

Ray

E D W A R D S

11 DEADLY EMAIL COPYWRITING

Mistakes

Which Do You Want To Fix?



1 "Me" Marketing

Writing to your audience and sounding like you only want to talk about yourself is a big fat nono. The worst part is, you don't mean to sounds self-centered. But it's not what you "say" you use that matters. It's what your audience "hears."

..... **BAD EXAMPLE:**



*Just wait until you come to **my** event and hear **my** speakers. **I'm** sure **my** event will be your favorite event all year.*

..... **GOOD EXAMPLE:**



*Just wait until **you** hear the speakers next week. They're going to knock **your** socks off.*



EXERCISE:

Write an opening sentence of an email, a sentence that hooks your reader. But... ONLY use words from the you list and NOT the me list.

YOU list:

- you
- your
- yours
- you guys
- you all
- y'all



ME list:

- me
- mine
- I
- I'm
- I have
- I did

Your Sample Sentence: _____



2 "Passive Voice"

Passive voice slows down your messaging. It sucks all the life out of it. It's the verb "to be" that's murdering your messaging. Stick to actions. Avoid abstractions. Cut to the chase. Bowl them over. Say what you've gotta say. Stop tip-toeing around worried the grammar police are gonna pounce. Rely on strong action verbs to kick passive voice to the curb.

..... • **BAD EXAMPLE:** •



Too many customers are being bored to death by your marketing.

..... • **GOOD EXAMPLE:** •



*Stop boring your customers.
Give them something fun to read.*

EXERCISE:

Rewrite each of the 3 "passive voice" sentences below using "active voice." Remember to watch out for any form of the verb "to be."

1. *All the preparations are being made by the photographer.*

Active Voice: _____

2. *Directions will be given to you by the desk clerk.*

Active Voice: _____

3. *The book was read in one sitting.*

Active Voice: _____



3 Formal Language

When was the last time you CHOSE to read a formal textbook? When you go out to dinner with friends, do you talk in “legal-ese” or in “university-professor-giving-a-lecture” voice? Nobody talks like that. Well, nobody “normal” talks like that. Nobody you want to hang out with. So why would you subject your email subscribers to such boring language?

Talk to your people like they're your friends. Be casual. Use slang. Let your hair down.

..... **BAD EXAMPLE:**



Due to the fact that our cohort outperformed the competition in a landslide victory, we invite you to celebrate with us by attending a culinary experience this evening.

..... **GOOD EXAMPLE:**



We beat the crap out of the other guys! So we're all gonna grab dinner to celebrate. Join us!



EXERCISE:

Rewrite this corporate jargon sentence into regular, conversational language.

Our differentiating value proposition and strategic planning demonstrates the transformation essence of true change.



4 No Personality

This one gets under my skin. Why on earth would your readers want to open a cardboard, boring, vanilla message from you? Guess what... they don't! You're not a robot. And you're not writing to robots. You're a person who has feelings, gets angry, laughs, shouts, cries, gets afraid, jumps for joy, and has all sorts of other "human" juices flowing through you. Let it all hang out!

Why are TV shows like Seinfeld, Modern Family, and Stranger Things so popular? It's the personality of all the characters. Yes, there's drama. Yes, there's intrigue. Yes, there's comedy. But it's the personality of the characters that really make these shows stand out. You have a personality, whether you like it or not. Use it!

..... **BAD EXAMPLE:**



After conducting extensive research, we discovered that marketers have trouble delivering satisfactory results with Facebook Ads.

..... **GOOD EXAMPLE:**



Survey says... "you suck at Facebook ads!" Sounds a bit harsh, sure. But you know it's true. Why beat around the bush. You need help with your ads. Lots of help!



EXERCISE:

Rewrite this bland sentence. Add some flare, some attitude, some personality.

*Every day we offer additional discounts to our customers.
It is our hope that you enjoy your various products and accessories.*



5 Massive Text Blocks

Stringing more than 2 or 3 sentences together in a big long paragraph makes your email really hard to read. To help your short-attention-span readers, use the "return" button more often.

