



What are these charlatans doing in our wonderful business?

I am close to giving up on all of them...

Just a few weeks into the New Year. And it has not been a good start.

We lost an industry legend - Lester Wunderman.

And I'm immensely sad about that.

I am also very sad - no, angry - about the dross that is all around me. In my inbox. In my letterbox. In my magazines - and on my screen.

Actually, I'm lying to you. It's not dross.

It's total garbage.

Toe curling, embarrassing and premier league brand-damaging garbage.

And, it's been hitting me in the face, seemingly every hour of every day, since Jan 2nd.

I'll tell you something now. This industry is done. It's gone. There is no hope.

The wonderful Roger Millington said to me over 7 years ago, "Andy, this business is fucked. Go do something else".

He was right. It is fucked. Big time.

Don't argue with me either. I'm right. You know I am.

If you have the slightest doubt right now, you won't have, by the time you've finished this article.

What we once had in this great industry, is no more. What we have learned, has all been thrown in the bin.

The knowledge that we gained, is sitting gathering dust - and the marketers of today are not in the slightest bit interested in any of it.

They know better, you see. They feel they can't learn from the past. That's old hat. Yesterday's papers.

They've moved on from that stuff and now do groundbreaking work.

Bollocks.

Most of them, don't know what day follows Tuesday, let alone know how to communicate correctly. And, what is worse - and hurts me more than any of that - is - **they don't care.**

"By the way, who was Lester Wunderman?" (Yes, I have been asked that very question by 2 senior marketers, twice in the last couple of weeks).

If it wasn't so serious, it would be funny.

Would any of today's ambitious tennis pros, ask who Jimmy Connors was? Or Stefan Edberg?

Would any budding blues guitarist of today, have to ask who John Mayall was? Or Muddy Waters?

Of course not. Those names will be in their DNA. They will have studied them, been inspired - and been hugely influenced by them.

They will have been amazed by their talent and their vision.

But, above all, they will have **learned** from them.

But, it's all different in marketing. No one studies. Well, very few, anyway. They don't feel they have to.

And, **they don't care...**

I have to tell you honestly, that I can't take much more of this nonsense.

But, because I'm rather incensed at this situation (as you can probably tell), I feel in the mood, to share a selection of the tripe that has angered me so much - and name and shame where I can.

I am going to start with one of the worst emails I think I have ever received (and trust me, I have received thousands). This defies any law of anything. And it was trying to obtain £200K from me!

Mind you, it does come from La La Land, where nothing is real...

1/21/2019 Parkside Golf Villas by Emaar starting @ 999,888

From: Peracha, Muzna <muzna.peracha@engelvoelkers.com>
To: Andy Owen <andyowen@aol.com>
Subject: Parkside Golf Villas by Emaar starting @ 999,888
Date: Wed, 16 Jan 2019 20:03



EXPO GOLF VILLAS
For The First Time Emaar
Launched Limited Premium
Villas for The Best Price Offer

STARTING PRICE: 999,888 AED

5% DOWN PAYMENT

5% With in 30 Days
1.25% For 60 Months Starting Dec 18

15% Final Installment Dec 23
Complition 2021

Expo Golf Villas are a true ode to the bright future of Dubai. Located only minutes away from Expo 2020, Championship golf course and the upcoming global aviation hub, the Al Maktoum Airport, Expo Golf Villas are a fantastic investment opportunity for the discerning investor. Select between three and four bedroom premium villas.

Thanks

Yours sincerely

Muzna Peracha
Property Consultant

ENGEL & VÖLKERS Dubai
EV REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE LLC

<https://mail.aol.com/webmail-std/en-gb/PrintMessage>

1/2

Just look at it. Errors everywhere. It simply beggars belief that this could be created like this, then signed off and sent out.

But, of course, **no one cares...**

Here's another one, from the land of Peter Pan...

Thank you for your email. Please note I am currently out of the office on businss travel (GMT +8). For immediate assistance, please contact my colleagues: Simone Garner at Simone.garner@kerzner.com or at +971 4 524 4051 or Maria Vieyra at Maria.Vieyra@kerzner.com or +971 4 524 4056. If your need is urgent, please contact me on my mobile +971 50 189 1270. Otherwise, I will reply as soon as I can.

