

# Essential Copywriting Tips for the 3 Most Important Pages on Your Website

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Writing great copy for your business blog is obviously a big priority, given all of the traffic it can drive to your website and the leads it can generate. But what about copy on the other pages of your website? Your homepage? Landing pages? Even your "about" page? These also need to be optimized with top-notch content.

For those marketers who aren't quite sure how to produce high-quality content for these pages -- and even those who are experts at updating their copy but want to freshen it up -- here are the things you ought to know to better the three most important pages on your website: your homepage, your landing pages, and your "about" page.

## 1) Homepage: The Lobby of Your Business

Your homepage is the virtual lobby of your business. Before I lay a series of copywriting tips on you for improving your homepage, let's look at the homepage experience from your visitor's point of view.

They are new guests in your virtual home. Nothing's all that familiar. They will take in every little thing -- consciously or subconsciously, subtle or not -- and make judgments. To get a vibe. To make a decision. What exactly is this decision?

I can't help but quote a favorite rock band of mine, The Clash: "Should I stay or should I go?" You need to remind yourself of this when making decisions about the composition of your homepage -- in particular, the copy presented there.

This decision, stay or go, boils down to comfort. When the visitor feels it, they invest their time -- just like you do. When something doesn't feel right, when a tinge of discomfort emerges, they flee -- just like you do.

So what do you do to address this newcomer situation (which hopefully happens very often) to achieve the desired result: getting visitors to stick around and click around?

As a veteran website copywriter, here's my advice:

### **Provide a big, bold assurance.**

Your homepage is going to have a big, dominant element -- probably a main graphic -- which you might refer to as a header. It might even be what website creators now refer to as a slider -- a series of headers that rotate. More often than not, your headline will be placed in this space, above or below it. In any case, we're talking about the first passage the visitor will read.

This passage has the all-important job of assuring the visitor they have arrived at the right place. You can do this in a number of ways, one of the best of which is to have [clear headlines](#) expressly created to communicate you understand the challenge they face.

In other words, it's a good idea to reiterate the product category and a bad idea to say something dreadfully generic, such as the popular favorite, "Welcome to our website." One way or another, the copy you present first should quickly suggest "you will be rewarded for coming here."

### **Set up a clear, concise introduction.**

An introduction of some sort should follow. It might be a sentence or two or a paragraph or two. This is not the place to boast, recite a boring company mission, or cram in the elevator pitch you labored over for your press release's boilerplate.

In fact, to the extent you can avoid it, this isn't even the place to talk about your company. Your company is secondary. First, by a long shot, is your prospect -- their pains and pleasures. Avoid "we," your company name, and "us" (read: "[The Most Effective Online Marketers Focus on One Thing](#)").

I suggest counting the uses of "you" and "we" (or variations thereof) and making the ratio largely favor "you." "You" is the subject. "You" is how you greet someone. "You" is how the persuasion process begins.

### **Think search.**

Don't think SEO -- think search. What I mean here is however much you've studied your optimization tactics, your application of them should be invisible to the reader.

Yes, you'll want to do meticulous keyword research and deliberation. And yes, you'll want to use the keywords in your homepage copy. Still, do not overuse or overemphasize keywords. Doing so makes for clunky copy. Even if you've abided by the current day's [best practices for SEO](#), you are now addressing a human being.

### **Snuff the fluff.**

[Effective homepage copy](#) gets to the point. It does so with flair, but not fluff. Throw-away lines, such as "In today's highly competitive marketplace blah, blah, blah," are to be, well, thrown away. Never lose sight of the notion that your visitor has a short attention span. To increase your chances of engaging the reader, edit your copy ruthlessly to make every word count.

### **Talk in a conversational, relatable tone.**

Your homepage copy needs to be personal and conversational. (Dare I say, casual?) Don't go techno. Don't take chances with industry buzzword babble. Don't show off your vocabulary or insider speak. Imagine you're out to make a new friend (because you are).

### **Make the page navigation a cinch.**

Easy navigation is all-important. Never make visitors hunt for what they need or begin to suspect the content's not available. [Make your navigation bar simple and easy to understand](#).

Feature prominent pods, windows, or sections with subheads that showcase the parts of the website you deem to be the most practical next steps for the visitor. Communicate the content you're offering with dummy-proof directions or calls-to-action.

### **Plan for scanning.**

Every key point and subsection you mean to showcase should work with or without lengthy explanations. Remind yourself of how quickly you scan a homepage in search of something worth fixing on or looking into. Though it may feel counterintuitive, your prose should be sparse and your white space should be ample.

### **Make your blog easy to find.**

Your blog is the section of the site where you flex your know-how. It's also where you engage readers and build relationships. Don't hide it in the footer. If you're emphasizing your blog the way you should, you should emphatically invite visitors to read it, [share the posts](#), and subscribe. Featuring recent or popular stories on the homepage is a highly effective tactic.

### **Feature some freebies.**

Understand most visitors are "just looking" or doing research during this first visit. Lead nurturing is likely to be a critical part of the sales cycle going forward, so your collection of free resources such as your blog, newsletter, ebooks, reports, archived webinars, and other content should be featured.

