

## **Copywriting defined**



Copywriting is writing with a practical purpose. The copywriter aims to inform the reader, persuade them to change their view or encourage them to take action.

Most copywriters write for commercial purposes - to encourage readers to make a purchase or try a product.



The tools of the copywriter's trade are simple: computer and word-processing software for longer pieces, and perhaps pencil and paper for slogans and ideas.

Most copywriters work iteratively, revising their work several times - in response to client comments, and also on their own initiative as they aim to refine and improve their work.



**START** 

WHEN?

created.

WHERE?

agencies.

anywhere.

John Irving

In corporate and agency

settings, copywriters work in

partnership graphic and web

freelancers, they work directly

with clients and also through

in areas with strong creative

industries. But, in theory, a

copywriter can work from

Copywriters naturally congregate

designers, web developers, account executives, marketing

managers and others. As

**MIDDLE** 

Because copywriters deal in

ideas, they are best involved

concepts, themes, topics,

of a project. However, a

early on. They can identify the

phrases that form the foundation

copywriter can also add a lot of

value by taking a fresh look at

content that has already been

**END** 

Copywriters provide the content for advertisements (broadcast and print), slogans and taglines, websites, brochures, leaflets, direct mail, marketing emails, articles, user guides, video scripts and more.

Some people use the word 'copywriter' to refer specifically to those who create concepts and content for advertisements.



There is no 'official' qualification to be a copywriter. Anyone who can write, and meet the needs of their employer or client, can be a copywriter.

Every copywriter is different. But many good copywriters are literate, creative, reflective and disciplined. They are curious like detectives, their job is to 'know a little about a lot'.

Some copywriters have a specialisation, based on their experience. Others are happy to write anything.



'Half of my life is an act of revision.'

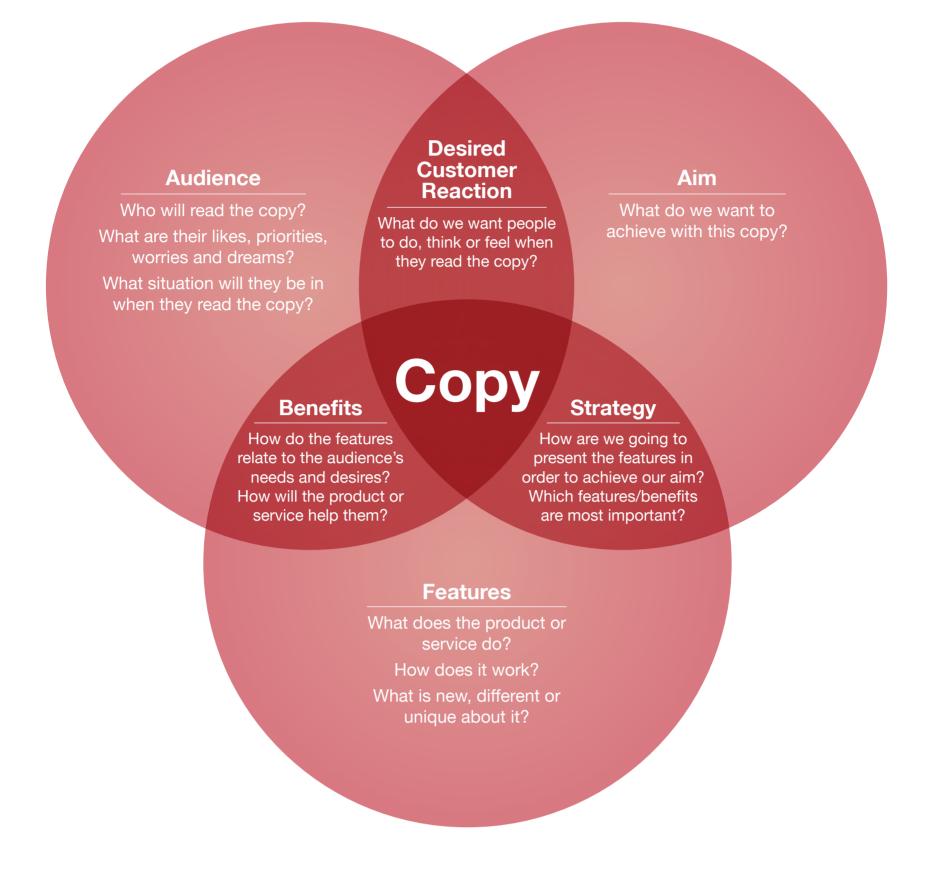


'A professional writer is an amateur who didn't quit.' **Richard Bach** 



The elements of copywriting

Although every copywriting assignment is different, there are some principles that never change. This diagram shows how they come together. It is always worthwhile considering these elements before starting to write.





