



INTRODUCTION TO COPYWRITING IN CONTEXT TO ADVERTISING

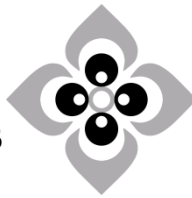
Introduction

Hello everyone, welcome to today's episode. Today we will discuss about the basics of copy writing, with emphasis on the basic techniques of copy writing for different media. The subject expert is Dr. Manu Sharma, who is a freelance academic, creative and web content writer.

What is Copywriting ?

Copywriting can be defined as a process of writing advertising promotional materials. Copywriters are the one who are responsible for the text on brochures, billboards, websites, emails, advertisements, catalogues, and more. This text is known as "copy", which is everywhere and it is becoming a part of a \$2.3 trillion industry worldwide. Unlike news or editorial writing, copywriting is all about getting the reader to take action. That action might be to purchase, opt-in, or engage with a product, service, or company. Copywriter, at times, is also referred to as "a salesman in print." The goal for a copywriter is to create remarkable content that the reader would find valuable and would make them want to take the recommended action.

In the field of broadcasting, copywriters are also known as continuity writers. They are used to help create direct mail pieces, taglines, jingle lyrics, web page content, online ads, e-mail and other Internet content, television or radio commercial scripts, press releases, white papers, catalogues, billboards, brochures, postcards, sales letters, and other marketing communications media pages. In book publishing, flap copy and jacket flap copy are the terms used for the brief summary of a book which often appears on the inside of the book's hardcover dust jacket. Back cover copy is similar, which is often a briefer text placed on the book's outside back cover. Catalogue copy is another book summary maintained in a publisher's catalogue of published books. Copy can also appear in social media content including blog posts, tweets, and social-networking site posts. Copywriting should not be confused with "copyright." Copyright means that an individual or company has the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute someone's work. The purpose of a copyright is to protect that material and prevent illegal use of it by unauthorized agents. The owner designates the material is copyrighted with the symbol ©.

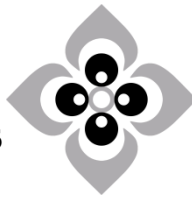


Copywriters

Most copywriters are employed within organizations such as advertising agencies, public relations firms, company advertising departments, large stores, marketing firms, broadcasters and cable providers, newspapers, book publishers, magazines and creative agencies . Copywriters can also be independent contractors who do freelance writing for a variety of clients, at the clients' offices or working on their own, or partners or employees in a specialized copywriting agency. Such agencies combine copywriting services with a range of editorial and associated services that may include positioning and messaging consulting, social media and SEO consulting , developmental editing, and copy editing, proofreading, fact checking, layout, and design. A copywriting agency most often serves large corporations.

A copywriter usually works as part of a creative team . Advertising agencies partner copywriters with art directors. The copywriter contributes in creating an advertisement's verbal or textual content, which often includes receiving the copy information from the client. The copywriter is responsible for producing compelling and persuasive content and the art director has ultimate responsibility for visual communication . In the case of print, work may oversee production. Although, in many instances, either person may come up with the overall idea for the advertisement or commercial, which is typically referred to as the concept; it is the process of collaboration which often improves the work. Copywriters are similar to technical writers and the careers may overlap. Broadly speaking, technical writing is dedicated to informing readers rather than persuading them . For example, a copywriter writes an ad to sell a car, while a technical writer writes the operator's manual explaining how to use it. One of the most traditional routes to begin copywriting career is to start with a Bachelor's degree in marketing . There are varieties, though. Plenty of them start as successful copywriters with little education, or get their start in journalism or even creative writing. The established path often includes some kind of internship, and then a directed job search. One major component of this job search will be the copywriter's portfolio, which is a physical or digital representation of projects/products that the copywriter has worked on. The characteristics needed to be a copywriter are similar, no matter what type of

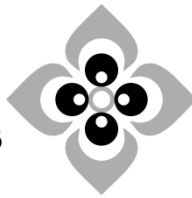
environment the writer works in. At the end of the day copywriters must be easygoing personalities, as their work is very often criticized, changed, or clashed. They must be willing to accept others ideas and edits. They must have a creative streak, especially verbally. Most of all, both kinds of copywriters must understand how to use and bend the language to capture sales and attention.



