

words by birds

A WordPress Developer's Guide to Copywriting

How to write about your product with
confidence so you can stop playing small
and start growing.

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01.

Intro — duction

If you had told me 10 years ago that one day I'd be working with some of the best businesses in WordPress, writing their marketing copy and contributing to their blogs, and generally helping to improve the quality of content that businesses publish, I would've laughed. Yet, I've somehow found myself in this reality and I love it.

The WordPress community is filled with clever people who love building stuff and are striving to grow their businesses. I love working with developers from all over the world.

But enough about me. **You're here because you want to write better copy for your product or service.**

People often ask how I approach writing like it's some kind of mysterious process. The truth is, anyone can write. The secret to writing, if there is a secret, is taking a step back from your work and looking at it objectively. Plus, it's about understanding some ground rules around grammar and structure.

I created this copywriting guide for developers to help pull back the curtain. I want to help you understand what copywriters really do when they write. That is, how we interpret your product or service and turn it into words that speak to your audience.

In this guide, we'll explore:

- What copywriting is (and why you don't need a copywriter);
- The fundamentals of copywriting, including how to create product and user profiles;
- The basics of grammar, or: what you need to know to get by;
- Tips for writing about your product; and finally
- I'll take you through a real-world example of a landing page I put together for Gridd, a WordPress theme.

What this guide will give you is a look into the copywriting process that works for me. You can then adapt my process to your own liking as a DIY developer. I hope it helps you write about your product or service with confidence.

Let's get started!

- Rae Morey

02.

What is —
copywriting?

“Oh copyrighting. Huh... I didn't know you did legal work.”

That's the response I typically get when I tell people I'm a copywriter. I get it—copywriting and copyrighting sound the same. It's okay that some people don't get what I do. (Pretty sure my Mum thinks I work for Google...)

So what is copywriting?

Copywriting is the art and science of writing compelling words that not only engage the reader but leads them to take your desired action

Traditionally, copywriting has been associated with advertising. Think newspaper advertising, television ads, billboards and brochures. If you're a Mad Men fan, you'd know Peggy Olson was Sterling Cooper's first female copywriter. She came up with the words for their ads.

Nowadays, you'll find copywriting everywhere online. It's used on landing pages, social media campaigns, lead magnets, homepages etc. And this is why copywriting is so important for businesses: it's not just about words, but about clearly and effectively communicating your offering to customers and clients.

Think about it. You could have the best product or service in the world but if your copy sucks no one is going to understand how it works or what benefits it offers (i.e. what's in it for them) and, ultimately, they're not going to give you their money. This is why great copywriting is so important.

Copywriting versus regular writing

Copywriting is writing with an actionable outcome. Regular writing makes you *think* about something, while copywriting compels you to *do* something.

How do you get someone to do something? You simply ask them with a call-to action (CTA). Writing can be persuasive, but if you're not asking someone to do something it's just regular ol' writing. A CTA is the secret ingredient that turns regular writing into copywriting.

So what makes a good call-to-action?

“Click here” is one example, though it's slowly disappearing now that people are tapping links on their phones. “Find out more” and “Learn more” are other common examples of CTAs.

Sure, they're boring but they work. My point is, the CTAs you write don't need to be clever. As long as you ask the reader to do something, you're calling them to action.

Other than your CTA, copywriting should be short and punchy. You're not writing an essay, you're trying to convince someone to take action.

And that, in a nutshell, is copywriting.

Great copywriting is about more than just writing words that ask people to do something. You also need to master some fundamentals, such as strategy and voice, objectively writing about your product, and figuring out who you're actually writing for.

You don't need a copywriter

You don't need to be creative or a "writer" to write copy. Copywriting isn't a magical skill that only certain special people can do. Copywriting is a logical process that you can do yourself. There are plenty of tools and methods available to help you write good copy.

If you find the act of writing difficult or have trouble getting started, it's possible to methodically develop your writing skills so you can write with confidence. Believe me, I've seen average writers become great writers. All it takes is time and patience.

The most important skill to master when copywriting is understanding the thought process behind choosing one set of words over another. And you also need to be able to effectively communicate the benefits—and not simply the features—of your product or service. I can't stress this enough. Say, for example, you're the developer of a caching plugin. It's more important to tell users what score your plugin can get them on WebPagetest than how it can eliminate render-blocking resources.

Yes, it's important to tell users about the features of your plugin but you also need to spell out the benefits in clear language so they know how it can solve their problem or make their life easier in some way.

