

Writing Ad Copy That Converts



YAHOO!
GEMINI

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Introduction

Digital marketing is a cluttered space. With a list of ad formats and platforms that seems endless, there is an ever-growing number of ways to measure ad performance. Digital marketers have many optimization tactics at their disposal including, bids, budgets, targeting, and keywords. While these are all important, **the only thing that your potential customer actually sees is your ad.**

Good copy is less about product and more about people. Always imagine that you're the user - would you click on your ad?

We've studied the impact of thousands of digital ads and a number of best practices have emerged that help ad copy break through the clutter. This eBook will break down the basic copywriting elements and show you how to use them to tell a cohesive, logical story. You'll be a Don Draper in no time!



At its core,
advertising is about
telling a story.
Whether your ad is
on TV, print, or
online, the same
principles apply.

Key ingredients to writing effective ad copy



Emotion

Make sure your audience feels your message.

Make the person feel, not think.



Language

Talk to your audience, not over their heads.

The end users are not experts.



Credibility

Always make believable claims.

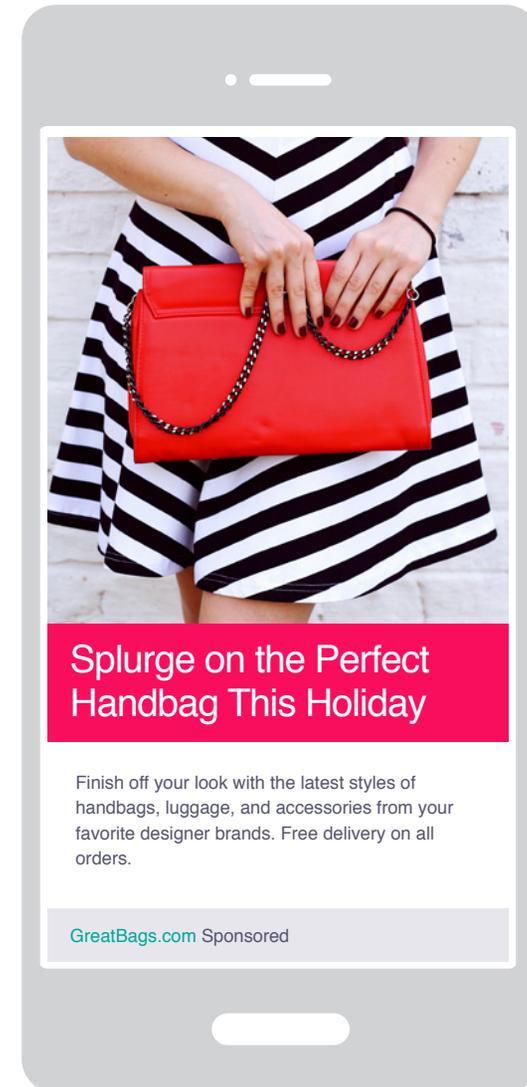
Be truthful. Be Honest. Earn the consumers' trust.



Emotion

The best copywriters are also the best storytellers. Compelling copy sells a product or service by telling consumers a (short) story they can relate to. Your audience needs to do more than simply read your message—they need to feel it on an emotional level.

For example, the ad to the right invites the viewer to “splurge” on themselves during the busy holiday season—instead of simply showcasing their selection of high-end purses. If you’ve ever felt stressed out during the holidays, you may be able to relate to the idea of wanting to treat yourself. The ad speaks to consumers on a more personal level.