New trends in copywriting

Society is changing faster than at any time in history. As society has changed, so too has the field of advertising. Instantaneous global communication, instant messaging and new media, such as youtube, are just a few of the ways copywriters have had to adjust their communication styles and messages to connect with buyers. Writing copy in today's fast-paced, information laden society involves communicating key information in short blasts through mediums such as text-messaging and audio scripts involving video and podcasting. Copywriting skills and techniques are evolving as fast as new ways to market are created. Today's copywriter must be able to communicate clearly in three punchy sentences as well as create 40 page sales letters for direct mailings. Some of the new trends in copywriting are:

- **Less formal, more conversational tone.** The rapid shift in advertising from traditional to “alternative” media means less formal writing. Connecting with readers, especially the growing number of younger buyers, has increased the demand for a more conversational tone in writing. Copywriters have long been taught not to write formally, but this guideline has taken on an entirely new meaning when they post on blogs or develop the content for videos on Web sites. The trend of writing less formally is only going to continue in the decade to come .
- **Technology’s Increasing Role in Reducing the Size of Sales Copy.** Modern technology demands that the message is delivered in a couple of sentences . Twitter gives us 140 characters to communicate thoughts or promote a brand. The rise of the smartphone has introduced the world to microblogging , thus enabling copywriters to write short blog posts on mobiles and post them on a website. And with Google placing an increasing emphasis on mobile-friendly responsive websites, it seems that the standard word limit provided to post a blog is becoming a thing of past. Similarly, mobile devices have introduced photo marketing and with mobile apps like snapchat displaying images for up to 10 seconds, there’s no denying that minimalist marketing is on the rise.
- **Highlighting benefits vs. features.** With less than two seconds to grab a reader's attention, demonstrating “what's in it for the reader”, also known as WIIFM, is more important in today's advertising age than ever before. Immediately connecting with what a reader deeply feels catches their attention and entices them to continue reading . Having their problem solved is what they are looking for - not how you can do it
- **Relationship-building and permission-based marketing.** Consumers are doubtful of being sold to at the turn of every corner as this is happening so frequently. But if they are interested in your product, they will take the time to learn more about you and your offerings. And once consumers do learn to



trust the company and its brand, they are more likely to subscribe to e-zines, read free reports, download podcasts, and so on. This is the reason the term “permission-based marketing” was born. Because consumers are so bombarded with offers and overwhelmed with information, copywriters who have the ability to condense useful, needed information into a usable, easy-to-read format can be key to businesses interested in developing a relationship with target markets. Providing electronic newsletters, free reports, white papers and podcasts are just a few of the many ways businesses build relationships and get permission to market to consumers.

- **Proof and validation.** Guarantees, testimonials, earned awards and company history are definite must-haves for every company. Marketers should create strong guarantees and include widespread use of testimonials to demonstrate happy buyers and powerful results. Including information about the company's long-standing history or its founders gives readers a sense of familiarity and confidence in their purchases. Staff photos, the story of how the company was founded and information on the company's awards or relationships with other proven companies validates a company's reputation and permanence
- **Promise of action.** Instant gratification is expected in today's world. Will readers lose weight at once? Can they download the product right away? Will their back stop hurting or their headache disappear instantly? Is the information they need to finish their product available immediately? Consumers expect it. Companies provide it. All of this information should be included in the copy.
- **Infographics & Email Marketing.** With Google's increasing focus on the use of images in marketing, it's no wonder that digital marketers are embracing infographics like never before. The way that people read on the web has changed significantly over the last few years and people now scan for information rather than giving their undivided attention to a piece of text. And it's this new ability that online readers have to scan that has made infographics such a popular way of marketing. Their visual appeal grabs people's attention and they don't take long to read either. Carefully selected statistics, phrases and images make for light reading but still add value to those searching for information on a particular topic. Infographics tend to be an effective way of building backlinks as they're easily embedded on blogs.

Even direct marketing methods have seen a shift towards minimalist copy with email subject lines becoming shorter so as to avoid being marked as spam by email filters. Avoiding words like 'free', 'money', 'offer' and anything else that sounds overly sales-like ensures that your emails reach the recipients' inboxes and not their junk folder. As with blog posts, only 20% of people read past an email headline unless they recognize the sender. Given



that people tend to scan information nowadays, text in the email body tends to be shorter and less informative. Sales emails are now a days written to create intrigue rather than heavily selling a product or service. Shorter emails tend to have a higher read rate too as at first glance, they appear more like short enquiries rather than several pages of product information that most readers instinctively steer away from.

