

Why the words in your sales copy, matter.

Maybe, but you're probably not sure yet because you don't know what this article is about. If I continue to address you and your concerns you will probably keep going. The example below is unlikely to grab you.

Our recycled paper is environmentally friendly. It is made from 100% recycled post consumer waste paper by a company based in the Northwest of England. They have been involved in recycling products for 12 years and they have an excellent reputation for quality products.

Why? The text on this fictional advert is talking about the company and its product but it doesn't make the leap in connecting your needs and concerns with the benefits this product can give you.

Below is some different text about the same product aimed at organic farmers.

Caring for the environment is a core part of your business. But you know environmental concerns are not an acceptable excuse for inferior crops and produce. So you might like our new recycled

paper. It's thicker and it feels expensive. In fact it is so unlike our competitors thin recycled paper that we recommend you put

Printed on 100% recycled paper

on it, otherwise your customers would never know.

For more products which combine quality with sustainability, visit our website to see our range of printer cartridges etc.

In the second example, the writer has spent time understanding the needs of the target market.

What makes your customers tick?

Find out as much as you can about your customers. Who are they, what is important to them, what do they get excited about?

How does your product or service fit in to this? Why are they buying your products or services?

What is publicity material?

All publicity material from labels to websites is an opportunity to have a talk to your customers.

**Labels – don't just say what's in this one; tell them you have
10 other types of sausage.**

Different publicity material has different purposes, but there is always an opportunity to talk to your customers.

In the example below, Village Bakery is using one of the panels on their apricot slices' packaging as a platform to shout out their message.

Village Bakery copy see attachment

Reproduced with kind permission from the Village Bakery.

Your leaflet should show them what they are missing.

Leaflets offer people an introduction to your products or services.

The purpose of your leaflet is to encourage people to take the next step towards buying from you. That next step could be sending off for a price list, clicking through to the website, visiting your shop or Farm Shop. Don't forget to make it easy for them.

- A phone number in large font that will be answered by a human being.
- Web address in large font.

- Postcode so they can find your shop with satellite navigation.
- A map or good directions for those who don't have satellite navigation.
- A reply paid envelope for the coupon.

You don't need just a website, you need a website that welcomes people in.

A website is your online shop. The home page is your shop window; it must say, "Come in". So don't waste your home page with neutral information such as your address that can go on your contacts page. Make sure your phone number is prominently displayed in the header section of every page, so browsers don't have to search for it.

Once someone has clicked through to other pages on your site, he/she is through the door and ready to find out more. You can now sit them down by the fire and have a chat with them. You can show them all the ways in which your product will make them feel good.

Bill them, and sell some more.

Even an invoice can be used to promote your products. For example:

Having a bonfire party? Order our party pack including 15 beef burgers and 15 sausages for only £25.00

Can go on your September and October invoices.

I know, you don't like pushy salespeople.

All your publicity material is about selling, which is solving problems for your customers. This may involve educating, informing, campaigning but ultimately if you are running a business you are aiming to make profit by increasing your sales and/or your margin.

For many women their business stems from a passion or hobby and it often has to fit around other activities such as families and farming. Against this background some feel uncomfortable with the idea of "selling".

"If it is good enough it will sell itself" is something I often hear.

Selling is something phone companies do.

Just think about your experience as a consumer. When, on the other hand, a company approaches you with a solution to a

problem that has been nagging at you, but for which you haven't found an answer, you are pleased not irritated by the arrival of the information; that is the secret to effective publicity material. Well thought out words, targeted to the right audience.

Once you unwrap selling and think of it as helping people solve problems, you will find it less uncomfortable.

How will your product enhance your customer's life?

Anybody who has done any sales or marketing training will have heard of features and benefits. The features of a product are descriptions of what a product is like. The benefits are how the features make the buyers life better/easier/more pleasant or what the features do for the buyer.

However much you know your product it is always worth sitting down and doing a quick analysis especially if you have a new product.

Below are the features and benefits of a pack of organic mixed salad leaves.

Features	Benefits.
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<p>Fresh delivered within 24hrs of being picked.</p>	<p>Maximum vitamin & mineral content.</p> <p>Maximum taste.</p> <p>Looks attractively crisp on your plate or in your salad bowl.</p> <p>Will impress dinner guests.</p> <p>Tastes good in sandwiches.</p>
<p>Mixture of leaves</p>	<p>Economical - You do not have to spend more money on many different types of individually packed leaves.</p> <p>You can enjoy the contrast of sweet and hot without having to know which leaves to put in.</p> <p>Enjoy the growers use of new, oriental varieties of salad leaves, many of which you cannot buy separately.</p> <p>Easy to prepare, just wash and serve.</p> <p>Convenient so saves you time.</p> <p>Easy to use in sandwiches, only need to wash it.</p>
<p>Certified Organic</p>	<p>Not sprayed with artificial pesticides whose residues may adversely affect some people.</p> <p>Grown using a sustainable form of agriculture so you can feel good about eating it.</p>

	The farm is certified and inspected so you can trust that the produce is genuinely organic.
Local	<p>You can feel good about supporting a local business.</p> <p>You can feel good that more of your money is staying in your local area.</p> <p>Buying this food is not supporting the excessive use of fossil fuels to fly produce in from overseas.</p> <p>You can reduce your carbon footprint by buying this locally produced item.</p>
Nothing added to enhance freshness.	You are not supporting an energy intensive system of processing and packing.

