

Do It Yourself Web Content

The “non-writer’s” guide to writing great web content

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Dear Non-Writer,

As a professional copywriter, I know exactly what you're going through when it comes getting good content written for your website. Writing isn't fun; it feels like being in school again. And even if you like writing, if you've never written web copy before it can be a real hassle.

So why not hire a professional writer to take care of it for you?

Unfortunately it's not that easy.

As soon as you try to hire someone, you'll find that you have writers who claim to understand your expectations, only to deliver something that completely misses the mark, leaving no time for quality, on-time revisions. Then you have writers who claim to be "native English speakers" but who write sentences that look like this:

"If you look to see the good website for you as customer, you have dropped into right place!"

And of course, you have great writers who craft an eloquent and persuasive masterpiece of modern literature, but you deflate your bank account paying their fees.

Of course, you could always do it yourself...but if you don't love writing, that old rat called "procrastination" gets you in a headlock. Next thing you know, your website content takes weeks or months to get written.

If this sounds familiar, your worries are over. This simple guide to writing great web content will be your life line.

I'm going to show you exactly how I write effective web content for customers without having to spend hours agonizing over my lap top. You can do the same, you'll see.

Let's start with your home page..

How to Write Your Home Page

Too many companies ramble on about their company on their home page instead of getting right to the point by addressing the customer's needs. The purpose of your home page is to get your customer to either place an order or contact your company for more information. That's it.

So before you write a word of your home page, you need a structure which will help you accomplish the goal of getting your customer to order your product or service or to contact you for more information.

That's the proven structure for writing a home page for your website, and once you have this structure down, it's just a matter of knowing how to fill in the spaces. So before you do anything, copy the following into a word document:

1. **Headline**
2. **Intro Paragraph**
3. **Body**
4. **Call to Action**

Now, let's break these down one at a time...

1. **Headline**

The biggest mistake people make when writing headlines is trying to be too clever and interesting. This is WAY too much work for you and it's not even that effective for getting your customer to contact you or place an order.

When someone lands on your website, you have just a few seconds to clarify that they're in the right place. So you don't have time for being clever and interesting, just get right to the point with a strong headline.

So the secret to writing a strong headline is to be 100% relevant to the *conversation going on in your customers mind when they land on your site*. For example, if your website is representing your plumbing services company, your headline might read:

Looking for a Dependable Plumber?

Think about it, what could they possibly say except for yes? By getting your customer to think “yes” the moment they land on your site , you start the relationship out on a positive note.

Here’s another example. This would be if you’re offering dog training services for aggressive dogs, your headline might read:

Get Control of Your Aggressive Dog’s Behavior Today

Notice again that you’re not talking about your company in the headline. Instead, you’re taking about the *specific problem which your customer wants to solve*.

You’re joining the internal conversation which led them to your site.

Let’s take one more example just to be 100% clear. This is a headline for selling skin care cream to people who have problems with acne.

Clear Up Your Acne 7 Days or Less

I know, not very “sexy,” but it doesn’t need to be. The idea is to join the internal conversation which led them to your site. Do that and the next step will be natural and easy...

1. Intro Paragraph

Your intro paragraph should talk about the problem which your product or service is going to help the customer solve. Notice again that you’re *not talking about your company*. You’re connecting with your customer and affirming that you *know exactly what problem they’re having*.

This is a lot easier than most people make it out to be. The trick is to talk about the problem your customers are having instead of talking about why YOU think they should choose your company.

For example, talk to the person who answers the incoming calls at your company or who takes the orders. Ask them which specific problems *most new customers mention when they call*.

What are their most common concerns? What are they most skeptical about when they're shopping for your services? Don't guess, ask the people who work at YOUR company and who talk to the customers on a consistent basis.

For example, check out the opening paragraph from this book again. Notice the yellow highlighted parts where I talk about the problem which you wanted to solve by reading this:

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Of course, you could always do it yourself...but if you don't love writing, that old rat called "procrastination" gets you in a headlock. Next thing you know, your website content takes weeks or months to get written.

Notice how I didn't tell you about how this book will help you until I made it 100% clear that I knew exactly what problem you wanted to solve. This is what you want to do in your opening paragraph.

For example, let's assume you're selling dog training services for overcoming aggression. So you ask your customer service rep to tell you the *most common concerns your new customers have when they first contact your company*. You might get a list that looks like this:

- **They're worried that they just have a "bad dog"**
- **They feel like they've "tried everything"**
- **They're afraid training might "change their dog's personality"**

These three concerns represent your customer's "hot buttons." With this list of concerns, you can create an opening paragraph which speaks directly to the most common concerns of your customers. For example, here's what your headline and opening paragraph might look like:

(Hot buttons have been highlighted in yellow)

Get Control of Your Aggressive Dog's Behavior Today

*Do you feel like you've **tried everything** to stop your dog's aggressive behavior but that you **might just have a "bad dog?"** If so, you're not alone and you're about to discover how you can **stop aggressive behaviors without changing the things you love about your dog's personality...***

Now by the time your customer has read this far, they're already thinking:

"Wow, this sounds like the exact problem I want to solve."

