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TIM TUCKER'S 7 COPYWRITING ESSENTIALS FOR DIGITAL MARKETERS

1. Use words you'd actually say

Online readers are in a hurry. Your copy will be easier to read if you write in Plain English. The Plain English website has useful free guides for writers.

The principles include:

• Use the simplest words you can – prefer informal language to formal language
• Avoid jargon where possible
• Write like you speak

2. Cut unnecessary words

Avoid words that carry no meaning.

This may include:

• Tautology (saying the same thing twice) and repetition
• Meaningless intensifiers ('very', 'really', 'truly', 'definitely')
• Abstract nouns (like 'analysis' or 'solution')

3. Write short sentences

Keep to 20 words or fewer. Write one thought per sentence for ease of reading.

4. Put 'you' before 'we'

Readers care about themselves, so focus on their needs. When you write in the second person ('you') it puts the reader at the centre of the message.

5. Avoid cliché and marketese

Clichés are words and phrases that have been weakened by being overused.

Marketese is the boastful subjective writing style that marketers sometimes use, for example in phrases like 'world leading provider' or 'hottest ever sale'.

Both these forms undermine your credibility.

6. Don't delay the subject

Readers struggle with the passive voice, so use the active voice:

- **Active:** You – are reading – this text
- **Passive:** This text – is being read – by you

Don't put too many words in front of the subject or verb:

- **Good:** I will finish this piece by the end of the morning
- **Bad:** Given the problems I'm having getting my attention focused and getting down to work, I will not take a break until I finish this piece

7. Use persuasive triggers

Consider these three ways to appeal to your readers:

1. Logic

- Arguments – usually constructed out of words and numbers
- Rationale and reasoning, data, statistics, proof

2. Emotions

- Based on human factors, often affected by pictures, especially pictures of people
- Stories convey emotions

3. Values

- Shared beliefs – individual, community and cultural
- What's important to you and your reader

You will need to rely on different balances of these three factors depending on context. However, recent neurological research suggests that we are far more often persuaded by emotions and values than by logic. Some studies suggest that up to 90% of our daily decisions are made by our emotional brain, rather than our logical brain.

For this reason, focus more on benefits than features, and especially emotional benefits.

Sources
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* Usability insights into writing for the web: https://www.nngroup.com/topic/writing-web/
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