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COPYWRITING FOR BUSINESS OWNERS:

WRITING EFFECTIVE SALES COPY
IS A MATTER OF MINDSET

Part of the Entrepreneur Essentials Series from [Amazing.com](https://www.amazing.com)

If you have something to sell, you have something to write — probably a *lot* to write, in fact. In an online marketplace that offers consumers dozens, hundreds, even thousands of options for getting what they want, you have to elevate and distinguish your message if you want to sell a product or service. In short, effective copywriting is key to making the sale.

The thought of having to write compelling sales copy is understandably intimidating to a lot of entrepreneurs because the general thinking is that writing is an innate skill — you have it or you don't. It doesn't help that marketing professionals continuously harp on the importance of good copy (see previous paragraph), putting further pressure on those who think they “don't have it.”

The purpose of this *Entrepreneur Essentials* guide is to take that pressure off (first paragraph notwithstanding). We're not here to suggest copywriting is some kind of exalted craft to be attempted only by seasoned professionals. On the contrary, this guide will show how you can write sales copy that converts — even if the most important thing you've ever written is a grocery list.

It's all about mindset. Plenty of guides out there will give you great information on the execution and mechanics of good copywriting, but more important than any of that is getting in the right frame of mind. You don't need a Shakespearean command of words; you just need to think like a copywriter. Fortunately this way of thinking can be learned with relative ease. Keep reading to discover how you can achieve the proper mindset to produce winning copy!

WRITE WITH A SPECIFIC PERSON IN MIND

This is an old standby of copywriting advice, but it always bears repeating. Before you start writing your sales copy, you need to figure out exactly whom you're writing for. And the best way to do this is to envision a living, breathing, *purchasing* person. Who's going to buy your product?

You need to go beyond a generic description. "Middle-age male with wife and kids" doesn't cut it here. Instead, picture a specific person. Try to think of a person you know in real life, if possible. Once you have this person in mind, you can begin the critical work of truly understanding their persona — including their motivations for purchasing.

Take a walk around in this person's proverbial shoes. Imagine their day-to-day life: where they work, what they do for fun, people they interact with, and so on. Ultimately you're trying to understand:

- **What are this person's hopes, fears, and desires?** These are key emotions for the copywriter. Customers buy on emotion and then use logic to justify their purchases. You want to know what your customer **hopes** to gain, the **fear** they feel at the thought of missing out on something or being perceived a certain way, the deepest **desires** they have. Once you understand these emotions, you can identify **problems** they likely have.

- **What are the problem(s) you can solve?** Think of your customer's problem(s) in terms of what you offer. Do they **hope** to improve a struggling relationship with their kids? Do they **fear** others will perceive them as unsuccessful? Do they **desire** a long-term romantic relationship? Think of how your product can address these problems.
- **How does your product deliver the solution to the problem(s)?** This is often the trickiest part of understanding your customer, because your product probably won't *directly* solve their core problems (hopes, fears, desires). Rather, your product will deliver a **benefit** that will ultimately address the problem. Furthermore, you don't want to overtly point out your potential customer's problem. That will send them running. You need to be subtle while still addressing the problem.

ESSENTIAL EXAMPLE:

BE SUBTLE IN ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM

If you sell luxury automobiles, you're probably trying to address your customer's desire to be perceived as successful. But you don't want to write "If you buy this Mercedes people will think you're successful." Instead, you want to emphasize the vehicle's aesthetic appeal and high-end features, which suggest the vehicle is classy and expensive. Of course someone with a classy, pricy vehicle will be perceived as a success. Check out the sample passage below, and notice how it indirectly addresses the desire to be perceived as successful with the phrase "you've arrived."

Sample copy: The Mercedes M-460 features a twin-turbo engine and an all-new aerodynamic design to combine power with beauty. When you show up in the M-460, they'll know you've arrived.

BUT ALSO TAKE YOURSELF INTO CONSIDERATION

Once you've gathered as much information as possible from getting in the mind of your ideal customer, it's time to get inside your own mind. Think about your recent non-essential purchases and why you made them. You're your own best source of good copy.

