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# Writing Powerful Headlines

**Compelling Words That Win People Over**



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## Introduction

As the WSI brand continues to grow, we have compiled this guide to assist our WSI partners with their marketing efforts, specifically as it relates to writing powerful headlines and copy. We all know the importance of having an effective headline - it virtually sets the stage for the rest of your copy. If the headline isn't compelling, chances are the rest of your copy won't get read no matter how well it's written.

In this guide, you'll learn how to use the right words to punch up your copy. Just ask any politician or public relations person. They'll all tell you the same thing – words have the power to motivate, prompt and entice people into a specific course of action. If you have the right headline, you can be almost sure that your readers will explore the rest of your copy and will be persuaded to do what you want them to do – your “call to action.”



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## 1.0 The Secret to Writing Powerful Headlines

Talented headline writers know and understand the secret to using powerful words to their advantage. What is this secret? Motivation. You need to know how human beings are motivated.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow said that human behavior is always the result of one or more of five basic needs, all of which are referred to in “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.” These are listed below starting with the basic needs.

**Physiological:** This includes hunger, thirst, shelter, clothing and sex.

**Safety:** The need for physical, emotional and financial security.

**Love:** The need for love, affection, companionship and acceptance.

**Esteem:** The need for achievement, recognition, attention and respect.

**Self-actualization:** The need to reach one’s full potential.

Humans are motivated by the desire to meet these five needs. So the secret to writing powerful headlines is to address at least one of these needs in your writing. A great headline appeals to readers’ needs, wants and desires. Below is a list of words that relate to one or more of the five basic needs, thus they are very powerful words in the English language.

Discovery  
Easy  
Guaranteed  
Health

Love  
Money  
New  
Proven

Results  
Safety  
Save  
You

Keep in mind that you only have a few seconds to grab your reader’s attention, so the first words of your headline should be the most persuasive and the most direct.



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## 2.0 Strategies Proven to be Effective

Your headline should instantly capture your reader's attention and trigger his/her appetite to find out more. Without giving your audience a strong reason to continue reading, they'll quickly move on to something else. The following strategies are extremely effective for writing persuasive headlines.

### Address your target market.

"Attention All Small and Medium Sized Business Owners!"  
"For Those of You Looking for a Web Solution..."

### Appeal to their competitive nature.

"Your Competitor Could Be Stealing Your Customers"  
"Stop Your Clients from Going to Your Competition"

### Use a quotation or part of a testimonial.

"I got 10 new customers minutes after my website was up!"  
"I made \$5,000 just like that!"

### Give them an incentive.

"Get a FREE Analysis on Your Website"  
"Win a \$1,000 Coupon for Fabulous Web Services"

### Provide a "How to" solution.

"How to Turn More Visitors into Customers"  
"How to Rapidly Increase Your Sales Using this Strategy"

### Ask a question.

"Want to Receive Higher Revenue Starting Today?"  
"Are You Ready for a Breakthrough in Your Business?"

### Provide a list of reasons.

"10 Reasons Why You Need Me to Provide Your Web Solution"  
"20 Reasons Why Your Customers Are Going to Your Competitor"

### Offer expert advice.

"Internet Marketing Specialist (insert name) Recommends..."  
"Everything You Need to Know About Prospering Online"

### Infuse fear.

"What Would You Do If Your Business Goes Under?"  
"You Could Lose Loyal Customers If You..."



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**Provide a step-by-step process.**

“3 Easy Steps to Convert More Customers”  
“Simple Steps to Create Customer Loyalty”

**Educate your readers.**

“Learn How to Promote Your Business Instantly”  
“Find Out What’s New with Internet Marketing”

**Provoke curiosity.**

“Did You Know that Your Website Could Be Repelling Customers Away?”  
“Want to Know Why Your Customers Are Abandoning Their Shopping Carts?”

**Add a sense of mystery.**

“Discover the Secret of...”  
“Find Out What Nobody Else Knows About...”

**Connect with them emotionally.**

“Sick and Tired of Customers Leaving Your Site without Buying Anything?”  
“Are You Frustrated with the State of Your Business?”

**Exaggerate (but only if you can validate it).**

“The Best Thing You Can Do for Your Website is...”  
“A Revolutionary Solution That Will Change Your Business Forever”

**Issue a command.**

“Stop Throwing Your Marketing Money in the Trash”  
“Make This Year Your Most Successful Year Yet!”

While you’re making use of the above strategies, don’t forget to incorporate compelling words that will attract massive attention and pull your prospects in to read more. In the following section, you’ll find undeniably influential words that you can use to give your headline a powerful boost.



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## 3.0 Popular Words Used in Advertising

The following is a list of words that are most commonly used in advertising. You'll notice that many of them are related to money. We can all admit that making money and saving money are a universal concern, so "money words" are extremely persuasive.

Amazing	Fortune	Miracle	Rich
Announcing	Gift	Now	Sensational
Bargain	Hurry	Offer	Startling
Capital	Immediately	Profitable	Steal
Challenge	Improvement	Quick	Successful
Complete	Introducing	Reduced (price)	Suddenly
Deal	Lowest (price)	Remarkable	Wanted
Discount (price)	Magic	Revolutionary	Wealth

### Other Persuasive "Power Words"

Whether you're writing a sales letter advertising a product or service or you just want to draw attention to your copy, the following "power words" are also influential.

