

Tips for Writing Your Own Web Content

Your website is the virtual storefront to your business. As such, it should be welcoming and attractive in the sense that it draws the eye of the reader and entices them to stay a while. Images on your website should be relevant and high quality, and the written content should promote you and your product or service in the best possible light. The expression “You never get a second chance to make a first impression” is just as applicable to your website as it is to you as a business person.



Many entrepreneurs choose to write their own website content. In some cases, this works out fine. If you prefer to do the writing yourself, keep in mind the following tips to ensure the content on your website is persuasive and engaging enough to convince the reader to do something - call, buy, fill out a form, download a coupon – whatever action you want them to take.

Visitors to a website usually know in advance what they want and are looking for something specific. In their search for information, readers are more likely to scan the content rather than read it line by line the way they would read a novel. To help them find what they're looking for quickly, keep your website free of lengthy content and distracting clutter. Their eyes will focus more easily on simple, obvious keywords than on complicated text.

Provide visitors to your website with the most important information first. Give them a high-level view of the products you sell or services you provide. Once the reader knows they can buy widgets from you, they will dig deeper and keep reading to learn the details on the types of widgets you sell.

Keep content and phrasing simple and direct. Creativity is fine if you are writing a poem, but wordiness and fancy phrasing will not gain new customers; clear messaging about what you offer will. The common wisdom is to keep the writing to an eighth-grade level.

Along those same lines, use precise wording that directly explains who you are and what you do. Write as though the person viewing your website knows nothing about you or your business. Avoid jargon, keep sentences brief and paragraphs short, and eliminate all unnecessary words. Read, read, and read again for grammatical errors and typos. If your website is full of errors, the person reading it may think you don't care about your work or your business. That is the exact moment you lose credibility and the potential to gain a new customer. Always proofread. Better yet, ask one or two trusted colleagues to also proofread for errors.

SEO

Make sure your web content is written for search engine optimization (SEO). Effective web content answers questions and addresses needs based on how people search for information, and carefully employs keywords and keyword phrases that align with potential searches. Web developers know readability and keyword density is how search engines rank websites, so follow their lead and put SEO to work for you.

Developers also know visitors to a website can enter the site on any of the site's pages; that is, visitors don't always enter on the home page. Regardless of the page a visitor lands on first, they should know exactly where they are and what the website is about. They should also see some type of call to action on every page in the form of a link or button that directs them to another page or step in the process.

The format of your content matters, **BUT THERE CAN** *be* **TOO MUCH** of a **Good THING**.

How easy was it to read the previous sentence? Were you distracted by the different formatting styles used? Just because you have a ton of font types and colors available to you does not mean you need to use them all. Visual appeal in your content is important, but don't overdo. Otherwise, you will have accomplished nothing more than to distract the reader. Your message will be lost and the reader might click away from your site altogether because they find it too busy.

How do you know if you've gone too far? If, in the course of setting the variations of formatting for your web content, you develop a migraine, it's fair to say you've gone overboard. While you will be fine if you use different font types, keep the variations to just two or three at most, for example, one for headlines and another for main content. Other formatting, such as **highlighting**, **bold**, *italics*, and underlining can also be used for visual appeal, but use these styles consistently and just enough to add interest.

The tips mentioned here assume you know your audience. They assume you know your product and service and the benefits you provide. Writing web content goes much deeper than dashing off a couple of paragraphs to tell people what you do and asking them to call you at the end. Your goal should be to always post quality content that is concise, engaging, persuasive, accurate, and up to date.

Stephanie J. Beavers Communications provides writing, editing, and proofreading services to entrepreneurs and professionals. We also train on these skills so people can feel more confident writing their own web content and marketing messages. Visit our website at: www.StephanieJBeavers.com or call or email us directly at 610-247-9494 or stephanie@stephaniejbeavers.com.