This is one of the reasons Apple's iPod was so successful. The marketing explained the benefits of the product—i.e how many songs consumers could listen to—while the competition talked about abstract features that people didn't really understand or couldn't conceptualise, i.e how many megabytes storage was available.

Practice makes perfect

Great copywriting is about more than just writing words that ask people to do something. You also need to master some fundamentals, such as strategy and voice, objectively writing about your product, and figuring out who you're actually writing for. And then there's basic grammar and spelling, writing for SEO, and structuring your content.

But the most important thing is just getting started.

03.

The fundamentals of copywriting

There are two important but equally essential elements you'll consistently find in great copywriting: **strategy** (the objectives and purpose of the copy) and **voice** (the tone of voice). You can't have one without the other.

What is strategy?

Strategy is the decisions you make when choosing what to write. It involves setting objectives you want to achieve and the information you want users to absorb and act upon.

What is voice?

If strategy is the "head" of your copy then voice is the "heart". Voice is the words you choose, the elements of speech and grammar you employ, and the way in which you construct sentences. Essentially, voice is the character and personality of your writing.

Great copywriting has a healthy balance of both strategy and voice. A WordPress.org plugin page that's cleverly written and has a ton of personality might lack information, hence it has a weak strategy. On the other hand, a useful plugin page that is informative but boring to read has a weak voice.

Defining your strategy

A solid strategy doesn't have to be complex. In fact, it should have a single, simple objective. It might be as broad as "make potential customers like us" or specific like "sell 20 copies of my theme in the first week after launch".

Once you know what strategy you're trying to achieve, it's easier to write with clarity.

You might have several objectives you want to achieve. I'd recommend against diluting your strategy. If you find yourself doing this, try listing all your goals and then choosing one to prioritise.

Compel versus educate

Most copywriting broadly falls into two categories: **compel** and **educate**. While both encourage users to take action, they do it in different ways. The strategy you choose will determine the form your writing takes.

COMPEL

Copywriting that compels is short and, well, compelling. It sums up a large amount of information and encourages users to complete a particular task. There's generally a call-to-action that's written as a short imperative sentence with a verb. For example, "Buy now" or "Download free".

It quickly gets to the point so the user can quickly scan for keywords, find what they're looking for, and get on with doing whatever they came to do—which is (hopefully!) buying your product.

Examples of copywriting that compels include landing pages and email campaigns.

EDUCATES

Copywriting that educates, on the other hand, is more subtle and in-depth. It aims to help the user learn something new so they can make an informed decision. While it has a similar objective to copywriting that compels, it spends more time educating rather than selling.

It's a form that attempts to build trust and a connection instead of outwardly encouraging the reader to take a desired action. Because users who

establish a long-term relationship with the writing a business publishes, such as blog posts, are more likely to take action later when they're ready to make a commitment.

Examples of copywriting that educates include blog posts, in-depth case studies, and ebooks.

Finding your voice

Voice is the personality and attitude of your writing. It's the way you "talk" to users; your choice of words and the subjects you choose to write about are expressions of your inner character.

For example, if someone messages you on Slack saying, "Do you have a minute to talk?" you might think, "Oh no, what's wrong?" But if it was rephrased as, "Got time to chat real quick?" you might be less alarmed. The difference between these two sentences is tone of voice.

Most businesses want a voice that is trustworthy and authoritative, yet down-to-earth and friendly. This may seem like a fair request but it can be tricky trying to capture this in a headline or short paragraph.

Some brands are killing it with their voice. Mailchimp, Cards Against Humanity, Slack and Dollar Shave Club are a few examples.

When crafting your tone of voice, don't overthink it. It's important to have a clear idea of the personality behind your product but there are a few grammatical tricks that can help too.

The basics of voice

1. USE GOOD GRAMMAR

Writing with correct grammar is a must. Using varied sentence length also helps create a strong tone of voice. Reading carefully crafted words using you-focused language can feel as if the writer is speaking to you one-on-one, carrying a conversation inside your head. It feels good, the sentences have rhythm, and you feel compelled to keep reading.

Great copywriting doesn't have to use long words or be overly clever. You just need good grammar.

2. DON'T WAFFLE ON

There's nothing worse than writing that doesn't really say anything at all. You know, writing that is just a long list of adjectives. It's an obvious sign the copywriter tried too hard to create a tone of voice and didn't have a strategy.

My rule is KISS: keep it simple, stupid. If you describe what you're trying to say with simple words while being mindful of your strategy, tone will follow.

