

# 7 SINS OF BUSINESS WRITING

A mini manual for better copywriting, for everyone

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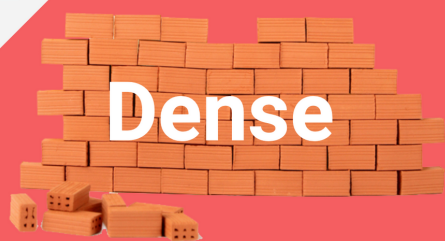
## Difficult



Good copy should not be difficult. It should be easy to read, easy to understand and easy to act on. Most of us are not vying for Pulitzers, but for persuasion. And even then most award-winning journos understand the power of keeping things 'tight and bright'. You have no rights on your reader's time so cut the flowery filler and keep it snappy.

2

## Dense



If your reader runs into a thick wall of text they'll be knocked unconscious. You need to provide small clues and signs to guide them along, such as: bold text to highlight key words & phrases, bulleted or numbered lists to lift or break up information, and subheads to cluster thoughts. Then, use subtle transitions to guide the reader - then, although, still, therefore...

3

## Dead



People will only believe and act on what you write if you truly believe it yourself - have conviction. Persuasive writing is lively and a joy to read, so keep it active to keep them interested. Therefore, avoid using the passive - it distances us from the words and their intentions. The way to spot the passive is to ask 'Can I add 'by zombies' after this?' The copywriter was eaten...BY ZOMBIES!

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## Dull

Try selling the prospect, not the product - the benefits, not the features. Flogging drills? Sell the holes they make. Good copy should get across the opportunity for the reader and make them feel powerful. You can also liven things up with the tone. This should reflect your brand guidelines, of course, but it should generally be human, relatable and popping with passion. Surprise people, stand out, shake things up. Just, please, don't be boring.

5

## Djargon



There's no equivalent for jargon that starts with a 'D' so I had to invent a new word with a silent first letter. It might catch on. It even might become jar... no. Cut the mumbo jumbo - you might as well be speaking an alien language. Write how people speak or they will not hear you. Write like a human, not an institution, if you want to engage. Translate that business b\*llsh!t that works across the desks into English before you speak to the world.

6

## Dumbass



Grammar is essentially the difference between knowing your shit and knowing you're shit. You don't have to be chief sub at The Times, you just need to know how grammar works and how it helps us communicate effectively. So avoid the dumbass mistakes - ensure consistency of style and triple check for errors.

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## Defective



Highly defective copy misses the target in two ways. On missing the audience: You wouldn't write a letter without knowing who it was for and you wouldn't post it without an address. You must know who your audience is and where they will read the copy (web, social, magazine etc) before you do anything. It is easy to assume that everyone is like you, knows the same things as you and has the same desires. Sadly not - write for them not you. On missing the point of the story: Don't ramble and fail to land. Get to the point. ALL good copy starts with knowing WHY you are writing. The rest will follow from there.

# A'DAM

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