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# 5 Essential Ingredients for Writing Copy

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## Writing copy is a challenging task.

It requires that you define your product or services clearly and succinctly, all the while adopting the point of view of your potential clients. But the rewards are truly gratifying—you sharpen your personal and business focus, develop a systems point of view, and have a much better chance of successfully marketing your product or services.

### 1. DECIDE ON A CONCEPT. (Make a *mind map* to help yourself think spontaneously.)

- A. *Take the point of view of your audience.* What do they want? How do they feel?
- B. *Before you write any copy,* write the headline or title, even if you discard it later.
- C. *Pay attention to your own voice.* Is it serious? Humorous? Excited? Professional? Let it flow naturally from the headline or title that you have selected.
- D. *Focus.* Write simply, clearly and briefly.
- E. *Use benefits language.* Resist the temptation to describe. Instead, tell the reader how they will benefit.

### 2. COLLABORATE.

- A. Use a *systemic* approach. Don't become too vested in your own efforts.
- B. Have a colleague participate in writing your copy. Allow for new ideas.
- C. Use an experienced copy writing professional to review your efforts. This will save you time, money and aggravation in the long run.

### 3. GET REACTIONS.

- A. Show your copy to anyone who will look at it—colleagues, friends, family, potential clients, etc. Ask for candor and be prepared to receive it.
- B. Try to put ego considerations aside. Listen carefully to other attitudes, tastes, perceptions and viewpoints. Be especially attentive to any *confusion* that is voiced.
- C. If the investment is considerable, hire or otherwise arrange for a *focus* group.

### 4. REWRITE!

- A. Do not become too anxious. Allow time to react to suggestions and *rewrite*.
- B. Avoid being defensive. Incorporate new ideas. Eliminate any confusing interpretations.
- C. Repeat steps 1-4. Do not be tempted to skip stages. *Remember, your goal is to create a successful response.* Caution now will save you time and money in the long run.

### 5. PROOF!

- A. Take pride in what you've created. Don't allow a fine effort to appear sloppy and unprofessional. Check for typos, grammatical errors, omitted copy, etc.
- B. *Never* proof your own material. Use a colleague or, better still, hire a professional.
- C. If you are producing printed material, insist on a "blue line" copy for final proofing.

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