3. FIND INSPIRATION

If a brand's tone of voice has resonated with you, spend some time reading and re-reading their marketing copy so you can pick apart why it works. Start by identifying the words and phrases that stand out. If you can recognise what makes the tone engaging, you'll have an easier time creating a tone that suits you.

Defining your voice

What is your tone of voice? List three words that sum up how you want to come across to your target audience.

Do you want to sound clever and authoritative? Fun and quirky? Friendly and down-to-earth? Choose words that best reflect your business' personality.

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Understanding your product

You created your product and know it better than anyone—you are the subject matter expert and that makes you uniquely qualified to write about it.

But writing about something you know intimately can be difficult. You know every line of code and every little detail behind how it works. This can make it hard to know where to start and what to prioritise.

This is why it helps to take a step back and look at your product objectively. Once you've got a clear picture of your product, you can create a product profile.

CREATING A PRODUCT PROFILE

A product profile describes your product's characteristics and can help you look at it more objectively so you can better communicate its benefits. Writing a product profile start with your unique value proposition.

What is a value proposition?

Your unique value proposition (UVP) should be a clear statement that describes your product's benefits, how you solve your customer's needs, and

what distinguishes you from the competition. It should be the first thing visitors see when they land on your site and should appear prominently in your marketing. On landing pages, the UVP statement is usually displayed just below the main headline.

A clear UVP statement tells visitors three things:

- **Relevancy** – How your product solves customers' problems or improves their life in some way.
- **Value** – The specific benefits of your product.
- **Differentiation** – Why customers should buy from you and not the competition.

Benefits over features

It's easy to get caught up in the features of your product. Say, for example, you've built an image optimization plugin and it took you weeks to code a feature that takes care of bulk optimization. You'll probably want to write about how this feature works, but the reality is, customers typically want to know how the product can help them and not necessarily the details of how it works.

This is why it's critical to translate the features of your product into benefits. Successful salespeople know all of their product's features and skilfully turn these features into benefits for their customers.

Customers are more likely to trust developers who show confidence in themselves and what they are selling. They're also more likely to respond to enthusiastic developers who are passionate about their product and eager to share the benefits, not just the features.

EXAMPLE PRODUCT PROFILE

Product name: Gridd

Unique value proposition: Gridd is a fast, accessible and sustainable theme for WordPress.

What problem does your product solve?

Gridd makes it easy for anyone to create an accessible theme that meets WCAG guidelines. It's built for optimal performance. It's also small in file size so it uses fewer resources.

Product features: Grid building system, easy to customise, inclusive design patterns, 100KB in file size, developed with proper SEO data structure, built-in accessibility.

Product benefits: Fast theme that achieves 100% on Google PageSpeed Insights. Built from the ground up using inclusive design best practices to help people create sites that anyone can use. It's an eco-friendly theme—small file sizes mean visitors can load pages faster, while helping to reduce your hosting costs and carbon footprint.

How is your product better than the competition?

There's no other theme available for WordPress that combines speed, accessibility and sustainability. Plus, it's free to download.

Understanding your audience

Your audience is the specific group of people you want to reach with your copywriting. They are the people who are most likely to buy your product, and they are united by some common characteristics, like demographics and behaviours.

The more clearly you define your audience, the better you can understand how to appeal to them with your copywriting.

The easiest way to approach defining your audience is to think about one person who uses your product. Maybe it's someone you know, like an existing user, or someone you have in mind as your "ideal user". It's important to be specific and imagine just one person—your audience can't be "everyone".

For example, if you're targeting someone who is trying to build an accessible website, think of someone who fits that profile. Who are they? What are they into? Where do they work? What websites do they visit?

It's much easier to imagine one real person rather than an abstract group of 18–35 year-olds you'll almost certainly make generalisations about.

Once you've got a real person in mind, you can create a user profile.

CREATING A USER PROFILE

A user profile describes your audience's characteristics, split into three simple approaches: what are they doing, what are their capabilities, and how are they feeling.

Creating a user profile will help you better understand the needs and context of your audience at the time they are reading your copy.

1. What are they doing?

Are they checking their email and social accounts in other browser tabs while reading about your product? Are they scrolling on their phone during their morning commute? Are they sitting at their computer in the early hours of the morning?

EXAMPLE USER PROFILE

Demographic: Male, 28

Name: Sam Stacker

Project: Developing client website with a focus on accessibility and performance.

What are they doing? Working in his home office on a desktop computer.

What are their capabilities?

