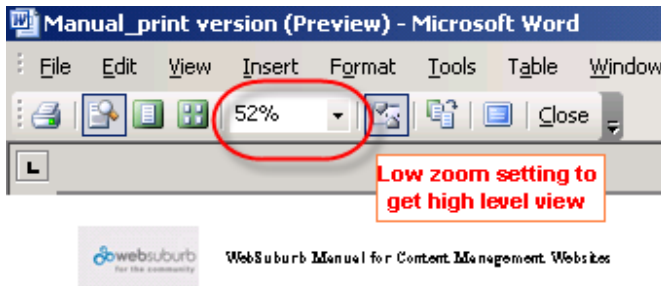


9-4 Short Stories – tips for improving web site content

<http://www.websuburb.com.au/HelpDesk/Content/WritingStyle/tabid/752/Default.aspx>

- **WIIFM - “What’s In It For Me?”**
When writing any content, remember that your reader will be asking the question “What’s in it for me?” Make sure you answer it for them.
- **Define a single key message**
People are bombarded with information and the mind can only really think of one thing at a time. If you want your customer to concentrate on something, make sure your points don’t require more than a split second to understand. Decide as specifically as possible the message or idea you want to get across and have customers taking away from your page. Be concise. Make your key message memorable so that people will recall your site.
TIP: A good practice is to write the objective of the page in the page description of each page setting.
TIP: Examine the personas closely and ensure you address identified issues.
- **Provide a customer-focused flow of information**
Meet the needs of your visitors and then present your credentials, not vice-versa. Too often, website owners are preoccupied by “we” and the “About Us” page and start by writing about themselves before offering useful information. People are only interested in you whether you can meet their needs.
- **Avoid duplication**
Use links to explanations already given. Don’t punish people who explore your website by having to read the same information twice.
- **Write the way you speak**
In school we were taught to express ourselves differently on paper than how we speak - to follow rules of grammar and inject an artificial air of formality. Web content should never be about trying to impress. Customers should never have to think about what you’re trying to say. Use simple words in short sentences. Keep plenty of free space (white space) around your copy so that it looks easy to read.
- **Review and rewrite**
As the saying goes, “Paper is patient.” Don’t be afraid to come back to your writing, read it out loud to yourself, summarise, add stuff, remove stuff, clarify.
TIP: If writing in MS Word, use the Print Preview function, with the zoom setting quite low. This will give you a snapshot of the page structure. Look for long (ie. monotonous) paragraphs. For example:

How to create your own website in 24 hours



I subscribe to Scott Bywaters email newsletter www.copywritingthatsells.com.au. He has excellent tips on improving writing that apply equally to web pages as to advertising. Here are a few of his tips:

Paragraph too big!

- "Mozart said 'I have never made the slightest effort to compose anything original. And I want to reinforce the point: 'If you want to hit winners in advertising, then don't worry about being original.' In my opinion, if something doesn't get a result... then it's not creative. Because at the end of the day, results are what matter, right? You see, if you write an ad to entertain your audience (which many ad agencies do) then that's your right. Just as it's your right to employ a salesperson to go around and entertain people. But it won't necessarily make you any money! So forget about being funny and entertaining... and focus on selling with excitement. Use words which grab people's attention and pull them into your copy. Words like... 'My accountant thinks I'm crazy for doing this... but I need to sell this stock', 'Exclusive Offer', 'Announcing', 'Just arrived', 'At Last'. Get your hands on a great swipe file of interesting ads and sales letters and take the bits and pieces from them that grab your attention... and integrate (don't copy word for word) them into your advertisement. Ask yourself, how can I create more excitement? What offer could I make which will really grab their attention? What headline would make people stop what they're doing and focus wholeheartedly on my ad or sales letter?"
- And on how to find crazy ways of saying things that will grab people attention. "Use Google to search for the phrases you want to highlight. Then mix in the results you get for great ideas."
- Here are a few tips you can mix and match into your next ad to boost your response:
 - 1) Just like any other type of advertisement using a strong headline can easily double your response: Think about it. Most ads have the company name at the top. So if it's a lawn mowing company it says: "Bob's Lawn Mowing". Does that make you become attracted? Or would you be more

I subscribe to Scott Bywaters email newsletter www.copywritingthatsells.com.au. He has excellent tips on improving writing that apply equally to web pages as to advertising. Here are a few of Scott's tips:

- Focus on selling with excitement. Use words that grab people's attention and pull them into your copy. Words like "My accountant thinks I'm crazy for doing this... but I need to sell this stock", "Exclusive Offer", "Announcing", "Just arrived", "At Last". Create a file of interesting ads and sales letters and websites you like and take the bits and pieces from them that grab your attention... and integrate them (don't copy word for word) into your advertisement.

Ask yourself, “How can I create more excitement? What offer could I make that will really grab their attention? What headline would make people stop what they’re doing and focus wholeheartedly on my ad or sales letter?”

- And on how to find crazy ways of saying things that will grab people attention. “Use Google to search for the phrase you want to highlight. Then review the results you get for great ideas.”

9-4.2 How to layout pages

- **Don’t bury information**

Critical information should be readily available and not buried under misleading headings. For example, if you run a parking garage, critical information people need to know is the location or street address. “Contact” and “Prices” are self-explanatory titles and should not be hidden in your “About Us” or FAQ sections.

- **Meaningful menu labels**

Your choice and order of menu labels reveals a lot about your business so ensure they clearly reflect your business’s products or services and what your website contains.

- **Avoid distractions**

When people are in the buying funnel, they have done their research, narrowed their options and are ready to purchase. Introducing new products at this stage or displaying Google Ads could confuse your potential customer or simply send people to a competitor’s site. When in the buying funnel, close the sale by reinforcing the customer’s purchasing decision with testimonials, guarantees, bonuses, etc.

The next step is Wireframes

<http://www.websuburb.com.au/HelpDesk/Content/WireFrames/tabid/753/Default.aspx>