

The 11 Things 99% of All Salesletters Are Doing Wrong (Including Websites)

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1) **You don't slave over your headline! You have a sucky, pathetic, wimpy, spineless headline that doesn't grab your prospect by the throat and practically *force him* to read your pitch!**

That's right... I said, "you didn't SLAVE over your headline!" Am I right... or what?

People are lazy by their very nature – and that's okay... it's just the way it is. But when you're trying to compel someone to hand over their hard-earned cash, the last thing you want to be is lazy.

You need to be writing 100 headlines *OR MORE* for each ad or salesletter you write! This may sound unreasonable, and certainly difficult – but if you push yourself and model other, successful headlines, you'll be able to come-up with 100 headlines or more.

Trust me on this... it's worth it to push yourself past the 100-headline mark, because here's what happens: once you're up to about the 30th headline, it'll suddenly dawn on you that if you combine headline number 13 with headline number 7, you'll have a killer headline for number 31!

And by the time you're hitting headline 70, you'll have well over a dozen KILLER headlines to choose from.

You see, by pushing yourself to 100 or more headlines, you'll come-up with the very best of the best headlines. (*And you can even test them against each other.*)

I've done hundreds of critiques for people who are trying to write their own copy. And I can always tell when a person has really pushed themselves to get a killer headline, and when they haven't. It's so stinking obvious to me.

I challenge you to do it! Push yourself to get past that sucky, pathetic, wimpy, spineless headline you've got and create a compelling masterpiece that grabs your prospects by the throat and practically forces them to read your pitch!

Slave over your headline!

2) **Your opening absolutely stinks... it's boring, predictable, and you spend way too much time "clearing your throat" rather than getting to the point.**

It just something that writers do.

They spend 2, 3, or more pages "getting their thoughts together"... or, put a better way by the master copywriter John Carlton... "**clearing your throat**".

And business-owner-copywriters are no different. You're uncomfortable with writing the opening your letter, and so you just end-up going with whatever spews out. Well, that's the wrong approach.

Here's something that almost always works:

After you're "done" writing your letter or website copy, read the copy out loud and pay attention to the "momentum" of your voice. It'll take a page or two, but once you've gotten past the "throat clearing", your copy will pick-up a pace of it's own... a "beat" of it's own. Once you feel or sense that "beat"... that "rhythm" kicking in STOP READING AND NOTICE WHERE YOU'RE AT!

More than likely, that's the exact spot where your letter REALLY needs to start!

Am I saying you should AXE the pages that lead up to that point?

Yeah... pretty much.

Your edit may not be that dramatic... but you should do all you can to get that part of the letter onto the first page that you can! Because 99% of the time, until your letter hits that “rhythm”, you’ve just been clearing your throat!

3) You make segues in your copy with subheads instead of allowing your copy to continue to flow like a one-on-one conversation would. Subheads aren’t bad to use... just make them a part of the whole conversation rather than as a subhead used in a book or article.

Subheads are the lamest way to change the topic in your copy that was ever invented! Do they work? Sure... they work. But consider this: your copy should be a conversation between you and your prospect... one-on-one... as if the two of you were sitting across the table from each other.

Now, obviously you don’t “get” their part of the conversation... but you CAN anticipate all their “Ya, but’s” if you’re careful and if you pay attention. (*I’ll leave that for another article*).

Now, if your copy is essentially a conversation – imagine this: you actually are sitting at a table having lunch with a prospect and you’re giving him your pitch, and then suddenly you stand up on top of your chair and yell out the SUBHEAD of your next topic!

Are you with me?

Conversational copy doesn’t require “topic-changing-subheads” because conversational copy tends to flow – like a conversation flows!

4) Your copy doesn’t look inviting to read... in fact, it makes me get dizzy and want to NOT read your copy!

This is really important... whether you’re doing it on the Internet or in print, your salesletter needs to “look readable”. Notice I didn’t say “look pretty”?... I said “Look readable.”

Really what I want to get across to you is this: your salesletter must look EASY TO READ.

Why?

Because you want it to GET READ! That’s why!

