

How to Fix Common Ad Copywriting Mistakes, Fast

I couldn't believe my ears, let alone my eyes! It was difficult to keep my eyes on the TV.

How could so-called 'professionals' be so uninformed, unaware, and...underwhelming?

For seasoned business professionals, you'd expect a task done well.

Couldn't be further from the truth.

They shouted louder and louder as the price dropped for the items they were selling. 'LOOK AT HOW SMALL THIS FAN IS!' was one statement. 'WOW, I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW GREAT THIS INFLATABLE POOL IS.' I couldn't look at the screen, least of all because it wasn't that impressive.

They weren't given a set of difficult tasks: selling four products per team on a live shopping channel.

Yes, I was watching The Apprentice. I know, it's not exactly the best source for marketing prowess, but you'd expect some level of competence.

Noting a distinct lack of any solid marketing, I thought I'd see if the trend continues across other areas.

So, I placed the advertisements you see every day under the microscope. The ones that magically transfer from your brain to the break. Those you receive in your inbox. In the websites you open. The places you visit.

Unsurprisingly, the trend continued.

By sifting through many advertisements in this process, I have uncovered three of the most common mistakes advertisers have made.

I'll show you how to spot these errors yourself. After each instance, I will provide suggestions on how you can write them differently. These changes will provide a step change to the normal so you can magnetise your message, today.

Mistake #1: Caring Too Much About Yourself

'Our award-winning formula will be back in stock soon'. 'We offer a wide variety of menu options to meet every craving'. 'Gain muscle, lose weight, FAST'. 'Over 5 million drivers have chosen our cars'. Such statements were all too frequent.

In at least 90% of the advertisements I analysed, there was an overemphasis on the business, rather than the customer.

Social proof/influence. A vague dream state. The bandwagon effect. These psychological levers weren't used to their greatest potential. Even more so, these ads seemed not to know how to capture attention or an understanding of what the consumers' needs are. So, not knowing in what direction you need to take them, compounds the inertia.

Talking about the business, therefore, is not as productive as people tend to believe.

Consumers rarely care about your business, your awards, or that you were founded in the 1300s. Frankly, they rarely even care about you. Consumers only care about what you can do for them; as individuals, not as a crowd.

It's your job to ensure the only person you care about is the person reading the ad even though thousands are doing the same thing.

People don't share one eye, stop writing as if they do.

Solution #1: As in, Out

The solution, unsurprisingly, is to focus on the consumer. You don't want to use broad-stroke language or vague statements that could apply to everyone.

Yes, it takes research, and yes, it takes effort to enter the mind of the target. But such effort is essential.

You must split your market into segments, building different avatars or archetypes within each. This allows you to create messages that target a much smaller group. This will increase its effectiveness, greater than if you were to try and attract everyone all at once.

Of course, this means one ad may not include the right messages to a different part of the market. But that doesn't mean you can't create an ad for another target.

So, build several campaigns with different consumer profiles. Then, rotate your focus as you progress throughout the month or year.

For example, within the fitness niche, typical profiles can include many sub-niches. Busy professionals, beginners, seniors, professional athletes, weekend warriors, weight-loss seekers, weight-gain seekers, and special health concerns. The list can go on. Each persona has distinct interests, preferences, and challenges. You need to tailor your ad for each need.

Stop using a megaphone and start building a network of microphones.

Mistake #2: Focusing on the Features

Focusing on the features without considering the target makes the advert woefully ineffective.

You can have the latest nanometer processing chip manufacturing process. The highest purity of organic broccoli powder. The safest military-grade automated driving technology. Without putting the work into stating how the features benefit the audience, you aren't (like above) appealing to the individual.

I'll repeat what I have said above. Even within a niche, needs will differ across each domain. A bodybuilder's use of protein will be different from that of a cyclist. A photographer's use of the latest camera technology differs from that of a 21-year-old university student. A

professional surfer's need for insurance will be different from that of an IT consultant. Not that they can't be surfers, of course, but, you know...unlikely.