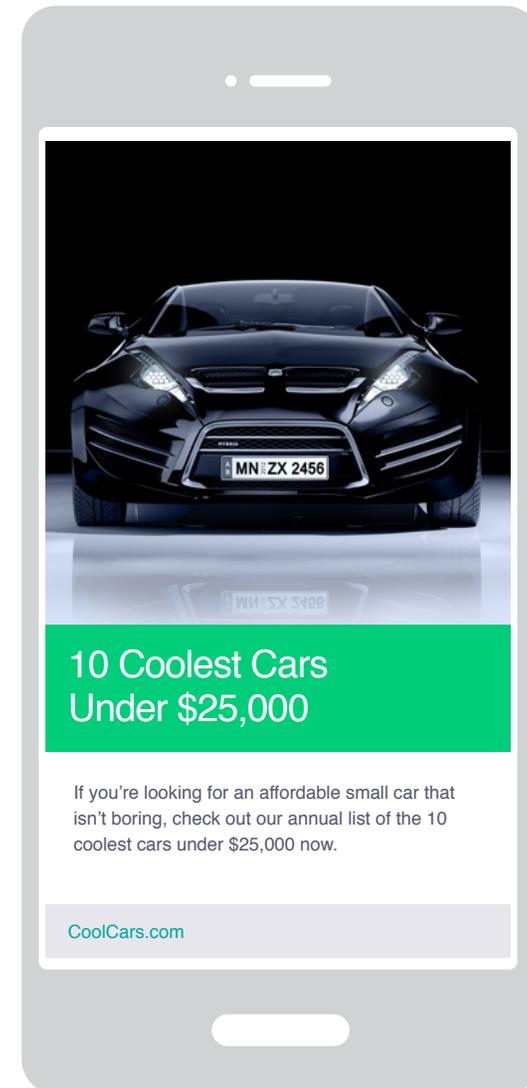


The image shows a smartphone screen displaying an advertisement. At the top, there is a photo of a person's hands holding a bright red handbag with a chain strap, set against a black and white striped dress. Below the photo is a pink banner with the text "Splurge on the Perfect Handbag This Holiday". Underneath the banner, there is a white box containing the text: "Finish off your look with the latest styles of handbags, luggage, and accessories from your favorite designer brands. Free delivery on all orders." At the bottom of the white box, it says "GreatBags.com Sponsored".

Language

Ad copy is not the place to flex your impressive vocabulary. Write in the voice of your target audience and keep it simple!

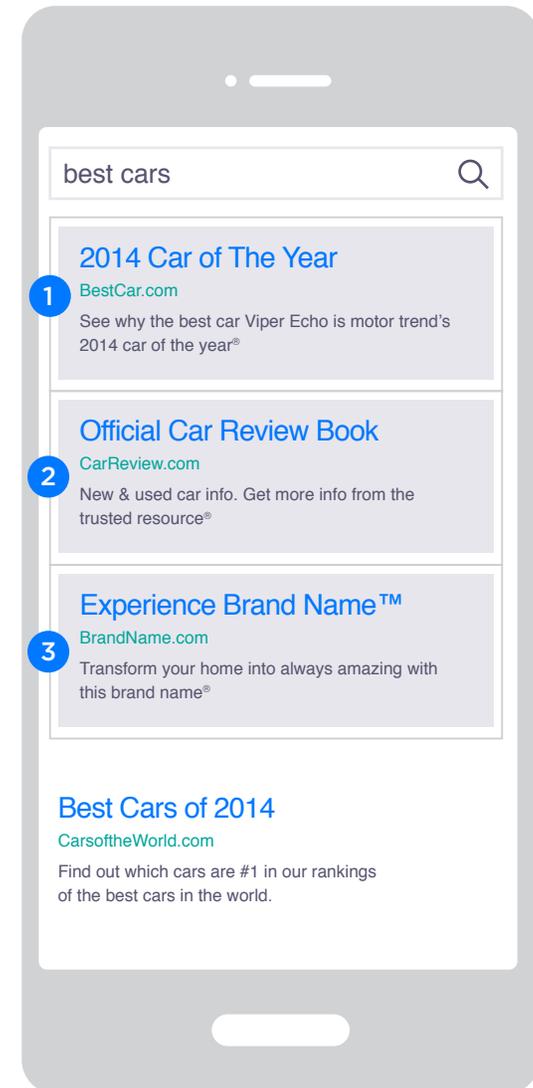
Let's reference the car ad to the right. Between the price point and the language, we can gather the target audience is recent college grads; those in need of a car but without the means to afford a high end vehicle. Instead of discussing engine performance or features, the copy speaks to the end user in their language. This ad was successful, which can be attributed to the fact that a young person will more likely respond to an ad using words and phrases like "coolest," or "that isn't boring."



