

# The Incredible, Edible Subhead

By Alexandria K. Brown

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Of course you're familiar with using \*headlines\* to call attention to Web copy, brochures, articles, or documents. But \*subheads\* can be just as effective in bringing out key points for your readers. And they also help make any document easier to read, because they break up long blocks of text into easy-to-digest bits. (Hence my "edible" title. Hmm.)

## Subheads Break It Up

Subheads are generally viewed as goodwill gestures toward your readers, since they're most often used to divide lengthy articles into logical breaks. They may indicate a change of topic or simply break up a mass of type. Placing subheads every four paragraphs or so allows readers to skim through your article or document and skip sections without losing their train of thought.

The next time you flip through any magazine, notice how its editors use subheads throughout the longer articles. Readers are very averse to reading large blocks of text, so subheads break it all up into bite-size chunks.

## Subheads Have "Idea Power"

Because subheads catch readers' eyes, you should use them to your benefit! Read through your document or article for your main promotional points, then summarize the ideas as subheads. This way your readers absorb your main points in just a few seconds by skimming through all the copy.

For best results, subheads should \*not\* read like a table of contents. To make your subheads engaging, it's important to include action or selling elements.

**BORING SUBHEADS:** "Our Story," "50 Years in the Business," "Our Department's Success"

**ENGAGING SUBHEADS:** "Five Clients Who Saved \$10K With Us," "The Most Creative Solutions in the Industry,"  
"Let Us Do All the Work for You!"

**BONUS TIP:** These types of subheads also work wonderfully for \*sales letters\* and \*proposals\*. Experiment the next time you compose a long letter --- try looking at it both with and without subheads. You'll definitely see the difference!

## Subheads Rule on the Net!

When you're writing copy to be posted online --- either in an e-mail or on a Web site --- it's even more crucial to use subheads! People don't like to spend a lot of time reading online --- it strains the eyes. Subheads help readers skim over your main points and pick up your ideas quickly. And if they're looking for a particular piece of information, subheads help them locate it faster.

If you're writing an e-mail that's longer than one screen length, try inserting subheads every two or three paragraphs, if appropriate. It only takes a minute, it helps you organize your information, and your readers will love you for it!

## Subheads Add Interest

Even if your document is a white paper that's about as exciting as white rice, don't be afraid of using "sum-it-all-up" subheads to retain the reader's interest and break up the copy. Remember, you want people to be drawn to reading your master- piece --- especially when it's a formal document!

Examples: "Great Forecasts for Next Quarter," "Improvements Needed in Management," and "30% Sales Increase Forecasted."

So consider subheads your new best friend --- whether you're writing an e-mail, Web copy, brochure, or report!

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandria K. Brown, "The E-zine Queen," is author of "Boost Business With Your Own E-zine." Sign up for her FREE newsletter that shows e-zine publishers how to write irresistible content, promote their services and products, and gain thousands of subscribers quickly. Subscribe now via <mailto:EzineQueen-On@lists.webvalence.com>

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