

7 DEADLY COPYWRITING SINS

... and How to Avoid Them

Steve Plummer's Quick Reference Primer for Business Owners, Marketers & Copywriters

*There's an old saying, "Nothing happens in business until a sale is made".
Never a truer word spoken.*

*So how do you make sales? Without over-simplifying it all, marketing. And
to market effectively you need copywriting skills... to either do the job
yourself or, if you have someone else do it for you, to know it is being done
correctly.*

As the business owner the buck stops with you.

*There are literally thousands of aspects that make up "copywriting" but
I've outlined seven Deadly Sins you need to avoid if you want your
promotions to fly.*

*What you have here is by no means an exhaustive list but is intended as a
read in one sitting or be kept on hand and referred-to-as-needed quick
reference guide.*

Let's begin...

Deadly Sin #1 – Making it About You

No one cares... about you and your business that is. They only care about
themselves and their problems.

Don't believe me? Try this...

When you woke up this morning did you think about XYZ Company or did you
think about your own stuff?

Whether the traffic would be heavy this morning and make you late... whether
that b#@*% Sally at work would be up to her old tricks again or would you have a

nice day... will your partner like the gift you bought... did you remember to put the bins out last night...

See? We all only think about ourselves. Your marketing, sales letter, ad must reflect this truth.

No one cares if you've been serving the local community for 15 years... they are just thinking about themselves and want their problems solved.

Your yardstick **MUST** be WIIFM: What's In It For Me. Me being your customer. If your marketing doesn't pass this litmus test then serving the local community for 15 years won't matter one little bit.

Remember... WIIFM!

Deadly Sin #2 – Making it Difficult to Read

Understand this second truth: No one wants to read what you write. So you need to make it easy for them. It has been said the average Australian reading age is that of a Year 8 student (12 or 13 years of age!!!) so your job is to make it as easy for them as you can.

Avoid big words. Use short sentences. If your text is long, break it up with sub heads and strategic changes of font.

No one cares and no one wants to read, so make it about them and presented in such a way they can access your message easily, with a minimum of effort.

Deadly Sin #3 – No Call to Action

Use only direct response advertising. **DO NOT** follow the big companies with their massive budgets who go for branding and exposure. Unless of course you can spare a million dollars a week to compete with the likes of McDonald's.

Direct response ads have a call to action. That way you can measure how effective your ad is. The call to action is what converts browsing readers into buyers. Unless you tell them to call, email, go to a website and order, they'll just move on to the next thing or spend their money elsewhere.

Deadly Sin #4 – Weak Offer

Weak offer = weak response. Build value. Make what you're selling irresistible. If you can't get excited by what you're selling and can't see the enormous value

in it... neither will your prospects. Make your offer as strong and economically viable as you can.

Deadly Sin #5 – Boring... Pass the Remote Please

There's an old saying in copywriting circles, "Your copy can never be too long, just too boring". What you write must always pass the "So what?" test. Will your prospects be excited by what you're offering and how you present it? Or will they be looking for the next shiny object to amuse themselves with?

Remember, they don't care about you, don't want to read and must get excited by what you offer... now present it in an interesting way that grabs their attention and makes them want to read on.

Deadly Sin #6 – Including Humour

Don't. Telling funny stories when you're with friends is hard enough. Writing amusing copy that sells is even harder. You may be thinking that some of the best ads you've seen on TV are the funny ones, you can still remember them, can't you? But we're not talking about TV ads here, where talking about small business direct response ads. Sorry, but no place for humour. It usually falls flat and chases prospects away in droves.

Deadly Sin #7 – Over Use of Exclamation Marks!!!!

Overly-hypey copy has a liberal dose of exclamation marks!! Prospects hate being sold to!!!! And turn off in droves. The good old-fashioned ! is partly responsible for it. Be careful. Use sparingly as they tend to be a red flag these days.

There you have it, a quick reference guide for writing better copy and boosting your response rate. Remember, this is by no means an exhaustive list and isn't intended as such. For your next promotion, before you go to print, might just pay you to run your eye over this primer. Good luck.