

# FAIL PROOF HEADLINES

by PRAYASH PAL

HOW TO WRITE HEADLINES THAT CAPTURE ATTENTION FAST!



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# Meet Your Coach



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# Introduction

So, you want to learn how to create attention-grabbing headlines that will motivate potential customers and close the deal?

If you've ever talked to copywriters, chances are you've heard about the power of a winning headline and its measurable effect on your bottom line. If you fail to capture your reader's attention within the first few minutes of them reading your copy, you'll likely lose them forever.

Add to that, the fast-paced digital world where people are used to social media updates flying across their screen all day long, overloading them with information, and you need to work extra hard to capture their attention long enough to convince them to read your message.

Think about that for a minute and the pressure that it puts on copywriters. Your headline matters so much that if you fail to hit the mark in your first few minutes (possibly seconds), you may never have another chance with that person again.

Your headline sets the tone. It's the first impression you make on your visitor, and it's single-handedly the most important component of a successful sales page.

A compelling headline captures attention and convinces people to continue reading every single word on your page until you have closed the deal. It persuades visitors into becoming customers, and makes believers out of the skeptics. And if it's done right, it has the power to **transform a sales page into an incredible money-making machine.**

David Ogilvy, a business tycoon, known as the "father of advertising" believed that the headline of a sales page was the **single most important component in a marketing system.** I agree!

He also summarized the importance of a killer headline with the following quote: *"On the average, five times as many people read the headline than they do the body."*

Are you beginning to see the importance of an attention-grabbing headline that conveys your message and speaks to your audience?

***A captivating headline is everything!***

**And here's the great news:** Despite the information-overload that many of us suffer from where we don't give much of anything our full attention, creating powerful headlines that ultimately persuade someone to respond to your copy isn't all that difficult when you know how to harness the power of emotional and intellectual triggers that will prompt anyone (even the most jaded) into taking action.

In fact, when you follow a **proven formula** for creating attention-grabbing headlines, used by the most experienced copywriters online, you simply can't fail!

This special report will provide you with the information you need to get started, while going back to the basics. I'm going to share some of the most effective strategies to creating successful headlines, even if you are brand new to copywriting.

So, without further delay, let's get started!

# K.I.S.S & Tell

When I first became a copywriter, I studied *everything* David Ogilvy had ever written. This was a man known to the world as one of **the** best copywriters in history, responsible for countless successful campaigns for household name brands, including Dove and Rolls Royce.

So, I set out to work, learning all that I could from one of the most skilled copywriters in the world. I read his book, *Confessions of an Advertising Man*, and analyzed his copywriting, especially his headlines. It was a pretty straightforward, no-risk way of learning from the best. And because I was new at copywriting, it was also a low-cost way to get started.

What better way to know that I was doing it right than by structuring my headlines using the same style and format as a top copywriter? It just made the most sense.

The one thing I knew was that my goal as a copywriter was a simple one in theory. I really only had one job; capture immediate attention. I thought of every headline in terms of a clock ticking down, and when



that timer ran out, if I hadn't managed to get their attention, it was all over. I intentionally put that pressure on myself because I knew the weight that a solid headline carried, and that my only hope of creating successful copy was in that power-player, my headline.

In truth, it was rather intimidating, especially when clients evaluated the success of their entire marketing system based on the front-line; the sales page I would write for them, starting with the headline.

So, I took it very seriously. I began by evaluating and studying successful sales copy within my client's niche market. I analyzed the competition, and found ways to improve their copy. I made a list of power words, phrases and triggers so that I had inspiration to draw from when I found myself stumped.

I tested out hundreds of headlines over my years in copywriting and throughout that time I realized what worked and what didn't. Yet, despite all of the time and effort I put into my headlines, time and time again, it came down to just a handful of proven techniques!

My greatest lesson? Learning to KISS.

## K.I.S.S?!

We all know what this stands for: ***Keep it simple, stupid.***

In copywriting, K.I.S.S is a lesson that I learned the hard way. You see, I was complicating my copy. I was trying to convey too many things to too many people. My message was often misdirected, convoluted or just plain confusing.

When I started to strip my copy down so that it was clear, targeted and direct, conversion rates went through the roof! My readers felt a connection to the copy because it spoke **directly** to them. In other words, I stopped playing word games with my audience.

David Ogilvy has many fantastic quotes that come to mind, but one of my favorites is:

*“When I write an advertisement, I don’t want you to tell me that you find it ‘creative.’ I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product.”*

Your job is to create a headline that immediately captures attention and touches down on what is most important to your target audience. You don't want to get too creative, crafty or clever with your headlines. While you can create headlines that create curiosity, when it comes to your marketing message you want it to ring loud and clear.

