

5 Common Mistakes People Make When They Write Their Own Copy... And How To Avoid Them

(What I Discovered Doing Over 968 Copy Critiques In Just One Year)

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What We'll Cover Today:

- The 5 common mistakes people make that causes their copy to repel instead of sell
- Why High School level writing skills are not enough in business
- The truth behind the “attention span” myth
- How to break through “writer’s block” to craft an engaging message
- Quick writing tips from a Copy Pro to make your copy flow



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968 Copy Critiques In One Year?

- Sounds like a lot?
- Is it true?
- Truth: It's actually way more than 968
- Why would I say less? (A valuable copy lesson I'll share in a moment...)



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First... What Is Copy?"

- "Salesmanship in print" (John E. Kennedy)
- Persuasive writing that influences a person's behavior
- Direct Response Copywriting = Conversational writing that makes people take an action
- Copy is more than words on a page... everything is copy!
- 5 Common Mistakes = My 5 P's



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The 5 Common Mistakes People Make That Causes Their Copy To Repel Instead Of Sell... And How To Remedy Them



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Mistake #1: Wrong **Person**

- Writing to the wrong person
 - Using the wrong words
 - Not knowing the person they're writing to
 - Only "Think" they know
- And being the wrong person
 - You need to be who they want, not only who you want to be
 - Honour yourself, but honour the reader too
 - Polarise at your own peril! (Includes swearing)



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Remedy:

- “Stalk your prey” and know them better than they know themselves
 - Social media
 - Reddit, Forums, Groups
- Research deeply
- Use their words to create familiarity and likeness
- “Problem = Solution” (Dan Kennedy)



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Mistake #2: The **Psychology** Is Wrong

- Good copy involves psychology and strategy
- Humans are emotional beings
- Emotional decisions are backed up by logic
- Trigger the right psychology and emotions
- Emotions need to be real
 - Fake emotions repel people... especially empathy
- Control the word pictures and imagery you give them
- Don't go too far!



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Remedy:

- Get people emotionally engaged in your writing = Stories
- Use words they understand easily (Readability score)
- Use supportive language
 - Don't be fake – “I know how you feel” or “I feel the same way”
- Strategically trigger emotions
 - Don't do it by accident
 - Close the emotional loops you create



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Mistake #3: The ***Pitch*** Is Wrong

- Use wrong generational language (Millennial, X-Gen, Boomer etc.)
- Speak to Males and Females the same way
- Talk at the wrong level
- Use industry jargon
- They don't write to where the reader “lives”
- Tries to impress people with their writing ability
- Writing is grammatically correct



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Remedy:

- Generational language is important (Millennial, X-Gen, Boomer etc.)
- Males and Females speak differently (Push vs Pull language)
- Use metaphors to explain complex ideas
- Don't use jargon
- Write in plain English... and use correct spelling (US, UK/ AUS)
- "Enter the conversation in the person's head" (Robert Collier)
- Writing should be invisible
- Copy needs to be conversational... not always grammatically correct



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Mistake #4: The **Purpose** Of The Copy Is Wrong

- Try to get a "whale to climb a tree"... it will fail every time
 - Try to get an Email to do too much work
e.g., sales "heavy lifting"
 - Email – click to the Landing Page or Sales Letter... that's all!
- Each piece of copy has a purpose...
 - Clicks
 - Sales etc.



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Remedy:

- Know the purpose of your copy
- Make sure you're writing the right type of asset to create the impact you need (know what each type does)
- Don't try to make marketing assets do what they're not designed to do!
- Copy is one part of the marketing puzzle
 - 40:40:20 – but copy is the easiest to blame
- Have a smooth, greased slide to the desired action... get out of the way!



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Mistake #5: Not Enough Or No **Proof**

- Claims are not backed up with proof
- Claims are unbelievable
- Question: How believable is 2550 copy critiques in a year?
- Only use testimonials as proof
 - Testimonials are often made up or bought
- Expect people to believe them on "face value"



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Remedy:

- When you make a claim think about how to prove it (x3)
- Don't expect people to believe you
 - "We aren't selling to virgins" (Dan Kennedy)
- Claims are unbelievable even if you have to downplay
 - Which is more believable?
 - 968 or 2550?
- Proof is more than testimonials
 - Online reviews - Case studies - Articles - Scientific/ Medical Studies - Awards
 - Guarantee



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Why High School Level Writing Skills Are Not Enough In Business