Highly educated, skeptical of the hard sell, extremely knowledgeable about WordPress and has developed sites for 8+ years. Concerned about performance and quality of code.

How are they feeling? Focused, pushing through a busy day of work (he works for himself as a freelancer), spending some time looking for a theme boilerplate.

Compel/educate: Compel.

What problem are they facing? Too many bloated themes on the web that don't provide adequate accessibility features.

What do you want them to think? "This theme is the real deal. They have an answer to every question I have about their theme. They seem down to earth."

What do you want them to do: Buy theme.

Consider how these states will affect the way they read your copy. For example, if they're on their phone, they're more likely to be distracted. So keep things short and place CTAs in high visible areas. If they're using their desktop, feel free to write something longer that requires more of a time investment.

2. What are their capabilities?

Are they familiar with your niche or are they a beginner? Do they speak English as a second language? What is their level of expertise? Will they need to understand complex concepts before they can make a decision or will they know what you're talking about straight away?

If they know your niche well, you don't need to explain complex concepts. But if your audience isn't familiar with your product, try to write about it in plain language and explain important concepts in simple terms.

3. How are they feeling?

Are they busy and feeling stressed or do they have time to read and understand? How will their emotional state affect their patience?

If they're feeling rushed, it's best to keep things clear and easy to read. For example, if your audience is looking for a backup plugin, it might be because they've just experienced issues with their site going down and they're in no mood for quirky copy. But if they're looking for ways to customise their site with micro-animations and they're in a good mood with time on their hands, it's okay to have fun with your words.

04.

The basics of grammar —

Many developers seem to think of grammar as a mysterious collection of rules that bored them to tears at school. The truth is that most professional writers are just as clueless about grammar (that's why we use Google and Grammarly!).

When writing great copy, you don't need to know all the rules, just the important ones. They've extremely simple and easy to remember and apply.

If your first language is English, most of what you'll read about in this chapter will feel so natural you'll find it obvious. But if English is your second language, use this section as a reference while writing and editing. The more you practice, the better you'll get.

Active voice

Where possible, always write in active voice when writing sales and marketing copy. An active voice sentence places the "doer" of an action up front, before a verb or verb phrase.

The girl (doer) licked (verb) the ice cream (receiver)

In the above example, the girl is the "doer" of the action. The ice cream is the receiver.

A weak sentence, also known as passive voice, places the "doer" away from the action, after a verb or verb phrase.

The ice cream (receiver) was licked (verb phrase) by the girl (doer).

The easiest way to spot a passive voice sentence is the telltale word "by" – if you see it, you know you've got a passive sentence. Try to avoid passive

sentences as much as possible. Active sentences are shorter and can make writing sound more open and honest.

Commas

Try to use commas sparingly. Your writing will be easier to read and understand.

The more commas you use, the more the user will need to remember, and if the sentence continues any longer than it should, beyond 30 words, they might lose their train of thought or forget what you were trying to communicate in the first place...

A HELPFUL HINT:

If you read a sentence back and have to stop to take a breath before you reach the end of the sentence, it's too long. Sentences should generally be no more than 30 words.

Tense

There are three tenses:

- **Past:** It happened yesterday.
- **Present:** It's happening right now.
- **Future:** It will happen tomorrow.

With each tense, the form of the verb is changed to express the timeline of the sentence. This is called "conjugating" the verb.

Simple, right? Well, not exactly. This is one rule people stuff up all the time as it's easy to switch between tenses while writing. Decide which tense you want to use before you start writing and stick with it.

First, second, and third person

First, second, and third person are ways of describing points of view.

- First person is the “I” / “we” perspective
- Second person is the “you” perspective
- Third person is the “he” / “she” / “it” / “they” / “Words By Birds” perspective

As a business owner, should you write in first, second, or third person? This answer is a little bit of everything. Try to use “we” instead of your business name and “you” instead of the customer or the reader.

GOOD EXAMPLE:

We are proud to provide quality copywriting and content. It’s part of our commitment to providing you with the best words for WordPress.

BAD EXAMPLE:

Words By Birds is proud to provide quality copywriting and content for WordPress businesses. It is part of our commitment to providing our customers with the best words for WordPress.

The bad example read a bit cold, right? Using “we” (first person) is a great way to set a casual and friendly tone. Using “you” (second person) helps put the reader in the picture.

Most of your marketing copy should use the we/you combination. It helps to bridge the gap between your business and your audience, like you’re having a one-on-one conversation. It also invokes the power of inclusive language, which is a useful tool for getting the reader to become emotionally invested in what you want to say.

