

# The Copywriting Checklist

## How To Sell The Crap Out Of Great Products & Services

Created By Dane Maxwell - Head Honcho at [TheFoundation.io](http://TheFoundation.io)  
We Create Web Based Companies Out Of Thin Air Without Any Ideas Or Development Experience

About Dane: I'm an entrepreneur at heart just like you. I'm the founder of Zannee.com and TheFoundation.io. 30 days out of college at age 22, I was scammed for \$12,000 on a business website I purchased for sale. Destroyed, embarrassed, and humiliated, I moved home with my parents and swore I would never do anything to anyone like what had happened to me. I would make a difference. That's when I started Zannee.com out of my parents toy closet. I created a business with real value with clients who I can call friends. You can find my personal Facebook profile [here](#) (add me as a friend!). For the last 7 years, I've worked with hundreds of brokers all over the country providing them software to recruit, retain, and go paperless. Now, I teach entrepreneurs how to build web based companies at [TheFoundation.io](http://TheFoundation.io).

I built my business without venture capital or partners, and I was able to do it because of copywriting.

This is the skill that I'd like to share with you now.

When creating a new marketing website, or better yet, editing an existing one. Make sure you have each of these items for maximum sales power.

1. Instant Clarity Headline
2. Declare The Problem
3. Present Your Solution
4. Borrow Credibility
5. Social Proof
6. Testimonials
7. Clear Call To Take Action
8. Reverse All Risk
9. Price Anchoring
10. Frequently Asked Questions

Turn the page and get to implementing!

## 1. Instant Clarity Headline

**Formula** = End Result Customer Wants + Specific Period Of Time + Address The Objections

**Strict Example** = Recruit 2 Top Producing Agents Each Week Without Cold Calling Or Rejection ([see example](#))

**Rules - You don't need all 3, all the time.**

1. Using only the first item (end result) from the formula is ok.
2. Using the first and second item (end result + time frame) is good.
3. Using all 3 items (end result + time frame + objections) from the formula is GREAT.

**Examples of how to do it**

Hot fresh pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or its free (Domino's)  
(Check out wikipedia's info page to learn more).

[Example](#) - Your home sold in 90 days or I'll buy it

[Example](#) - In 1 hour, learn the copywriting systems that will double your conversions

**What it does?**

Tells the customer in seconds what your product will do for them, not what it is.  
Forces the product creator to think about the customer, not about their product.

**Mindset tricks**

Purpose of the headline? To get your customer to read the second line.

Be clear. Not Clever. Clarity trumps persuasion.

The best headlines get you to stop, jerk your attention, have greed, curiosity, and unexpected surprises in them

Write to the individual, just like you'd talk to one person. Don't write to the masses.

If you had a gun to your head, and the trigger was pulled if your target customer didn't clearly understand your headline, would you keep it?

It's not about your product. It's about your customer.

## 2. Declare The Problem

Why their situation's rough right now without your solution.

**Formula = Explain the problem using your customers words**

### What it does?

Gets the customer to nod their head in agreement, invites them to read the next line. Lets customer know you understand them. Deepest human desire is to be understood (leverage it). It creates empathy (the most powerful sales tool). Most important: sets up your solution to be presented into the whole gap you just created by defining the problems.

### More Examples of how to do it

[Sendgrid](#): "On average 20% of email never reaches the inbox"

[Earning \\$1,000](#): "I can't freelance, I don't even have an idea."

Dating advice [DoubleYourDating](#): Have you ever seen a beautiful women, but didn't know what to say to start a conversation?

Flight search site [Hipmunk](#): Need to visit your honey across the world? Then you'll have to hunt through dozens of crappy flight search sites that drain your energy.

[37signals basecamp](#): Still managing projects with email? Are you still using excel for your to do lists?

### Mindset tricks

If you can describe your customers current problem better than they can, they will unconsciously assume you have the solution.

If you're not solving a clear problem, it's a struggle to get people to pay.

Sell insulin to a diabetic, not sugar cookies.

1 reason products fail is because they aren't solving a problem someone has - if you're product is a nice to have, not a must have, you don't have much power.

If you're selling an aspirational purchase instead of an "I've got this problem, I'm going to do it with or without your product" purchase - you're in risky territory. Think Nordictrac vs BasecampHQ.com. Nordictrac people buy to start doing something (working out), for project management, people are going to do with or without basecampHQ. Aspirational purchases usually don't last long.