- What do Accountants, Caterers, Musicians, Actors and Athletes have in common?
 - We learn all these subjects at school, but use professionals in business and our personal life
 - We willingly pay for them
- But writing has a "She'll be right attitude" – writing is writing
 - Right?
 - Wrong!
- No Sales or Persuasive writing taught at School



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Why High School Level Writing Skills Are Not Enough In Business

- Words are the lifeblood of our businesses
- The right words in the right place can make us a fortune
 - One sale letter/ funnel away from \$1,000,000
- The wrong words... even in the right place can ruin us
 - Social media is brutal - Everyone tells everyone – nothing is private
- Writing needs to be clear and impossible to misinterpret
- You can be Conversational or Grammatically correct – choose wisely!
 - Does not mean “sloppy copy”



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Remedy:

- Study Human Psychology (watch people)
- Keep a copy of ads or emails that make you take notice of them... or make you buy
 - Swipe File (Copy the idea NOT the copy)
- Know basic level copywriting
 - Read books, online courses, email lists
- Edit your writing to ensure clarity
- Get your copy critiqued (by a good copywriter)



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The Truth Behind The “Attention Span” Myth... Don't Fall For It!

- Movies are longer now than 5 or 10 years ago
- People binge watch their favourite TV series for HOURS!
- TL;DR society (People hate reading!)
- Not too long... just too boring
- Long copy works as well as it ever has
- Short copy can be boring too
- People read and watch what interests them for as long it takes



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Remedy:

- Don't be boring
- “Infotainment” – Entertain and tell/ teach
- Copy needs to be a “greased-slide” that puts and keeps the reader in an “Attention Trance”
- Write at the right level
 - Don't “dumb” things down - Simplify
 - Don't offend people
 - “The consumer isn't a moron, they're your wife!” (David Ogilvy)



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How To Break Through “Writer’s Block” To Craft An Engaging Message

- Shocking Admission...
 - There is no such thing as writer’s block!
 - Just not enough research
 - Dive deeper, read more
 - Other professions don’t have “Accountants Block” or “Nurses Block”
 - Look at great copy for inspiration
 - Keep a Swipe File of great copy that works
 - Keep a notebook handy to capture ideas (Think it, Ink it!)



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Quick Writing Tips From A Copy Pro To Make Your Copy Flow

- Research (Before you write a single word)
 - Do a deep dive into your market
- Authentic Empathy
 - “COVID Concern” = Fake Empathy
- Readability Level
 - 6th grade or 14-year-old (both comprehension and attention)
 - Tools to help you
 - Hemingway App, Grammarly, Spell Check



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Quick Writing Tips From A Copy Pro To Make Your Copy Flow

- Write to a real person (COVID messages)
 - Avatar with a family and a house and a career is still a 2 dimensional “Person”
 - Pick a real person who is the embodiment of your avatar and write to them
- Show don’t tell
 - *Show you care... don’t tell people (e.g. “COVID empathy”)*

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Quick Writing Tips From A Copy Pro To Make Your Copy Flow

- Avoid “Me Too” Marketing Messages (Trout and Reis)
 - Don’t be a copycat
 - Be a leader not a follower
 - Be inspired by others... but develop your uniqueness
- Upskill yourself
 - No need to be an A-List copywriter
 - Just know enough to be good at writing your own copy
 - Or to confidently hire a copywriter
- “Writing Smoothness Test:” Read your copy aloud
 - If you “trip” over your words... the reader will too



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Quick Writing Tips From A Copy Pro To Make Your Copy Flow

- The easier copy is to read... the more work has gone into it
- We can't expect the reader to do any of the work for us
- Make things as easy as you can for people to:
 - Read
 - Understand
 - Connect
 - Engage
 - Take action
- Every dollar I've invested in learning copywriting has given me at least 10 in return



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My Biggest Copy Tip: The 2 R's

- Be RELEVANT and RELATABLE
 - As a person
 - Who, What, Where, When, Why and How
 - Who you're sharing it with
 - What you share
 - Where you share
 - Why you're sharing it
 - How you share
- Result = Deeper, meaningful, and memorable connection...
 - And copy that flows



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- My biggest copywriting tip



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Good Luck and Happy Writing 🖋️

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I have a weekly “Knowledge Nugget” newsletter
(It’s been called a marketing seminar in an email)

www.TheCopyAlchemist.com/weekly-email

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Thank you 😊

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