THE “CORPORATE PLURAL”

When writing about your business, try to avoid the corporate plural. This is a common problem. An organisation’s name, like Automattic, is a singular, not a plural.

Although you might use “we” (a plural pronoun) to refer to “we, the team at Automattic”, when referring to the organisation name, make sure you use singular modifiers (the word you put directly after the name).

For example, “Automattic is” instead of “Automattic are”. Or “Automattic provides” instead of “Automattic provide”.

Contractions

It’s an unwritten rule that contractions—words shortened with apostrophes, such as “don’t” instead of “do not”—make writing more casual. People tend to use the longer versions because they believe it adds an air of authority and formality to their writing. There’s something about “is not” that “isn’t” can’t convey.

Personally, I prefer contractions. They make the reading experience flow better. Unless you’re writing a history essay or legal letter, it’s okay to use contractions. It gives your writing a friendly tone and makes it less stuffy.

Idioms

Let’s face it, people can be lazy when it comes to language. This might be why we often turn to popular phrases, otherwise known as idioms, instead of speaking plainly.

Commonly used idioms include “moving forward”, “piece of cake”, and “at the end of the day”. They can be useful when making your tone of voice more casual and conversational. But don’t use idioms too often as they can make your writing sound vague.

It’s also worth keeping in mind that your audience may not understand idioms, particularly if they speak English as a second language. In this case, it’s often best to stick to plain language. After all, not everyone says “Howdy” when greeting each other.

Types of sentences

There are four sentence types: declarative, imperative, interrogative, and exclamatory. Understanding the usefulness of each sentence type will often come in handy when writing for your website, particularly when writing headlines and CTAs.

If you're attempting to find the right headline for a blog post or landing page, try the same sentence written in each of the four sentence types.

The imperative is almost always the simplest way to express a headline—particularly when you're asking the reader to take action.

- **Declarative:** Our plugin is cool (making a statement)
- **Imperative:** Buy our plugin (telling someone to do something)
- **Interrogative:** Would you like to buy our plugin? (asking a question)
- **Exclamatory:** Buy our damn plugin! (expressing an emotion)

Capitalisation

The rules of English capitalisation might seem simple. You probably know you should capitalise proper nouns and the first word of every sentence. But you should also capitalise the first word of a quote (well, sometimes. Google this if you're not sure). Usually, you don't capitalise after a colon, but there are exceptions (so Google this too).

When it comes to capitalising headings, it's best to stick to one style: either capitalise every word that isn't a conjunction, or only capitalise the first word.

For example:

How to Write Effective Copy for Your Plugin or Theme

versus

How to write effective copy for your plugin or theme.

The important thing is to be consistent. Don't capitalise some headlines and not others.

Exclamation marks

An exclamatory sentence is one that expresses a strong or forceful emotion, such as joy, surprise or anger.

The hardest thing about using an exclamation point is knowing when not to use one. In copywriting, it can be hard to convey emotion and intent behind a simple statement. If you said aloud, "This is the best SEO plugin for WordPress" it would be clear from the tone of your voice and body language whether you meant this as an expression of joy or sarcasm. An exclamation point can help make it clear by conveying your delight, "This is the best SEO plugin for WordPress!"

Using exclamation marks too often can make them less effective. A past editor of mine once told me we get two exclamation marks in our lifetime. If you use too many, your copy might come across as disingenuous, or worse, annoying to read. In addition, they're considered casual so are best avoided in business or formal writing.

Instead of relying on exclamation points, use more descriptive vocabulary. For instance, instead of "Download Gridd today!" try "Download Gridd. You'll be glad you did."

05.

Tips for — writing about your product or service

The web has been both a blessing and a curse for writing. While there have never been so many people reading the written word, they're infinitely more impatient. Most scan for keywords and only read what's relevant to them. Some don't read at all—they usually want to complete a task as quickly as possible so they can close the browser tab.

In order to stand out from the crowd (there's an idiom for you!) and make your copy consumable for short attention spans, here are some crucial things to keep in mind.

Write with clarity

Confusion kills engagement. Writing clearly keeps people reading and ensures they don't have to reread your sentences.

To ensure this:

- **Use simple words:** Write "start" rather than "commence" and "learn more" rather than "ascertain".
- **Use specific words:** Write "SEO plugin" rather than "search engine optimisation tool".
- **Use transitions:** These are words or phrases that connect ideas between sentences. For example: as a result, although, while, and because.