Credibility

Consumers are savvy about advertising. For a message to resonate, consumers must first trust it. One way to establish trust is by using words that signal credibility. Make true claims and support them with objective, third party evidence. Using third party awards such as “rated best headphones,” the TM symbol if you’re a trademark owner, or legitimizing language including “Official Site” can have a big impact on ad quality and performance.

1. Use testimonials. If you do, make sure your testimonials are on your landing page.
2. Use words like “official” if you are the official site.
3. Use trademarks or registered symbols when possible.



Copywriting: The 1-2-3 Connection



1

Ignite



2

Shine a light



3

Send to site

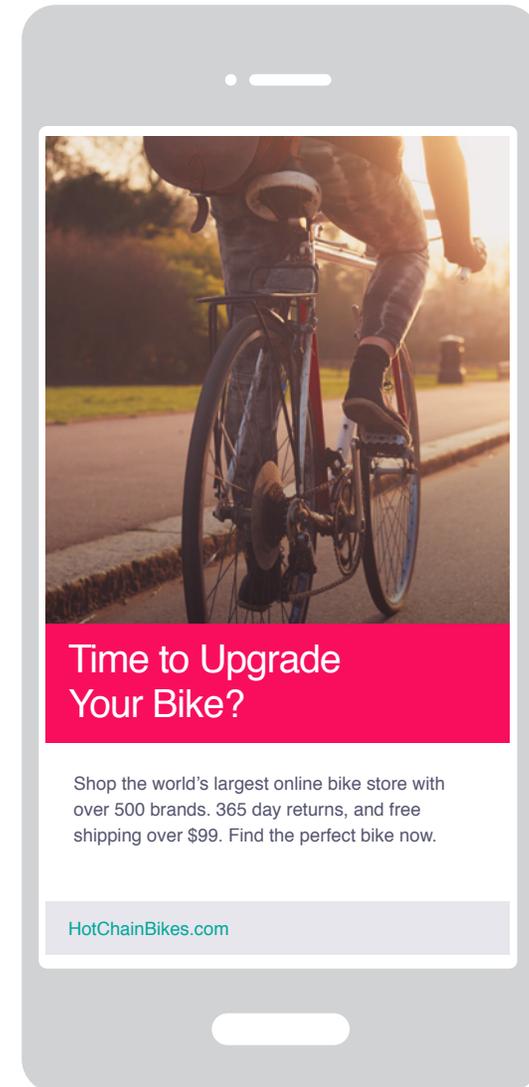


1. Ignite

Igniters are the words that spark a connection and pull your audience into your message. One of the best ways to connect with users is with a teaser or provocative question like the one in the title of the ad to the right. Questions can create interaction, and interaction can prompt action.

Igniters to consider

Affordable	Easy	Opportunities
Alert	Economic needs	Save
Allure	Effective	Savvy
Breakthrough	Emerging-growth	Security
Buyer's Guide	Hot property	Successful
Crucial	Hurry	Switch
Danger	Next generation	Sure-fire
Daring	Novel	Surging
Destiny	Obsession	Limited time only
		Upscale