'The secret of becoming a writer is to write, write and keep on writing.' Ken MacLeod



'If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.'

Richard Feynman (probably)

## Slogans

Slogans are one-line promises of value. The value might be boldly stated or subtly shaded, but it has to be both clear and believable.

When used as headlines, slogans should grab attention, establish the theme and set the tone for what follows. When used as signoffs, they should strengthen, confirm or enrich what has gone before. In some advertisements, the slogan may be the only content.

Slogans should 'talk to' their visual context. Copy and design should come together to form a sum greater than their parts. Neither should try to say something that would be better said by the other.

The art of writing a great slogan can't be reduced to a formula, but there are some recognisable types. Here are a few of them.

Concrete benefit		
	Direct and forceful.	

- Generates strong interest from motivated or interested readers.
- No risk of misunderstanding, but come across as

## Personal benefit

- Expresses a concrete benefit, but relates it to the reader.
- Combines reason and
- emotion. Used for many B2C headlines.

## Intangible benefit

- No specific concrete benefit expressed. States brand value and invites the reader to associate themselves with it.
  - Depends on strong

misunderstanding, but may come across as inelegant.	• headlines.	Depends on strong emotional resonance (and sheer spending power) for effect.
<b>No other battery looks like it or lasts like it'</b> Duracell	<b>'1,000 songs in your pocket'</b> iPod	<b>'Just do it'</b> Nike
Literal question	Rhetorical question	Accusatory question
talks to their personal concerns.	Can be intriguing or compelling, but risks pretension or irrelevance. <i>Who knows the secret of</i>	Can jolt the reader out of their comfort zone if used effectively.
'Does your memory let you down?'	The Black Magic box?' Black Magic chocolates	'Would you be more careful if it was you that got pregnant?'
Powerful if the reader agrees with the advice	Implicit command           Poses a question, or makes a statement, that	Offers general reassurance without necessarily stating
<ul><li>(in other words, they want the benefit promised).</li><li>Ineffective if the command</li></ul>	implies a command to the reader – usually, to use the product.	any specific benefit. The use of 'you' is always compelling.
elicits reactance (the impulse to resist control).	May constitute an NLP 'embedded command' (i.e. sentence contains a fully formed command).	
0000 1234 5678 0000		
<b>on't leave home without it'</b> American Express	<b>'What will you send?'</b> Post Office	<b>'Always there for you'</b> Hyundai
Puts a striking,	Pun Can be memorable, but	Neologism 250,000 English words not
sensory-rich image in the reader's mind – but only if the metaphor is well chosen.	<ul><li>the reader might remember the joke and forget who told it.</li><li>Use jokes with care.</li></ul>	<ul> <li>enough for you? Make up one of your own!</li> <li>At their best, neologisms combine the expression of</li> </ul>
Don't fall into the trap of making the reader think about something irrelevant.	Humour can fall very flat. Don't bend the message to the joke.	a benefit with a witty and memorable turn of phrase – all in one 'word'.
<b>'Liquid engineering'</b> Castrol GTX engine oil	<b>'Alarmed? You should be'</b> Moss Security	<b>'Innervigoration'</b> Gordon's gin
۲he task of a	writer consists	'A writer is someone who
of being able something ou Thomas Mann	e to make ut of an idea.'	can make a riddle out of an answer.'
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L'Oréal Kellogg's Rice Krispies

The Independent

Interflora

Improve appearance of hair

Makes noise when milk added

Politically neutral

Get flowers delivered

them

Feel attractive

Kids have fun eating

Readers seen as discerning and intelligent

**Delight loved ones** 

- 'Because you're worth it' 'Snap! Crackle! Pop!'
- 'It is. Are you?'

'Say it with flowers'



'The real engagement is between reader and writer.'



'The talent is in the choices.'



Calls to action guide the audience towards a real-world action. They set a boundary on readers' 'information gathering' experience, encouraging them to move into the 'doing' phase.

('DCR' = Desired Customer Reaction.)

**Express the DCR** 



Identify the DCR. What single action do you want people to take when they've finished reading?



State the DCR clearly and simply.

Command the reader directly. Don't obscure the message by saying 'please', 'why not' etc.

Stay on target



Keep the DCR consistent throughout the piece. You can say it in different ways, but you should always say the same thing.