The vast majority of unsuccessful products I see are usually aspirational in nature.

### 3. Present Your Solution

**Formula** = Product Name Helps You Do [Task]. Say Goodbye To [Frustration] And Hello To [Benefit]. You Get [Top 3 Features + Benefits For Each Feature]

**Strict Example ([see example](#))** = PaperlessPipeline Helps Take Your Real Estate Transactions & Related Documents Online. Say good bye to filing cabinets and hello to happy mobile agents.

Email, Scan, Fax, Or Directly Upload Contracts & View Them From Any Computer, Any Browser, Anywhere.

Get An Items Needed Checklist Per Transaction To Stay Organized  
Securely Send Contracts via Email To Clients, The Lender, Or The Title Company When They Ask For It And Travel Without "The Paper Briefcase"

#### Rules

1. Try and fit your product into this description for a good practice exercise, regardless of what you're selling. Even if you don't have a product or service to sell, pick a product and try it.
2. Keep it to the top 3 features and benefits, it should be painful to pick.
3. If you sell consulting, replace "product name" with your consulting package.
4. Of all checklist items on this copywriting guide, this was personally hardest for me to crystallize down into an actionable template. There are countless ways to present a product. This is one that works well for me.

#### What it does?

It forces you to create the 30 second elevator pitch for your product. Customer will unconsciously trust and bond with you because you are clear. Gives customer info to say "I want to know more" or tells them this is not for them.

#### More examples of how to do it

[SurveyTool.com](#) - Survetool helps you quickly create and distribute surveys with just a few clicks

[Harvest](#) - Easily track time, send invoices and run your business.

[Harvest product tour page](#). You can see they keep it to the top 3 features/benefits in bold. And follow the 3 feature/benefit under each of the top 3 features.

#### Mindset tricks

Use the language you hear from customers when they describe how they use the product. For PaperlessPipeline: "Work Paperless" became "Show Up To Closing Without Paper" and "Travel Without Your Paper Briefcase" after

listening to my clients feedback.

Think of your solution first in terms of the benefits. Not the features. Every feature I design is to get the client a benefit, not to get them a feature.

#### 4. Borrow Credibility

Tie your company to trusted symbols and famous authorities.

Put the biggest brands all over your marketing pages, even if they don't use your product.

##### Examples:

[Surveytool.com/pricing](http://Surveytool.com/pricing) - They mention that Domino's and other top brands use surveys to grow their business. But they never say if they use [surveytool.com](http://surveytool.com) or not.

[RecruitingNinja.com/tour](http://RecruitingNinja.com/tour) - I use a quote by Charles Darwin "It's not the strongest species that survives, nor the smartest, but the ones that are most adaptable to change." - It creates authority, credibility, and also sets the stage for me to present a solution that will help them change.

<http://unbouncepages.com/copywriting/> - big brands below the sign up button.

And just a random idea for you to get your juices flowing. If selling an eCourse, put a quote by Benjamin Franklin (include his photo) below your buy button. "An Investment in knowledge always pays the best dividends."

#### 5. Social Proof

Show people are using your stuff and signing up

##### Examples:

37signals is famous for this. [Basecamphq.com](http://Basecamphq.com) - "millions of people use basecamp"

[PaperlessPipeline.com](http://PaperlessPipeline.com) - a join the crowd with number of files stored and companies registered

[Aweber.com/order](http://Aweber.com/order) - Shows last 4 people who just signed up on right hand side while you are ordering

[Freshbooks.com](http://Freshbooks.com) - credibility indicators + social proof. Solid!

##### Rules

1. Never stop selling social proof. Let it bleed into everything you do to make the sale. See on the [sign up page for basecamphq](#), they are still selling social proof on the right hand side.

## 6. Testimonials

Proof your product works in your customers words.