2. Shine a light

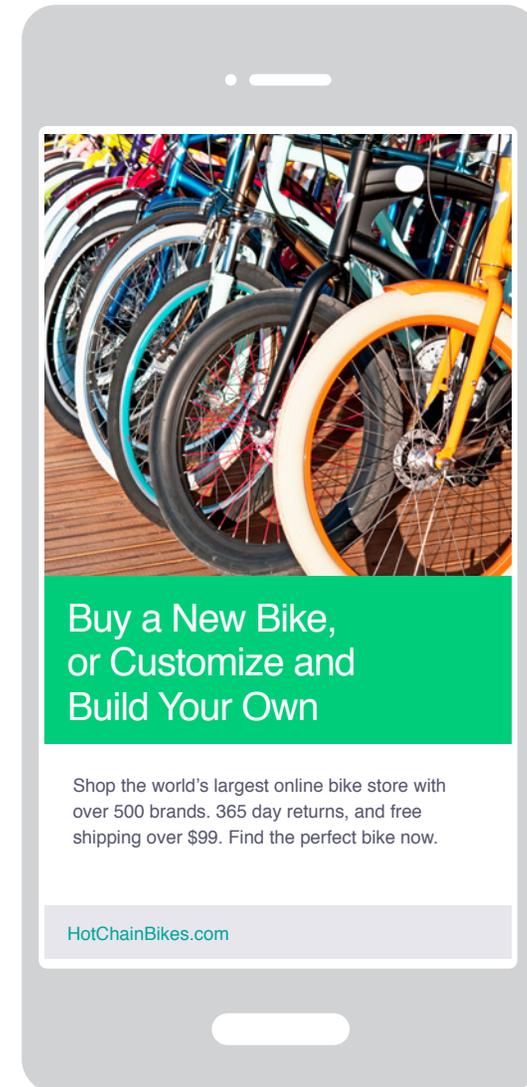
Enlighteners are the words and phrases you use to show the audience why your product or service is different, and how you offer a competitive advantage.

Focus on benefits rather than features. Why is your product or service different? What is your competitive advantage? Enlighteners include: price, value, availability, customer service, expertise, consistency and reviews.

In the ad for Hot Chain Bikes, the company's customization options, vast selection, return policy, and free shipping help it stand out from the competition.

Enlighteners to consider

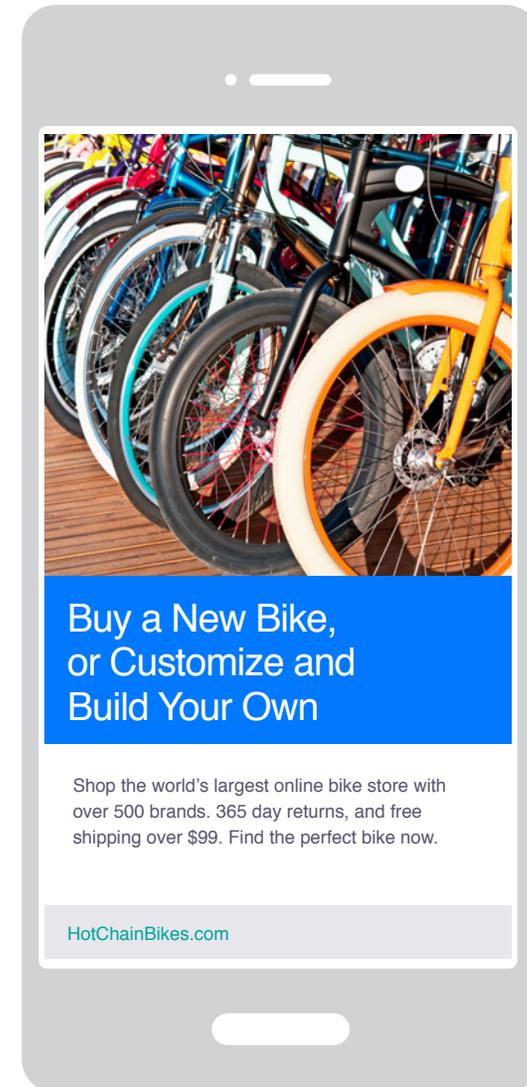
Price	Availability	Expertise	Reviews
Value	Customer Service	Consistency	



3. Send to site

The clinching words and phrases that push the undecided over the threshold and deliver them to your site are called the “call to action.”

The key to digital advertising success is motivating the undecided. Every ad needs a solid call to action. A strong call to action offers extra information that compels users to take a next step. Instead of simply telling a consumer to “shop now,” the ad invites them to create a customized bike that fits their needs—a potentially fun and informative experience that will pique the interest of a bicycle lover.



