Does your copy speak well of you?

What does your copy say about you and what you offer? How does it speak to your key audiences? Readers hear your "voice" through the words and sentence structure. Ever read a novel and then see the movie, but a character doesn't sound right? You already "heard" the character's voice through the author's words.

Readers draw important conclusions about you from the voices they hear from your copy. Whether you can be trusted. How you'll treat them. Whether you're friendly and clear—or distant and confusing. You control that impression, because you control that voice. Is your copy's voice correct? Read it aloud. If it sounds like a friendly one-on-one conversation, it's probably right on the nose—or right off your lips.

Making these three common copy mistakes?

1 **Modifying "unique."** Unique means *one* of a kind, so something can't be *very* unique or even *more* unique. If it's really unique, don't hedge. If not, use another word.

2 **Talking to yourself.** Many organizations write about what matters to them. Writing to the *reader's* viewpoint, needs and concerns is much more meaningful and effective.

3 **Using "utilize."** It's bigger and more impressive than "use," but "utilize" usually involves something serving the function of something else. *Use* a hammer to pound nails, but *utilize* a screwdriver to do the same when the hammer isn't handy.

Simple + conversational = more effective

Whether your target is a CEO or a custodian, educator or engineer, he or she is above all a person. Friendly copy is more communicative with people than formal verbiage. So write to communicate, not to impress. Skip the jargon and big words in favor of language everyone understands. It's not dumbing down; it's communicating more clearly.

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