Are you starting to see how this approach is much more relevant (and not to mention easier) than agonizing over writing the "perfect" headline and opening?

Notice also that I prepared the reader for the rest of the message with the statement:

“You’re about to discover how you can...”

In other words, once I’ve confirmed that I understand their problem, I’m affirming that they’re about to discover the solution if they keep reading...

3. Body

This is where you deliver some value by educating your customer a little bit about what it’s going to take to solve their problem. Notice that you’re still not talking about your product or service, and that’s okay.

People don’t buy products and services, they buy solutions to problems. If you can show them that you have the solution to their problem, they’ll be more interested than if you just talked about your company.

Again, rather than guessing, go to your customer service rep or sales person and ask them *what most often convinces new customers to go ahead and order your services*. What are the most common things your sales reps say which “push your customers over the edge” and get them to buy?

For example, let’s assume you ask your customer service rep to tell you the *most common things they say to close new customer orders*. You might get a list that looks like this:

- **Customers like to hear that “our trainers all have 20+ years experience**
- **They like to hear that the training will help THEM to become the new trainer**
- **Customers like to hear that their dog’s behavior is completely normal and that the real problem is that their dog believes they’re the Alpha Dog and that they’re acting exactly how an alpha dog should act.**

So using the above information, your copy would continue like this:

(Hot buttons have been highlighted in yellow)

Get Control of Your Aggressive Dog's Behavior Today

Do you feel like you've tried everything to stop your dog's aggressive behavior but that you might just have a "bad dog?" If so, you're not alone and you're about to discover how you can stop aggressive behaviors without changing the things you love about your dog's personality...

Our trainers have 20+ years of experience in training aggressive dogs, and we've found that 99% of the time your dog's behavior is NOT the problem.

The problem is that if your dog thinks they're the "Alpha Dog," they'll be naturally aggressive in order to enforce their role as the protector and the one to bring order. This is completely normal behavior for a dog which has been placed in the Alpha Dog role.

The great news is that once your dog understands that YOU'RE in charge, their aggressive "Alpha Dog" behavior will disappear. When this happens, you'll become the new trainer and be 100% in control again.

This is exactly what our two decades of professional experience will do for you...

Notice that I educated the customer and at the same time sold them on the solution. I did this using the *proven hot buttons which I gathered from talking to the customer service reps who speak to real customers.*

Now, I've *earned the right* to tell the customer that we have the solution to their problem....

4. Call to Action

This is where you tell your customers exactly how you're ready to help them and *exactly* what they need to do next. This is no time to be shy. If they've read this far, you can bet they're interested, so ask for them to take the next step. This is your "call to action," and a good call to action needs three things:

- **Tell them *exactly* what to do**
- **Remind them of *why* they need to do it**

- **Tell them *what* will happen when they do**

For example, your call to action might look like this:

To put a stop to your dog's aggressive behaviours right away, pick up the phone and call XXX-XXX-XXXX. One of our customer service professionals is waiting to answer your questions and set up a time for you to meet one of our trainers.

The “*to put a stop to your dog's aggressive behaviour,*” is the reminder of why they need to do it. The “*pick up the phone and call...*” tells them exactly *what to do* and the “*one of our customer service professionals is waiting...*” tells them exactly what will happen when they call.

This way, your customer is 100% certain of WHAT to do, WHY to do it and of WHAT will happen when they do.

How easy was that?

Summary of How to Write Your Home Page

1. **Headline:** join the internal conversation which led them to your site.
2. **Intro Paragraph:** talk about the problem they want to solve by using the hot button information gathered from your customer service reps.
3. **Body:** educate them and ease their concerns using the information gathered from your customer service reps.
4. **Call to Action:** tell them exactly what to do, remind them of why they need to do it and tell them exactly what will happen when they do it.

Now, that takes care of your home page. Next let's look at your “**About Us**” page...

How to Write Your About Us Page

If you've followed the previous instructions for creating your home page, your "About Us" page simply becomes a supportive page. Your about us page needs to answer the three most common questions on your customer's mind:

- **Who Are You?**
- **What Can You Do for Me?**
- **Why Should I Choose You?**

Once you've addressed these concerns, you close the page with a call to action just as you did on your home page.

That's the proven structure for writing an about us for your website. Once you have this structure down, it's just a matter of knowing how to fill in the spaces.

So before you do anything, copy the following into a word document:

1. **Who Are We?**
2. **What Can We Do for the Customer?**
3. **Why Should they Choose Us?**
4. **Call to Action**

Now, let's break these down one at a time...