Bringing it all together

1 Eliminate unnecessary words

Words like “that,” “furthermore,” and “in addition” don’t add anything to your writing.

2 Edit for rhythm

Rearrange thoughts so they flow better, and consider combining sentences.

3 Corporatespeak

Train your mind to get out of email-writing mode when creating ads.

4 Don’t use clichés

Remember not to settle for easy words that may be trite or outdated.

5 Remove tentative adjectives

“Pretty good,” “very impressive,” “quite striking”—weakens your copy.



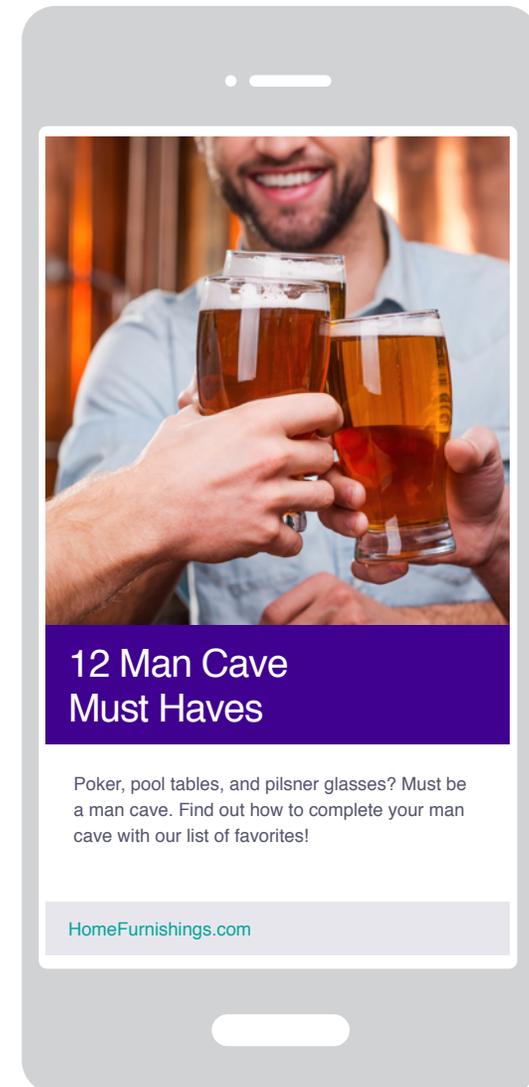
I have written you a long letter because I did not have time to write a short one.

– Pascal

Channel your inner maestro: Write in the rhythm of three

Good copy, like good music, has a tempo all its own. Write in rhythm with the power of three. The “Man Cave Must Haves” ad to the right uses the power of three with its “poker, pool tables, and pilsner glasses,” all the must-haves for the perfect Man Cave. It’s a natural beat that connects with the audience and keeps the copy moving.

Another advantage to thinking in threes is that it works even if you only can only think of two enlighteners. If there were only two enlighteners in the ad to the right you could say “Poker, pool tables and all you need for the perfect man cave.” In this way, you can benefit from the power of the rhythm of three with only two actual enlighteners.