Space things out.

Give me some eye relief.

It makes your emails MUCH easier to read...

...quickly...

...easily...

...without having to think so much.

6 Delete-worthy Subject Lines

Email is similar to snail mail in many ways, but especially in the way we TOSS the mail and email we don't want to read.

Every time you get the mail from your mailbox, don't you immediately separate the READ pile from the TRASH pile? The same goes for email. Everyone scrolls their email account with their finger hovering over the "delete" box ready to chuck your longsuffering email efforts into the trash.

That's why email subject lines are so important.

..... **BAD EXAMPLE:**



Consider Marriage Counseling, 10% Off First Session

..... **GOOD EXAMPLE:**



The 2nd time my husband abandoned me



EXERCISE:

Here are a couple formulas for interesting email subject lines. Fill in the blanks to write your own “clickable” subject line.

How to _____ without _____.

Example: How to get more chicks without getting the clap.

The _____ I might have.

Example: The disease I might have, and it's contagious

The case against _____.

Example: The case against condoms.

_____ ways to ruin _____.

Example: 7 ways to ruin your love life.

Why _____ is always _____.

Example: Why the customer is always an idiot.

How to stop _____ while _____.

Example: How to stop getting fat while still eating dessert every night.



7 Horrible Hooks

After writing your excellent click-worthy email subject line, you have to follow it up with a great opening sentence. A hook that keeps the reader wanting to read. A hook that jump starts a story or an image or a lesson. A hook that plants a seed that you'll fertilize with your story and harvest with your call to action at the end of the email.

I typically don't use a salutation because it gets in the way of the link between the subject line and the opening hook. That "attention" capital you spent on the headline is very unstable. Just because they opened your email doesn't mean they're going to keep reading. To get the seed of curiosity to take root, you have to keep the interest going. Keep up the intrigue. Every passing word that does that makes the "attention" capital more and more stable.

If you do use a salutation, try to include it in a first sentence, or in some way that doesn't break the flow of thought your reader is holding onto from the subject line.

..... • **BAD EXAMPLE:** •



SUBJECT LINE:

She's not breathing, her lips are turning blue..

OPENING HOOK:

Dear John,

I wanted to tell about this really great sale we're having.

.....



..... GOOD EXAMPLE:



SUBJECT LINE:

She's not breathing, her lips are turning blue..

OPENING HOOK:

SSLLLLLLIIPPPP, SMACK!!!

...but no crying... hmmm... why isn't she crying...?

"Aubrey, are you okay?"

No response.

"Aubrey? AUBREY!?"

We come into the kitchen and see 18-month-old Aubrey lying flat on her face. Lips turning blue.

EXERCISE:

Take one of the 5 examples of email subject lines from the previous section and write a good opening hook that will keep your reader reading.

Subject Line:

Opening Hook:



8 No Story

Avoiding stories in your emails is another big “bad idea.” Everybody is hooked on stories. Don’t believe me? Think for a quick second about how much time you watch Netflix, movies, and other entertainment. See, you like stories too.

And nothing demonstrates the effectiveness of a product, a service, or an ideology like a good story. Why else do you think Jesus taught in parables... aka... stories?

Your stories don’t have to go on and on. They should have a point. They should serve tell the tale of transformation your product or service offers. And a story can be told in very few words.

In fact, though this story may be a myth, Ernest Hemingway is reported to have made this very point to his literary friends with this 6-word story.

“For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.”

9 Terrible Turns

Every email should end with some kind of call to action (see #10). But how do you go from telling your story to asking people to take action? That’s what we call the “turn” in email copywriting language.

The “turn” is the string that connects the subject line, hook, and story to the offer or close. It’s like a transition in music from the chorus to the bridge before returning back to the original verse melody. It has to be smooth or it can completely turn off the reader. But all it takes is a little twist to extend the string of logic from your story to the call to action.

