the person as if she were standing right in front of me, including details such as age and income. Then I describe her personality, and what she values most in life. By the time I'm finished, I've answered the following questions:

- What are this customer's goals in life?
- What are her biggest fears?
- What problem is this person facing? What kind of pain does this cause, mentally and emotionally?
- What end result does this person want? What end result does this person need? Are the two the same or different?
- How can I solve this problem?
- What benefits do I offer that this person may not know about?

Writing the Rough Draft

Once you've gathered information about your audience, you can begin writing your first draft. Don't try to control your writing at this stage in the process. Just get everything you want to say down on the paper.

"People try to be too perfect, too soon in the process," says Megan McDonough of Mindful Marketing. "You have to get messy before you get neat. The purge step is throwing down a whole bunch of stuff. Especially if I'm feeling stuck on a project, I'll just throw down words. Once those words are purged, I go back maybe a different day and mine for the nuggets."

Editing for the Five Fundamentals

Once you're done "purging" the first draft, you can begin to edit. You may have to edit two, three or even four times before the copy is exactly the way you want it. During the process, you may choose to set the writing aside for a few days or get feedback from others.

Once you've finished writing the copy, it should include these five fundamentals, taken from the book "[How To Write A Good Advertisement](#)" by Victor O. Schwab.

- i. Get attention
 1. Offer a reward for reading
 2. Psychology shows negativity is not always a bad thing
- ii. Show people an advantage
 1. Understand your audience's needs
 2. Know the difference between features and benefits
 3. Use the five senses
- iii. Prove it
 1. People decide with emotion, but justify their purchase with logic
 2. Be specific and thorough — leave no questions unanswered.
 3. Testimonials.
- iv. Persuade people to grasp this advantage
 1. Sum it up with your strongest point.
 2. Again, remember the five senses.
- v. Ask for action
 1. Many people ignore this step, but it's crucial
 2. Make it easy to take action.

Additional Resources

[How To Write A Good Advertisement](#) by Victor O. Schwab

[Juicy Pens, Thirsty Paper: Gifting The World With Your Stories](#) by SARK

[Writing Begins With The Breath: Embodying Your Authentic Voice](#) by Laraine Herring

[The Courage To Write: How Writers Transcend Fear](#) by Ralph Keyes

[Copyblogger.com](#) -- an online blog with copywriting tips for marketing success.