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DDGT121 – Website Documentation Assignments – Welcome Page

Write a paragraph or two for your Welcome Page. Here is some information to help (taken from: https://www.susangreenecopywriter.com/articles/10_rules.html):

10 Guidelines for Writing Your Home Page

Tips from a Professional Copywriter to Get You Started

Get your new business off on the right foot with a well-written home page.

10 Tips to Write a Powerful Home Page

1. Keep it concise.
2. Use keywords.
3. Write copy from the visitor's perspective.
4. Provide specifics, focusing on benefits.
5. Simplify navigation.
6. Personalize your approach.
7. Use headlines and subheads.
8. Sound enthusiastic but don't go overboard.
9. Proofread your copy.
10. Make sure your design is professional.

Because the home page is the first page most of your visitors will see, it's also the most important page. Its purpose is to grab readers' attention and help them find information quickly and easily.

If your home page lacks facts or the copywriting is confusing, your visitors will click off before they ever get a chance to know you. Here are some tips from a professional copywriter on making your home page effective:

1. Keep it concise

Today's web surfer has a short attention span. The home page copy needs to cut to the chase or risk losing the reader. Don't waste a lot of time giving details and background.

Tell the visitor what your website is all about right off the top. The copywriting should be concise and focused. A good size is 200 to 300 words. That should give you enough space to tout your biggest benefits and also encompass those all-important keywords. Save lengthy, detailed copy for inner pages.

According to CXL, a company that specializes in online conversions, the exact right length depends on things like “what you want your visitors to accomplish on the page, what information they need to make a decision to take action, or how aware they are of the solutions that exist to their problems.”

2. Use keywords

Search engines use keywords to determine where to place you in their directories. Make sure you write your home page to include the words you most associate with your business and, more importantly, that your prospects likely associate with your business. You need words, the right words. That’s why flash sites and graphics-only sites do not perform as well on search engines as sites with keyword-rich copy.

Take some time to brainstorm what keyword phrases best describe your offerings. Don’t know what search queries might be used to reach your site? Go to www.wordtracker.com where you can actually test your keywords and get suggestions for related terms.

Determine what keywords people use when searching for products or services like yours.

Also, do keyword research through various search engines. Be sure to target a keyword that has a high search volume. After all, what good is targeting a keyword that no one is looking for, right?

Finally, get feedback from customers, suppliers, sales people and friends. And don’t forget to check your competitors’ websites. How do they describe their products or services? Now determine what will work best for you.

3. Write copy from the visitor’s perspective

First, you must know your visitors. What is most likely to interest them? Visitors are looking for the answer to the question, “What’s in it for me?” They don’t want to read company profiles or lengthy corporate histories. They may want to learn more later, but initially they want to know that you’re offering something that they want.

Your visitors must be able to quickly understand what you’re offering or they’ll leave.

Here’s a quick test you can do to see if your copy is reader-oriented. Count how many times you use the terms “I” and “we.” Next count how many times you use the terms “you” and “your.” If the “I’s” and “we’s” outnumber the “you’s” and “yours,” you’re likely to lose your reader.

4. Provide specifics, focusing on benefits, not features

Rather than giving broad generalizations about features such as, “Our machine is fast,” it’s better to write specific benefit statements like, “Our machine will increase your productivity by as much as 25%.”

Facts are more persuasive than fluff. As any copywriter will tell you, if you can offer data or testimonials that support your claims, you’re more likely to gain the visitor’s trust.

Be mindful of the difference between features and benefits. According to the marketing firm Key Splash Creative, “The features on a product will help you do something (or do it for you). On the other hand, the benefits are **how** the product will help the customer.”

5. Simplify navigation

Your visitors should be able to instantly determine where to click on your website to locate the information they want. Hyperlinks should be easy to find. Use good descriptive phrases when writing the labels for the menu items.

To ensure your visitor’s best journey through your site, use clear navigation on your home page.

According to Orbit Media Studios, web designers, your navigation plays an important role in your website’s success:

- **Navigation affects traffic:** how high you’ll rank, how much traffic you’ll get from search
- **Navigation affects conversions:** how easy the site is to use, what percentage of visitors convert into leads and customers

Keep in mind too, that your home page presents an opportunity to promote some of your website’s inner pages. Pick 2 to 3 of your most important pages and reference them in your narrative copy along with links to encourage visitors to navigate to them and ultimately spend more time on your site.

6. Personalize your approach

More people will buy from you when they feel you are talking directly to them about their individual needs. Your copywriting should be friendly and conversational. Use simple words instead of complex, multi-syllabic vocabulary.

Despite what you were taught in Freshman English class, it’s okay to write in second person. As mentioned earlier, sprinkling the words “you” and “your” throughout your copy will personalize your approach.

Also important is to write the copy of your home page as though you're speaking to one person. After all, that's how the visitor is reading it, as just one person. So, no speaking to the masses. That means I'm talking directly to "you" and not "all users" or "those who are interested." Once again, the words "you" and "your" will help forge a connection with your visitor.

7. Use headlines and subheads

Big blocks of copy turn readers off. Use catchy headlines and informative subheads to break up long-winded paragraphs and guide the reader. They also make your page "scannable," the meaning able to be gleaned in a few seconds, which is how many people view web pages.

It's a good idea to use keywords in your headlines and subheads whenever possible as their prominence can help boost your position on search engines.

Wordstream, an online advertising agency, suggests using "simple but powerful language to make sure your content gets the traffic it deserves. When using words that are bland, uninspiring, or unknown by most, your potential readers are going to be turned off."

8. Sound enthusiastic, but don't go overboard

Readers are pretty savvy these days. They're also pretty skeptical. If you're the type of copywriter who fills her content with obvious exaggerations, you'll lose their trust. A little enthusiasm goes a long way.

Enthusiasm sells, but don't go overboard in your home page copy.

For the same reason, don't fill your copy with exclamation points, bolding, underlining and too many font styles and colors. Use these eye-catching techniques with discretion. A hyped-up home page will decrease credibility. Instead, mix an equal portion of enthusiasm with believability, and you'll see results.

9. Proofread your copy

It's easy to find errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation on the Internet. We've all seen them. But that doesn't make them right. Nothing detracts more from your professionalism than misspelled words or sentences that don't make sense. Even the most experienced copywriters proofread their work.

If you don't feel that's a strength of yours, ask a friend or coworker to look over the copy. An extra set of eyes may catch mistakes you miss.

One more tip: put a note on your calendar to check back in a month and proofread the page again. You'd be surprised what you notice when you read through your site with fresh eyes.

10. Make sure your design is professional

First impressions count, even on the Internet. Be sure that your online image, particularly your home page, conveys professionalism in both its written content and its design, or you'll lose the visitor's trust. Your site doesn't need to have glitzy graphics and expensive flash screens, but it also shouldn't look like it was created by your 13-year-old nephew.

Your website, especially your home page, must be responsive, able to be read on a tablet or smartphone screen.

It also needs to be responsive, which means the pages will adjust or "respond" according to the screen size of the viewer, whether it's a desktop PC with a large screen, a tablet with a medium screen, or a Smartphone with a small one.

Take things up a notch

Those 10 items are great for the basics. Taking the copywriting of your home page one step further, HubSpot, a content marketing agency, created an infographic that highlights 12 elements they view as critical to a successful home page. They are:

- Headline
- Sub-headline
- Primary Calls-to-Action
- Supporting Image
- Benefits
- Social Proof
- Navigation
- Content Offer
- Calls-to-Action
- Features
- Resources
- Success Indicators