1. Who Are We?

This is the place to shamelessly brag about your company. Introduce your team members or your leadership team and to talk about credentials, awards which you've won or company's experience level.

For example, if your company offers plumbing services, your about us page might open up like this...

Who Are We and How Can We Solve Your Plumbing Problems?

All of our technicians have at least 10 years of experience in solving complex plumbing problems. We have received customer service awards from “J.D Powers and Associates” and _____.”

The goal here is to tell your customer exactly who you are and to build up some credibility, not with claims like “we are the best,” but with verifiable information like: years of industry experience, credentials and awards or certifications. You can also mention organizations you’re a member of or even non-for-profits which you support.

Notice that the above headline also speaks about the exact problem your customer wants to solve AND addresses the question about who your company is.

Now you’re ready to answer their next question...

2. What Can We Do for the Customer?

This should be easy because you’ve already answered this question on your home page. So on the “About Us” page, you simple say it within a new context, using the *same* hot buttons you did on the home page.

For example, let’s go back to our Dog Training Services Company

Who Are We and How Can We Solve Your Dog Aggression Problems?

All of our dog trainers have at least 20 years of experience in solving complex dog aggression problems. We have received customer service awards from [redacted] and been featured in (local newspaper) and on (local news channel).

If you feel like your dog’s aggressive behavior is incurable and that you’ve tried everything, you’ll be glad to know that there’s nothing wrong with your dog.

Our trainers have found that aggressive behavior can be easily corrected once your dog has a clear understanding of their role as the submissive dog and NOT the dominant “Alpha Dog.” Our goal is to get you back in control and to make you

the new trainer for your dog so that you NEVER have to worry about dog aggression again.

Now, as you can see this can get a bit redundant, so you want to make sure you've not saying it exactly how you did on the home page. Just make the point about what you can do for the customer and move right on to answering the question that landed them on your "About Us" page...

3. Why Should they Choose Us?

This section can have a direct headline which speaks right to the primary concern. Next, you want to tell them what you offer that your competition is NOT offering. It's important to be as specific as possible here and to avoid generic statements like:

"We have the best service."

"No one can beat us."

"We'll get the job done right."

Your competitors are going to say the same thing, so generic statements will just make you sound like everyone else out there. Instead, begin this section of your "About Us" page with a statement about how you're the *only plumbing company* that _____. Of course, you need something to fill in the space, and that's not something I can help you with.

Just find something, anything, that makes you different and tell your customers that you're the only company who can offer it. Then, tie this "one and only" difference right back into the promise of how you'll solve the customer's problem.

For example, let's assume that our imaginary dog training company is the only company whose trainers ALL have *at least* 20 years of experience. Your

Why We're Your Best Choice for Solving Dog Aggression

Alpha Dog Aggression Training Academy is the ONLY dog training company in (insert local area) whose trainers have AT LEAST 20 years of experience. Just ask any of our competitors and you'll discover why we're the best choice for solving dog aggression.

Notice how the statement about being the ONLY local dog training company whose trainers have AT LEAST 20 years of experience is followed up with the statement “...why we're the best choice for solving dog aggression.”

I tied the “one and only” statement right back to the main reason why the customer has arrived on our site. This way, I'm not just telling them why were the “one and only,” I'm telling them why that one and only difference is the reason they need to take the next step...

4. Call to Action

As with the home page, this where you tell your customers exactly how you're ready to help them and *exactly* what they need to do next. Again, this is no time to be shy. If they've read this far, you can bet they're interested, so ask for them to take the next step. This is your “call to action,” and a good call to action needs three things:

- **Tell them *exactly* what to do**
- **Remind them of *why* they need to do it**
- **Tell them *what* will happen when they do**

For example, your call to action for your “About Us” page might look like this:

To regain control of you dog's aggressive behaviours, pick up the phone and call XXX-XXX-XXXX. We're ready to answer your questions and to set up your free in home evaluation.

So that's how you write a great "About Us" page. Now, let's wrap this up with creating your products and services page.



How to Write Your Services Page

Believe it or not, this is the most important page on your site. In my analysis of hundreds of company websites, I've found that most web visitors go to the services or products page right after landing on the Home page or the about us page.

So even if you've followed the previous instructions for creating your home page and your about us page, your products or services page needs to be able to stand and sell on its own.

Thankfully, you don't have to be a master copywriter to a products and services page that sells. In fact, and this is something a lot of copywriters don't want you to know, you probably know more about your customers and about the benefits of your products and services than most copywriters do.

In fact what you're about to learn is something which many copywriters don't know. There are three steps to writing a great product or service description and using these descriptions to sell your products and services:

1. Turn features into benefits
2. Turn benefits into an experience
3. Ask for the sale (call to action)

Let's start with step one...