Clear writing will help users visualise your sentences, which keeps them reading. If you're unsure if your sentences are clear, read them aloud.

Use a clear page structure

It's important the reader can quickly grasp the order of information on the page from most important to least important since they're probably making

decisions based on a quick scan of your content.

If there are 10 things you want your audience to know, list them in order of importance. Work with a designer to make sure the size of the typography, placement of copy, any images, videos and CTAs reflect your order of importance.

Have one clear call-to-action

Your call to action is an invitation for the user to take some desired action. So what is it you want people to do when they land on your site?

Have one very clear CTA. When visitors scroll down your page, it should be obvious what you want them to do. For example, you might want them to "Get in touch" or "Download plugin."

Keep decisions to a minimum. You want to make the decision process as easy as possible and if there's only one CTA visitors will be more likely to take your desired action.

Think of it like a "choose your own adventure" book. When you only have to choose between two paths, it's easy to pick one. But if you had to choose between 10, you might spend too long deciding which way to go and simply close the book because it all feels like too much.

Know your SEO

You probably already have a basic understanding of how SEO works. You're probably already using it on your site. So for the purposes of this guide, I'm going to recap the basics.

It's simple really: people generally don't want to read boring, poorly-written copy full of typos. They want quality content that is actually helpful.

Optimising your search results falls into essential two tasks: using keywords strategically and publishing high quality content.

1. USE KEYWORDS STRATEGICALLY

Google doesn't just look for instances of words; it looks for the connection between instances. Your page will rank higher if a keyword has been used consistently in several different elements of the page content.

This doesn't mean you should stuff keywords into your copy anywhere and everywhere. It's essential that your keyword use makes sense to both Google and your audience. If users find your copy confusing, they'll quickly close the tab, sending Google a signal that your content isn't very good.

Make sure to use your keyword in the URL, in the meta title and description, once in the heading, once in an image alt text (if you have any images), and then in 1-2% of your body text. This will be enough to let Google know what your page is about.

2. PUBLISH QUALITY CONTENT

Yes, there's a lot of mindless content on the web. People love cat memes and BuzzFeed quizzes for a reason—they want to be distracted. But when it comes to searching for solutions to a problem and finding products that can help, people want quality content that doesn't mess around.

It's simple really: people generally don't want to read boring, poorly-written copy full of typos. They want quality content that is actually helpful.

Google routinely updates its algorithms to weed out poor-quality content from search results. Meanwhile, sites that publish highly-quality content that is useful for searchers move up the SERPs. Even Google's guidelines clearly spell what the search engine wants you to do to help it find, index and rank your site: publish quality content.

USE SEO TOOLS TO OPTIMISE YOUR COPY

There are some fantastic tools that make writing SEO-optimized copy so much easier. If you can, fork out for premium SEO tools as they will help you get ahead of the competition. Here are two of my favourite tools:

- **Clearscope** – I don't know what I'd do without Clearscope. It allows you to compare your copy for a particular set of keywords with other content in the top 10. When you sign up, you get an hour-long one-on-one walkthrough of how to use the product and it's eye-opening.
- **KWFinder** – This is a great tool for searching keywords and finding the right head, midtail and longtail keywords for your product or blog post.

06.

Real-world
example —

The hardest, most frustrating part of writing is getting started. You might start, stop, and start again, go and make a coffee, come back to your computer, stare at the screen for a while, and then spend the next 30 minutes doing BuzzFeed quizzes.

This is normal. The way around it is to organise your thoughts and work through what you want to write in a logical fashion.

The more planning you put into what you want to say—and to whom and in what tone of voice—the stronger and more effective your copy will be. It will also help your writing flow a lot easier if all you need to do is fill in the gaps.

To help you get started, I want to walk you through my copywriting process using a real-world example: the Gridd WordPress theme by WPLemon.

Ari Stathopoulos's Gridd theme combines speed, sustainability and accessibility into one user-friendly product. I sent Ari a questionnaire to learn

more about his theme and audience. Using this information, I was able to create a copywriting brief. And using this brief, I put together the copy for the Gridd landing page.

Creating a copywriting brief

The simplest way to get started is to write a brief. In fact, I recommend not starting without one. A brief will help organise your thoughts, clarify your goals, and put you into the right frame of mind to start writing.

A brief is comprised of two essential components: a **product profile** and a **user profile**.

We explored both these components in chapter 3, and I'm going to combine those two examples to create a copywriting brief for Gridd.

GRIDD COPYWRITING BRIEF

Product name: Gridd

Unique value proposition: Gridd is a fast, accessible and sustainable theme for WordPress.

