51 Copywriting DOs

- Tell visitors to “click here”
- Point to words you want people to notice
- Use symbols in place of words: +, &, $
- Use numerals in place of written numbers: 7, not “seven”
- Follow the “Goldilocks” rule
- Use meaningful headlines everywhere
- Talk with your prospects like you’re in the same room
- Explore layers of benefits
- Highlight your best product
- In lists, put your best points at the top and bottom
- Replace long words with short ones
- Communicate what’s unique + highly desirable about you, and give a reason to buy from your site
- Put a caption under photos that matter
- Let your happiest customers do the selling
- Make friends with... the ellipsis
- Explicitly write who your product is “ideal for”
- Let copy guide your design / page layout
- Focus on “what’s in it for me” (WII-FM)
- Scratch all instances of “we” + your company name
- Lead with “you”
- Repeat important messages
- Position “click triggers” around your buttons
- Research before you write
- Scrap your first ideas
- Mimic Robert Munsch and Dr. Seuss... Not Ernest Hemingway
- Match your headline to the call to action that led visitors there
- Make your calls to action specific
- Steal your customers’ words
- Either kill a pain or highlight a delighter
☐ Know your messaging hierarchy
☐ List out all your benefits & bonuses for your own use
☐ Start with 10x more info than you need
☐ Summarize testimonials with mini-headlines
☐ Keep your offers simple
☐ Group & chunk text
☐ Keep ‘paragraphs’ short
☐ Show and tell
☐ Have meaningful hero banners
☐ Increase font size and darken type color
☐ Be smart with your logout screen or thank-you page
☐ Make tangible promises
☐ Optimize your headlines for SEO
☐ Display key messages on the screen in demos/videos
☐ Write descriptive alt text/tags
☐ Be enviably risky
☐ Use the word “quit” if you don’t want people to quit
☐ Put a face on your [impersonal] company
☐ Be Unique-to-You and Desirable-to-Them
☐ Make it easy to buy
☐ Spell check
☐ Split test to be sure
50 Copywriting DON’TS

⊗ Write for 100% of your traffic
⊗ *Imply* anything
⊗ Welcome people to your site
⊗ Tell yourself, “No one reads online”
⊗ Depend on testimonials and logos to *sell* your product
⊗ Use “I love it!” testimonials
⊗ Put your best content in a video only
⊗ Limit yourself to X number of words
⊗ Use “lorem ipsum”
⊗ Pretend you’re well-known... yet
⊗ Use small, tight fonts or spacing
⊗ Dilute your audience’s lingo
⊗ Blindly copy someone else’s tone
⊗ Assume your visitors are just like you
⊗ Exclude people unintentionally
⊗ Use incentives like a crutch
⊗ Break bad news like a jerk
⊗ Waste your tagline
⊗ Make it hard for people to unsubscribe
⊗ Follow antiquated rules of features vs benefits
⊗ Try to sell everything at once
⊗ Be vague!
⊗ Forget why you created a page to begin with
⊗ Compromise clarity for cleverness
⊗ Be a grammar nazi
⊗ Bore your reader... ever
⊗ Let your USP scroll away
⊗ WRITE IN ALL CAPS OR WITH LOTS OF EXCLAMATION POINTS!!!
⊗ Use round bullets for numbered lists
⊗ Write long bullet lists
Hide BBB + security proof
Be a slave to “consistency”
Use dead-end pages
Assume your competitors have got it right
Forget that customers can leave anytime
Fake a waiting list
Tell yourself, “Writing copy should be easier than this”
Interrupt user flows for your own purposes
Write like a smug prick
Assume your visitors are ready to buy on your Pricing page
Jump straight into “persuasion tricks”
Cram everything above the fold
Invest more in your visual design than in your copy
Stuff keywords where they don’t belong
Hold back
Write the width of the page
Let paid ads rule over your visitors
Complicate your ‘storefront’
Take any rule as fixed and unchanging
Forget why you hired a copywriter & designer