

# Unit II: Copy writing



Copywriting is the act, or occupation of writing text for the purpose of advertising or other forms of marketing.

The product, called copy, is written content that aims to increase brand awareness and ultimately persuade a person or group to take a particular action.

Copywriters help create billboards, brochures, catalogs, jingle lyrics, magazine and newspaper advertisements, sales letters and other direct mail, scripts for television or radio commercials, taglines, white papers, social media posts, and other marketing communications.

Advertising agencies usually hire copywriters as part of a creative team in which they are partnered with art directors or creative directors.

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- ▶ The copywriter writes a copy or script for an advertisement, based largely on information obtained from a client.
- ▶ The art director is responsible for visual aspects of the advertisement and, particularly in the case of print work, may oversee production
- ▶ Copywriting agencies combine copywriting with a range of editorial and associated services that may include positioning and messaging consulting, social media, search engine optimization, developmental editing, copy editing, proofreading, fact checking, layout and design.

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- ▶ Copywriters also work in-house for retail chains, book publishers or other big firms which advertise frequently.
- ▶ They can also be employed to write advertorials for newspapers, magazines, broadcasters and cable providers.
- ▶ Copywriters are similar to technical writers and the careers may overlap
- ▶ For example, a copywriter writes an advertisement to sell a car, while a technical writer writes the operator's manual explaining how to use it.

# 1. How to write advertisements?

In order to create a good print advertisement, you should take the following steps:

- ▶ write a well targeted headline
- ▶ design your advert clearly
- ▶ write compelling advertising text – known as copy

# Writing an advertising headline

- ▶ A compelling headline is vital
- ▶ A good headline should catch the reader's attention and make them want to read on.
- ▶ It might ask a question or inspire curiosity.
- ▶ It may refer to a specific problem, eg a bed manufacturer could ask: "Had another bad night's sleep?" Or it may appear to offer the solution to a problem, eg "Ever wanted to know the secret of a good night's sleep?"

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- ▶ Don't overplay the actual message - people will feel let down if they read on and their expectations are not fulfilled.
- ▶ A headline will encourage people to read on if it offers a clear benefit - such as "never have a bad night's sleep again".
- ▶ It could also be used to create a fear of missing out in the reader's mind, eg "last few remaining".



# Designing a Print Advert

- ▶ Use a clear design to convey your message.
- ▶ The way an advertisement looks plays a big part in attracting and retaining the reader's interest.
- ▶ Avoid small or complicated typefaces that are difficult to read.
- ▶ And don't mix too many typefaces in one advertisement - use one or two at most.
- ▶ Don't clutter the layout - keep plenty of white space in the advertisement - avoid the temptation to say too much.
- ▶ If your product or service needs more explaining - refer readers to your website or other easily accessible material.
- ▶ Ensure your contact details are clearly positioned.

# Writing Advertising Copy



- ▶ Use convincing copy to persuade your audience.
- ▶ The amount of text you include depends on the purpose and size of the advertisement.
- ▶ Businesses that want to advertise a sale might have a very limited amount of text accompanied by a headline and a picture of some of the items on offer.
- ▶ Consider the print quality of the newspaper or magazine - a small advert in a poor quality publication will be hard to read.
- ▶ If you're writing a lot of text, it should follow on logically from the headline, build a convincing case and prompt a response from the reader.
- ▶ Back up any claims with facts.
- ▶ Magazine readers generally tend to dwell on the contents for longer than newspaper readers, so tailor the length of your copy accordingly.



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- ▶ Good copy draws attention to the benefits of the product or service rather than focusing solely on the features.
- ▶ You should always write your advertisements with the reader/viewer - your potential customer - in mind.
- ▶ The advert must be tailored to the type of print media and the potential reader's interests and habits.
- ▶ Likewise, you might write a shorter advert for a more general newspaper - where the reader's interest may be less easily sustained.
- ▶ Remember that businesses have a duty to ensure their advertising is legal, decent, honest and truthful.

