

The 10 Commandments Of Copywriting



Helping People with Purpose be Impactful.

VIM + ZEST



The vast majority of us write a little every day, this is a reason why we hire professional copywriters to compose our website, brochures, direct mail and other marketing text.

Copywriters have trained and amassed working experience in making every word count in the quest to get your audience to act. Their words deliver a strong return on investment, whether you want them to sign up to a newsletter, donate to your cause or buy your product or service.

There is an art to persuading them to do so through the power of words.

From the desk of copywriters with a combined experience of more than 35 years in the field and experience in delivering masters-level University education comes the following 10 Commandments of Copywriting.

Follow these and you could very well find the possibilities of utterly compelling, action-inducing copy opening up before you.



The First Commandment

Thou Shalt Know Thy Audience

Know exactly who your writing for. Be as specific as you can. Not just their age, sex and where they live, but also what they have for breakfast, how they work out, whether or not they have pets and what keeps them awake at night. Make your audience a real person and write for that person.

The Second Commandment

Thou Shalt Know Thy Publication

The majority of written content ends up online – on social media, a blog or a website. An online audience scans rather than reads. You have approximately three seconds to convince them to read on instead of logging off. Short, one sentence paragraphs are key.



The Third Commandment

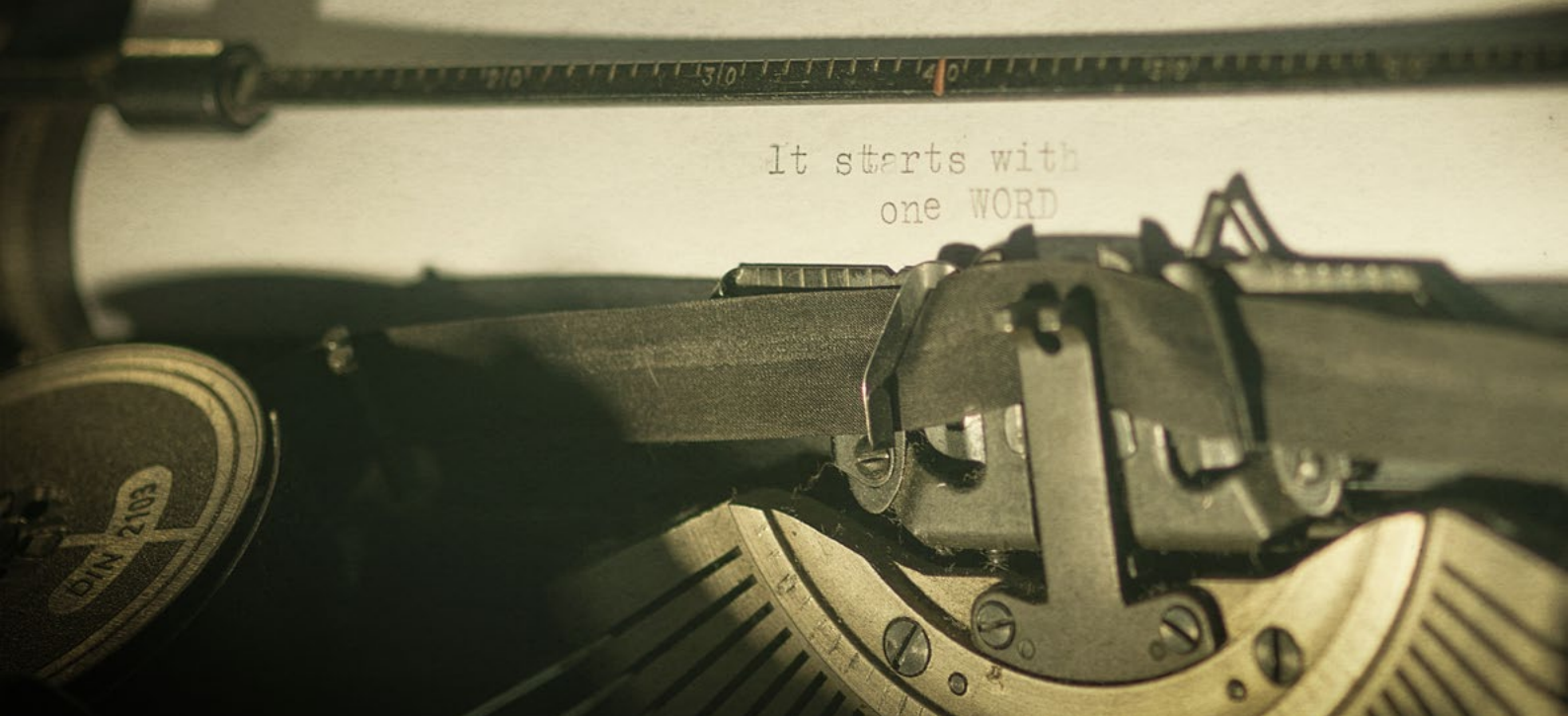
Thou Shalt Lead The Reader's Eye

Give your content visual cues. Sub-headings help the reader understand key information. Bullet points offer a way of emphasising key information and cater to the scanning reader.

The Fourth Commandment

Thou Shalt Use The Right Tone

Assess the audience and publication to ensure the style, tone and personality of your text is correct. Would a relaxed, conversational style work or does the publication require more technical and formal language?



The Fifth Commandment

Thou Shalt Impact With Headlines

A headline is equivalent to a person's first impression. It should not be under-estimated. Imagine your reader has a huge to-do list in front of them and almost 50 emails they need to read before they even start. Would your headline be compelling enough to make them stop and read on?

The Sixth Commandment

Thou Shalt Tell A Story

Storytelling is compelling. In our experience honest, open and personal copy not only makes an audience stop and read, but also increases engagement dramatically. If you make a reader feel, you will make them want to act.



The Seventh Commandment

Thou Shalt Adopt A Customer's Perspective

One of the most common mistakes is to write text from you or your brand's point of view rather than that of the reader. The text will be laden with information about the services you offer when you should be discussing the ultimate benefit/s that provides the reader.

The Eighth Commandment

Thou Shalt Put The Important Stuff First

Consider what information is most important to your reader and put that up front and centre.



The Ninth Commandment

Thou Shalt K.I.S.S (Keep It Simple, Stupid!)

Write your first draft then give yourself a break. Come back to it with a fresh head and simplify the text. Try to imagine you are a person who knows nothing about the subject matter. Does the text still make sense? Now that you have your second draft, ask a trusted friend or colleague to read over it. A confused mind won't buy. If there is anything that confuses your readers, simplify it further.

The Tenth Commandment

Thou Shalt Call The Troops To Action

Finish your copy with a call to action. Simply, tell the reader what you want them to do. Do so in a way that they cannot say no to. The very best copywriters spend 70% of their time researching and 30% writing – using that research to create copy geared towards getting the audience to act.



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