Be specific with these types of offers, making sure to provide compelling reasons for the visitor to submit their email address. For instance, don't use generic pleas such as "free ebook" or "subscribe to our newsletter." Provide practical reasons why doing so is a must.

### **Be a crowd-pleaser.**

This final homepage tip traces to the well-known principle of persuasion called [social proof](#). Your visitors crave evidence your company is legit. Give it to them on your homepage in the form of testimonials, client logos, reviews, accreditations, accolades, and the like.

If you're active on social media or have a large subscriber base for your blog or newsletter, mention this. Something like "Join our 10,000+ subscribers" helps establish the credibility visitors value.

## **2) Landing Pages: The Key to Conversion**

To be an effective online marketer, every page of your website needs to be well-written, elegantly designed, purposeful, and part of the big-picture plan. However, after your homepage, nothing is more critical to your success than your [landing pages](#).

### **It's all about conversion.**

I want to be clear about what I'm calling a landing page because it's entirely true a visitor could "land" on just about any page you publish.

The landing page I'm offering tips about here are the pages expressly created to solicit an opt-in or a desired action from a prospect. (Pages such as these are sometimes also called "squeeze pages," though the term isn't common today.)

This page is meant to collect basic information, which usually includes an email address. It acts as a gate in front of an offer of some sort.

## **Landing pages have special requirements.**

While many of the smart, but general, copywriting tactics will apply, a landing page is a different beast. Unlike many of your website's pages, a landing page is not about helping readers find what they want -- it's about delivering it.

An important thing to keep in mind when writing a landing page is the dynamic at play and, of course, the mindset of the visitor. Your visitor has arrived for a treat -- some instant gratification. Visits could come from [pay-per-click ads](#), a search result listing, an internal link on your website, a link from another website, an email, or even a printed piece, ad, or commercial.

## **Make the headline succinct and stand out.**

The headline needs to make a keyword connection. This is not an SEO lesson, but rather a plea to connect the visitor's expectation to the first line they read on your landing page. The link the prospect just clicked was about something specific, so your headline should deliberately reiterate those words.

Landing pages are not the place to show off your creative writing chops. If your link promised a lesson on cloud computing, your headline needs to say as much. Your first objective is to assure the visitor he landed on the page he needs.

## **Focus solely on the offer.**

An effective landing page must be singularly focused on one subject: your offer. Do not give in to the temptation to cross-sell, upsell, or wander into related territory of any kind. Deliver information on point with exactly what your visitor came for.

Landing pages should not include links to other sections of your websites. This means the navigation bar, sidebars, and footers are stripped away. A logo linking to your homepage is acceptable (but does offer an "out").

## **Use plenty of action words.**

The question on the user's mind is "What do I get and how?" So, hammer on the verbs. Include phrases such as "Learn how to," "Get insights," "Save time," and "Download the" to catch the reader's attention and make him want to click through.

## **Showcase the landing page's value.**

A visit to your landing page is not a victory. Your visitor's interested. They've clicked. But they're not a lead until they've [completed your form](#). Highlight the value of your offer multiple times on your landing page. Use subheads and captions to state the value of your offer in a variety of places on the page so they can't be missed.

Also, consider making big, bold, and even dreamy value statements. You might write, "Imagine how," "Conquer your," or "You'll never have to (blank) again because" to drive home the value.

If you can be specific, be specific. Value statements are more credible when you can promise specific benefits -- such as the amount of time or money that will be saved.

### **Use clear, second-person narrative.**

Simply stated, use the word "you." Don't refer to your visitor as a job title or generic seeker of a resolution to a problem. Don't refer to your company by its name if you can help it. Write "our."

Moreover, let nothing confuse the reader. Get to the point. Guide the reader with clear directions. Keep the page brief (unless you have a very strong reason to do otherwise.) Those letter-stuffer type landing pages that drone on turn off most readers.

### **Add some bullet points.**

Bulleted lists work great on landing pages. You can list the benefits of what you're delivering. If it's an information asset, it's useful to preview the contents in short and sweet passages. You might [use icons or small images](#) to steer the eye to the main points, a la a 1-2-3 list of most important points.

### **Show and tell.**

Plan to show the "prize" and write a caption that summarizes the entire landing page in one sentence. Many readers go straight to the image and caption, so this will certainly catch their attention.

### **Deliver a little proof.**

You don't want to veer off into a detailed case study, but a helpful conversion tactic is to include a brief testimonial. If you can quote a notable authority or high profile client, all the better. If your offer has helped a large number of customers or garnered recognition, go with these types of proof statements.

### **Streamline the form.**

The fewer required fields your form has, the more leads you'll capture. Unless you have a compelling reason to qualify the leads at this stage, make your form easy to find and fill out. If you're going to send email (and you should), a singular email address field might suffice.

### **Include a smart button.**

It may sound odd, but the words you choose for your call-to-action play a huge role. Studies prove generic words such as "submit" and "subscribe" perform poorly compared to short, directive value statements such as "Send me my free tips." KISSmetrics offers [some useful variations in this informative post](#).