This means you need to be very direct. No guessing. No wordplay. No gimmicks.

**Take away:** Simplify your headline and marketing message. Remove superfluous language or confusing words and be direct. Read newspaper headlines for inspiration and to see this exercise in action. When you limit yourself to only so many words, you'll pack a lot more power into your headlines.

# Benefits Always Win

To create a winning headline, you need to truly understand the greatest benefit of the product or service you are selling, and use that within your copy. You also need to make sure you know the difference between a benefit and a feature so you don't make the common mistake of leading with the wrong message.

Give your visitor's a reason to continue reading your sales page right away by showcasing the greatest advantage and the biggest benefit to the offer you are promoting.

That way, if your reader doesn't connect with anything else, and even if they fail to continue reading the rest of the page, they are aware of the greatest reason they should respond to the offer.

Makes sense, right?

Some people refer to this as "*value-centric headlines*" because the focal point of the headline is to highlight the tremendous value your reader receive get by taking action.

## Examples:

**“Lose Weight Without Counting Calories Ever Again!”**

**Benefit:** They will never have to worry about counting every calorie or staying within a calorie range. Huge benefit!

**“Eliminate Debt With This Stress-Free Solution!”**

**Benefit:** They will be able to transform their lifestyle immediately and get rid of all debt without the solution adding additional burden or stress to their life.

On the other hand, avoid using action-centric headlines that hard sell. They may come off as aggressive and pushy. You haven't won them over yet so be careful with encouraging an action too soon.

Remember, your headline captures their attention and your sales copy closes the deal.

**Remember, customers don't buy features – they buy benefits.** You need to explain exactly how the product or service will offer fulfillment, improve their situation, make their lives better, or solve their problem. Customers are looking to justify their decision to purchase. Give them one.

# Speak Their Language

Proper grammar? Formal sentence structure? There is no such thing when creating compelling headlines that speak to your audience!

When it comes to successful headlines, it's all about **speaking the language of your target customer.**

To do this, you need to know *everything* you can about your audience. This involves a bit of investigative work, but it'll pay off in the end.

## Find out:

- What concerns them most?
- What are they most passionate about?
- What keeps them up at night?
- What are their burning questions?

And then dig further into your market by reading forums, message boards and social media websites where consumers are discussing your topic openly. You won't believe how much information and insight you will garner from this strategy!

**Find out:**

- What kind of terminology do they use?
- How would they describe the product/services they purchase?
- How do they describe the problem?
- What are their demographics?

The more you know about your target audience, the easier it will be for you to create headlines that speak directly to them. Throw the “Grammar 101” handbook out the window; you won’t need it. When it comes to headlines, all you care about is learning as much about your market as you can so that you can speak their language and prove to them that you know how they are feeling, and that you have an answer to their problems.

**Food for thought:** One of my favorite taglines comes from Copy Hackers which reads “Convert Like a Mofo”. While this is a slogan rather than a headline it still conveys the message that the company isn’t your ordinary, stiff corporation. It’s trendy, cool and edgy. Reading it makes me want to know more about the company because it’s refreshing and different. And it works.

# The Headline's BFF

A headline should never stand alone. Regardless how compelling, exciting or targeted your headline is, you should always follow it up with a **clear and direct sub-headline**.

Sub headlines add more detail to your headline, provide clarity and reinforce value. And you don't have to stop there. Consider using sub-headlines throughout your sales copy to further highlight important benefits and to break up your copy into digestible segments, especially when you are writing lengthier sales copy that can otherwise easily get bogged down.

Sub-headlines serve as beacons in long form copy, keeping your reader engaged while encouraging them to read lengthy paragraphs to make it to the next "beacon".

You've probably experienced this yourself as a consumer. You land on a sales page and the headline has done its job at capturing your attention. Still, you don't have a lot of time to spend so you find yourself scanning the page.



What stands out to you?

### **The sub-headlines (otherwise known as sub-headers).**

They are in bold, larger font. They stand out. They keep your eyes glued to the page as you scan the material and they break up chunky content.

Your sub-headlines should always feature additional benefits. You can load them up with power words just as you would your headline, but always focus on benefits. Not only will this strengthen your sales copy but it if you write your sub-headlines first, it can even help the flow of your material, while giving you ideas for your salespage!

# Quick & Easy Tips

Here are a few simple ways to ensure your headlines are strong and captivating.

## Ask a Question

What better way to get your readers attention than by asking them a burning question?