**Formula** = Specific end result or benefit customer got + Specific Period of time + Accompanied Feeling + The Persons Name With Their Stats

**Strict Example** = For [PaperlessPipeline.com](http://PaperlessPipeline.com): "I've saved \$200 per month alone in file folder savings. It took 3 days to get implemented, and I recruited my first agent in the first month as a result. I can now be home with my baby son and review files. The freedom is incredible. - Robb Campbell Top 10 RE/MAX In The World 200+ Agents"

### Rules

1. Don't use testimonials word for word as folks tell you or send them in. Re-order the biggest benefit to be at the top, bold it, and put the rest of the testimonial below it. See this excellent example of putting the biggest benefit in action - [click here](#).
2. For me, testimonials on websites are not nearly as powerful as within an email. Marketing tip: I send an email out with 1 persons testimonial and a sign up link to users who have not bought yet. (Reason #6372 to do lead gen :-)
3. I've found folks are more likely to read testimonials if it's just one by itself, and 1 at a time, they are scattered throughout a sales page, but if stacked among 5 to 10 or more they gloss over it.
4. If people have no idea who the person is on the testimonial, find some sort of authoritative or relatable fact on them. "Here's Why The #1 Agent In Texas Is Excited!" (then follow with testimonial)... or put directly below their name something like "Head of the association of Realtors" ...or "A \$500,000 Project Manager"
5. Spread testimonials out all over your website. 1 per feature, on the sign up page, below the "click to register" button. Never stop selling testimonials. Every single page should have a testimonial on it.

### Examples:

[Hudl.com](http://Hudl.com) - 3 testimonials on top right hand side. Notice each is touting a different benefit. 100 testimonials all saying the same thing isn't nearly effective as 10 touting a specific, different benefit.

[PaperlessPipeline.com](http://PaperlessPipeline.com) - 6 or 7 spread throughout the site all touting different benefits and common objections people have about this niche of software.

**A 237% increase in conversions by adding a testimonial** - I ran 2 variations, one with a testimonial, one without a testimonial. The screenshot below shows the website that had the testimonial. Picture the other variation with no testimonial.

### Does Your Contact Database Do This?

You will feel amazed after seeing how SIMPLE this is

Click on the "PLAY" button to start the video below



Would YOU Like To Use This Product for FREE?

**Y**OU are invited to the PRIVATE and FREE Early-Launch for ClientLunchbox. ClientLunchbox is a dead simple contact database for Realtors and sales professionals.

Get instant access to the private blog and find out more about the upcoming release of ClientLunchbox.

Simply enter your First name and valid email as password and press "Sign Me Up For The Early Launch"

**Join the FREE & PRIVATE Early-Launch**

First Name:

Email:

*I hate spam just as much as you do and I will never give your email address to anyone. ever!*

**See Why The #1 Agent In Texas is Excited!**

Most agents don't get "over the hump" to "do" things.... This reminder system might just be the ticket to their success. I am excited to be one of the first to use this.



Sam Ferreri - Owner & Agent  
RE/MAX Top Realty  
RE/MAX Diamond Club Member  
#1 RE/MAX Agent in Texas, 2004, 2005  
Top 10 RE/MAX Teams in Texas, 2006

Questions? We LOVE those! [Email us here](#)

## 7. Clear Call To Take Action

Tell the customer to do something, such as asking for money (without guilt).

### Rules

1. Freemium software: Make your call to action the end result of what your customer wants to do. Instead of "create an account" - split-testing software: "create an a/b split test" - transaction management: "create a transaction" - project management: "create a trial project"
2. Buy buttons: "Add To Cart" seems to test best for most marketers - or extremely descriptive: "Click Here To Create Your Recruiting System And Start Recruiting Agents!"

### Examples:

[VerticalResponse.com](http://VerticalResponse.com) - Try it free

[BasecampHQ.com](http://BasecampHQ.com) - Sign up takes less than 60 seconds

[PaperlessPipeline.com](http://PaperlessPipeline.com) - Try it out

[Back pain inversion table sales page](#) - the offer below is extremely clear

**Regularly \$399...Today Just \$299**  
**Plus FREE Shipping!\***

\*Free shipping US only - excludes Alaska, Hawaii and Puerto Rico.  
To order from these states please call 1-800-216-4908.

 **How To Reserve Your  
HBI Premium Inversion Table**

**Step #1** - Select Your Country

**Step #2** - Click "Add To Cart"

Select Country... ▾

Add To Cart

Add to Cart

  
  


  




  
SECURED BY  
GeoTrust  
click to verify  
24-Nov-10 12:46 GMT

 **To Order by Phone Call Toll-Free - 1-800-216-4908**  
(Outside the US please call - 1+240-780-5977)

## 8. Reverse All Risk

Think guarantee's, but you're really just reducing fear.

To look like a fool is one of the biggest fears we humans have. By purchasing a product that turns out to suck, a person thinks they will look like a fool. When people buy products, they do not just consider themselves. They wonder what their friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family will think of them while they are pulling out their credit card.