Thank you,

This was a reply to an email I sent, to the VP Corporate Communications and Public Relations, at one of the highest profile hotel and leisure groups in the world.

What chance has anyone got to convince this person, that good copy could improve her company's performance, when she can't spell herself?

When you consider her job title, such an error is impossible to understand. But, of course, **she won't care...**

Whilst we are on the subject of hotels, have a look at this pile of horse droppings...

20/02/2019

21/03 Potential Booking Enquiry

From: Martínez Rodríguez, Cathy <cathy.martinez@melia.com>
To: andyowen@aol.com <andyowen@aol.com>
CC: Marco Talens, Silvia <Silvia.Marco@melia.com>; Perez Marcos, Cristina <Cristina.Perez.Marcos@melia.com>
Subject: 21/03 Potential Booking Enquiry
Date: Thu, 17 Jan 2019 11:50

Second sending,

Sorry, there waas a mitake on colleagues in copy.

Beg your pardon.

Regards,

Cathy Martínez

Departamento Reservas

MELIA ALICANTE

T: +34 965.20.50.00 – F: +34 965.14.02.96

@ cathy.martinez@melia.com

 facebook.com/meliaalicante  [@meliaalicante](https://twitter.com/meliaalicante) www.melia.com

HOTEL MELIA ALICANTE
Plaza del Puerto, nº 3 - 03001 Alicante (España)
T: +34 96 5205000

This was sent to me, following a personal enquiry I made to this hotel in Alicante recently, regarding a potential booking.

How is this lady allowed anywhere near customer-facing communications, when she clearly struggles with English?

This type of mistake is hugely brand damaging. But, clearly, the GM who gave her the role, **really doesn't care**...as long as the figures are OK at the end of the week.

Next on the list, is a charity ad. Look at it - and weep...

Most charities these days, understand the communication process, because, over the decades, they have tested, they have listened and they have learned - and they have got better as a result.

This charity is clearly an exception.

Give someone who's homeless all this for Christmas. For just £28.18

Please can you give £28.18 to reserve a place for someone who's homeless at Crisis at Christmas?

Being homeless at Christmas can be a nightmare. There can be nowhere that's safe, nowhere that's yours. It can be impossible to find enough to eat or to look after yourself. And when the bitter cold and pelting rain kick in, you really feel it.

People treat you like dirt too. Some people think it's a laugh to abuse you, just because you're homeless. And while the shops and pubs welcome people in, you're stuck on the outside.

Did you know that the average age of death for a homeless person in the UK is just 47? It doesn't bear thinking about...

Your gift could mean everything to someone like Tom.

A whole new life for Tom

When Tom's relationship broke down, and he then lost his job, he struggled to pay his rent. His landlord locked him out. He found work but couldn't afford a rental deposit.

He slept in a tent and on the streets. "When it rains it is horrific. You're damp for days, you have no clothes. You haven't slept and you can't think."

Being homeless left him unable to function. As winter drew in, Tom's situation seemed hopeless. But then he came to Crisis at Christmas.

At Crisis he found safety, good food, and company. He was able to talk to Crisis about longer-term problems.

"Crisis at Christmas has everything," Tom told us. "It makes me feel a lot better. I plan to use Crisis in the new year too, and to try and find an affordable room. Crisis has changed my life. Without them I wouldn't be anywhere."

Tom's story is 100 per cent genuine, but his name has been changed and a model photographed to protect his identity. Photo: Sam Roberts

Please make your gift today
visit www.crisis.org.uk
or call 0800 999 2060

Thank you

Yes, I'll reserve a place at Crisis at Christmas. Here's my gift.