Structure of good body copy

- **Headline-** Headlines usually have the largest font size. It is usually 5 to 8 words in length. One should use simple, easy to understand words that should appeal to the self- interest of the audience. The headline has several functions:
 - It gives news
 - reinforces the brand
 - attracts attention
 - attracts a target market
 - increases curiosity
 - arouses emotions
 - calls to action
- **Subhead line-** This optional device often occurs right below the headline. The subhead line uses a few words that clarify, reinforces or explains the headline. The goal is to provide a smooth transition into the body copy.
- **Body Copy-** This is the text in the advertisement that provides support and details about product or the current offer. Often the body copy will use present tense, singular and active verbs. The sentence length varies but must involve the audience. Some of the types of body copy can talk about:
 - benefits of the product
 - testimonial from customers
 - expert opinion
 - narrative about the product or a customer
 - examples
 - options
 - rhetorical questions
 - statistics about the product
 - positioning information
- **Tagline** -Often this is the brand slogan that has been used for years.
- **Logo-** Brand symbol and/or words .



Tips on creating print ad Copy

1. Headline is the single most-important element of a print ad. It should be clear and concise. A copywriter should avoid the temptation to become so “creative” that one may lose upon the meaning. Where the headline is placed within the ad is as important as what the headline says. One needs to make sure that the headline dominates the ad so it can be quickly understood. Too often, the headline, which includes the most important information within an ad, is lost in a muddle of too many type fonts, graphics, and other elements.
2. In addition to the main headline, a subhead can impart secondary information. The headline must grab readers, but the subhead can explain the deal further. Not all ads require a subhead, but this element, generally set in smaller type, is there to give the reader additional information without cluttering up your ad
3. The *body copy*, also known as the *sell copy*, is where a copywriter can explain the offer in detail. But, like everything else in a good print ad, one needs to keep the body copy brief and possibly not include it at all.
4. The graphic element of the ad is there to attract the readers’ eyes and interest them enough to read body copy. The graphic element usually calls attention to, or complements, the headline. These two elements work together to create the overall ambience of the ad. Make sure that the ad's graphic element is relevant to what you’re selling.
5. Decide on a final layout. The design and layout of an ad is everything

Tips on developing radio commercial Copy

1. **“What you say is more important than how you say it”**: As a copywriter for radio commercial one should know products thoroughly. Know everything there is to know about product features and benefits. The Value Story should pull the important points out and must make an interesting listening.
2. **Make believability the goal**: Sincerity must shine through each and every ad and to inject believability, copy writers should avoid bragging or boasting. One must believe in product and refuse to exaggerate or make excessive claims.
3. **Give the ad a story line**. One interesting fact piled on another, then woven into a little narrative makes a powerful presentation. But, one interesting fact, unrelated to another, simply bores everyone with another shopping list. And who wants to read somebody else’s shopping list? Tell stories as examples to illustrate and explain your points. Stories make the arguments sound real.



4. **Get on one topic and stay with it:** One can choose an item, an idea, a sale or an event for the topic. Get on one of those topics and then load in one feature/benefit after another, one argument after another, in support of that single topic.

This method differs from writing a copy for Print. If you bring multiple major topics into a Radio ad, the listeners will not be able to follow them. In Print, ad designers may feature up to seven unrelated items in the form of a large layout usually called omnibus ads. Or, a writer might put a box somewhere in the print ad and write about another topic. However, in each case, the topic should qualify as a complete sales presentation by itself.

However, the broadcast industry demands short ads, usually 30 or 60 seconds. This ad structure works very like a person-to-person sales presentation. So, it's hard to promote two, three or four different items in the same broadcast announcement. So if a copywriter tries to throw several items into the same ad, one would end with a shopping list that seldom sells.

5. **Use specifics:** Listeners believe and respond better to specific statements than to generalities. Once you choose your appeal or major benefit(s), translate it into a very specific appeal. When talking about more than one of an available item, try always to give specific numbers: "We have 16 of these gift vouchers in stock. Eliminate generalities and get specific. Explain exactly how you serve your customers.
6. **Length of ads:** Your half-minute ads should run about seven to eight lines; a full minute, approximately 14 to 16 lines. Make sure your ad length allows the announcer time for a normal delivery pace. Studies show listeners misunderstand communication most of the time. Why compound the error by forcing your announcer to speak too fast as well? In any media, people better understand a simply worded and a simply presented message. Clarify your message even further when your announcer can speak at a normal pace. This rule stands out as one of the most important among radio advertising ideas. Read each ad aloud to make sure it comes through clearly. Then read it to others and watch their eyes. You'll recognize any error immediately when that blank look of incomprehension appears.

