

Is there a difference when writing for the Internet?

By Charlene Rashkow

As a writer for a multitude of projects from web site content to detailed business plans all the way to press releases and promotional material, I've noticed one major difference in writing for the Internet versus writing for other channels of communication. Primarily writing good copy is essentially the same no matter where it's presented but writing for the Internet requires one important distinction. That distinction is less verbiage with more impact!

While you have free reign to put as much information on your web site or within your article when presenting it on the Internet, material on the web must grab the reader's attention very quickly. Becoming verbose and redundant may be satisfying to your ego but it won't attract the attention of your reader.

Your Readers

Those who are searching for meaningful information on the net are either visiting web sites or reading online publications because they want bottom-line information rapidly. One of the perks of using the Internet is the ability to sift through as many web sites as required from the privacy of your home until you find what draws your attention. Material for most readers if too wordy or intellectual is a deterrent. Personally, if I'm seeking information from the web, I want it to be informative and interesting without being long-winded. Having a creative eye, of course I require the site to be somewhat appealing in layout and design but I want the information to meet my needs. More than likely most readers don't want to pore over a lot of jargon before reaching the main point. If an individual wants to read a novel they'll buy a book or borrow it from the library but when reading it on the net, the data should be a source of information.

What are you trying to sell?

One of the key points to remember when writing for the Internet is that overall you are selling knowledge and therefore should consider that your article or web site are merely tools to provide appropriate information. If you write regularly or have an on-going group of individuals visiting your site, you may find after a while that you've developed a following. By that I mean that a number of individuals have become familiar with your writing style and relate to your views and opinions. They may now become interested in what you have to say not just in what you are selling. It's at that point that your audience is interested in you personally but that may take some time to achieve. First prove your consistency, professionalism and appeal and before long people will begin wondering what you have to say.

Too much information

Bear in mind that you may have the most beautiful site ever created but without excellent content your site will have no meaning. People pay a fortune to have sites created

boasting loud music, flashy flash presentations and all the other hype so common on web sites these days. In truth all that extra stuff can be of very little significance without meaningful content. Most people are seeking information, not flamboyant pictures. I do believe the layout, style and design of a web site is critical to its success but all the overdone, heavy-duty sites have become boring.

We grow impatient if the site loads slowly and even more impatient if each subsequent page takes forever to appear. No matter how beautiful your site, if it takes forever to load, you'll lose your viewers before they've had a chance to read the first word on your site. Additionally, if there are too many visuals and auditory sounds on your site it can be disturbing to the majority who come to visit. Keep it simple.

If your goal is to have people come back to your site or to continuously read your articles, take the time to provide practical, interesting content minus the hype. The best suggestion is to write honestly, plainly and concisely.

Charlene Rashkow is a Writing Stylist who has successfully written outstanding business material for companies and individuals for more than 15 years. Creating clever promotional materials, Charlene is well known for her press releases, business plans, resumes, brochure copy, web site content and ghostwriting dynamic manuscripts. You may visit Charlene Rashkow at www.allyourwritingneeds.com or write her at Crwriting@aol.com. You can also call her directly at (310) 514-4844