£28.18 (1 place) £56.36 (2 places) £281.80 (10 places) £ (Other)

Payment details
I enclose a cheque/charity voucher/postal order payable to Crisis or please debit my card using the details below:

Visa MasterCard Other: _____

Card no. _____ Expiry date _____

Title _____ First name _____ Last name _____
Address _____ Postcode _____
Email _____

Crisis Promise: By choosing to give us your postal address and email above (both are optional) you agree that we can keep you updated on our work and how you can help us end homelessness through donating, fundraising, campaigning and volunteering. You can change your mind at any time by calling 08000 38 48 38 or emailing mydetails@crisis.org.uk

We promise to respect the information you give us.
You can see our privacy statement at www.crisis.org.uk/privacy

To make your donation visit
www.crisis.org.uk 0800 999 2060 Room 080, Freepost, Crisis at Christmas

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Please tick the appropriate box:
 I am a UK taxpayer*
 I am not a UK taxpayer

Please make every pound you give worth 25% more to Crisis by ticking this Gift Aid declaration.

*I am a UK taxpayer and I would like Crisis to treat this donation and any donations I make in the future and have made in the past 4 years as Gift Aid donations, until I notify you otherwise. With this declaration, Crisis can reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please remember to write your full name and home address to allow us to claim Gift Aid.

Registered with FUNDRAISING REGULATORY

Crisis Together we will end homelessness

Crisis UK trading as Crisis. Registered charity number: ERW0182947. SC040094. Company number: 4024938. CCB/PA/SA-1001/BAR/RM080

This joke of an ad, has so much wrong with it, I don't know where to start.

It's a dog's breakfast. A headline and creative delivery that could be so much better, a layout that has no structure or eye flow - and white copy reversed out of a red background, that will reduce readership by up to 60%.

How can this kind of crap get out there, when surely people know by now, the basics of an effective charity ad?

The answer is simple. **No one cares.**

Before I share a few more unbelievable examples of bad work, here's a view on this joke industry of ours, from another angle...

I was talking with an old chum the other day - a senior figure and hugely respected 20-year veteran of the digital media industry.

We share the same views on the appalling decline of the communications industry - and when I mentioned that this Copycat was on this very subject, he sent me something for inclusion.

It's a fascinating insight into the continued stupidity of marketers, regarding digital - and the continued fraudulent activity that they are turning a blind eye - and a deaf ear - to.

Have a listen to this...

"Andy, people don't care.

If they did care, we would not be in the situation we are in now, with regards to fraudulent media buying, fraudulent clicks on ads, fraudulent companies that barely exist, consuming millions on a daily basis.

We currently have around 25% of all online media budgets being consumed by either bot (computers impersonating people) traffic, or by ads that don't exist, triggering measurement mechanisms to say they do, and someone paying for that.

All of this is completely solvable, but there is no will from those in positions of authority. So it is fair to say, **they don't care** and if they are running huge budgets with huge departments, one can fairly assume everyone under them has as many fucks to give as their boss does.

Which are not many.

Some statistics demonstrating the level and value of the issue:

Marketers **lost \$7.2 billion** in 2016 to ad fraud (source WhiteOps 2016)

In 2017 US brands alone **will lose \$6.5 billion** to ad fraud (Marketing Week 2017)

20% of all ads shown on a website, are exclusively viewed by fraud bots, not humans (The Verge 2017)

For every \$3 spent on digital ads, **fraud take \$1** (AdAge.com 2015)

In the finance industry, **22% of all internet traffic to websites is bots**, it is fraud (Bloomberg 2015)

Nearly **20% of all digital ad spend was wasted** (CNBC 2017)

So, as you can see, the stats back up the opinion that there is more wrong with the industry than right, and this is before we even get into the dodgy mark-my-own-homework of Facebook, being caught numerous times exaggerating their own user numbers, ad engagement, and length of time people view the ads on their platform.

It is everywhere and it is accepted.

If people cared about where, how, and with whom their advertising budgets were spent, this wouldn't be happening. This is a people, not a technological, problem to solve.

But we won't, because **no one cares**".

That might be an eye-opener for some, I'm sure. But, it doesn't surprise me a jot, I have to say. Marketers and business leaders have been *seduced* by digital for years - and continue to invest in it, even though they are consistently disappointed with the results they get.

They feel they have to be seen using it. Even though, in a lot of cases, other choices would work better for them. And, they know it.

I have lost count of the conversations I have had with top marketers, almost pleading with them to test - and then they will know what works best. But, they won't. I struggle to understand it.