Copywriting for web

The Internet has expanded the range of copywriting opportunities to include web content, ads, emails, blogs, social media and other forms of electronic communications. Writing for the web is very different from writing for other media, tending to be more succinct than traditional advertising. Other stylistic distinctions also come into play when it comes to writing for web. It has also brought new opportunities for copywriters to learn their craft, conduct research and view others' work. The Internet has also made it easier for employers, copywriters and art directors to find each other. As a consequence of these



factors, along with increased use of independent contractors and virtual commuting generally, freelancing has become a more viable job option, particularly in certain copywriting specialties and markets. Some of the web copy writing tips are:

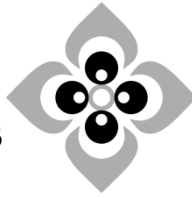
- **To know if the writing is based around one main keyword or keyword phrase** - Good copy which is also optimized for performance at the search engines should be carefully crafted around a single main keyword or keyword phrase. This is the keyword phrase the page will rank well for, so it should be as relevant as possible to the product, service or company the copy promotes.
- **Is the keyword in the Keyword Tag for the page?** - While the Keyword Tag itself is no longer as important as it used to be for the search engine rankings, it is still important in some respects. There must be consistency and relevance between the Keyword Tag and the rest of the copy to get the best results.
- **Does that keyword appear in the Title Tag in for the web page?** - Google have said explicitly that the Title Tag is still an important factor for search engine rankings. Leaving the main keyword out of this part of the web page copy is detrimental. Also, this is the first part of the copy a user will see in the search results, so it needs to be compelling and grab attention.
- **How many times is that exact keyword repeated throughout the copy?** - How many times the keyword should appear on the page is a matter of balance. Too little, and the search engines won't know what the page is about - too much and they will think the page is spam. A good search engine copywriter knows the right keyword density to use for the best results - usually it's no more than 3% of the total copy.
- **Does the keyword appear in a Headline Tag, preferably at the top of the page?** - While not as important as the Title Tag, headlines do help point out to the search engines which words in the copy are most relevant and important.
- **Does the keyword appear in the Description Tag?** - Again, this helps the search engines determine the topic of a web page.
- **Does the keyword appear in a text link on the page?** - Including keyword phrase in the text of one or two links on the page is good practice. Again, if the keyword appears in too many links, which is usually more than two, then this can look like spam to the search engines.



Copywriting for banner advertising

One of the most important elements in the banner ad is the value proposition: what you're offering your customers and the words you're using to "dress" up your offer. A good value proposition attracts users' attention, it gives people an incentive to click and it gets them on the path to conversion.

1. **What are you selling?**- This is the question a copywriter needs to start with. Think of it this way: the people who will see the banner ad have never heard of the product/ service before. They don't know anything about it or what is being offered. So, what it is that is being sold? What is the actual product or service that you want your users to purchase? Even if you're starting a display advertising campaign focusing on increasing brand awareness, it is still an important question. Even if people don't complete a purchase right away, they can connect your product or service to what they need later on. Think in terms of direct benefits: what will your users get when they complete a purchase or fill in a lead generation form with you? The main point here is to make it as clearly as possible what you're selling, the actual product instead of brand names. Unless one is planning a retargeting campaign, don't try to push brand names that don't speak to target audience as they won't be interested to learn more. Also, if you're offering a service, consider what will customers get when they use the service being offered?
2. **What makes your product/ service or company different?**- This question will help you find the characteristics that will set you apart from the competition. It will give you the competitive edge and it will help you craft a clearer position in your audience's mind. So, how is your product, service or company different from the competition? Make a list as comprehensive as possible of all the attributes that make your business different. Go for quantity and don't worry about wording. However, don't lie and don't add benefits that are not actually available.
3. **How can you say that differently?** - If you've done the work in step two by now you should have a list of items that can be used to describe your business. This requires a bit of creativity, but when in doubt you can always try thesaurus.com or any other online dictionary to find alternatives. However, one needn't always rephrase the benefits. Sometimes the benefits you've outlined in the previous steps are good enough on their own.
4. **Combine** - Take the product and the service that you've outlined in step 1 and create combinations of it and the attributes or the variations you've



come up with in the subsequent steps. Don't be afraid to combine one or two attributes with the product or service. Also, don't worry if you come up with more than one copy versions for your banner ads. See to which one your audience responds best by running an A/B test with one or more banner ads.

I hope today's episode was helpful to you in understanding the skill set required to be a copywriter and the essentials one needs to keep in mind while designing an ad copy for different media.