..... **BAD EXAMPLE:**



END OF STORY:

The stool she was standing on, playing with water in the sink, must have slipped because of the wet floor and caused her to hit her face hard enough on the ground to wipe her out. She was down for the count!



TURN:

Well, enough of that. Go by my stuff.

..... **GOOD EXAMPLE:**



END OF STORY:

The stool she was standing on, playing with water in the sink, must have slipped because of the wet floor and caused her to hit her face hard enough on the ground to wipe her out. She was down for the count!

TURN:

And speaking of being "down for the count," our count to 35% Off sale is officially underway.

EXERCISE:

Here's another "end of story" sentence. Write a "turn" sentence to make a smooth transition to the close.

END OF STORY:

But the Hare slept on very peacefully; and when at last he did wake up, the Tortoise was near the goal. The Hare now ran his swiftest, but he could not overtake the Tortoise in time.

TURN:



10 No Call To Action

Not every call to action has to be a “firm” command. Some can, when appropriate. Others can be softer and more fun. Try a few of your own based on these examples.

3 Examples of a firm CTAs:

- ➔ *Buy now*
- ➔ *Click here to sign up.*
- ➔ *Watch the new video now.*

2 Examples of softer, more fun CTAs. The trick is to take a CTA from the “firm” list above and add some extra language to it. Use a metaphor or some other reference to what you talked about in the email to soften the CTA. I’ve underlined the “firm” CTA within each example of the “soft” CTA.

- ➔ *Hop on over and take a peek. Just click the big blue link below to start watching.*
- ➔ *Strap in for a bumpy ride, but a ride you’ll never forget. Click the link, buy now, and get ready for the ride of your life.*

Now you give it a try...

_____, click here to sign up,
_____.



11 Making a Mess of Your P.S.

If you decide to use a P.S., it needs to be for a specific reason. Not just to add some more fluff. A P.S. is always a good idea for a sales email, if you do it right. I don't always use them, but when I do, the best thing to do is make a micro-version of your email. Restate the main problem, your solution, and call them to action one more time with a link.

..... • **Here's an example:** •

P.S. Are you ready for the next power outage? All you need is a few trusty flashlights and stack of batteries. To get your Energizer "safety pack" for half off, click the link here, www.EnergizerSafetyPack.com/half-off.

Another fun way to use your P.S. in an email is to open a story loop. In other words, plant the seed for another story that you'll finish telling "tomorrow" so your readers will look forward to receiving your email.

..... • **Here's an example:** •

P.S. When I told my husband I was ready to have another baby, he wasn't too excited... I guess I don't blame him after nearly dying the 1st time around. But there was no reason to get into such a heated argument about circumcision with our sweet "all-natural" birthing coach.

More tomorrow...



Conclusion

Are you getting the hang of this? I hope so, because email is still the undisputed champion of online selling. Don't believe me, take a look at this article from DMA.org, [**"Marketer Email Tracker 2018."**](#)

Remember, your subscribers CHOSE to join your list. They asked you to email them. They put their trust in you. Are you abusing their trust? Or are you giving them something to look forward to, something they enjoy, something they can't wait to open and buy from?

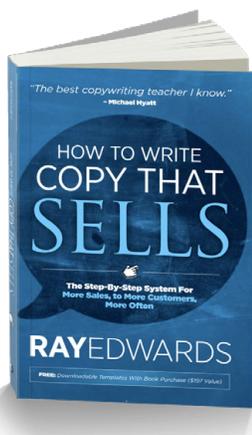
Apply these 11 solutions to the most common email copywriting mistakes and watch your list become a loyal tribe of fans.

Go forth and prosper with your emails!

To Your Prosperity,

PS – If you found this Email Subject Line Starter Kit helpful, consider checking out my book, **How To Write Copy That Sells: The Step-By-Step System For More Sales, to More Customers, More Often.**

Inside this book, you'll learn how to use many more useful writing tools to turn prospects into buyers and loyal, lifetime customers. And you'll do it all without hypey, sleazy, slimy, or pushy sales tactics.



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