Assure	Hate	Powerful	Shocked
Breakthrough	Hidden Incredible	Profits	Shocking
Control	Love	Prosper	Stop
Discovery	Master	Proven	Truth
Easy	Money	Results	Ultimate
Free	Naturally	Revealed	Uncovered
Giveaway	New	Scientific	Win
Guaranteed		Secret	You/Your

### Words that Signify News

If you have news to tell, below are some good ways of doing so.

Announcing	Just out	New discovery	Recent
At last	Just published	New invention	Revolutionary
Hot off the press	Last chance	New method of...	Suddenly
Important development	Latest	Now	The world's first...
Introducing	Latest findings	Now here	Today
Just arrived	New	Presenting	Unexpectedly



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### Words that Convey Value

A good strategy to use when promoting a product or service is emphasizing its value.

Accepted	Certified	Established	Genuine	Praised	Proven
Acclaimed	Chosen	Guaranteed		Recognized	
Acknowledged	Commended	Honored		Recommended	
Admired	Complimented	Legitimate	Popular	Standard	
Approved	Credited			Tested	
Authorized	Endorsed				

### Words that Show Quality and Excellence

One of the best ways to sell a product is by showcasing its quality to your consumers. The following is a list of adjectives that you can use.

Authentic	Fantastic	Fine	Matchless	Reliable	Surpassing
Best	First-rate		Noted	Remarkable	Terrific
Capable	Genuine		Outstanding	Robust	Top-notch
Dominant	Good	Greatest	Perfect	Selected	Unique
Durable	Improved		Personalized	Solid	Unparalleled
Enhanced	Limited		Phenomenal	Special	Unsurpassed
Excellent	Marvelous		Powerful	Strong	Valuable
Exclusive			Priceless	Superb	Versatile
Famous			Rare	Superior	Wonderful

### Words that Emphasize Surprise or Revelation

In some cases, the factor of surprise or unusualness can be helpful in your headline writing.

Amazing	Eye-opener	Notable		Strange
Astonishing	Extraordinary	Noteworthy		Striking
Astounding	Fantastic	Out of this world		Stunning
Awesome	God-send	Remarkable		Surprising
Beyond belief	Impressive	Sensational	Singular	Unbelievable
Breathtaking	Magical	Startling		Uncommon
Exceptional	Miracle			Unusual



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### Words that Stress Size

If the size of your product is a major reason consumers should purchase it, then the following words could be used to highlight its size.

Big	Gigantic	Large	Substantial
Chock-full	Great	Massive	Tremendous
Colossal	Huge	Packed	Vast
Enormous	Immense	Sizable	Voluminous
Extensive	Immeasurable	Spacious	Walloping

### Words that Highlight Appearance

Sometimes the appearance of a product is the most important feature to showcase. In such cases, the following words are very effective to use.

Alluring	Dazzling	Fascinating	Polished
Appealing	Distinctive	Fine	Prestigious
Attractive	Dramatic	Flattering	Radiant
Beautiful	Elegant	Flawless	Ravishing
Captivating	Enchanting	Glamorous Handsome	Scenic
Charming Classic	Enticing Exquisite	Impeccable	Smashing
Colorful	Fashionable	Magnificent	Spectacular
			Stunning

### Words that Denote Interest

The following words are usually used to describe books, magazines, pamphlets, brochures, videos, etc. as a way to prompt interest.

Absorbing	Exciting	Instructive	Profound
Affecting	Fascinating	Intriguing	Refreshing
Amusing	Illustrative	Interesting	Revealing
Compelling	Informative	Mind-blowing	Secrets
Enlightening	Inspiring	Moving	Stirring
Entertaining	Insightful	Passionate	Thrilling



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## 4.0 The Call to Action

Every copy should have a call to action. The call to action doesn't necessarily have to be in the headline, but if it appropriately fits in the headline, it can have a tremendous effect. Below are some good examples of call-to-action phrases that can be used in the headline or as a subheading just below your headline.

Act fast

Act now

Be the first

Don't delay

Don't put it off

Call today

Ending soon

Experience it now

Final offer

Find out for yourself

For a short time only

Get started today

Hurry up

Investigate today

Last chance

Limited time offer

Order now

Order now, pay later

Order today

Price going up

Register today

Respond now

Rush name for details

Send post card today

Send today

Supplies limited

While supplies lasts



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## Conclusion

Smart writers know the importance of having a powerful headline. That's why they usually spend more time writing their headlines than they do writing their copy. It's a good idea to start by writing your headline first, because if you can come up with a sizzling headline before anything else, the rest of your copy will naturally flow.

A great headline that attracts attention immediately usually leads to your entire copy getting read. Remember the purpose of your writing. Your headline should be the bait that hooks readers in to read the rest of your copy – and in turn lead to a specific course of action. So the words you choose to use in your headline must provide a powerful incentive for your readers to want to continue reading. After all, if they continue reading, they'll likely be compelled to complete your call to action.