

CHEAT SHEET

6 WAYS TO WRITE BETTER CONTENT

1. Less is More

Apart from being easier to manage, simpler content should:

- Support a key business objective
- Support a customer in completing a task
- Provide a better user experience
- Cost less to create

2. Focus on moving your customer forward

- Trust that your customer is on a page because they want to be. Your web page will be more effective and you'll have a much happier customer if you strip the page of as many backward or sideways links.
- Write nice clear links and treat links as steps in a task

3. Figure out what content you have, and where it is coming from

- If you don't know what content you have now, how can you make decisions for around your new website's content? So complete a content audit (see eBook for details).

4. Learn how to get the facts, not just opinion

- Make content decisions based on facts, not opinion. "Evidence is customer centric. Opinion is organisation centric".

5. Put someone in charge of the content

- You will need someone to own the content and be responsible for what needs to be created, how it will get online, and what happens to it once it is live

6. Start asking "why?"

- Force your organisation to examine reasons for delivering content online
- Just because you can doesn't mean you should
- Plan for content with care

If you do not have the right people in your organisation to write content, consider whether to hire the skills of a web content writer and/or editor.

Remember that users will not read your web content page to page like a book and most people will scan through your content. In that case it's important to have clear calls to action (like a Book Now or Buy Now button) to perform their key tasks.

Make your copy clear, concise, short, yet inviting. One of the most common mistakes in web writing is overly long content. You want your readers to always be engaged, and not to click away from your website – get to your point, and make it fast. No one wants to scroll through long pages of boring website content!

Janice Redish has written a book called "Letting Go of the Words". Her book explains clearly and simply how to plan, select, organise, write, illustrate, review, and test content that meets people's needs.

Good web writing answers people's questions. Good web writing lets people "grab and go".





CHECKLIST FOR QUALITY WEB CONTENT

Usefulness & Relevance:

- Does the content meet user needs, goals, and interests?
- Does the content meet business goals?
- For how long will the content be useful? When should it expire? Has its usefulness already expired?
- Is the content timely and relevant?

Clarity & Accuracy:

- Is the content understandable to customers?
- Is the content organized logically & coherently?
- Is the content correct?
- Does the content contain factual errors, typos, or grammatical errors?
- Do images, video, and audio meet technical standards, so they are clear?

Influence & Engagement:

- Does the content use the most appropriate techniques to influence or engage customers?
- Does the content execute those techniques effectively?
- Does the content use too many or too few techniques for the context?

Completeness:

- Does the content include all of the information customers need or might want about a topic?
- Does the content include too much or too little information about a topic for the context?

Voice & Style:

- Does the content consistently reflect the editorial or brand voice?
- Does its tone adjust appropriately to the context—for example, sales versus customer service?
- Does the content convey the appropriate editorial and brand qualities?
- Does the content seem to have a style? If so, does the content adhere to it consistently?
- Does the content read, look, or sound as though it's professionally crafted?

Usability & Findability:

- Is the content easy to scan or read?
- Is the content in a usable format, including headings, bulleted lists, tables, white space, or similar techniques, as appropriate to the content?
- Does the content have the appropriate metadata?
- Does the content follow search engine optimization (SEO) guidelines—such as using keywords—without sacrificing quality in other areas?
- Can customers find the content when searching using relevant keywords?