

Don't Write Like You Think...Write Like You Talk

By Paula Morrow

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The Internet has provided us marketers with an amazing opportunity. It's leveled the playing field - regardless of your background, you can now pursue a profitable business in your area of interest.

But selling online brings its own set of challenges. One of the most difficult being able to establish a one-on-one, personal customer relationship.

So how to overcome the anonymity of the computer screen and create this critical bond?

One of the simplest ways is through your words.

Words are your online ambassadors, so why not have them reflect your personality?

If you're enthusiastic, write enthusiastically! If you're thoughtful, let your words convey this, too.

A great example of someone who does this extremely well is Bob Gatchel, Mr. Internet Cheapskate himself. On his website (<http://www.internetcheapskate.com>) and through his emails, you soon come to feel like you know him personally, that he's your best friend.

How does he do it? By adding emotion, writing in facial expressions grin and by carefully using capital letters for effect. The end result is the representation of a VERY ENTHUSASTIC person.

Which, having seen him at a seminar, he truly is in real life. In his writing, Bob really lets his personality shine through.

You can do the same. By writing like you speak (or 'writing in your own voice.')

In school, they try to teach you 'writing for business.' The pressure was to be 'textbook perfect.' Nothing is further than the truth. Actually the opposite holds true.

You are attempting to make a connection - one living, breathing human being to another.

[Before going on, I wish to sincerely apologize to Mrs. Williams, my tenth grade English teacher, for what I'm about to

recommend...]

When you talk, you break most of the rules. Real people start a sentence with 'and.' You use slang. You combine words - do not becomes don't; you have becomes you've.

One warning: Just beware of how you use the variations of your-you're; their-they're-there; and when to use it's or its. If you're not sure how to use them, choose other words to make your point.

Feel free to lean heavily on the action verbs (jump, run..) and descriptive adjectives. Just don't go overboard...there's a fine line between genuine enthusiasm and hype.

Write in brief paragraphs, to keep your readers engaged, like in a conversation, and moving rapidly down the page.

Need more ideas to get started? Try the following:

*Tape-record a conversation. Describe your product/services to your friend, your spouse, your pet. Any audience that you feel comfortable with, so that your words flow and your enthusiasm takes over.

Then, play it back. You'll soon pick up on your own unique presentation style. Now, convert that into words.

*Create punch through the careful use of capital letters. You can use initial caps (Capitalize The First Letter Of Each Word), or USE ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. Use this last sparingly, since online, capital letters = shouting.

*Translate physical expressions into words. Remember the above example of Bob Gatchel, and his trademark grin. You could also use smirk or ;-) for a wink, or blink.

* If you talk dramatically, use ellipses (...) for dramatic effect

* State your message, then say it again in a different way. You never say something exactly the same, twice, in conversation.

So restate your offer a number of times - you never know which version will connect with your audience.

*To make an aside comment, use parentheses (like this)

There are a number of ways to inject your personality into your words. Think about it, loosen up, and make that personal connection.

Through necessity, you have to communicate through a machine...but there's no need to write like one too!

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Paula Morrow heads Ideal Marketing Corporation, specializing in information products and training for newbie netpreneurs.

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