



Association for Creative Business Writing

Write to sell more by this afternoon by Lynda McDaniel

Successful sales writing is more than stringing words together or simply getting the grammar right. It's about building relationships, achieving goals, developing and sharing new ideas, connecting with clients' needs, and ... the list goes on. Whether you're selling products, services, or fundraising, you can increase your sales with the following tools and techniques.

Write copy that sells more by this afternoon:

1. Use a conversational, professional tone: No need for exaggerated formality or over-zealous self-promotion. Just be you. We live in a more casual time when people still expect courtesy—but not so much formality. (Having trouble? Picture your best friend and write to him/her.)

2. Get creative: Engage your readers with:

- **Similes.** Help your readers get on your wavelength faster with a colorful comparison or analogy.
- **Vivid verbs.** Use *achieve, celebrate, galvanize, ravage, taunt, wither* instead of *is, are, get, go, have*, etc. You'll wake up your readers and make your message more compelling.
- **Bullets.** Break up copy and draw attention. Skimmers get a good idea of where you're headed and go back to read more.
- **Numbers.** Not only do they break up copy, they help your readers' brains register how many points or requests they need to remember or respond to.
- **Subheads.** Attract attention and entice skimmers to delve deeper.

3. Use keywords and company buzzwords: Check out your readers' websites or articles they've written to find their favorite phrases and missions.

4. Ask questions: Questions engage your readers, especially since they often include that magic word "you."

- *Isn't it time you started writing like the professional you are?*
- *What if you woke up one morning, and your public radio station was silent?*

Write copy that sells more by next week:

5. Write to your readers, not at them: It's so easy to launch into our own story. After all, we're proud of what we have to offer. But when we're selling, we need to frame what we have to offer in light of our readers' needs. Every reader is asking, "What's in it for me?" (WIIFM?)

6. Find the pain - and offer the solution: Problems are at the core of selling. Solve them, and you'll seal the deal.

7. Offer benefits before features: It's easy to talk about your products and services and assume that readers understand how those features benefit them. But they don't. Again, they're thinking WIIFM? They want benefits spelled out so they understand how you address their needs, concerns, and problems. When you offer benefits, you grab their attention and keep them engaged.

Write copy that sells more by next month:

8. Preempt objections: As you do your research, you'll get a better sense for why your readers haven't tried this solution before or why that idea might receive a "no thanks." When you discover objections—rejoice! They allow you to craft preemptions before your clients mention them.

9. Set yourself apart with stories: Most people overlook this easy and fun tool for engaging readers and getting results. Based on MRI tests while people were reading, scientists have proven that stories activate the brain in ways far more creative than the words they're reading. Stories conjure memories, trigger emotions (which is where we buy and buy in from), and resonate in personal ways that make your message stick.

10. Create call-to-action endings: It's easy to assume our message will excite people so much they'll jump at the chance to contact us. Not so. Work toward endings that:

- Use hyperlinks for fast action online: e-mail letters with hyperlinks put oomph in the call-to-action.
- Tell them when you'll be calling on them.
- Request an RSVP.
- Use P. S. to demand attention: Post scripts are a great way to highlight important points. Research shows they are often the most-read item in a letter or e-mail.

Use powerful business writing techniques to help you make the sale and seal the deal.