

Mike Capuzzi's Ultimate Copywriting Checklist

MY TARGET

- I have identified the target profile of the individual that this copy is intended for and know they:
 - Have money to purchase my product or service
 - Have known interests
 - Are available through mailing lists

- I have identified their three top pain points/emotional appeals and what motivates them to buy, including:
 - To avoid feelings of fear or worry.
 - To gain pleasure – in any way.
 - To make money.
 - To avoid losing money.
 - To satisfy greed.
 - To save time.
 - To gain status.
 - To avoid change.
 - To avoid effort.
 - To gain or remain comfortable.
 - To avoid embarrassment.
 - To avoid physical pain or sickness.
 - To gain praise and recognition.
 - To be popular.
 - To attract the opposite sex.
 - To avoid loss.
 - To have fun.
 - To gratify curiosity.
 - To be happy.
 - To have or hold beautiful, coveted possessions.
 - To avoid stress.
 - To be accepted by others.
 - To avoid problems.
 - To avoid criticism.
 - To be unique.
 - To protect their reputation.
 - To avoid missing out.
 - To have safety.
 - To boost their image or ego.
 - To be or appear to be smart.

- I have researched and found the best list possible.
 - SRDS (www.srds.com)
 - Melissa DATA (www.melissadata.com)
 - InfoUSA (www.infousa.com)
 - My own client/customer list

MY PRODUCT/SERVICE FEATURES & BENEFITS

- I have identified at least five unique features of my business and product/service.
- I have associated a "reason why" to each feature.
- I have identified at least five "first-level" benefits to my product/service.
- I have identified at least five real, bottom-line, rubber-meets-the-road, EMOTIONAL/PERSONAL benefits that my product/service provides. These are the tangible, measurable, real value that my target craves and is willing to pay for.

MY LETTER FORMULA

I am using one of the following fundamental formulas for sales copy:

- AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action)
- Problem – Agitate – Solve
- Before & After (Winners & Losers)
- Premium First – Product/Service Second
- Told by Testimonial (Success Story)

MY HEADLINE

- I've reviewed my "swipe file" of other sales letters and headline examples and used it as an idea-generator and brainstorming tool. (If you currently do not have a swipe file, please start one immediately. It's a very useful tool for copywriting.)
- My headline samples are based on emotion versus analytical or technical points. My reader is interested in **WIIFM** – "*what's in it for me?*" They do not care about me, my company, or my products (at this point in time). They want to know how I am going to help them.
- My headlines sell the benefits of my company, my services, or my products. It is not necessarily cute or entertaining. It sells benefits! People don't want to buy drills – they want the hole that the drill can make for them.
- I've used emotional triggers in my headline including one of the seven fundamental triggers:
 - Fear
 - Guilt
 - Flattery
 - Exclusivity
 - Greed
 - Anger
 - Salvation
- Is this headline loaded with attention-getting words designed to stop readers in their tracks and draw their interest?

- Is a specific audience identified and targeted?
- Does my headline deliver a captivating and complete statement that makes readers want to read on?
- Does it woo the reader into the body copy?
- Does it intrigue?
- Does it offer a solution?
- Does it remind prospects of their anxiety?
- Does it make a huge promise?
- Does it appeal to the prospect's self-interest?
- Does it supply news?
- Is it believable?
- Is the message of the headline focused on my intended audience?
- Would the message be enhanced with the use of a photograph?
- Could my headline be made more visually captivating with any additional graphic enhancements?
- Does it call out to my target audience with a message that's of specific importance to them?

MY OPENING

- I have used my target's name if possible.
- I tell a story.
- I have created the "slippery slope" effect. My headline entices the reader to read the first sentence. My first sentence entices the reader to read the second sentence and so on. Each line should compel the reader to continue on.
- I've used a dimensional "grabber."

