The Ultimate Copy Checklist:

Ask Yourself These 51 Questions to Optimize Every Element of Your Online Copy

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HEADLINE

- **Audience**: Does your headline directly identify and address your audience?

- **Emotion**: Is one dominant emotion (i.e., “mass desire”) powerfully verbalized?

- **Interest**: Does the headline startle your audience or “enter a conversation already taking place in their minds?”

- **Clarity**: Does your headline contain any technical or unnecessary words?

- **Intention**: Does your headline show the audience exactly what they should do or expect on your page?

- **Momentum**: Does your headline propel the reader into the subheadline for an answer, solution, or explanation?

SUBHEADLINE

- **Connection**: Does your subheadline retain and support the same thought, concept, or dominant emotion in your headline?

- **Qualify**: Does your subheadline narrow your audience by adding qualifications?

- **Intensify**: Does your subheadline amplify the one dominant emotion from your headline?

- **Push**: Does your subheadline push the reader into the first sentence to find an answer, solution, or explanation?

VALUE PROPOSITION

- **Unmistakable**: Is your value proposition visually prominent and unmistakable?

- **Desirable**: Does one key benefit, or “mass desire,” powerfully verbalize your value proposition?

- **Unique**: Does your value proposition clearly differentiate you from the competition in at least one specific way?

- **Target Market**: Does your value proposition directly address one target market?

- **Simple**: Is your value proposition clear, concise, and memorable?

- **Quantified**: Is your value proposition supported by at least one piece of concrete data?
INTRODUCTION

**Build:** Does your first sentence continue the momentum — the same emotional or mental energy — from your headline and subheadline?

**Body:** Do your first, second, and third paragraphs intensify and expand the same dominant emotion contained in the headline and subheadline?

**Flow:** Is your first sentence smooth, simple, and incredibly easy to read?

SUBHEADS

**Scannable:** Are subheads evenly spaced (roughly every three to six paragraphs) to break up the copy and reinforce the page’s one dominant emotion?

**Benefits:** Do your subheads highlight the “major” and “minor” benefits of your article, product, or service?

CONCLUSION

**Climax:** Does the last sentence end on a climax consistent with the page’s one dominant emotion?

**Realistic:** Does the conclusion “shrink the change” by offering a path to action that is “concrete and doable” today?

**Action:** Does the conclusion drive the reader to action (see “Call to action” below)?

CALL TO ACTION (CTA, THE “OFFER”)

**Singular:** Does the page have one (and only one) clear and direct CTA?

**Visible:** Is the CTA easy to locate and visible at multiple points on the page (i.e., always just a “scroll” away)?

**Promise:** Does the CTA promise value “in advance?”

**Button:** Is the button copy seductive and actionable?

**Next:** Does the CTA tell the visitor exactly what’s next (i.e., what he can expect after he clicks)?

**Forms:** Are the form fields brief, limited in number, and fool proof (i.e., have you tested them to make sure they actually work)?

**Trust:** Does the CTA have a trust certificate to relieve the fear of converting?

**Trial:** Does the CTA have a trial period to relieve the fear of committing?

**Guarantee:** Does the CTA have a guarantee to relieve the fear of buying?

VOICE

**Conversational:** Does your copy sound like one real human communicating with another real human?

**You:** Does your copy speak directly to your audience by using the word “you?”

**Smooth:** Does any phrase “sound weird” when you read it out loud?

**Straightforward Words:** Is the page free of jargon, insider language, and clichés?
ARGUMENTS

Data: Does your copy provide concrete and credible data — i.e., numbers — to back up its claims?

Application: Is data explained, interpreted, and applied in terms related directly to the page’s key benefits?

Actors: Is your copy composed of “actors” — real flesh-and-blood characters?

Vivid Verbs: Do your “actors” act with vivid verbs rather than bland versions of “to be”?

Story: Does the page tell a story — a single, overarching narrative?

Hero: Is your audience the hero of the story?

Hell: Does your story paint a vivid portrait of the “hell” (i.e., the pain or fear) your message, product, or service diminishes?

Heaven: Does your story paint a vivid portrait of the “heaven” (i.e., the pleasure) your message, product, or service delivers?

Senses: Does your copy use sensory language: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling?

THE “WEAPONS OF PERSUASION”

Reciprocity: What free value does your page provide for its audience?

Consistency: Does your page invite small, initial commitments that align with the big, ultimate “ask”?

Social Proof: Does your page present testimonials from a variety of sources its audience naturally trusts — namely, industry experts and other people just like them?

Likability: Does your page establish “similarity” with its audience by using relatable language and humor?

Scarcity: If appropriate, does your page “play hard to get” by making the reader want what he can’t have?