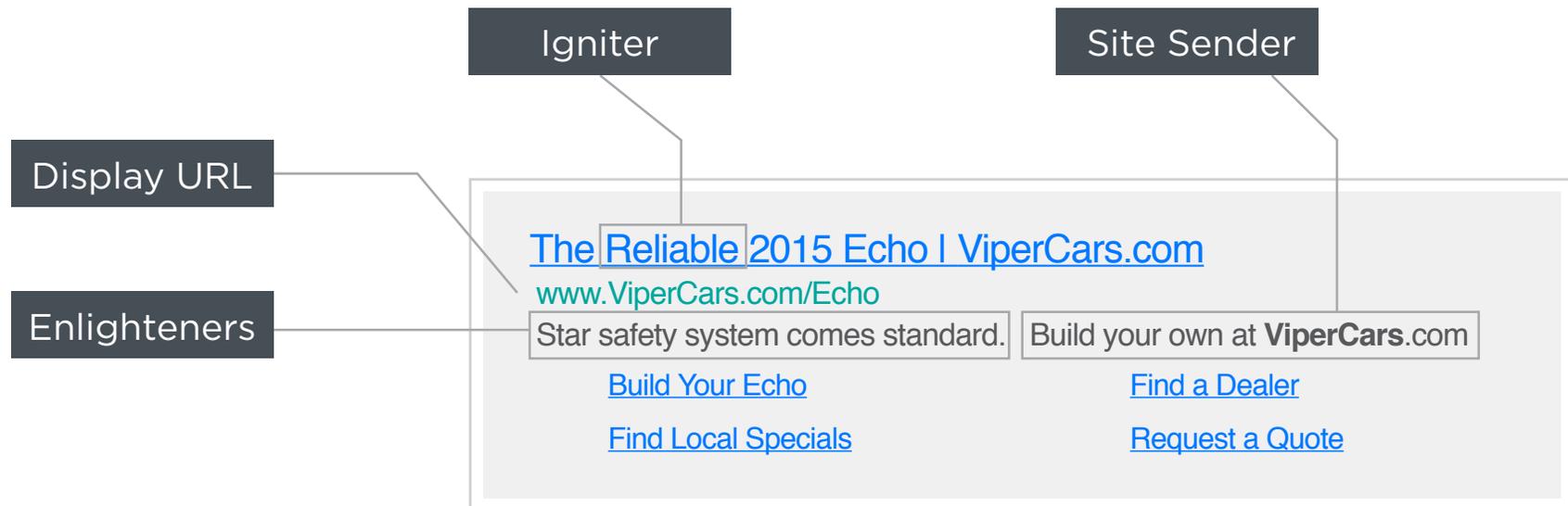


Ad testing

How to test:

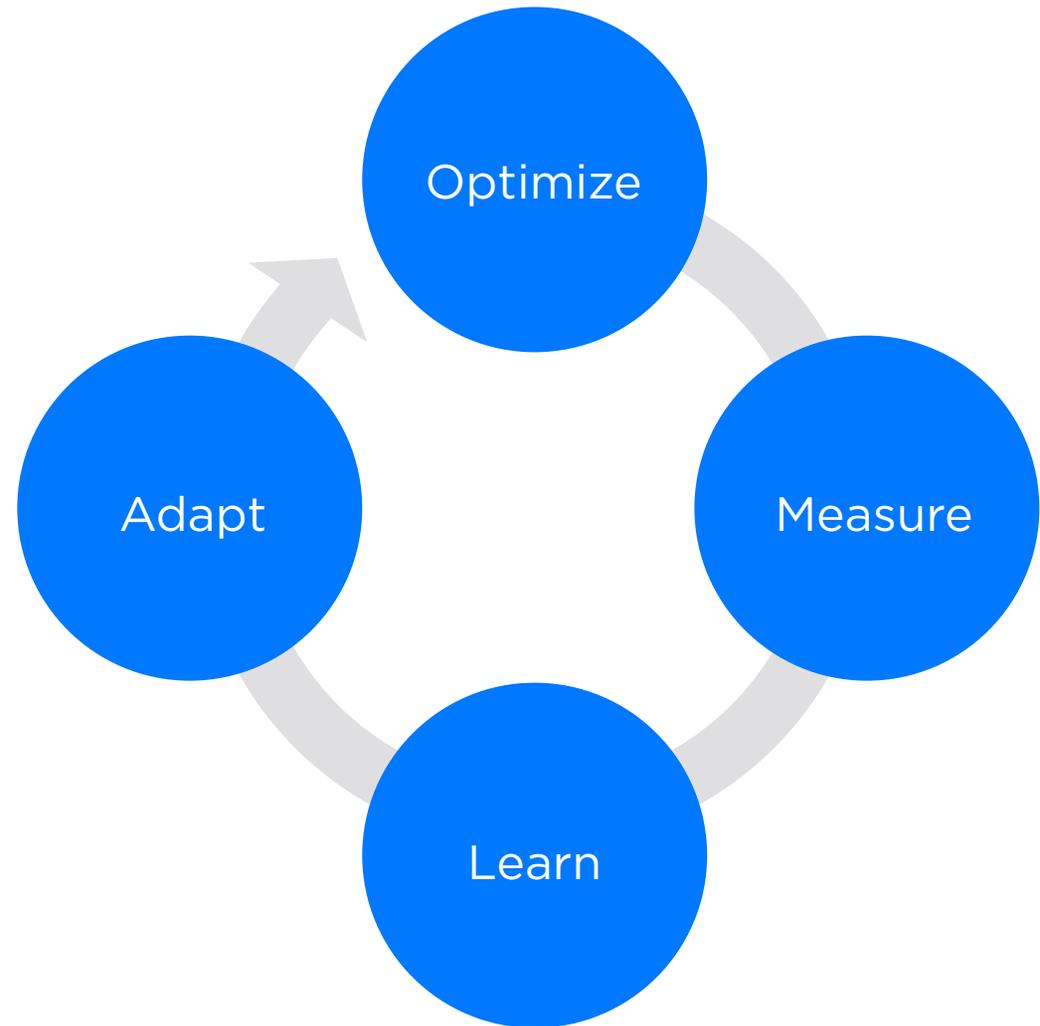
Isolate a single variable – try the title, ad components, or 1-2-3 connection