Again, people tend to purchase based on emotion, then justify with logic. It's important to keep this in mind as you analyze your own reasons for buying products. Did you really buy that expensive outfit or coffee maker or [insert any non-essential item here] because it offered markedly better performance? Maybe you did, but odds are you were also addressing something deeper. Perhaps your new outfit makes you feel attractive. That high-dollar coffee may be your way of assuring yourself you work hard and are worthy of the finer things.

As you probe your real motivations for purchasing, don't be afraid to admit you're human. We all behave this way when it comes to buying things, and once you're comfortable with the fact that you give in to basic hopes, fears, and desires, you'll be comfortable with harnessing those same emotions in your readers (customers). You're speaking to feelings that are already present, rather than creating those feelings.

This comfortability is what will free you to write effectively. Getting inside your customer's mind will help you *know* what you want to say. Getting inside your own mind will help you *say* what you want to say. What words — written or spoken — would convince you to buy?

REALIZE IT'S A SCIENCE AS MUCH AS AN ART

After you've surveyed the motivations of your ideal customer and yourself, you should have a good idea of what you need to say. So you're just about ready to put pen to paper! This is a critical moment for any copywriter, especially for one with little or no experience. Why? Because this is where paralysis often strikes. You want to start writing, but you just can't. You don't know where to begin, or perhaps you think you just can't muster the right words once you get going.

The best way to combat this writer's block is to realize that copywriting is a science as much as it is an art. It is *not* a "you have it or you don't" ability. There are proven methods that move people to action — in this case, buying your product — and you can use this knowledge to write with confidence.

For example, researchers have found that “[context words](#)” — words that suggest insight, time, space, and/or motion — are particularly engaging to readers.¹

These context words are especially useful when writing headlines (sales and landing pages), product descriptions (on Amazon listings, your own ecommerce website, etc.), email subject lines, and even opening lines in video scripts.

¹Channick, Tom. “The 1,072 Words That Will Change How You Write Headlines Forever.” NATIVE. July 1, 2015. Accessed August 6, 2015. <http://nativeadvertising.com/contextwords/>. Essential Example: Use context words to write a killer headline

ESSENTIAL EXAMPLE:

USE CONTEXT WORDS TO WRITE A KILLER HEADLINE

“Learn How to Double Your Productivity Every Day”

In this one headline you have words conveying insight (“Learn How to”), motion (“Double”), and time (“Every Day”). Play around with other context words to see what kind of engaging sentences and phrases you can come up with!

Powerful words are just the beginning when it comes to research-backed copywriting strategies. Both scientific studies and informal analyses have shown the effectiveness of everything from [good storytelling](#) to [well-designed calls to action \(CTAs\)](#) to [selling time and experience over possessions](#).

The main takeaway is that you shouldn't think of copywriting purely as an art. It's something you can do effectively if you're willing to take some time and learn from the nearly infinite resources, which, by the way, are easily accessible via web search. This ultimately means that *anyone* can write effective copy. As with any discipline, though, it may require a little bit of effort and refinement (more on that later).

STILL, DON'T BE AFRAID TO LET THE WORDS FLY

Okay, so there's an abundance of readily available educational resources on copywriting. Does that mean you should write cautiously, reading every bit of copywriting advice you can find and double-checking every word you write against the "context words" list as you go?

Absolutely not. Now is the time to let the words fly!

By this point you should be in a good mindset to write the gist of what you need to say to your potential buyer. You've envisioned your ideal customer, identified their problem(s), and determined that your product can solve the problem(s). You've probed your own mind and thought about what *you* would have to hear or read to make the purchase.

So start writing! Tell your customer in plain language that you know their issue and you have the solution. The key to this part of the process is selling your product just as you would if you were talking to your potential customer in person. Use clear language. Be honest. Be authentic. If you're passionate about your product, the words should come easily. You just need to commit those words to paper (virtual paper, most likely).

