



## **Think like a wise man, but communicate in the language of the people.**

The above was an original quote from one of the greatest poets of the 20th century - William Butler Yeats.

It still represents one of the most powerful rules of copywriting.

And, it always will.

I've been trying my best for decades, to get the message through, that 'times change, but people don't'. The proven techniques of copywriting for response that have worked for well over a hundred years, still work today.

Many other experienced copywriters have been saying the same.

Savvy marketers have listened. The new breed of marketing charlatans have not - and will not - because to most of them, anything old has no value.

They listen to dorks like Zuckerberg, who brain fart rubbish, like:

*"Young people are just smarter" "Move fast and break things"*

Infantile and plain stupid. But, you can draw a straight line from this nonsense to the current apology of a communications industry and the disastrous work they create.

Never mind. The hangman isn't hanging today.

Let those bozos get on with it.

But please, don't you fall for it.

It is vitally important in today's cluttered and challenging marketplace, to make your sales messages uncomplicated.

Simple and effective always works better. *Always.*

Copywriting for response and sales - is effective writing - simple transparent writing. It is not literary writing.

Eugene M. Schwartz has become a legend for many direct response writers. He wrote the brilliant book, Breakthrough Advertising.

It's a classic. Get it and read it. You will learn so much.

I read it once a year and have done for as long as I can remember. I learn something new and valuable from it each time.

Schwartz left us with so much that is good and usable today. This is what he had to say about keeping it simple:

*"You are presenting a showcase for your product. Just like a store showcase on Fifth Avenue. You want the person to be able to look through the copy like the person is able to look through the glass in the showcase and see the product inside.*

*If that glass becomes dirty, reflective, or calls attention to itself in any way, you have failed.*

*If you want to write a novel, go write a novel. But don't write novel copy"*

Your website, email, sales letter, ad, newsletter, or anything else for that matter, **MUST** connect with your prospect's emotional hot buttons to persuade him or her to take some sort of positive action towards you.

Your promotional messages should not just be about image or branding. They should be about telling your own unique story in a language that appeals to your prospects' needs, wants, desires, fears and vanity.

Good effective copy does what a top sales person would do, face-to-face.

Does yours do that?

Here's something for you to consider. And you need to be honest with yourself, too, when you answer the questions.

Imagine you are face-to-face with your best prospect in a bar. You have been trying to influence that person to do business with you for quite a time. But, so far, you have failed.

Now you find yourself in front of that person. You have your chance.

How would you approach the opportunity? What would you say? What words would you use?

Would you say things like this?

*"It is a pleasure to be able to introduce our company to you. We provide award-winning services in XXXX and uphold the highest level of professional standards and reputation for integrity".*

*"We specialise in creating and implementing integrated business solutions centred on delivering valuable brand and customer experience strategies for you"*

*"We are focused on creating value for companies like yours, by strengthening the effectiveness of your brand, ultimately enhancing their bottom-line".*

*" You can trust us to deliver all year round – it's what we do, so it would be great to provide you with a quote for your next campaign"*

*"We can help you to change your destiny by realising the inner potential of your company" Myself and my friendly team are happy to help you, so please get in touch with any questions or queries you may have".*

*"We assure you of our very best attention at all times. We offer the best quote in the industry for our premium quality services. Let me know if you need our services".*

*"We have been in business for over 20 years - and have been given a 5-star rating by our customers".*

If you did use any of those, or anything similar, you would be looking at a space where your prospect had been standing. Did you not notice his eyes glaze over, before he walked out?

You will never sell a thing with garbage like that. Yet probably, you will have used similar copy on your web pages and in your promotional campaigns.

If you have, you will be leaving your prospects in a catatonic state. Not an ideal start, when you are trying to sell them something.

I have to tell you, that those lines above, represent actual copy that I have been subjected to, in recent emails, websites, direct mail and ads.

They are misguided companies with no communication expertise - sending out garbage copy and expecting me - and others - to be interested.

It's a huge waste of time and money. And, on top of that, they are doing significant damage to their brand.

