

## Writing effective copy

When you write effective copy for your website, newsletters or marketing material, it helps your customers understand who you are and what your business is all about. It can persuade potential customers to buy from you or send them directly to your competitors.

When it comes to writing good copy, there are key elements that are essential to the planning process... as well as major pitfalls that can be avoided.

**Establish your goals.** What do you want to achieve? Do you wish to sell a product, generate more revenue or inform your clients of a new service or business direction? Document your goals and highlight the main purpose.

**Research - what are you writing about?** If you don't know enough about it, you won't be able to write about it. You'll need to clearly define your topic.

**Establish your audience.** Who will be reading your text? What tone will you use to help your readers relate? What is it they want and what can they get from your website/ product/ service? How can you make it appealing to them?

**Keep it concise.** You're not writing a novel. Keep your sentences short and the article to the point. Remove unnecessary words that over-embellish your writing and detract from the point.

**Carefully review spelling and grammar.** This is often overlooked but extremely important for establishing credibility. Proof several times (on and off screen) and ensure someone else reads your work. Break from the writing process and come back with fresh eyes and a clear head. Remove anything pointless or unnecessary and embrace feedback.

**Avoid jargon.** Don't use words that confuse the reader. Put yourself in your audience's shoes - are you making sense?



**Avoid hype.** Using superlatives such as 'best in the world' and 'once in a lifetime' could ruin your integrity. Be specific and credible at all times.

Good copy needs to be concise, persuasive and easy to read. Plan carefully to save time and potential embarrassment. Don't be afraid to write your own copy. The key is to be confident in your work.

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor



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## The importance of client feedback

Keeping your customers satisfied should be top priority. So how do you measure their satisfaction? The key is communication; ask the questions. One of the most cost effective ways to do this is with a client survey.

A survey can establish how your customers perceive your company, gauge interest in products, get feedback on services and pinpoint areas of concern. Involving customers in a survey will help make them feel valued and important to your business.

Establish a plan and a list of important questions you want answered. Is it a one-off survey, or something you will send out regularly? How will you deliver your survey? If you're not sure where to start, there are a number of free or cost-effective websites allowing you to capture important client information via online survey software. Research which survey company best fits your business and intentions.

**The most important element to any client survey is action.** Be sure to take on board all feedback received and put it to good use. Address any client frustrations promptly.



### Creating an online customer survey

Online survey tools allow you to easily design and conduct your own surveys, providing a cost effective alternative to printing and posting client feedback forms.

#### Before you start:

- Register an account with your chosen survey website. This should be as easy as choosing a user name and password. No money should change hands
- Follow the help guidelines and familiarise yourself with the process from start to finish
- Review the pricing options - a free version may suit you. If not, decide on a starting payment plan depending on your level of use - it's likely you can upgrade at any time

#### Now you're ready to create...

1. **Define your objectives:** What will be the focus of your survey.
2. **Work backwards:** Once you've established your objectives, determine the information you wish to gather.
3. **Check for bias:** Make sure you're not asking leading questions or offering biased multi-choice answers. This will only lead to inaccurate feedback or annoy your customers.
4. **Test-drive your survey:** Engage an independent party to test it - they'll let you know if your questions and response options are understandable and logical.
5. **Collect your results and analyse the data:** As data rolls in from your survey you should gain an accurate client insight and important future direction for your business.

If you feel you're not savvy enough to design your own survey, your chosen survey website can probably develop your questions and design your survey for a minimal fee. It should be as simple as supplying them with your logo etc.

### Introducing Survey Monkey

Survey Monkey is a popular online survey web tool. It's free at the basic user end as well as incredibly intuitive to use.

#### Survey Monkey provides:

- Step by step, easy to follow guidelines for putting your survey together
- Questions that have been designed to give you an accurate and precise answer with minimal bias
- A variety of survey options, formats and designs
- Multiple options to collect responses including email, your website or social network site
- Access to specific target markets or wider demographics
- Four different pricing plans from Basic through to Premium
- Concise results displayed in graphs
- Tips, tricks and ongoing support



Survey Monkey a great starting point if you want to learn more about what drives your customers. Creating an online client survey can help you research different demographics and/or focus on a new target market. Most importantly you'll find out if your current client base is happy with your products and services, or if they enjoyed the latest event you hosted.

If you're yet to open the doors of your business, you can conduct a survey for target research purposes and 'buy' the responses of many different target markets. Survey Monkey has millions of survey respondents ready to provide answers to your questions.



