

## Writing Website Content That Sells

### Hook

Your homepage is the first thing that your website visitor sees, so it better be good. It's your hook. But contrary to popular belief (and sometimes natural intuition), your goal for a homepage is not to inform or to tell anyone anything. Your #1 goal for a homepage is for your website visitor to click forward and not back. That is, it is to convince them that you have something on your website worth spending their time on.

If you've ever taken a sales class in anything, they'll tell you the first step to selling is making the customer say "yes" to something, anything. That's why telemarketers always ask you stuff like, "What would you say if I told you I could save you 10% on your phone bill every month, and it would only take you 10 minutes of your time today?" Because what are you going to say? I don't want to save 10%? Of course not. You have to say, "Well, I guess that sounds pretty good."

Clicking is the web version of saying "yes" in the sales world. So your first step is to make the customer want to click forward. Fortunately, you don't need to tell them much to do that. To do that they only need to be able to answer two things:

1. What's in it for me?
2. Where do I click?

If they can answer those two questions quickly, then you stand a darn good chance of selling your product. If you babble too long...Well, unfortunately web surfers are finicky, impatient creatures that are all too happy to click the back button.

Once you can get them to start clicking, then they have already taken a proactive approach to your site, and they will start reading deeper. So don't cram your homepage with too many details. Tell them just enough to make them click forward. Don't worry, once they get interested, website surfers will read deeper.

## **Line**

Once you get your website visitor into your site, you need to make sure they feel comfortable and welcome and that they follow the line you want them to take: to the telephone, to the order form, to the buy now button... To do that, you need to know how to write website content.

Website content should be some 50% - 75% shorter than content created for print. Font's should be larger, sentences more concise, paragraphs shorter, and space should be used frequently (but not after every other sentence). Why? Because reading on the web is hard. Computer screens just don't make comfortable reading platforms. So, concentrate on making it easy for people to scan pages. Break things up with headers and well-considering spacing.

Easy and short, however, does not mean that you can leave out the details. Once you get your visitor to start clicking, then they are going to want the details. They better be there, and they better be easy to find. The web is a medium for propagating information: So give it to them. If you don't, they'll buy from someone who did.

So how do you get a lot of content onto a short web page? You don't. You create a lot of unique web pages.

If you have 10 products, make a main products page and 10 products web pages. Don't try to cram all the details about every product onto one page. If you have a long industry article, break it up into several shorter pages and provide a way for readers to click forward or backward within the article at the end of each article page. If your services require extensive explanations, break up the info. If merited, each service can have its intro page, benefits page, installation page, FAQ, order form, whatever.

But beware. There is a careful balance between short and stupidly short, between breaking up pages and breaking up flow, and between giving your reader places to click and confusing them to holy heck with too much navigation. The solution? Never lose sight of your reader. Put a little thought into how you are going to break up your pages. In fact, put a lot of thought into how you are going to break up your web pages. Professional website content writers spend as much of 1/3 to 1/2 of their time plotting navigation, creating outlines and drawing page layouts before they write the first sentence.

## **And Sinker**

The goal of your homepage is getting your visitor to click forward. And the goal of your site is to get your visitor to take action. That is, to buy your product. Your ordering process must be simple. And, if at all possible, it should be automated and online. If your product or service doesn't lend itself to a shopping cart system, then at least make sure that you've got a simple online request form where potential customers can input answers to some basic questions about themselves and request a free quote or a call from a customer service representative.

During the ordering process, never ask your customer to fill out more than you absolutely need to complete their order. If you can get away with asking for just a credit card number and name, do it. Loosing people that already decided to buy because you just had to know their demographics is not a good thing.

Not sure if your ordering process is simple enough? Here's a stretch: Go through it yourself. Too many website owners have never once been through their own ordering process. Still not sure? Find a 10 year old. If they can't do it. It's too complicated.

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