What problem does your product solve?

Gridd makes it easy for anyone to create an accessible theme that meets WCAG guidelines. It's built for optimal performance. It's also small in file size so it uses fewer resources.

Product features: Grid building system, easy to customise, inclusive design patterns, 100KB in file size, developed with proper SEO data structure, built-in accessibility.

Product benefits: Fast theme that achieves 100% on Google PageSpeed Insights. Built from the ground up using inclusive design best practices to help people create sites that anyone can use. It's an eco-friendly theme—small file sizes mean visitors can load pages faster, while helping to reduce your hosting costs and carbon footprint.

How is your product better than the competition? There's no other theme available for WordPress that combines speed, accessibility and sustainability. Plus, it's free to download.

Demographic: Male, 28

Name: Sam Stacker

Project: Developing client website with a focus on accessibility and performance.

What are they doing? Working in his home office on a desktop computer.

What are their capabilities? Highly educated, skeptical of the hard sell, extremely knowledgeable about WordPress and has developed sites for 8+ years. Concerned about performance and quality of code.

How are they feeling? Focused, pushing through a busy day of work (he works for himself as a freelancer), spending some time looking for a theme boilerplate.

Compel/educate: Compel.

What problem are they facing? Too many bloated themes on the web that don't provide adequate accessibility features.

What do you want them to think? "This theme is the real deal. They have an answer to every question I have about their theme. They seem down to earth."

The anatomy of a landing page

There are eight core elements that form the foundation of any landing page:

1. THE MAIN HEADING

The heading is the very first thing visitors will see. It should include your main keywords and succinctly describe your product in one line of text.

2. A STATEMENT

If the headline makes visitors pause to read, the statement should make them want to keep reading. It should be short, descriptive, persuasive, and explain the heading in more detail.

When writing your statement, consider your UVP and what value your product delivers. Your statement should clearly describe your product, its main

benefit, how you solve your customer's needs and what distinguishes you from the competition.

3. THE PROBLEM

The essence of entrepreneurship is finding a problem and solving it. What big problem does your product solve?

It might be obvious but if you're not sure what to write, think about what users might be searching for to find your website. Consider their point of view and use emotional triggers to convey their frustrations.

4. YOUR SOLUTION

Every visitor who comes to your landing page has a problem. Naturally, you should tell them how you are going to solve their problem.

If your product presents a unique solution, your target audience is going to do whatever they can to get their hands on it, whether it's now or in the near future.

You may want to write about your solution as a single statement or combine it into a problem + solution statement.

5. THE BENEFITS

Your audience needs to know what's in it for them, so tell them about the benefits of your product. Keep the message short and concise and use bullets to clearly communicate the benefits.

It will be easier to convert visitors if they fully understand the benefits of your product and how it will help them.

6. THE FEATURES

What are your product's features? Developers love digging into the details, so while highlighting the benefits of your product is essential, so too is listing its features.

7. TRUST SIGNALS

Good landing pages make abundant use of trust signals, which can indicate to visitors that your product is trustworthy. Often, it's also a case of "I'll have what she's having"—when people see someone

else is enjoying a product, they want it too.

There are lots of different types of trust signals, also known as social proof. Testimonials are a classic form that capitalise on word-of-mouth to reassure visitors with endorsements from past customers.

Other types of trust signals you may want to use include company logos, tweets, and case studies.

8. CALL-TO-ACTION

The call-to-action is one of the most important elements on a landing page. It's the one element the rest of the page is driving the visitor's attention to. Without a CTA, visitors won't know what you want them to do.

Use a single CTA to keep your visitors focused. More than one will divert their attention away from your primary goal for the page. Also, make sure it's prominent and uses a contrasting color—you want to make sure that visitors know immediately it's a CTA.

Place your CTA at the bottom of your page as well as above the fold beneath your statement.

Creating the landing page

Using the copywriting brief, and keeping in mind the anatomy of a landing page, here's the copy I put together for Gridd's landing page.

Keep in mind that this is essentially a copydeck (i.e. a single document that contains all the necessary bits and bobs for a given copywriting project). It's not indicative of the layout or what the finished landing page looks like.

*// **Headline + statement** //*

Gridd

The fastest, most accessible, and sustainable theme for WordPress

What are you waiting for? Not this page to load, that's for sure. It's built with Gridd so it's fast, anyone can enjoy it, and it's eco-friendly. Do the earth a favor and get Gridd today.

