

Making Your Marketing Effective

Clarity is a wonderful thing in advertising. It's also pretty rare within the small farm/livestock world. Too many are writing web content, ads or brochures that are wordy and confusing. Are you trying to impress someone or to communicate the benefit they get from doing business with you? When you use big words to imply a vast depth of knowledge and expertise, you actually turn people away. If you're trying to show off your vocabulary, you'll fail to connect with your readers.

Today's article will have several rules about copywriting. Here are the first two:

- **Never write anything that is unclear.**
- **Never write anything that is hard to understand.**

How? Number one way is to remember that **less is more**. Marketing is not like any other kind of writing. You cannot prove your intelligence or your expertise through volume. Since they don't have to read it, the only way to get them to read it is to entice them to read it. Make it easy, clear and fun. Simple, clear writing never offends anyone, not even the most highly educated. Complicated, lengthy writing leaves readers unable to understand what you're trying to say or else they just won't bother. An example is turn on C-Span sometime and listen to the politicians. Not short and sweet, by any means.

Using short word, easy words, helps to make marketing understandable and easy to read. Winston Churchill said this: "The old words are the best, and the old small words the best of all."

Using simple words is an art. I could cover pages and pages of examples of the big, self-important words and cliché phrases people use. They have a simpler alternative.

The **simpler alternative always makes it clearer and easier to read**. Here are some examples:

Wrong phrase ~ Why it's wrong ~ What to use instead

As well as ~ a three-word version ~ **and**
Out of pocket ~ a slangy jargon phrase ~ **away**
When all is said and done ~ cliché ~ **finally**
And/or ~ cliché use one or the ~ **other**
Nonfunctional ~ pompous word ~ **broken**
Cadre ~ pompous word ~ **group**
Tantamount to saying ~ pompous and cliché ~ **this means**
Utilize ~ big word ~ **use**
Individual ~ 5 syllables-it distances you ~ **man, woman**
Edgy ~ meaning is not clear ~ **trendy, in your face, fresh**

Here's another rule:

- **Do not use "Passive Voice" if you can possibly avoid it**, and you usually can! Passive voice is mushy. It separates the doer from the action. It is a way to be hesitant, not very sure of yourself. The active voice is sharper and direct and more attention getting. Here are some examples.

I have a suspicion ~ means ~ **I suspect**
He will make an agreement ~ means ~ **he will agree**

I am holding a discussion ~ means ~ **I discuss**
She gives instruction to ~ means ~ **she instructs**
To make a choice ~ means ~ **to choose**

And one more rule:

- **Use simpler forms of verbs rather than the “ing” form** (gerund). Just find all the “ing” endings and see if you can change them to a more active form.

And from **George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language"** more rules that work!

1. **Never use a metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech** which you are used to seeing in print.
2. **Never use a long word** where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to **cut a word out**, always cut it out.
4. **Never use the passive** where you can use the active.
5. **Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word** if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.

If you only take away one idea from this article, it is to **edit, edit, edit -- and take out all the words that do not absolutely have to be there**. Your writing will be a whole lot more interesting and easier to read! And that's the point of marketing!!!

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Rural adventure: <http://beyondthesidewalk.com>