Millions and millions of valuable marketing budget is being wasted.

Simply because, **no one cares**.

Remember testing? (I know to some of you out there, the word 'testing' might be a word you are unacquainted with. Sorry about that. There is a Copycat article on it. Please look it up).

Okay, back to the asylum...

A direct mail letter from Hiscox. I have had great fun with some of their appalling stuff over the years - and I have shared their poor work in ads and letters in my Masterclasses worldwide.

This is another load of tosh...

Mr Andy Owen
Andy Owen Copy & Creative Ltd
27 Berkswell Close
SOLIHULL
West Midlands
B91 2EH

**WHEN IT COMES TO GIVING ADVICE IT'S GOOD
TO KNOW YOU'RE EXPERTLY COVERED FOR WHAT
HAPPENS NEXT**

Dear Mr Owen,

You know what it's like to run a consultancy business in 2018 and how difficult it can be to give clients the advice they need. With over 20 years' experience of helping businesses like yours, we know how to protect you from issues such as a client claiming you've provided poor advice.

Hiscox is the specialist insurance provider for consultants. We provide cover for all aspects of how you operate, from your premises and people, to issues with clients. Our cover includes:

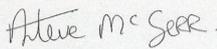
- **Professional indemnity insurance:** Protects and defends you against claims from customers who are dissatisfied with the work or advice you've provided to them. This could include allegations of negligence and breach of intellectual property.
- **Cyber and data risks insurance:** Designed to provide rapid response in the event of a cyber-attack. This could include a hacker holding your data to ransom or your systems being damaged by a virus as well as helping you comply with the notification requirements of GDPR.
- **Public liability insurance:** Protects your business if you inadvertently cause injury or damage someone's property, such as a client's laptop.

The enclosed brochure shows our full range of products and you can get a quick quote by calling **0808 1497 107** now. Or visit hiscox.co.uk/consultants

Our business insurance experts will tailor cover to your current needs – and if those needs change at any time, you can amend your policy quickly, without any administration fees. It's one of the reasons why we've been named Best Small Business Insurer by Start Your Business magazine for 8 years running.

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Yours sincerely,



Steve McGerr
Head of Direct Commercial

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Look at that headline. Just been thrown together by the office boy.

No real benefit in it at all. No reason to read on. Punctuation is non-existent and it's all in caps, when we know U/L case headlines always work better than caps.

First paragraph is too long, preaches to the reader, does not engage - and is simply pedestrian. 99% of readers would have left right there. So the rest of the useless copy wouldn't have been read, anyway.

Just another Hiscox example, of how not to do it. The next one will be along soon, I have no doubt...

I'm selecting something of quality to end the examples. I mean, a quality product, not a quality example.

When the word 'Steinway' is mentioned, you immediately think of a wonderful piano. One, that in most people's eyes, has no equal. One, that, if we could afford it, we would all love to own.

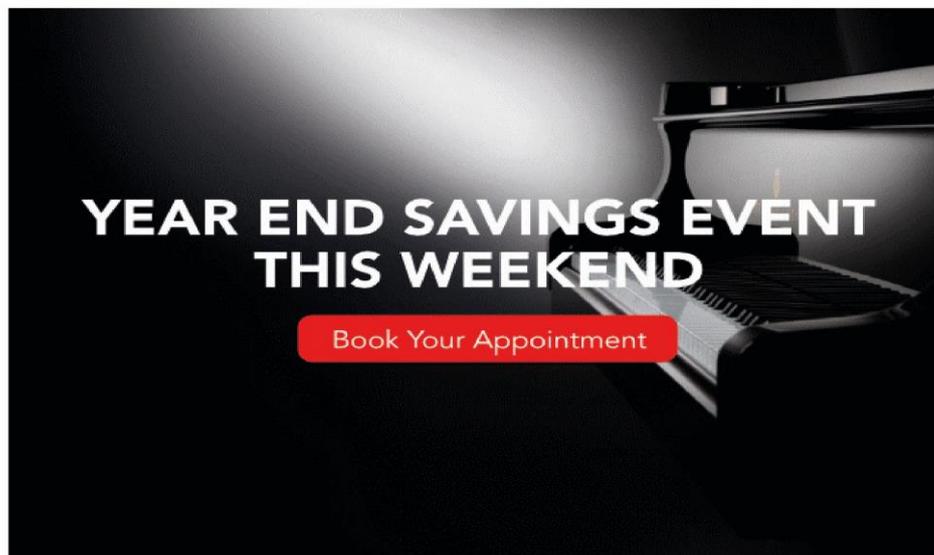
So, it would be logical to expect, that when you receive a sales communication about a Steinway, it would reflect that class and style and have tons of emotion and desire in the copy.

