

Writing effective copy for your homepage

This document is a guide for writing the copy (words) used on your homepage. The copy should provide clear and concise information to visitors about the products or services you provide. You know about your business and your customers and so we rely on you providing the copy for your homepage. We'll rewrite copy if it needs it and make sure its Search Engine friendly but we need the raw material to work from that only you can provide.

There are four stages to writing effective homepage copy -

1. **Know your audience**
2. **Choose relevant Keywords**
3. **List the services or products you provide**
4. **Write a concise introduction**

1. Know your audience

Before you start writing; think about who your audience is. If it's the general public, then you need to think about writing for the general public and don't include industry or technical terms that will baffle or alienate them. On the other hand, if you're selling engineering products to a specific industry sector, your copy should be aimed at them, as if you were speaking or writing to them and not to the general public.

2. Keywords

Search engines match a user's search with keywords and phrases found on your homepage in an effort to display the most relevant search results. Effective SEO (search engine optimization) copywriting requires the right combination of compelling content and a homepage that is optimized for search engines.

You need to start with a **list of 10 keywords or phrases** that **your target audience will use** to find your products or services via a search on Google. Write out a comprehensive list of all the keywords that apply and then whittle them down to the ten most important. Remember to target your keywords to your intended audience.

Don't forget to include town or county names if they are appropriate; someone looking for carpet sales and installation will almost certainly include their town in any search for a local carpet business.

Include your business name in the list of keywords only if the audience will have heard of it.

3. List the services or products you provide

Copy for your homepage should consist of at least 150 words, including bullet points etc. Consider the points below and anything else you think is important to get across to your audience and cover these points in a short paragraph. Make sure you try to include each of your keywords or phrases at least twice in the copy, the more, the better.

Things to consider -

3.1 What products/services do you provide?

Ask yourself: *Have we spelled out, clearly and in simple language, what the products or services we provide?*

3.2 Keep most copy short

When coming to a homepage the visitor will expect to read a breakdown of your products or services along with a brief description of each and links to find out more information about them. Keep copy short and to the point, no more than a sentence or two about each product/service.

3.3 Keep short copy simple

The complexity of your copy matters as much as its length. Make sure visitors can understand short copy on its first reading, without stopping to think about it. (They won't.)

Typically, you can convey one key idea effectively in one or two lines. You can sometimes get two, if they're both simple. Don't try for three; try to say too much and you ruin the chance that even the first idea will get through. Make it easy for them by dividing distinct ideas into separate paragraphs, using helpful headings, sub-headings and bulleted lists, and introducing key ideas deliberately.

3.4 Make it lively

Be clear, but don't be boring. Write vividly and aim for a light, unassuming tone of voice. It takes a little while for boring or overbearing copy to affect a reader, but once it does, practically nothing you say with it will get through.

3.5 Use a consistent voice throughout

The more consistent a voice you create – and the better it speaks to your intended audience in particular – the quicker your visitors will recognize it and become familiar with it. And the more familiar it is to them, the more effective it will be.

3.6 Let the facts speak for themselves

Don't talk down to or past your audience. Make your descriptions compelling, but not excessive. Web readers read hype as hype, and remember it that way, too. Skip it.

4. Write a concise Introduction

Write a concise summary about what services or products your company provides, what it does and how it helps its users or is better than its rivals. If serving a specific location - area, town or county - make sure your intro mentions this.

This introduction should summarise the main points you want to get across. If your audience reads nothing else, then this introduction should cover all the important stuff.

Why write your copy this way?

We know from many studies, that the audience will often come to a website after a search on Google, and will already have a good idea what they're looking for. When the webpage appears, they will quickly scan any headings or subheadings and initially read only the content that applies to them.

Breaking your content down into short paragraphs/sections with clear headings will help your audience find what they're looking for quickly.



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