

7 Ways to Improve Your Copywriting Without Ever Taking A Course

By Zac Nelles

If you are writing copy here are some things you can do to drastically improve your sales copy so that more people will take action.

Tip 1: Write just like your audience or prospects talk.

Generally we will trust someone who is like us. It's human nature. We like people who have the same body language as us, we are more likely to trust someone who does the same job as us. And so on. So when you are writing copy, you can benefit from the additional trust your prospect will have for someone like themselves, by writing in their language.

Keep your jargon out of your sales copy. Both your company's and your professional jargon. Your customers are unfamiliar with it. When I was in the roof restorations business, the customers would say the mortar on my roof is falling apart. The roof restorer would want to know if it was the pointing or both the bedding and the pointing that need fixing. If you asked the customer if they knew if the bedding was in good nick? 9 times out of 10 you'd get a blank stare.

So do yourself a favour, go and hang around your prospects in a socially. See popular movies, read bestselling books and watch hit TV shows, they resonate with lots of people for a reason. Attend the events they attend. It will hold you in good stead to speak their language

Tip 2: Tell stories.

Everyone loves a story, from a yarn at the pub, to a bedtime fairy tale. Almost all popular entertainment is basically a well told story. Try telling a story at a party, many of the people within earshot will invariably wind up their private conversations and start to listen to your story. It's so deeply ingrained in human nature.

The highest selling sales letter ever written started with a story. It has been copied more times than most people would care to count.

Weave your selling message into a story that resonates with prospects and your copy, because they will empathise with the people in the story and your prospects will be more compelled to buy. There is an added bonus to selling through stories, without fail you will tell the story in conversational language.

Tip 3: Keep your copy about your prospect and their world.

Most advertising these days is so pathetic because it is about the seller. How great they are, how long they have been in business, why they are better than their competitors and so on. The ads are there to grandstand and to stroke the ego of the advertiser, not how they can help the prospect.

If you are serious about making sales, you'll invest your time effort and energy

putting together advertising that will help enrich your prospects lives. You will ultimately be rewarded by customer loyalty, more referrals and more business.

I recently received 10 emails from a friend about how to play better poker. They were sent to him by his brother and have been forwarded around to quite a few of their friends. The interesting thing is that they knew they were forwarding marketing materials, but because they were so helpful they were happy to send them anyway.

Interlaced with the tips were offers for books on poker and a betting odds calculator that he sold. So by enriching the life of one prospect that this company could actually email, maybe a dozen others who had never heard of him got helpful poker playing advice and may buy his products, even though they had never heard of this business directly.

Tip 4: Learn to sell Face to Face.

If you can't sell face to face you'll almost certainly never be able to write copy compelling enough to sell people in print, radio or video. So read some books on sales. Get an idea of what will persuade people face to face. Then spend 1,000 hours either making door to door sales or telemarketing.

Or if you are diligent both. Even if it is for a charity and you do it after work, it

is still selling practice. If you do it full time it for 6 months. If nothing else the experience will be hard wired in your brain to draw on when you next write copy.

But you must genuinely try to learn and get better. If you are there just to log hours forget about it. You aren't ever going to learn anything. Combined with writing how your prospects talk and you'll be producing more compelling copy in no time.

David Ogilvy, one of the best copywriters of his generation sold stoves door to door and became quite successful at it before he went into advertising. Claude Hopkins the father of modern advertising always claimed to be trying to emulate a door to door salesman when he sat behind his type writer punching out highly successful copy. Hopkins collected annual pay checks of \$214,000, all the way back in 1914.

Tip 5: Build a swipe file.

Start collecting successful advertising. Sign up to successful copywriters email newsletters. They'll inundate you with good copy. Get on to top direct marketing operations mailing and email lists. Clip good ads out of newspapers and magazines (any ads that take your interest). Never send a piece of direct mail to your round file unopened. Sort through all your junk mail and keep the gems. Buy copies of Cosmo etc when the cover

turns your head, or at least regularly check out the covers on magazine.com.

After a little bit of time collecting whenever you are stuck for ideas you can start working through your swipe file for ideas. You are bound to find something useful that will germinate some new ideas.

Tip 6: Write good copy out by hand

I've been at this copywriting caper less than 5 years and I have already written 50 packages that are amongst the most successful of all time. I didn't write them from scratch, what I did was wrote each package out word for word in my own handwriting. It hardwires into the deep reaches of your brain the way to structure sales copy for maximum effectiveness. Good copy now just happens for me, it's not a conscious thing it just flows out of the recesses of my brain.

I'd estimate 90% of my copywriting ability has come from that effort; the other 10% is reading books and taking courses. You need to learn copywriting at a deeper level than the intellectual level.

Tip 7: Study the masters of copywriting.

John Caples, David Ogilvy, Vic Schwab, Eugene Schwartz, Claude Hopkins and Rosser Reeves stand out from the heap. Buy their books. Do that before you spend a cent on any courses.

A book from each of them is maybe \$180. I haven't seen a worthwhile copywriting course for so little. Many copywriting courses are too expensive compared to what you learn reading these books. Buy the books first it will make the courses that much more enriching if you decide to do them later on.

I heard a story from a speaker at a direct marketing conference. He asked the audience to raise their hands if they had read Scientific Advertising. 3 hands went up in the hall. These people paid \$5,000 a seat when most of what was covered can be found in a \$12 book.

In Conclusion.

Take this advice before you buy a copywriting course. It will save you a fair whack of cash, it will give you some new skills and most importantly you will have a background and education that very few professionals have.

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To arrange a free no obligation copywriting consultation call +61 4 21 604 983 or by email at zac@zacnelles.com

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