Writing web copy that is searchable, sings and sells

GoodSense How To and checklist – August 2019

Writing great web copy is writing on three levels at once:

1 Writing using a focus 'key word phrase' designed to bring search traffic to that specific page on your website (and not used as the focus key word phrase for any other pages on your site)

2 Writing to represent your brand and using your key messages

3 Writing to sell.

Taking each of these in turn:

1 Writing using a focus key word phrase

First choose the phrase you are going to use for that page. Pick something that is very relevant to the page content, that isn't the focus phrase for another page already. To choose your phrase look at Google key word search data but also think about what people really enter into a search engine if they were looking for what that page covers. Note the phrase and the page URL in the SEO Planning template (supplied) so you have it for reference in future.

Next write the metadata for the page. The metadata helps rankings and determines how Google displays your result. Use the SEO Planning template for this, following the guidelines below:

Page title	The site title is the first and most visible information displayed for each search result listing.
	It should describe in 5-8 words (60-65 characters) what the site is about so users can determine if it is relevant to them.
	Include key words.

Page description	The description is presented in search results below the title.
	Keep it short (155-160 characters (15 - 30 words)) or it will be truncated.
	Make it as useful as you can to searchers looking for what you offer.
	Load key words to the left and end with a call to action.
	If no site description is provided, search engines will show part of your website content instead.
Meta tags	Keywords inserted in the meta tag area of your site and page headers are less important than they used to be. Some search engines still use them however.
	In Meta Data Key Words put the three or four individual words from your key word phrase in priority order and separate each word with a comma. All lower case.

Lastly set up and write the webpage using the focus key word phrase in as many of these places as you can without it reading clumsily, and following steps 2 and 3 below, as well.
The higher up and further left on the page the key words are the better!

Master checklist for using key word phrases on-site:
URL suffix (hyphens between words)
Menu item

H1 heading
First paragraph
H2 headings
Rest of the page copy

Image file names
Image alt tags
Image captions

Links in body copy
3+ frequency per page

2 Writing to represent your brand and using your key messages

Have the brand summary and key messages to hand as you write. Try and use the tone and vocabulary of these messages as much as you can. This will bring the brand to life and add consistency to the site.

3 Write to sell

Get to the main benefit really quickly. Put the most important benefit to the customer of the info that follow right at the start. Then explain in more detail as you go down the page.

- Keep the sentences short.
- Include hyperlinks from relevant words to other useful pages ON YOUR SITE
- Make the language active.

Finish each section and page with a clear 'next step' action so each page feeds the user further into a responding or buying funnel.

Think about each web page as a pyramid with the most important info summarised at the top and then expanded in more detail below that, getting more detailed as the page progresses. And finish the page with a call to action.

Use images and diagrams to make the page more interesting.

Can you add a video for the content?

Don't ever let a page finish as a dead end – always give the reader a link to an action or more content that will help them choose you and buy.

Check out this GoodSense resource on effective writing.

For more support in writing great web copy contact Kath@goodsense.co.nz