## Avoiding a termination grievance

It can be extremely testing when an employee pushes the limits of his or her employment. You may have given that person the benefit of the doubt too many times, and then the final straw breaks.... Failing to follow correct process at the final hour can be extremely costly for an employer, as this Employment Relations Authority ruling demonstrates.

**Case breakdown:** An employee was awarded around \$9,000 (in unpaid annual leave, pay in lieu of notice, compensation, costs and lost wages) after she was dismissed immediately when her car broke down on the way to work.

During 28 months of employment, she had repeatedly called in sick, using up all of her sick leave before eating into her annual leave - taking off more than 50 days in total. She was also late to work at least once a week.

The employee was spoken to regularly before being given a final warning and told any further infringement would result in termination with one week's notice. The employee decided it best to resign at that point but it was agreed that she would stay on until new employment was found.

On the day of the breakdown, the employee waited more than an hour to contact her boss, via text. The employer responded with: 'You have blown your job. Last pay tomorrow.'

The Authority ruled that the dismissal was unjustified. Although the employee should have phoned or texted earlier, by immediately terminating her job without investigating the rights and wrongs of the matter and seeking her response, her employer had not acted fairly.

Though the employer had earlier been 'very considerate' over her frequent absence for sickness, their final lack of patience proved expensive.

We are all human. If your patience is truly tested, take a breath, act rationally and be sure to engage the advice of an employment specialist to avoid a costly mistake.



*'The most important thing I learned from big companies is that creativity gets stifled when everyone's got to follow the rules.'* **David Kelley**

## ENGINE ROOM



### Netiquette - Focus on fonts

Whenever you're tempted to style your emails with a particularly smart font remember! Plainer also means easier to read. If your readers scroll through hundreds of emails a day, they'll want to delete anything that looks choppy or hard to read. And then you've lost them.

**Uniformity** - establish a font that you want your business to use and set up everyone's email to default to this. It projects professionalism.

**Stay away from fancy fonts and multiple font colours.** They're harder to read and can make your email look as if you scrapbooked it.

**Be cautious of downloaded fonts** - if your recipient doesn't have the same font, the text in your email could default to something unattractive or unreadable.

**Avoid emoticons** in professional emails unless you know your recipient really really well. Nothing undercuts your business image like a smiley face. 😊

## Writing an effective position description

A position description is a written summary designed to ensure job applicants and current employees understand their roles. They're an important resource when hiring *and* managing team members, as they reinforce employee accountability.

A position description describes the key areas of an employee's job, helps to outline performance expectations, training requirements, and evaluation process.... It will also help to attract the right job applicants when recruiting.

**When writing a position description**, clearly, concisely and accurately define the role, including:

- Job title: this should reference level (e.g. assistant, senior, manager) and be consistent with industry standards and your company culture
- General job summary: the purpose of the position
- Type of employment: full time, part-time, contract etc
- Key tasks, responsibilities, accountabilities and scope of the position: list each task with appropriate detail and clarity
- Hierarchy: who the role reports to within what department
- Skills, qualifications and experience required to perform the role (mandatory and preferred)
- The methods, equipment and software used to complete tasks involved
- Authority and budgets relating to the position
- How the role fits within the organisation (interaction with other staff)
- Company culture and overview - mission statement and core values
- **You may also wish to include** job location and the broad salary range depending on the level of the applicant/employee.



**A job description should be organic.** Roles will evolve due to personal growth, changing company structure and technology advances. A flexible job description allows team members to grow within their position and grow their contribution to your business. Encourage your team to show initiative for new ideas and processes.

Make sure to review your team's job descriptions regularly - keep them informed and engaged.



### FYI...

**CRM translates as customer relationship management.** A CRM system develops and manages customer relationships in an organised way so you can help your business improve customer satisfaction.

CRM does more than a client database. It tracks sales, marketing, customer service and support. For instance, with it you can analyse what clients had support queries, whether and how quickly they were resolved and whether those clients later gave you repeat business or left as clients.

CRM provides businesses with the information to know their customers and identify their needs. It allows marketing departments to identify target customers, manage campaigns and generate quality leads. If you would like to know more about the benefits of CRM, come and see us.

### An Important Message

While every effort has been made to provide valuable, useful information in this publication, this firm and any related suppliers or associated companies accept no responsibility or any form of liability from reliance upon or use of its contents. Any suggestions should be considered carefully within your own particular circumstances, as they are intended as general information only.

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