What mood is your reader in?

It is worth bearing in mind, that readers of different media are in very different moods. So if you have an advert in a local paper you have about 30 seconds to grab your reader's attention before your £350.00 advert ends up unread in the recycling bin.

If however your reader has clicked through to the 'About Us' page of your website, your reader is interested, has more time and is in a thoughtful mood. In this situation, the reader is actively looking for more information about your product.

If your reader is on page 3 of your direct mail letter you definitely have their attention and they want to know about as many of the benefits as possible.

Hints for writing better copy.

- ❖ Focus on the customer more than your company. If you were the customer what would you like to know?
- ❖ Highlight benefits that will appeal to the reader.
- ❖ Talk to your reader as though you are in their front room.
- ❖ Keep it simple. Long words can alienate readers.
- ❖ Keep it lively. Imagine you are having a conversation with your reader.
- ❖ For websites and brochures break up the copy with sub-headings.
- ❖ Facts including statistics are more convincing than unsubstantiated claims.

- ❖ Keep your customers' nice comments and use them in your publicity material.
- ❖ Don't forget the call to action, to put it in the shopping cart, phone, go on the website or send back the coupon.
- ❖ Make use of front pages e.g. brochures and home pages on website. Do they make the reader want to read on?

How to do a better leaflet

Following a few basic rules can give your leaflet more chance of being read and acted on. Rules are of course there to be broken too!

- Dark text on pale background is easier to read.
- Words over images are hard to read.
- Use the back page for your address but make sure website and phone are on every page.
- Think about and distil your Unique Selling Point e.g. home reared, rare breed or picked in the morning, delivered in the evening and put it on the front cover.
- If your name doesn't say what you do, make sure the line or symbol that does is more prominent than your name.

- Unless you have a famous company or brand name, make sure your tag line isn't too obscure. "The future's bright, the future's orange" is not really going to help a carrot grower in the way it has helped Orange.
- Good graphics on your leaflet will make it eye catching, good copy will attract buyers.
- Always put captions under photos.

How to do better web copy

- Make sure your web developer and copywriter have looked at key words before you start. These are vital for Search Engine Optimisation.
- The home page is the shop window, hold the door wide open and let the sight and sound of your products entice people in.
- Spend time planning the structure of your site. Make sure that the reader can move to purchasing or contacting you at any place in the site, i.e. have the shopping cart icon or the contact icon visible wherever in the site they are.
- Once they are into the bowels of your website your reader is looking for lots of information. Help them to find the bits they are interested with lots of clickable links. Remember to present that information from the reader's point of view.

- Keep product descriptions short but interesting and use clickable links to more information like cooking and storage instructions.
- Keep in touch with new opportunities for using your website, such as blogs or podcasts. If you don't have time use resources like the WIRE website to read about others who do.

Making the most of your budget

For smaller businesses marketing budgets are rarely adequate.

You may well write most of your own material, using web developers and printers when necessary. If you are limited make sure you use your budget well.

When you are getting brochures or leaflets printed, it is always worth talking to printers about design and layout. They vary enormously in terms of what creative input they can give you. If you are stuck for inspiration, it may be worth spending £50-£200.00 on creative design. Look for independent graphic designers.

Likewise, if you want a website designed or revamped, bear in mind that there are 5 distinct areas in website design. You need an integrated approach.

- Copy- the text on your site.
- Graphics – the images
- Layout and navigation - the look and ease of moving around the site.
- Behind the scenes technical performance – the speed and functionality of the site.
- Search engine optimisation – this is the term used to ensure that when people search for keywords related to the products and services of your business you come high up in the search results of search engines like Google and Alta Vista.

The best way to find a web developer is by recommendation from other businesses who have sites that are delivering sales for them, not just sites that look nice.

The Internet is a fast changing media and you need good support once you have a website to ensure that you are always maximising its performance.

Freelance copywriters can write all types of publicity material for you if you either don't have the time or don't feel happy with

what you produce. Most freelancers will work with graphic designers, printers and web developers to ensure that the final product hits the target audience. If you spend the money on printing and layout, it is worth getting the copy right so that all that effort gets a response.

Where do you go from here?

If you enjoy this side of your business and have found this article useful, go out and get more information on copywriting and graphic design.

Visit <http://www.inst.org/copy/> for information on copywriting courses or search Google for 'copywriting' for lots of sites offering more hints and tips.

If on the other hand you feel this is all very well but you are already juggling so many hats that you really can't take more on in this area, then spend some of your budget on a professional copywriter who can help to keep those customers coming for more of your products or services.

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