**Formula** = If you don't love [product], call or email us and we'll refund every penny immediately.

### Rules

1. The more outrageous the better. Not just a refund, but double your money back. (I've never had anyone ask for double their money back).
2. #'s behind refunds: less than 5% refund, if at all, and guarantee's can double or triple sales. Do the math. Very well worth it.
3. A good guarantee can sometimes sell the product alone with nothing else.
4. Bonus tip: Tie your guarantee to the result or main benefit itself ---> The Club: We'll pay \$500 towards your car insurance if you're car gets stolen.

### Examples:

- a. [YourBRT.com](http://YourBRT.com) - double your money back guarantee
- b. [Earn1k.com](http://Earn1k.com) - You'll make \$1,000 on the side, or I'll be your first client.
- c. Here's a guarantee that sold 10's of millions worth of a self published book on self improvement. "Try this book or product, 100% at my risk. If it doesn't immediately solve every problem you're now facing, free your mind from worry forever, and let you walk 2 inches taller, then send it back... and every penny of your purchase will be returned."
- d. "That is why I am willing to lift all of the risk off of your shoulders and place it firmly onto mine and offer an iron-clad, 60 day money back guarantee on the example product name."
- e. [Aweber.com/pricing.htm](http://Aweber.com/pricing.htm) - 30 day money back guarantee

## 9. Price Anchoring

Make your price seem like a bargain

Robert Cialdini is a world renowned psychologist, and one of his principles is "The Contrast Principle."

### The Contrast Principle

- If you put your hand in warm water, then put it in cold water. The cold water feels much colder than if you just put your hand in cold water to begin with.
- The principle affects the way we perceive the difference between two things when they are presented one after another. For instance if you pick up a light 2 lb. weight, then pick up a 10 lb. weight, the 10 lb. weight will seem much heavier than if you'd just picked up the 10 lb. weight alone.

### The same principle works with pricing.

#### How to do it:

Link or tie product price back to a physical product in similar category

If you did this by yourself what it'd cost

If you hire me 1 on 1 what you'd pay

Example of above 3: [GetFitWhileYouSit.com](http://GetFitWhileYouSit.com)

The dollar amount you gain by buying

What 1 additional deal will bring you

You lose \$X dollars by not buying this

Your time is worth x/per hour, you save 3 hours per month, thus X savings

Example: For the price of a Frappuccino, you can learn every step I use to write profit-pulling copy.

## 10. Frequently Asked Questions

Boost your conversions by as much as 85% with an FAQ!

### Rules

1. Ask the good questions that create a sale, even extremes like “why should I trust you?” or “What’s in it for you?” ... are great. They are questions that get people to stop and read. Also consider questions that address pessimists.
2. Ask (and answer) questions you yourself are afraid to answer. Example: Why should I pick you over the competition?

### What an FAQ does

2. Addresses distrust
3. Acknowledges concerns, and then by that, eliminates objections
4. Speaking their language --- highly empathic

### Examples

[SwoopoManual.com](http://SwoopoManual.com) - FAQ Increased conversions from by 85% by adding an FAQ right below the buy button. Questions were gathered via email and he took the most popular questions like “Can you guarantee I’ll win every auction on swoopo if I buy your ebook?” or “If you’re so good at winning on swoopo, how come you’re telling us everything you know?”

[YourBRT.com/free-cd-offer](http://YourBRT.com/free-cd-offer) - I ask questions like “why are you giving this cd away for free, what’s in it for you?” and “who are you and why should I trust you?” It’s a brand new site so I don’t have conversion data on it yet, but it is converting. It works.

[Hudl.com/signup](http://Hudl.com/signup) - Excellent FAQ example. First question is great “Why should I pay an annual fee, as opposed to paying up front and owning the system?”

<http://www.sitepoint.com/kits/web-design-business-kit/> - excellent FAQ questions along right hand side, “Is \$247 really worth it?” “Who is this trainer and why should I listen to him?”

This is the end of the checklist. But it’s not the end for you... this is just the beginning of what is possible with this new skill.

## **Did You Know Copywriting Can Sell Products That Don’t Exist?**

When you goto [TheFoundation.io](http://TheFoundation.io), you can request a free case study to see how a 22 year old from new zealand used copywriting to get 12 customers

and make \$2,000... all before he ever built a product... and how you can do the same.

[Learn how we make magic at TheFoundation.io](#)