Wrong. What were you thinking of? It's 2019, remember. No one has the faintest idea of what they are doing - and remember, **no one cares...**

This is the first half of the email, when they are trying to interest me in a Steinway....



S T E I N W A Y & S O N S



This weekend only:
Friday January 25th & Saturday January 26th.

Significant savings on all remaining models.

Dear Andy, The Steinway factory will be increasing prices on January 31 2019, so this is your last chance to save thousands and purchase the piano of your dreams.

* Pianos will be sold on a "first come, first served" basis.

* Part-exchange welcome on all makes and models.

[Click here](#) to book a viewing appointment or find out more about Steinway pianos.

Look at it. It's a joke. No emotion, no sell, no *nothing*...

Just asking me to book my 'appointment' (what?) before the prices go up. It's a total disgrace and a brand embarrassment.

Here is the second half of the email.

A lot of this copy should have been right up front, selling the benefits of this wonderful product, creating the desire, instead of the awful copy they put there.

Steinway & Sons was founded by master craftsmen, trained in the best European tradition. We built our pianos then as we do now, one at a time, applying skills that were handed down from master to apprentice, from generation to generation.

Each Steinway grand piano takes nearly a year to create. Nothing is hurried. The carefully selected woods employed in the rims, tops, soundboards and actions cure for months in our yard kilns and conditioning rooms until they stabilise at our rigidly specified moisture content.

[Book Your Appointment >](#)



Steinway & Sons | 44 Marylebone Lane, London, W1U 2DB | Tel: +44 (0)20 7487 3391

They might make incredible pianos. But, if this is anything to go by, they certainly don't know how to market them...

But, of course, **they don't care.**

Those are just a few of the appalling apologies of marketing work sent to me, or I have seen, since the turn of the year.

Trust me, there were many, many others.

Like a holiday operator who collects customers from their homes, in 'taxys', a software company trying to sell me their latest product with the salutation 'Dear Any' - and an email from our friends at Saga, who are always good for a chuckle, that had this, as the first line:

'Hello there, when you are worried about your health, waiting to find out what is wrong can be frustrating'.

Frustrating? Bloody hell, I think it's a little stronger than that, don't you?

So, there we are. Buffoons and Muppets rule OK. **But, what the hell, no one really cares, do they?**

Hang on, I have one more. And it's a stunner to finish off with...

Look at the product they are selling. Then read the copy.

To stop receiving our information at the address andyowen@aol.com, [unsubscribe](#).



SAVE TODAY - CLICK HERE!

Universal Stain Remover

BUY ONE, GET ONE FREE



- Fast and effective stain remover
- Faster than cream cleaners
- Suitable for use on most surfaces

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Just add one to your basket,
& we will send you another **FREE**

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P&P £1.99

Keep warm for less with these space-saving, money-saving heaters. Highly efficient, they generate more heat from less electricity. Highly versatile, they're ideal for providing a secondary, ambient source of heat.

Rated IP55 for enhanced water resistance, each heater comes with a protective cover, which means you can use your Eco-Heater in a shed, garage or the damp atmosphere of a greenhouse (but not a bathroom).

Fitted with indicator light, safety guard and 1.1m power lead, our white enamel Eco Heaters are supplied with easy-fit wall-mounting brackets.

SAVE TODAY - CLICK HERE

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London NW1 0JP, Registered in England.
Company registration no. 05221840 VAT no. 760918416.
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You have received this message because you opted to receive offers at www.easylifegroup.com

You couldn't make it up, could you? If you told someone about this, they wouldn't believe you.

