



*Online Copywriting Checklist*

# Red Hot Copy's Secret Sauce to Sizzling Copy

*by Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero*

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## Online Copywriting Checklist

Hi there!

You know, now more than ever, every business owner and corporation relies on copy to get their message out to their prospects, convert them to customers, and hopefully make a difference in people's lives on a grander scale (*although that goal is highly individual*).

Since we all know how to write, sometimes people downplay just how important copy is. Or maybe they just don't know what they don't know. Either way, they are making a huge mistake. A mistake that will cost them profits and, possibly, reputation. One that I don't want you to make. Let's be honest if your recipe is missing one ingredient the flavor changes. That explosive spark could disappear without your own Secret Sauce, losing the excitement of the dish altogether. Don't let that happen.

So to take some of the mystery out of writing copy, I've put together a checklist to help you out, no matter what your skill level is today. Let's start with the basics...

### What is copy?

Let's start with what the term "copy" really means. The industry standard definition of copy is "salesmanship in print". But with the wide reach of technology today, that definition has expanded dramatically.

Every word you write, every audio you record, every video you are a part of that is released across the Internet contains your message. The common denominator of all these formats is the words or the copy. It's critical today that your copy is clear.

We will never have less information or fewer words so it's better to start whipping them into shape now.

### Why should you care about copy?

In general we only stick around people, places, or things we feel an attraction to. Wouldn't you agree?

So when you have *engaging copy*, you build relationships with potential customers, expand your brand, and get your message out to the world.

Listen, copy is a one-to-one event. In other words, one person reads it at a time (*even if literally millions of people read it*). When someone is reading your copy, they need to feel as if you are talking directly to them...that they are the only person in the room.

Why? Because as soon as the reader is disengaged,

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they are free to go...to click away and explore someone else's copy. To be sure your reader hangs around as long as possible, make sure your copy is compelling.

Fortunately there is a checklist for copy that works. It's easy peasy...and I'm gonna share it with you.

### How do you know if your copy is any good?

Allow me to take the mystery out of it for you. Here are five areas to focus your copywriting magnifying glass on. Grab your copy and compare it to this checklist to see if it's up to snuff, or if you could benefit from a teeny tune-up.

**I call my checklist the S.O.B.O.C. Method.** It's a simple acronym for these 5 online components:

- **Scannability** – Since 79% of all Internet users scan first and look for key words and phrases that grab their attention, the scanning aspect is pretty important. It's the first layer to getting a prospect hooked to stick around longer.
- **Opening** – The opening is what is "above the fold," or what your prospect sees on the screen without having to scroll down.
- **Body** – The body is the unfolding story and details of your message or offer. It includes what's in it for them.
- **Offer** – The offer is the nuts and bolts of exactly what is given in exchange for money (*or an opt-in if you're selling "free"*).
- **Close** – This last part ties up any loose ends, revisits objections, and makes a final push for the prospect to take action.

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### ***Scannability***

When someone gets to your website, their eyes are naturally going to take in the copy, the graphics, and any other bells and whistles you might have added BEFORE they sink their teeth into the words. Call it a "first impression" if you will.

Huge red flag here...there's a danger of too much happening on the page. Too many distractions will send your prospect looking for the place to CLOSE your site, or worse yet, move on to a competitor's. Keep it simple and clean.

There is a certain graphic element to copy. Your eyes take the copy in as a grouping of words before you dig in and read them more comprehensively. There should be enough white space in the copy to guide the prospect's eye down a specific reading path. Savvy? Remember, you, as the copywriter, are in control of the reader's experience.

When you're evaluating how scannable your document is, check these factors:

1. Headlines and subheadlines should reveal a complete understanding of the text that lies between them, without having to actually read the fine print. It's almost as though you were looking at the copy from a 10,000 foot view



from a plane...you can see the outline of the bigger picture but can't necessarily make out the farmhouses.

2. Key words and phrases should be formatted (*bold, caps, or italics*) to pop off the page, and be easily understood without slowing the reader down.
3. Bullets should be used generously in your copy to make it breezier and easier to read.
4. White space between your paragraphs and thoughts makes it easier to cruise down the page and take in more information. Break copy into small, easy-to-read paragraphs.

