

## **Small Business Owners: Are You Making These 3 Deadly Website Copywriting Mistakes?**

By Karon Thackston © 2010, All Rights Reserved

It's a common question. "What copywriting mistakes should I avoid?" There are many, but the 3 I chose might surprise you. Why? Because while these can potentially cause the greatest amount of damage they are not ones most copywriters talk about.

Why? Because these aren't the "sexy" copywriting mistakes. They aren't the quick-fix aspects. They require thinking and judgment and... <gasp!>... work! However, they are the ones that - when implemented correctly - can drastically boost the performance of your copy and content whether that be a blog post, article, web page, email or other forms of text.

### **Copywriting Mistake #1 - Writing Without a Plan**

Regardless of what you write, you'll get better results if you perform due diligence with a little prior planning. In fact, if you go through the planning phase of copywriting, chances are the copy will all but write itself. How so?

Because research allows you the opportunity to get to know your target customer, organize your thoughts, outline features, benefits and end results, get your creative juices flowing, and much more. It also allows you to overcome what might otherwise become copywriting mistakes.

Take this article, for instance. When I started, I didn't just lay fingers to keyboard and begin rambling on. I thought about the topic I'd like to approach. I looked into keyphrases that might be a good fit. (For this piece, I chose "copywriting mistakes" and "copywriting mistake.")

Then, I gave some thought about what - specifically - I'd like to accomplish in the article. What, precisely, did I want to communicate to you? Those became the "3 copywriting mistakes" mentioned in the headline as well as the outline for my writing.

All that was left to do was fill in the blanks.

The same applies to writing website copy. When you follow a process for outlining features, benefits and end results, researching keywords, and creating a skeleton of what the page should accomplish, it all falls into place much easier.

### **Copywriting Mistake #2 - Writing About Your Company/Product Instead of To Your Site Visitor**

One of my biggest pet peeves - and one of the most common copywriting mistakes I see - is ignoring your site visitors. Indulge me for a minute as I climb on my soapbox.

If someone walked into your office, shook your hand and asked how you could help them, you would not immediately begin to rattle off everything you believed to be a strong point about your product or company. No. What would you do? You'd start getting to know the customer.

You would ask questions. You would find out what their problems/challenges are. You'd get details on specifically what they want to do/accomplish and then you would address their exact issues.

Instead of "we do this and we do that and our company... let us help... we, we, us, us, our, our, our...blah, blah, blah" you would speak to the customer who is seated in front of you. Instead of "we-ing all over yourself," you'd say something like this:

"Mr. Smith, you can get to where you want to go. It's not as hard as you think. You can improve the image others have of your company and help reinforce your brand with a system that offers 3 important advantages. First, you'll find that \_\_\_\_\_...." You get the idea.

Does that mean you can never use "us" or "we" or "our?" Certainly not! But keep it to a minimum. I'd venture to guess you should use those words less than 10% of the time. After all, it's not about you... it's about the ones who have the money: your customers.

### **Copywriting Mistake #3 - Thinking Copywriting Only Happens on Your Web Page**

If you plan to write search engine optimized copy, you'll have to understand that your copy actually begins in the search engine results pages (SERPs). The title tag and the META description tag create a little advertisement for you in Yahoo!, Google, Bing and the other engines.

Let's say a surfer types in "black cowboy boots" (for example). The very first exposure that customer has to your web page is what they find in the SERPs. Which of these tag sets grabs your attention?

#### **Black Cowboy Boots - Black Cowboy Boots**

*Black cowboy boots* are manufactured by all of the major cowboy boot makers. This most popular boot comes in various styles depending on your needs.

#### **Black Cowboy Boots - Free Shipping and Return Shipping**

Buy *cowboy boots* with a price guarantee and top rated customer service. You can compare multiple ... Dan Post Boots Eel Cowboy - *Black* (Men's) \$249.95 ...

#### **Western Spurs, Tshirts, Western Wear, Art, Posters**

*Black Cowboy Boot* with Spurs keychains · *Black Cowboy Boot* with Spurs Key Chain by White\_Wedding. praying cowboy pet clothing · praying cowboy dog shirt ...

I don't know about you, but I'd be clicking that free shipping one with the price guarantee!

You have to write your title tag and META description tag as an advertisement. Tell the surfer why they should click to your page as opposed to the other 10,000 in the SERPs. What's in it for them if they click to you?

So, now you know. And now that you know, you can avoid making the 3 most deadly copywriting mistakes small business owners make.

Are you looking to revamp or build a small business website but aren't sure where to start? Karon's book *Effective Websites for Small Businesses* helps you work with professional to make it happen. Learn more at <http://www.EffectiveWebsitesForSmallBusinesses.com>.

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