[DOWNLOAD GRIDD FOR FREE]

*// **The problem** //*

Bling isn't always a good thing

You want a minimal WordPress theme that's functional and accessible. A website that gets s!@# done without all the bells and whistles because you know you're not going to sell anything if your site takes 20 seconds to load.

But every WordPress theme you come across is weighed down in animations, things sliding in from all directions, sliders and carousels and countless fonts and scripts. We're talking pages that are 10 MB or more.

All it does is satisfy a designer's ego so they can say they "built something fancy." The reality? Slow sites are bad news for SEO. Anyone who doesn't have a top-of-the-line smartphone, a powerful laptop, or a 4G network can forget about trying to access your site.

*// **The solution** //*

Do the earth a favor – download Gridd

Did you know the web's carbon footprint has already eclipsed global air travel? Our growing appetite for digital services means the datacenters that power them are now responsible for about 2% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Do your bit to help the planet. Choose Gridd, the first eco WordPress theme that focuses on performance, accessibility, and sustainability.

*// **The benefits** //*

Fast. Real fast.

A WordPress theme that's both fast and high quality. Yes, you really can have both.

Every little detail in Gridd has been optimized for performance. It only loads what is needed when it's needed, resulting in 10x faster pagespeeds and less data than most premium WordPress themes.

Accessible

We're showing the world that accessible, standards-compliant websites can rock.

We care about WCAG and we make it our business to know all there is to know about accessibility. Built from the ground up using inclusive design best practices for WordPress, Gridd automates tasks like picking accessible color combinations to help you build a beautiful website that anyone can access and enjoy.

Sustainable

Reduce your hosting costs and reduce your carbon footprint.

We've reduced Gridd's footprint per page load so your visitors to your site will enjoy a faster browsing experience. This reduced server load means your pages will consume fewer resources, helping to reduce hosting costs for your business while at the same time contributing to a lower carbon footprint.

// The features //

User-friendly, yet powerful features

DIY WordPress layout

With its revolutionary grid system, you have full control over what your pages look like. Whether you want a complex layout or one that's minimalistic, build your site just how you want it.

User-friendly customization

The intuitive Customizer interface gives you the tools you need to build your pages. Add headers, as many widgetized areas as you want, Gutenberg blocks, and more with ease.

Truly accessible WordPress theme

Text and link colors automatically change color when you adjust the background color for pages to ensure maximum readability and compliance with WCAG guidelines. Menus are also optimized for screen readers and keyboard navigation.

Inclusive design patterns

Your brand is unique so stand out with your own custom color palette. Use the colors you select consistently, both in your theme-options and in the Gridd editor.

Responsive design

Everything is responsive and scales to fit the visitor's screen. Font sizes change automatically to ensure your text remains readable on any size screen, from a 3-inch old smartphones to 8K 50-inch smart-TVs.

Built for speed

Gridd is fast. Out of the box, it scores 100% on Google PageSpeed for both mobile and desktop. It's faster than Google's AMP Project (and provides native support for it, too).

Lightweight footprint

At just 50KB for both styles and scripts, Gridd is lightweight and functional, unlike heavy themes with 1MB stylesheets and scripts pushing 5MB+. With fewer assets to load and smaller files sizes, your site will consume fewer resources.

Smarter SEO

Developed with proper data structure and correct use of all appropriate HTML tags and properties. Combine that with speed and quality content and your site is ready to rank.

// Trust signals //

<ARI TO INSERT TESTIMONIALS>

// Call-to-action //

Make a conscious choice. Choose Gridd.

[DOWNLOAD GRIDD FREE]

07.

What next? ———

I hope you've found this look behind the scenes into my copywriting process helpful. The point of this guide isn't to make you an expert. At least, not yet. It's to give you the information and tools to write about your product with confidence.

So if you take anything away with you, be confident about your copywriting, be confident in writing about your product's benefits, be confident in your strategy and voice, and be confident that you know your audience.

Like any skills, practice makes perfect. That means writing, editing, and more writing. That's the best thing about writing—you can chip away until your words work just the way you want.

If you're not sure your words are working, ask someone you trust to review your copy. Getting someone's opinion might also help you see your product more objectively.

Then all you need to do is review your copy regularly and ensure it's always up to date.

Finally, remember to have fun with your writing. Be honest about what you've got to offer, break the rules sometimes (because rules are meant to be broken) and just be yourself. The best writing is full of personality, and there are some wonderful personalities in the WordPress community.

words by birds

WORDS BY BIRDS.COM