ESSENTIAL EXAMPLE:

STRUCTURE YOUR SALES PAGE FOR SUCCESS

Need a good template for a basic sales page? Stick to these elements and you'll have a page that converts visitors to customers:

1. **Attention-grabbing headline.** Remember those context words!
2. **Bold introduction.** Identify the big problem and the solution. Don't disclose your product here; provide the solution in general terms. Tell what your product will *do*, not what it *is*.
3. **Credibility.** Tell your potential customer why they can trust you. Are you an expert in a certain field? Do you already have many satisfied customers? Use whatever information you have that establishes your authority.

4. **Overcome obstacles.** What questions might your potential customer have about your product? Answer them!
5. **Benefits.** Go beyond what your product does on the surface level. Speak to the *real* benefits. If you're selling a workout supplement, for example, you might say "Increase muscle mass (surface benefit) and hit the beach with confidence (the deeper desire to feel attractive)."
6. **Social proof.** Use customer testimonials to show how you've already helped customers. You can also give numbers. Example: "More than 5,000 people have already seen the benefits..."
7. **The product and price.** Now is the time to unveil your product!

8. **Guarantee it.** You need some kind of guarantee, plain and simple. Never leave it out of a sales page.
9. **Scarcity.** Inject scarcity by offering limited-time bonuses, giveaways, and/or discounts.
10. **How the purchase will change the customer's life.** Invite your customer to imagine what life will be like with your product.
11. **Call to Action.** Tell your customer what to do. Example: "Click below to place your order of MegaMuscle. We'll send it right to your doorstep in 3-5 days!"
12. **Warning.** Tell your customer why they shouldn't miss out on the opportunity.

This is the “just get going” part of the writing process that so many people can’t seem to get past. What those people don’t realize is that if you start from the right frame of mind, your words will be sincere and convincing — and that’s 98% of the battle. This is your first draft, so it probably won’t come out perfect, and that’s okay.

BECAUSE REFINEMENT IS WHERE YOU PERFECT YOUR MESSAGE

At this point you've committed your words to paper, imperfect though they may be. Congratulations, because you've completed the most *difficult* step! But now it's time for the most important step.

Here's something every writer knows, even if most don't want to admit it: You win or lose in the editing process. It's absolutely critical that you go back through your piece — whether it's a full-length sales page or a short email — and polish everything from simple grammar to flow and cohesiveness.

The good news is you don't need to be a seasoned editor or a grammar expert to get this part right. You simply need to read back through your copy with fresh eyes and a clear mind. The key to editing is giving yourself some time before you go back through your piece. Take a day or more — a half day at the very least — before you edit. This way you'll view your words as an unbiased reader rather than as the author.

You want to read through your piece as if you had never seen it before. And quite simply, if it doesn't keep your attention and make you think you need the product, fix it so that it does. This is where you'll want to use those resources we mentioned earlier. When you combine your sincere words with some expert advice and research-backed strategies, you're virtually guaranteed to create a message that will sell.

SIX EASY STEPS TO GUIDE YOUR REVISION

1. Redefine your offer from memory. Make sure what you've written is crystal clear and as concise as possible.
2. Write an even better headline by incorporating those powerful context words.
3. Revise your introduction. Make sure it entices your reader to read on and devour what you promise to deliver.
4. Remove fluff from the entire sales letter. Get rid of unnecessary words, excessive hype, and cliches.
5. Make sure each sentence pulls the reader along and makes him or her desire even more.
6. Have somebody else read your piece and give you honest feedback.

WRAPPING UP

We hope you see how mindset is more important than anything when it comes to writing strong sales copy. You don't need to have an English degree. You don't have to be a grammar expert. You don't even need previous experience. If you can tell people why your product is valuable and how it can meet their needs, you can write effective copy. If you're a business owner, you should be able to convey the value of your product with passion and sincerity.

Remember, the purpose of this guide is not to teach you every little thing about the craft. Rather, it's to help you approach copywriting as a professional would, which mostly consists of looking through your potential customer's eyes. If you can do that, you'll discover the right words to sell your product.

We encourage you to keep exploring all the resources that are out there. As with most worthwhile disciplines, there will always be room for improvement in your copywriting. It's a continuous process of learning and doing. This *Amazing.com Entrepreneur Essentials* guide has taught you how to kickstart that process — and how to write sales copy that gets the job done — by getting into the copywriter's mindset.