It's a great way to make them sit up and pay attention, while making them feel as though you really understand how they are feeling.

## Use Power Words

I've included a cheat sheet of power words at the end of this report to help you get started, but I wanted to mention it in this section as well because it's exceptionally important.

Words such as "Warning, Special, Uncover, Success and Winning" are all positive words that evoke emotion. Sprinkle them throughout your copy and make sure you use at least one power word in your headline and sub-headlines.

## **Be Controversial (if it suits your audience).**

Your job is to elicit a response from your reader. So, if you know your target audience and what makes them tick (and you better), you can get away with using controversy to capture attention.

## **Cater to the “How-to” Crowd**

How To styled headlines work extremely well, especially when they directly target a specific solution to a problem or task.

For example, ***“How to hit the New York Times bestsellers list with your first book!”*** targets the new author who is yearning to become a bestseller but doesn’t have a lengthy backlist (or any backlist at all). Be very direct and targeted with how-to headlines!

# The 4 U's

The 4 U's is a term you'll hear throughout copywriting circles, so let me explain exactly what it means and how it will help you write better copy.

For your headlines to be engaging and effective, they should contain all of the following four points:

- Your headline should provide a sense of **URGENCY**.
- Your headline should be **UNIQUE**.
- Your headline should be **USEFUL**.
- Your headline should be **ULTRA-SPECIFIC** (direct).

**Urgency** persuades people to take immediate action because they know they need to respond promptly or lose an opportunity of some kind. The clock is ticking and they can't twiddle their thumbs, debating whether to move on it or not. They need to act now.

Incorporating a sense of urgency into your headlines can definitely help motivate people, but be careful with this: You need to make sure that your headlines contain the other three U's in order for urgency to be effective and not come across as pushy.

**Unique** is a critical component of a successful headline because it will provide your reader with something fresh and new, instead of the same thing they've seen countless times before (and likely become unresponsive to). Customers are bombarded by sales messages every single day, so you need to work hard to capture their attention with a uniquely crafted headline that your readers haven't seen before.

Don't be afraid to be edgy, to take risks and to offer your customers something different. They'll take notice!

**Useful** in your headlines gives people a reason to read on. This is where you highlight the most important benefit of your product and service and persuade them to continue reading. Of all the U's, this is the most important one.

**Ultra-Specific** ensures that you are being direct when targeting your market. It guides you so that your headline is effectively communicating

your message to your audience and clarifying its benefit.

Your job is to incorporate all four U's into your headline, if possible. It's not always easy to include them all, but even if you only include one or two your headline will be stronger than ever before.

Give it a try!

Play, Easier, Stress-Free, Easy Going, Laid Back.

# Cheat Sheet

To help you get started, here are some power words commonly used in successful headlines and ad copy. Most high-converting headlines will incorporate at least one of the following words:

**Mystery Words:** Secrets, Insider, Proven, Expert, Revealing, Unlock, Uncover, Announcing, Rare, Unusual, Explore, Discover, Exclusive, Private.

**Excitement Triggers:** Savings, Save, Bonus, Instant, Lifetime, Special, Unleash, Ultimate, Maximum, Exceptional, Powerful.

**Urgency Words:** Rush, Immediately, Instant, Limited-Time, Temporary, Last Minute, Urgent.

**Power Words:** Boost, Grow, Succeed, Accelerate, Turbo Charge, Guaranteed, Tested, Profitable, Trusted, Amazing, Stunning, Phenomenal, Incredible, Unbelievable, Jaw-Dropping, Sensational.

**Simplify Words:** Easy, Simple, Fail Proof, Foolproof, Effortless, Child's Play, Easier, Stress-Free, Easy Going, Laid Back.

# Conclusion

David Ogilvy was an exceptional copywriter and we can certainly all learn a lot from him. It was his belief that the foundation of every successful marketing campaign begins with a killer headline that immediately speaks to our customer.

Thankfully, by following the copywriting giants before us, we are given a simple formula, proven to work time and time again.

And remember, practice makes perfect! Work on your headlines every single day and study what is working for others. Keep a steady pulse on your market and learn to speak their language. As David said, *“Never stop testing and your advertising will never stop improving.”*

Consider creating an extended swipe file of collected phrases and words seen throughout your niche market and use that for inspiration when working on your ad copy. Believe me, it will help!

I hope this special report helps you create better headlines and stronger ad copy, and I wish you the very best of success in your



business.

I will leave you with a final quote from David Ogilvy.

***“Don’t bunt. Aim out of the ballpark. Aim for the company of immortals.”***

Well said, Mr. Ogilvy. Very well said, indeed.