## **3) "About" Page: The Awkward First Date**

Your "about" page is sure to be one of the most visited pages on your website. But commonly, it's a serious snoozer. If your analytics show your "about" page is a leading exit page, you're going to want to heed the advice I have for you here.

### **The page poses a challenge.**

"About" [pages](#) scare even veteran website copywriters. The thing that makes this page the trickiest of them all is the confusing -- contradictory, actually -- subject of the page itself. You're tempted to write about yourself or your company. And that's fair. But if that's all you do, you'll risk losing your reader.

Remember the purpose of the visit. What the reader really cares about is themselves. Your "about" page needs to be about how you can help him or her. Sonia Simone of Copyblogger offers these suggestions:

- Talk about why they should bother reading your site.
- Talk about the problems you solve.
- Talk about what they're interested in.

A good first step is to strike the use of "us" or "me." That is, don't call your page "about us" or "about me," or at least don't think of the page this way. It shouldn't be a biography, resume, or company backgrounder.

Yes, you can include biographical and background information, but your story needs to be presented in the context of how you can serve the customer.

### **Be interesting.**

Write a tight, well-paced page without droning on with needless detail. While a storytelling style can be very appropriate for your "about" page, you don't want to test your reader's patience. Every line on the page should add something significant and heighten the reader's interest. You want the reader to want to know more about you, not less.

### **Careful with the video.**

Sure, many will welcome a chance to see and hear you speak, so go ahead and [make a short and sweet video](#) to demonstrate your mastery of your field. But don't rely only a video, and please don't have it begin playing automatically. That's not a convenient play. It's annoying.

### **Write conversationally.**

The nature of an "about" page invites writers to adapt a stiff and stilted voice, which is poison for any web page. Be you. Be warm and approachable. Go ahead and use your sense of humor. Avoid jargon. Writing in a conversational voice is far more appealing than stilted, generic copy.

### **Proof plays well.**

While no one wants to find an egomaniac lurking in your "about" page, some of the credentials hanging on your office wall might help enhance the reader's experience and comfort level.

Badges indicating your professional memberships, accolades, publications, speaking experience, and so forth make nice additions to the page. A small dose of testimonials could be useful, too.

### **Lose the BS.**

"About" pages tend to be home to overblown BS. Be wary of superlatives and hyperbole. Face it: Words like "visionary," "outstanding," "world-class," and "cutting-edge" don't do anything other than feed your ego.

### **Don't write fiction.**

Your aspirations and accomplishments are not the same thing. Nothing but the truth will do. If you've accomplished great things, simply tell your readers about them and why they should care. Let the reader be the judge of your awesome sauce.



## **Take some chances.**

A lot of company "about" pages sound the same as all the rest. Don't let that happen to yours. Make it your top goal to write a page no one else could write and that sets you apart from the competition.

## **Think different.**

Apple didn't just preach it -- it embodied it. Of course, the company's landmark campaign highlighted MLK, John Lennon, Jim Hanson, and Albert Einstein -- world-changers.

What did these big thinkers who thought so differently have in common? They took risks. So, take risks with your "about" page. Don't just recite the company mantra. Make the reader feel they have to do business with you because yours is a company of real people who will change its customers' lives.

## **Bring bios to life.**

I always discourage biographies of any length to be 100% academic and professional. Why? It's boring. I expect to learn you're educated, qualified, and bring relevant experience to the company. Tell me something I don't expect. You tap dance? Breed dogs? Make beer? You love Springsteen? Me too. Give your reader something conversation-worthy.

## **Suggest social.**

Think of the "about" page as an opportunity to begin building relationships. The page is a logical place to publish [links to social media profiles](#) and encourage online networking.

If you're featuring profiles of the directors and staff, you might showcase social accounts with anyone who's representing the company on your social networks or active on your blog.

Consider publishing email addresses there too (but you'll probably want to spell out "at" or "dot com" so as to not allow bots to capture, then spam, employees).

## **Make it a quick read.**

Michelle Slater offered some interesting ideas in her post, "[Spice Up Your About Us Page and Intrigue Prospects](#)." Her suggestions included making your page skimmer-friendly by bulleting company facts, presenting information in an interview format, and using a video Q&A.


## **Update the page when needed.**

Things change. People may join or leave the company. Don't allow your "about us" page to present outdated information. Whether it's personnel, new services, locations, or any item that changes the company story, make sure your page reflects the company you are today.

## **Remember who the page is really about.**

If you're stuck for getting started with your "about" page, there's no harm in tackling the five W's to get the facts down, but remind yourself -- a "who, what, when, where, why" is likely to be a press release-like snore. Pepper it up by really focusing on the "why." The salesy and overly self-congratulatory page won't establish the credibility and trust you seek. Put the reader first, use plain language, and communicate what customers really want to know (and what you need them to leave with) -- a reason to believe you put them first.

*Got some copywriting tips for these pages you think marketers would be wise to hear about? Give us your advice in the comments below!*

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