I learnt my trade by being influenced by people better than me. I was very lucky to be educated by legends - the best the industry has ever produced - including, Bill Jayme, Claude Hopkins, David Ogilvy, Herschell Gordon Lewis and, of course, Drayton.

I listened to them. And many more greats like them.

I studied their work.

And I copied them.

One of the key elements they all agreed on - was to write copy in a conversational, intimate "voice."

What that means, is to write the way you and your prospects talk.

*"I don't know the rules of grammar. If you're trying to persuade people to do something, or buy something, it seems to me you should use their language, the language they use every day, the language in which they think."*

David Ogilvy said that. And he was right.

To write effective sales copy, you need to write like you talk. Let your words flow easily and with a natural rhythm. Great letters, when read aloud, sound just like a friend talking to you.

And that is their power.

It's exactly why this copy approach works. Its warmth and connectivity at reader level, disarms the reader and makes the selling approach more effective.

The reader becomes connected to the writer, because the writer is talking in the reader's language.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: *"It is not enough to write so you can be understood. You must write so clearly that you cannot be misunderstood."*

The sole objective of any copy you write, is to persuade the consumer to be interested in the product you are selling. To either buy, or take a step closer to buying from you.

It's as simple as that.

As Steve Harrison once said: *"Good copywriting should be invisible. It's about getting the customer from where they are - to where you want them to be - without them noticing"*.

Copywriters—the best and most knowledgeable ones - write mostly in short, compact lines. This style mimics the way we speak.

And, as I have mentioned earlier, good selling copy is most effective, when it sounds conversational.

We use shorter lines and shorter sentences, randomly interspersed with a tight, punchy delivery.

Why?

Because it's easier to read - and it lets the reader *breathe* while reading.

It's also easier on the eye for the reader.

It's just too daunting for people to read big fat blocks of text and sentences choked with long paragraphs and void of punctuation.

So they don't. They leave the conversation.

And they don't come back. So, there goes another potential sale.

If you don't believe me, read a play or screenplay, or listen closely to the dialogue in a good movie.

It's breezy and uncomplicated.

It's sharp.

It's clear.

And in selling copy, if you don't write the same way, your copy will underperform.

**Remember, you are trying to SELL somebody something.**

Remember too, that we're in very tough times. The recipient of your communication is apathetic and cynical and is only looking for a way to get out of reading your copy.

Badly written copy is all the excuse that's needed.

Most copywriters today - and business leaders who think they can write their own copy - don't understand the concept of writing in the language of the reader.

It's an art. A unique skill. And they don't have it.

In today's cluttered and cut-throat business world, it is useless to be an entrepreneur, if you can't sell what you create.

Your prospects cannot be expected to recognise a good deal, unless it's presented to them in the right way, by an effective sales person.

And, as we all know, its words that do the selling.

Your copy **IS** that sales person.

So, get it sorted. And get it sorted now.

Get rid of that 'eyes glaze over' copy and replace it with punchy selling copy, delivered by someone who knows what they are doing.

Someone who can see the veins of gold, where others see only bare stones.

You will sell more. I guarantee it.

Keep the faith



### **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 selling copy for over 33 years. He writes traditional and digital marketing campaigns, including direct mail, sales letters, emails, SMS's, PPC and FB ads, media ads, websites, landing pages, brochures, radio scripts and much more.

He works with clients in three continents and was inducted into the **Direct Marketing Hall of Fame** in February 2015, one of only two copywriters in Europe with that honour.

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

Andy launched an innovative new copywriting service late in 2019, called **Copy Chief** - which guarantees professionally written copy every time - for a fraction of the normal rate card cost.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of copywriting and creative for direct marketing, please contact Andy personally at [andyowen@aol.com](mailto:andyowen@aol.com)

All Andy's **previous Copycat articles** are available to download and enjoy

Don't forget to visit Andy's **personal website** where you will find many interesting tales, amazing yarns and wonderful stories - completely devoid of any corporate claptrap.