A salesletter that has “thick paragraphs” (paragraphs with 5, 6, or more lines of text) just aren’t that inviting to read. Now there are plenty of people who’ll argue with me on that – they always say, “Yeah, but... have you seen some of Dan Kennedy’s salesletters? That have big thick paragraphs that are sometimes 15-lines high, dude!”

And I say, “Yes... that’s true. But tell me this – are YOU Dan Kennedy?”

No... and neither are you!

Practically everything I teach is to help the “normal Joe” have an advantage when it comes to writing copy. And the “normal Joe” who writes his own copy has no clue about why Dan Kennedy does what he does! (Heck... I don’t even know why Dan Kennedy does some of the things he does!)

My point is this: if you’re looking for more sales from your copy, then you should make sure your salesletter looks “easy to read”.

Make sure you use an “easy-to-read” font in your printed salesletter... Times Roman, courier, palatino, and bookman are all very readable fonts.

On the Internet, all the top experts say to use a sans serif font. Don't use all caps or funky fonts. Indent your paragraphs. Put a nice bit of “white space” between the paragraphs and don’t cram your copy clear to the edge of the screen or the edge of the paper.

Remember: you want your reader to barely notice that they're reading your letter. If you make their eyes strain, it's like burping or hiccuping when you're trying to ask someone out on a date!

5) You offer a wimpy, gutless guarantee that no person in their right mind would trust!

It's important that you completely reverse the risk from your prospects so they feel no hesitation about buying your product. You should be willing to take the burden of proof and the risk upon yourself.

If not, then you don't have a good enough product, and if you're trying to sell a shoddy product, you probably oughtn't sleep well at night.

Make your guarantee as long as you possibly can (6 months, 1 year, etc.). Ironically the longer your guarantee is, two interesting things will happen:

- You'll get more buyers of your product, because they will believe and perceive that YOU have a ton of confidence in your product.
- You'll get less refunds, because people are much less likely to be "calendar watchers" when the deadline for them to return the product is so far in the future.

6) You don't give me enough reasons to do business with you instead of your competition!

Your letter should communicate your UCA (Unique Competitive Advantage). This is perhaps the most important element of all.

In other words, does your letter answer the all-important question (that your readers will undoubtedly ask): Why should I buy YOUR product as opposed to any other similar product available to me? What's different? Why's it different? Ideally, your UCA should be **specific, customer-focused, and difficult to duplicate**.

Also, make sure you give your prospect several **reasons why** the offer you're making them is so good. Used right, I believe this is **the** most powerful technique you can use in a sales letter to get the sale.

When you make a powerful offer, tell them WHY you're making them such a good offer. If you don't, the reader will wonder, whether consciously or not, WHY you're so willing to get rid of your product for so cheap.

If you give them a good, honest reason WHY you're giving them such a great deal (i.e. you have to move inventory out of your warehouse before your new line of products are delivered or else you'll have to give it away for free), people will feel like they're getting the bargain of a lifetime and will rush to get your product, rather than have skepticism at your hollow offer with no "Reason Why."

Just make sure your "reason whys" are heartfelt and sincere.

7) You don't make me an offer I can't refuse... so I DO REFUSE YOU!

The goal of your offer is to make the reader say, "I'd be an absolute idiot if I didn't take this guy up on this offer!" You want to offer so many bonuses and create so much value that the person actually feels like he's almost ripping you off by ordering your package!

Remember that people want BULK! They like to get LOTS of stuff. The more you can give them the better. You want to give them enough bonuses to choke a horse, to the point where the offer simply becomes impossible to refuse. And when they open up the package of stuff from you, or start downloading all those files... their initial reaction should be, "WOWWW! Look at all this stuff!"

One way you can offer lots of bonuses without driving up your costs is to offer information, such as reports, consultation certificates, tapes, or software.