Step #1: Turn Features into Benefits

The best way to sell products and services is to convert the features of your product or service into direct benefits and to convert those benefits into experiences.

Ordinary sales people just sell features. So if they're selling a car they'll tell you it has power windows, XM radio, a built in GPS, voice recognition control for your CD player etc.

But a good sales person will sell the *benefits* of these features:

1. *The benefit of power windows is convenient, push button control over all the windows in your car.*
2. *The benefit of XM radio is listening ONLY to your favourite music style without commercial interruptions.*
3. *The benefit of a GPS system is that you NEVER have to worry about getting lost or finding the nearest gas station.*
4. *The benefit of voice recognition control is that you can select your favourite tracks without having to fumble with buttons or take your eyes off of the road.*

See the difference? I just took each feature and translated it into a direct benefit. This is easy if you just remember this simple saying:

“Don’t sell what it is, sell what it does for the customer.”

Customers don’t buy products and services. They buy what those products or services will do for them. That’s a subtle difference, but the results are staggering. So before writing your services or products page, sit down and write a list of your products and services, then list the features of each product or service.

Next, go through those features and ask yourself what those features do for the customer. This also works if you’re selling a service, because you can use the components of the service.

For example, if you’re selling dog training services, make a list of all the things which your company does for the customer when they order your service. Those are the features of your service. Next, go through that list of features and convert each feature into a benefit for the customer.

Once you’ve got a list of your features and the benefit connected to each one, you’re ready to REALLY make your copy shine...

Step #2: Turn Features into Benefits

Ordinary sales people only sell features; good sales people sell benefits...GREAT sales people sell experiences. Ultimately, your customer is after a great

experience. If you use words to paint a picture of this experience, you're doing something most *copywriters* don't even know to do.

To sell an experience, you simply connect the benefit to one of the following three emotional triggers:

- 1. Feeling excited**
- 2. Feeling safe or comfortable**
- 3. Feeling important**

If you can show how the benefits of your product or service will make your customer feel excited, safe & comfortable or important, you've reached the height of salesmanship. This is easy to do. Just go through the list of benefits which you've already written down and ask yourself which emotional experience is connected to it.

- 1. Feeling excited**
- 2. Feeling safe and comfortable**
- 3. Feeling important**

Let's take a few examples of the "emotional hot buttons based" connected to the benefits and features we've already covered....

- 1. The benefit of power windows is convenient, push button control over all the windows in your car.*

Emotional hot button: safety and comfort

- 2. The benefit of XM radio is listening ONLY to your favourite music style without commercial interruptions.*

Emotional hot button: excitement

- 3. The benefit of a GPS system is that you NEVER have to worry about getting lost or finding the nearest gas station.*

Emotional hot button: safety and comfort

4. *The benefit of voice recognition control is that you can select your favourite tracks without having to fumble with buttons or take your eyes off of the road.*

Emotional hot button: feeling important (safe and comfortable works here too)

With this information, you can now create a list of bullet points illustrating each feature of your product or service and selling the experience created by each benefit. For clarification, I've highlighted the features in red, the benefits in yellow and the emotional "hot buttons" in green.

1. *Power windows give you the comfort and safety of convenient push button control over ALL the windows in your car. Great safety feature for drivers with little ones in the back seat!*
2. *Choose from over 600 music stations and listen to ONLY your favourite music XM radio for an exciting, enjoyable and commercial-free cruising experience.*
3. *NEVER have to worry about getting lost or finding the nearest gas station! This advanced GPS system will deliver you to your destination safely and comfortably.*
4. *Voice recognition controlled MP3 player that puts YOU in charge. This system obeys your every command, allowing music selection based on song and artist!*

Examples one and three sell the emotional experience of safety and comfort. Example two sells the experience of excitement and example four sells the emotional experience of feeling important by emphasizing that you're in charge.

Now that's sexy copywriting.

Just one thing left to do now...

Step #3: Ask for the Sale (Call to Action)

As with the home page and the about us page, this where you tell your customers exactly how you're ready to help them and *exactly* what they need to do next. Again, this is no time to be shy.

If they've read this far, you can bet they're interested, so ask for them to take the next step. This is your "call to action," and a good call to action needs three things:

- **Tell them *exactly* what to do**
- **Remind them of *why* they need to do it**
- **Tell them *what* will happen when they do**

For example, your call to action for your "About Us" page might look like this:

To regain control of you dog's aggressive behaviours, pick up the phone and call XXX-XXX-XXXX. We're ready to answer your questions and to set up your free in home evaluation.

And That's All There is to Writing Great Web Copy

See how easy that is?

Now you're ready to craft a simple home and about us page without having to pull your hair out evaluating copywriting services and without having to spend a fortune hiring a writer.

Good luck!

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