

7 Simple Rules for Better Email Copy

You can spend a lifetime trying to master the strategies, techniques, and nuances of compelling email copy.

Or you can use this checklist.

I'm not saying this checklist will turn you into an A-list email copywriter.

But, it will give you a few nifty shortcuts for writing emails that are easier-to-read and more engaging than 99% of the stuff that's clogging your subscriber's inbox.

That equals a better experience for your subscribers.

And more sales for you.

Ready to get started?

First, I'll briefly explain the 7 simple rules for better email copy.

Then, there's a quick-reference checklist for you at the bottom.

Here we go!

1. Always start with your subscriber.

Before you write a single word of your email, ask yourself: "WHO am I talking to?"

Write this question on an index card and tape it to your computer monitor. Print it on tee-shirts and ask your family to wear them around the house. Tattoo it on your heart and soul.

Because, no joke, this question is the heart and soul of EVERY email you write.

Picture your subscriber in your mind. She's a living, breathing person.

Imagine the hopes and dreams she wants to achieve. As well as the fears and frustrations she wants to avoid.

Now, write to that person.

2. Write at or below a grade 6 reading level.

If you want your emails to get read, make them easy to read.

One way to do that is by writing at or below a grade 6 reading level.

Think about your subscriber:

Chances are she's opening your email on her phone. She might be waiting in line at the grocery store. Or taking a minute of "me time" while the kids tear around the house. Heck, she might be in the bathroom.

Either way, she's busy. And distracted.

By writing at or below a grade 6 reading level your copy will be easy-breezy to consume.

The tool I use to get my writing down to a grade 6 reading level is called **Hemmingway App**.

This tool helps you clarify your copy. It helps you get rid of passive voice, adverbs, and confusing words. All of which make your copy unnecessarily complex. And difficult to read.

You can check out the **Hemingway App** here (it's free):

<http://www.hemingwayapp.com/>

Bookmark that page.

Run every email you write through the **Hemingway App**.

And don't hit "send" on an email until it's at or below grade 6 reading level.

3. Write with emotion.

Matt Furey is an email marketing legend.

If there were a Mt. Rushmore of Email Copywriting Matt Furey's face would be on it. So when he talks about email copywriting, it pays to listen.

Matt once said the secret to writing great emails is your ability to be emotionally free.

You must be willing and able to express yourself without resistance.

Don't hold back when you craft your emails. Make your subscribers laugh, cry, or pound his fist on the desk. Push her emotional hot buttons.

I try to get myself into a peak emotional state before I write an email.

I want to be EXCITED... or PISSED... or CURIOUS.

I've gotta be FEELING something when I write because those feelings transfer to my emails.

And emails that crackle and buzz with emotion are loads more interesting to read.

Here are some simple but powerful ways to inject more emotion into your emails.

4. Engage your subscriber's 5 senses.

One of the best ways to get your reader emotionally invested in your emails is by stimulating her five senses.

For example:

Sight: "Do you see a bright future blooming with technicolor possibilities? Or are the weeks and months ahead dim, gray, and filled with uncertainty?"

Sound: "Haven't you been silenced by your fears and insecurities long enough? It's time for you to speak from your heart and tell the world how you really feel!"

Smell: "Is the rotten stench of corruption oozing out of Washington enough to make you gag?"

Touch: "Do you feel buried beneath the weight of your countless obligations? How would it feel to seize control of your life and race towards the future YOU desire?"

Taste: "Tired of choking down one failure after the next? Dig into sweet success with our brand new executive coaching program!"

Emotions are PHYSICAL experiences.

You can make your emails more emotionally compelling, and more engaging, by writing to your subscriber's senses.

5. Write in an active voice.

The end goal of every email you write is to compel subscribers to do SOMETHING:

Click on a link, check out a blog post, reply to your email -- you want him to take ACTION!

To prime your subscribers for action, write in an active voice.

Here's an example of active voice versus passive voice to show you what I mean:

- It was noted that hardly any of the population was satisfied with the president's performance. (passive)
- A mob of furious people flooded the streets to shout and protest the president's utter incompetence. (active)

In active voice something actively happens. You **show** an event rather than simply **tell** about it.

Speaking of showing...

6. Bring your emails to life with word pictures.

When you're writing emails, it's better to show than tell.

You want to bring your emails to life with word pictures.

Or as Mark Twain puts it:

“Don’t say: ‘the old lady screamed’; bring her on and let her scream”.

You can picture a woman screaming on stage, right? That’s a word picture. Here are a few more examples:

- I have a red Lamborghini. (telling)
- I whipped my candy apple red Lamborghini into the hairpin turn at 90 mph and left the cop choking on my dust and cursing my name! (word picture)
- Micah is a talented bass player. (telling)
- When Micah slaps and pops his bass guitar it sounds like his right hand is possessed by the spirit of a 70’s funk band. (word picture)

The word pictures are compelling, right? They’re definitely more engaging than just telling how something is.

An easy way to create word pictures is by asking yourself:

“If I were watching a movie of this thing I’m trying to describe, what would that movie look like?”

7. Read your emails aloud.

Once you’re done writing an email, read it aloud.

Or better yet, ask someone else to read it aloud for you.

How does it sound?

Does your email sound the way you talk? Is it conversational?

If it's not, re-write it until it sounds like you.

This is where the **Hemingway App** will be a big help. Often, when an email doesn't sound conversational it's because the copy is too difficult.

There are too many long, winding paragraphs. Too many long words. Too many ideas crammed into one sentence.

Simplify.

Write the way you talk.

Follow this CHECKLIST with every single email you write:

- ☐ Do I know WHO I'm talking to in this email?
- ☐ Did I write at or below a grade 6 reading level?
- ☐ Did I get myself into a peak emotional state before writing this email?
- ☐ Did I write to one (or more) of my subscriber's five senses in this email?
- ☐ Did I use active voice?
- ☐ Did I use word pictures?
- ☐ Did I read this email aloud? Does it sound the way I speak?