Here are some other things you can do to make your prospects an offer they can't refuse:

- **Use Risk-Removal** - As mentioned above, you want to do everything possible to remove the risk from the prospect and put it on yourself. If you're afraid to do this, improve your product! Make bold guarantees, and make the reader feel absolutely no hesitation to do business with you.
- Even if you're a perfectly reputable and honest individual and businessperson, your prospect does not know this, and wants to have protection from possible exploitation.
- **Create Packages** - When you think of creating a product, don't just think of making a book or a tape. Create package with books, audios, certificates, reports, etc.
- **Give "Multiple-Choice" Bonuses** - This is a very little-known method I'm going to show you right now, and it works like gangbusters. Give the prospect a choice of premiums, such as "Choose any 4 of these 6." It completely shifts the mindset of the prospect from IF they should buy to WHICH ones should they buy. Just make sure the bonuses are enticing.
- This is powerful... don't overlook it.
- **Offer Payments** - Offer to accept two or three payments, or whatever you can afford to do. Sometimes people can't pay the total amount all at once. This will sweeten the pot for a good many people.
- **Give An Honest Reason Why Your Offer is So Good**– (See above)
- **Lead With Your Best Offer You Can Make.** This is VERY important, so read closely. Too many people fail to make the offer as irresistible as possible the first time they mail a letter or run an ad. They make wimpy guarantees, set their price too high, and pinch pennies on their mailing (mailing bulk or using labels).
- Then, they waste the rest of their lives making the offer better and better, thinking that if they just sweeten the pot a little and be more generous with their offer, people will buy their product and THEN they'll be rich. 5 years and 20 thousand dollars later, after finally getting up the guts to make the most generous offer they can think of, they realize that their product never was going to sell.
- You see, **if you make the most tantalizing offer the first time you mail, and if it doesn't work, then you'll never need to waste any more time, money, sweat and tears with the project.** So give your product its best shot.
- If your best isn't good enough, walk away and be grateful you knew better than to spend half your life and half your inheritance on the project.

8) **You don't talk personable... like you're having a one-on-one, heartfelt conversation!**

Make sure the **tone** of your letter is very down-to-earth and warm. If people like you, they're much more likely to trust you and to buy from you. Don't talk as if you are talking to a crowd, or selling from a platform. Try to make it very "me-to-you".

One idea is to get a photo of a friend and tape it to your computer as you write. Pretend you're just writing to that one person, and don't use fancy, long words. A salesletter is NOT the time to show off your vocabulary, no matter how extensive it may be.

9) You forget that people are interested in people – and you fail to use pictures of real people in your letter!

Don't be afraid to use a picture of yourself. When a reader sees your face, they're more likely to believe that you are a real, honest person (especially if you have an honest face).

One thing I've used over the years that no one else ever seems to do (it's actually become a "signature" of my work, really) is what I call:

A Signature + Picture + Guarantee Statement from the Writer

I use this at the beginning of most of the copy I write. It's a powerful template that's pleasing to the eye... a picture of the seller of the product at the beginning of the letter, with a signature and a written guarantee is very powerful. I've used it successfully time after time for myself and clients.

10) You forget to put your real signature on your letter!

I get mad when Internet Marketers fail to put a "real" signature at the end of their letter! A signature is a sign of authenticity... which is a sign of integrity. Don't just type your name on your website... scan in your signature.

And if you're worried about security... then have someone else sign your name and use THAT signature!

11) You're not selling to a starving market!

Yes, yes... I know that, technically, this is NOT a copywriting mistake. BUT... I can't tell you how many people are busy wasting their time and energy going after "markets" that don't really exist!

It is so important that you pursue a market that is HUNGRY for what you are offering them. It's much easier to fish in a pond chuck full of starving fish than it is to fish in an empty pond. Even if you have the best fishing bait in the world, you must go to the areas where there are fish!

Conclusion

There are a lot more mistakes that marketers are making every day when it comes to writing their copy, but there simply isn't room to cover it all here. These concepts will put you on the right track, though. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Success to you!

Brian Keith Voiles is a direct-response copywriter who writes copy that grabs people's eyeballs and glues them to your message. If you have any comments, or if you want a free subscription to Brian's ezine: "The Brian Keith Voiles Letter" contact him at brian@briankeithkillercopyclinic.com. You can find out more about what Brian's up to at his website: www.briankeithkillercopyclinic.com