How is it possible that this could see the light of day?

You can talk all night about attention to detail - and checking and authorisation processes. But that's not the answer.

Perhaps I know.

No one cares...

Why this once-great industry of ours, is now producing work of the lowest quality ever seen since its inception, is impossible for someone like me to understand.

I come from a different time. A different place.

A time and place where people DID care. A time and place where trying to get better was paramount. Where testing was king.

A time and place that saw some of the greatest work this industry has ever produced.

We knew how to communicate effectively. We knew how to create work that attracted, influenced and inspired.

We knew *loads*. (We still do).

But, we were never satisfied. We were insatiable to learn more - and always had a passion to get better.

We went on our annual pilgrimage to Montreux to meet, hear and learn from people who were better than us. (Lester was one of them, by the way). We always came back inspired and excited - and we tested all the new techniques or ideas that they shared with us.

We were always growing. Always improving. Always studying.

And, as our heroes did with us, we then shared what we had learned with each other - and with others.

Since then, we have continued to share that priceless knowledge. It is available right now. It's everywhere. All you have to do, is look.

Books, articles, presentations, examples, stories - they are all out there. There's a huge amount on my website, for a start. And, be under no illusion, most of what we learned and have passed on, is as relevant now, as it has ever been.

That's because, times change, but people don't. Don't think for a minute that because we are now in a digital age, we somehow respond differently to the offers placed in front of us.

In the main, we don't.

Most of the techniques that worked all those years ago, will still work today. If the marketers of today opened their blinkered minds - and tested some of them - they would know.

How to create an off-the-page ad that works, is an art. We learnt how to do it. David Ogilvy, Claude Hopkins, John Caples and others, showed us how.

How to write a DM pack, that generates response, is an art. We learnt how to do it. Bill Jayme, Drayton, Herschell and others, showed us how.

How to write an email that cuts through and gets opened, read and responded to, is an art. Malcolm Auld, Michael Leander and others, showed us how.

How to write web pages that engage, influence and sell, is an art. We learnt how to do it, by listening to Ian Dewar and others, then applying the above knowledge we had gained, in all the other key disciplines.

After all, a web page is only a one-to-one communication challenge. It's as simple as that. A writer, using his/her skill, to connect, engage and influence a reader.

And no one knows more about that, than us.

But, one thing we had in spades, that no longer seems to exist in today's joke of an industry, is **we cared**.

We cared, passionately.

And the few of us left, that are still strutting our stuff, still do. But, I have to tell you, that it gets harder by the day. Having to deal with people that know virtually nothing - and care even less - is soul-destroying.

A close friend reminded me of this quote from a character in a Jane Austen novel. I think it sums up rather well, my feelings about the debacle of the communications industry today - and a lot of the people that populate it.

"There are few people whom I really love, and still fewer of whom I think well.

The more I see of the world, the more am I dissatisfied with it.

And every day confirms my belief of the inconsistency of all human characters - and of the little dependence that can be placed on the appearance of merit or sense."

Keep the faith. If you can...

Andy

ABOUT YOUR AUTHOR

Andy Owen is MD of **Andy Owen Copy & Creative Ltd**, one of the most respected and experienced International direct marketing consultancies, specialising in all aspects of creative, copy and strategy for direct and digital marketing.

Andy has been writing copy for over 32 years. He writes traditional and digital marketing campaigns, including direct mail, sales letters, emails, SMS's, PPC ads, media ads, websites, landing pages, brochures, radio scripts and much, much more.

He works with top clients in three continents and was inducted into the [**Direct Marketing Hall of Fame**](#) in February 2015, one of only two individuals in Europe with that honour.

Visit [**www.andyowencopyandcreative.com**](http://www.andyowencopyandcreative.com)

Andy runs [**in-house copywriting training**](#) for companies of all types and also presents direct marketing Masterclasses, Workshops and Seminars all over the world.

If you would like further information on these, or indeed any aspect of copywriting and creative for direct marketing, please contact Andy personally at [**andyowen@aol.com**](mailto:andyowen@aol.com)

All of Andy's [**previous Copycat articles**](#) are available to download and enjoy.

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