# Prewriting

- ▶ Pre-writing is the key to making your writing go faster and be more focused. It makes your writing go faster.
- ▶ Whereas a project may start with many options, pre-work eliminates rabbit trails, helps you organize your raw material, and lets you sort out your ideas.
- ▶ Decisions you make in this phase give you a sense of direction allowing you to get from Point A (a project that needs to be written) to Point B (a completed project) in the shortest route possible.
- ▶ It helps your writing be more focused.
- ▶ Just because you're not "officially" putting down words for your actual piece, the time spent in this preliminary phase is wisely invested.

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- ▶ Pre-writing lets you avoid one of the stumbling blocks to clear writing: muddy messaging.
- ▶ Writers develop their own formulas to follow before they write a piece.
- ▶ Identify your goal
- ▶ Determine the one thing you want your piece to accomplish.
- ▶ Perhaps you want the reader to change the way she looks at a topic or become informed about a cause.
- ▶ Record one overarching goal you want your piece to accomplish.
- ▶ You can have secondary goals, especially when you're writing a larger project like a business plan or a website, but make sure you identify your top priority so you can focus on it.

# Direct Mail

- ▶ A direct mail is a physical letter of promotion in the form of brochures
- ▶ Direct mails are sent using the postal service or the courier service.
- ▶ Distribution of hand bills can also be considered as a part of direct mail.
- ▶ Advertising through the mail is a useful marketing tactic for businesses selling goods or services or nonprofits raising money.
- ▶ Direct mail is the strategy of using the postal system to directly reach prospects with a marketing message.
- ▶ Writing effective direct mail copy takes practice and technique.
- ▶ As the industry has matured, several direct mailing strategies have proved to lead to better results.
- ▶ Copywriting a direct mail is very important as it has to convince a potential customer after having competed with similar mails.
- ▶ Effective direct mail copy follows established and tested rules and strategies.

# Before Writing Your Letter



- ▶ Define the need.
- ▶ Consider the recipients' desires that you hope to satisfy with your product or nonprofit.
- ▶ Highlight how buying or donating as you suggest will make the person's life better.
- ▶ Focus on benefits, not features.
- ▶ Features tell the specifics of the product or organization, such as "180 horsepower" or "we support a multidisciplinary approach to homelessness."
- ▶ Benefits show how the person reading the letter -- or the world at large -- will be better off if the recipient heeds your call to action.

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- ▶ Examples of benefits include "cuts your workload in half" and "we strengthen our community by making sure families don't go hungry."
- ▶ People are more likely to take action when you focus on benefits.
- ▶ Outline your offer.
- ▶ Decide what you will be asking readers to do.
- ▶ If you are selling a product, define the special deal you are offering consumers.
- ▶ If you are asking for a donation, figure out how much you would like the recipient to give and what gifts or recognition they will receive in return for their support.



# While Writing Your Letter

- ▶ Write to a "typical prospect."
- ▶ Recipients respond better to letters that are written in an easy and conversational tone, as you might write to a friend.
- ▶ Envision your typical prospect. Outline what the average person on your mailing list looks like.
- ▶ Your average prospect could be a senior citizen living in your community, a young professional in a major metropolitan area or anything in between.

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- ▶ Write for scanners and readers.
- ▶ Most people will scan your letter before deciding whether to read the whole thing.
- ▶ Persuade them to read by using powerful headings, subheadings, captions and bold and italicized words that convey your message clearly and make them want to read.
- ▶ Include more information in the narrative of the letter so when they do decide to read it through, they will find substantive information and compelling stories and testimonials.

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- ▶ Use the word "you."
- ▶ Readers like to read letters that talk directly to and about them as opposed to letters that talk mostly about the company or organization that sent it.
- ▶ Rather than saying, "Our flashlights are the best because they are the most powerful," say, "You will never find a more powerful flashlight for your home or car."
- ▶ Include a clear call to action. People don't make purchases or donations unless they are asked.
- ▶ A strong call to action tells the reader what you want her to do and then asks her to do it.
- ▶ Include information on how to perform the requested action, such as where to send the check or how to choose between a number of options.

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One of the best practice of writing a direct mail includes: Create a "swipe file" of good ideas for your direct mail letters by saving effective direct mail pieces that you come across in your business and personal mail.

Use emotionally compelling examples and stories to increase your response rate.