Variables:



Ad testing

Keep improving your copywriting through a virtuous cycle of ad testing



Takeaways

Anyone can become an effective copywriter. It's about connecting with people through their wants, needs and aspirations. Always imagine that you're the user— would *you* click on your ad?

But remember, a good copywriter's work is never done. Keep rewriting your copy in different ways by **ad testing**. Remember that the market is very dynamic and you need to be more dynamic to stay ahead.

Key Ingredients:

Emotion

Make sure your audience *feels* your message

Language

Talk to your audience, not over their heads

Credibility

Earn the consumers' trust with believable claims

The 1-2-3 Connection:

Ignite

Pull your audience into your message

Shine a light

Show the audience your competitive advantage

Send to site

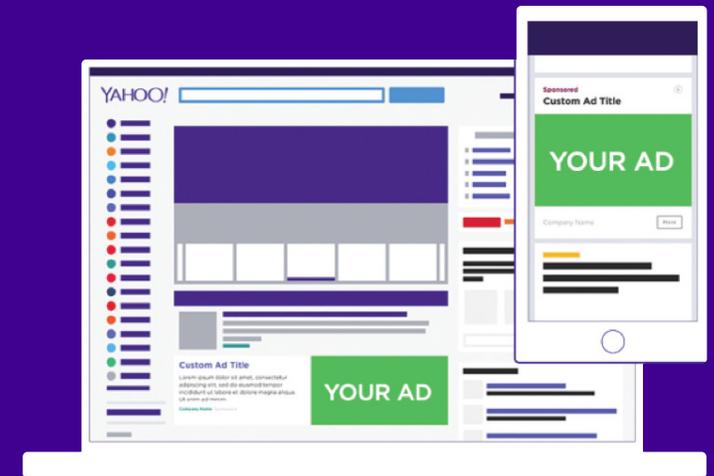
Deliver them to your site with clinching words

About the author



Frank Palmieri

With more than ten years of experience in the search industry, Frank Palmieri manages a team of Creative Strategists in the finance and consumer packaged goods verticals at Yahoo. His team works hands-on with some of the largest companies in these industries, helping them drive optimal performance for their search and advertising accounts. Frank also teaches a workshop for Yahoo Creative Strategists and Creative Analysts, “The Art of Copywriting,” in which he combines his online experience with years of copywriting to ensure that his Strategists are constantly revisiting their ad copy with solid ideas and sound testing. In addition, he has been a featured speaker at ClickZ Live, Search Marketing Expo (SMX) and other online marketing conferences. Frank earned a BA from the University of Notre Dame and previously worked as a copywriter in the New York publishing industry.



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