MY BODY COPY

- I am writing to the reader as if I am talking to them one on one, in a friendly conversational manner.
- I do not use the words "we", "us", or "ours" in my copy.
- I use the word "you" liberally and avoid the word "I" unless it supports the benefits I am offering.
- I am helping the reader mentally picture and enjoy the benefits of my product or service.
- I am writing "with personality" and using stories and real-life examples to add personality to my copy.
- When feasible, all copy is personalized to the reader.
- I have a "reasons why" bullet list.
- I have created a unique proprietary name for my product, service, system, etc.
- I use "copy transitions" to move the reader along. I use these when I start or end a paragraph.

MY DAMAGING ADMISSIONS AND FLAWS

- I address any known objections with persuasive and compelling specifics that overcome these objections.
- I offer a "direct answer" to the issue.
- I offer a verifying testimonial, case history, or story.
- I restate my guarantee, free trial offer, etc.

MY OFFER (action item)

- I have a specific, singular action-item that I want my reader to do as the result of reading my copy.
- My offer has a time-based deadline and a sense of urgency.
- My offer is repeated throughout my copy.
- I offer additional bonuses as a way to motivate my reader.

MY USE OF "FREE"

- I offer a free trial, a free sample, kit, etc.
- I offer a free bonus for prompt response.
- I offer a free gift for action taken.

MY GUARANTEE

- My goal is to reduce any perceived risk in every possible way.
- I have developed a strong, unique and compelling guarantee that is as long as possible.
- My guarantee is **BOLDED** and **OBVIOUS** in my copy.
- I have a satisfaction guarantee.
- I have a perception guarantee (how they feel).
- I have a results guarantee.

MY TESTIMONIALS

- I use real testimonials and endorsements throughout my copy to offer social proof.
- My testimonials include first and last names and city and state of the person giving the testimonials. I use a company name if applicable.
- I use photographs if possible.
- I put my testimonials into text boxes to make them stand out.
- The more testimonials, the better.
- I use testimonials within the letter, on my envelope, on my response form, etc.

MY RESPONSE CHANNEL(S) & SPARKING IMMEDIATE ACTION

- I have multiple ways for the reader to respond (Web, phone, fax, e-mail, mail)
- I tell my reader exactly how I want them to respond.
- I tell my reader when to respond by.
- I offer a gift to spark action.
- I offer a discount for fast response and/or penalties for slow response.
- I use the concept of "limited availability" to spark action.
- I use a contest or sweepstakes to spark action.
- My Web address, phone number, fax number, e-mail is included.
- I include my offer several times throughout my letter.
- I have included an "Immediate Action Form" (don't use the words "Order Form").
- I have put a "coupon border" around my form to make it stand out.

MY LETTER & ENVELOPE LAYOUT

- My goal is to make my letter look as personal as possible.
- I vary the type size and fonts throughout my copy.
- My primary font is a serif font like Courier, Times New Roman, etc.
- I indent my paragraphs to make it easier to read.
- I *italicize* and/or **boldface** key words and phrases throughout my copy.
- I use simulated handwritten notes.
- I use simulated hi-liting (sparingly).
- I use different colored fonts to accentuate certain things.
- I use outlined boxes to highlight specific sections.
- I use photos and graphics, with captions, to make my points clearer.
- I use short, bite-sized paragraphs.
- I use sub-heads for a dual, readership path.
- I use bullet and numbered lists. Middle item is my most important.
- I use first class, live stamps when possible.
- I use my envelope as additional real-estate to market and sell.
- I use teaser copy on my envelope.
- I use testimonials on my envelope.
- I've checked U.S. Postal regulations regarding size and weight of my letter.

MY CLOSE

- I have a strong and persuasive close in my letter.
- In my close, I tell my reader exactly what to do next.
- My close creates a sense of urgency.

MY P.S.

- I have a strong P.S. at the end and it serves as a high-impact, "second headline."
- I use my P.S. to highlight a benefit in my sales letter, remind prospects about any bonuses, reinforce my guarantee, introduce a special surprise bonus, or motivate the prospect to take action by mentioning a date, limited time offer, etc.
- I use multiple P.S.'s at the end if necessary.
- If I use multiple P.S.'s, I put the most important ones in the middle.

MY REVIEW

- I have taken time away from my letter and revisited to edit.
- I have had a third-party proof my letter.