Without emphasising the ways these features provide an improvement or fast-track to the solution you are not laying down the path for the sale. You need to tie the benefits to the needs of a target market segment's avatar.

Solution #2: Captivate with Specific Benefit

You instead want to build campaigns around specific use cases.

Remember, you aren't tied to making one ad.

People don't like to think; our brains have evolved to conserve energy. So, you need to make it easier for the user to visualise how they will directly benefit from using your product. How it accelerates their journey to their dream state.

It's your job to place the benefits of the product within the scenario they frequently are found.

The clearer you make that image for each potential user, the faster they will respond to the call to action. The more likely they will buy.

Let's use an example. A new rowing machine uses the latest 'ocean feeling' technology, equipped with a VR headset. OK, great, it uses the latest tech, but give it a minute and every rowing machine will have the same features. So what do you do then? Do you still use the features as the message? Not if you want to stand out.

Say you're targeting aspiring athletes, you write about the specific benefits for them. 'Power through the water with each stroke as you see the finish line ahead. Sit alongside a virtual Olympic-winning rowing team as they drive you to win'.

Similarly, when targeting a senior user, you could say something like the following. 'Our easy-to-grip, sturdy handles transport you to a serene lake in the Alps. Gliding through the water, you re-energize your mind and body with youthful energy.'

The features are the same, but the unique benefits are different. All with a tweak in the approach to the message and who you are talking to.

Problem #3: No Emotional Connection

How often do you see these phrases:

'We are proud to announce that our company has received 'The Best Company Award' for the third consecutive year'.

'Hurry! Limited-time offer! 50% off all clothing items! Don't miss out, shop now to save big.'

'Our latest skincare product uses cactus needle oil to nourish and rejuvenate your skin. Shop now!' Ok, I may have exaggerated the needle oil, but it's not exactly uncommon. I wonder if that's a real thing...

Such hollow statements are all far too common and neglect to appeal to the heart of the consumer. Nor do they speak to their emotions, their personal experiences, or their concerns.

Solution #3: Create Heartfelt Inspiration

You need to create a deep emotional connection with the content you produce and the prospect.

Create a story. One of the most effective ways to appeal to a consumer's heart is to build a scenario that the viewer can connect with.

For example, say you are making an advert for a meal delivery service. You could say, 'Our rapid meal delivery service ensures your food arrives steaming hot within 15 minutes'. Ok, but what meal delivery shouldn't be aiming for that anyway? Instead, build a story. 'Meet Sarah, a single mother of two. Our meal delivery service takes the stress out of mealtime. Making dinner is no longer yet another draining task after an already exhausting day. Our service creates the space for quality, stress-free time with her children.'

Another way you can build emotional resonance is through building on the core human drive of connection. Don't say when advertising mountain bikes, 'Our latest carbon fibre frames make your bike lighter than a feather'. Where will the user be using the bike? How will these upgrades enhance the experience? Switch it to 'experience the thrill of carving through the mountain paths with ease and grace with your friends. With our new model, you can cycle further for longer (and faster) to make memories that last a lifetime.'

Conclusion

Effective ad copywriting is crucial for capturing consumer attention in today's hyper-competitive market.

From self-centred messaging to neglecting emotional connections, we have uncovered pitfalls that hinder effectiveness. Alternatively, by shifting the focus to consumers. By highlighting the specific benefits. By creating emotional resonance. Combined, you can greatly deepen the appeal of the message, the audience's engagement and their attraction to your product. Ultimately, this will build trust and increase conversions.

So, as you navigate your ad copywriting journey, prioritise the needs of your audience. Avoid the common mistakes outlined and implement the solutions. These will help create compelling campaigns that compel the reader to act. To take a step towards the promise of the product and not away.

If you enjoyed this, please like and follow. Any feedback, I greatly appreciate constructive comments.

For further assistance in applying these techniques to your business, feel free to reach out via DM.

Many thanks,