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5. Have one call to action (*although you can have multiple order links if you're doing a longer copy sales letter, like the one exhibited at the end of this report*).

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### **Opening**

How you launch into your copy is critical. If they're not engaged right away by your hook or message, your prospect may never get beyond the first bit of copy. Make this section count!

1. You need an attention-DEMANDING headline. If you deliver a milquetoast, boring headline, you might just lose your reader right here. Don't be afraid to brainstorm 20, 30, even 50 or more headlines. They are the most highly read part of your copy. Plus they are easily tested for more sales.
2. Headlines should be in present tense (*usually*), as should the rest of the copy. It creates a more "here and now" feeling when you're talking in the "here and now".
3. Fairly early in the copy, you should indicate who your target market is and what problem you solve.
4. Talk to your prospect informally using first person ("I") and second person ("you"). You're carrying on a conversation. Don't talk to a mob of people – just one at a time.
5. Make your own choice on this but my personal pet peeve is self-launching videos. People are multi-tasking more and more. There is nothing that makes me click the CLOSE button faster than some video screaming at me when I have several windows open at the same time. I find it intrusive. Others claim to have success in sales. It's your call...just don't invite me to your website.



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### Body

The Body section will be the longest part of your copy. You're really getting inside your prospect's head here, and having a conversation. In the Body you're overcoming objections and highlighting the benefits. You also want to anticipate what he or she will have questions about so you include the answers in your copy.

Here's a quickie breakdown of FEATURES and BENEFITS, which are key components to your message.

The FEATURE describes what your product or service does. It's sort of like the adjective of what you're selling. The BENEFIT clues them in on the emotional aspects...how their lives will improve once they say, "Yes!" Humans are just wired to want to know the answer to WIIFM (*What's In It For Me*).

When you're crafting the Body, here is the basic long copy formula...ready?

In general, after your Opening, you will have a sub-headline followed by short copy that lays out a problem or an objection.

Next there's often a smattering of bullets, a possible testimonial, and an order link.



Then, like with shampoo directions, just WASH, RINSE, REPEAT. (*Check out the graphic at the end of this report for a visual of what I'm talking about.*)

1. For every feature you should have at least one benefit to demonstrate the stellar changes your prospect is about to experience after they invest in your product or service.
2. Use one thought per paragraph, no matter how short the paragraph actually is. When you change your thought, you start a new paragraph. It's as simple as that. It also helps you create more white space so your copy isn't as dense and difficult to read.

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3. Don't be afraid of sentence fragments. Write like you speak. You're not getting graded by an English teacher.
4. Be sure to bolster your credibility with testimonials from past success stories as well as letting your prospect know why they should trust you.
5. Anticipate and answer any questions that might come up in your prospect's sales-resistant brain. (*Remember, no one likes to be "sold to".*)

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### Offer

You've led your prospect down the garden path, explained how his or her problem will be solved, stressed the benefits of what he or she will get, overcome objections, and tied it all in a pretty bow with testimonials and credibility. Now it's time to lay it all out on the table. What exactly does she (or he) get for the money? Don't overthink this section. Just be crystal clear.

1. When possible have the offer placed in an easy-to-find box so it pops out and grabs your prospect's attention.
2. Spell out exactly how many do-dads they get for their money. For example if it comes with audio, is it downloadable or will it be mailed? If it's a membership site, explain what they can expect once they give you their hard-earned Benjamin's. If it's a service, let them know the parameters right out of the gate. This isn't a time to be coy. The Offer is a time just the facts, ma'am.
3. Entice them to take action now with free bonuses and scarcity or a time limit. Who doesn't like free? We all do! Just be sure they are valuable and relevant to what the actual Offer is.
4. Remove any lingering doubt by taking the pressure off of them with a strong guarantee.
5. Remember to position your Call to Action at the end of the Offer. You want to make it as easy as pie for them to buy.



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### **Close**

By the time they get to the Close, most of the hard work done. Don't overthink this component. It's a necessary piece but it doesn't have to be long or belabor what you've already said. The Close is designed to get them into a frothy lather if they haven't bought yet and have them do it...almost trancelike!

1. Recap the Offer. If you followed my method of boxing off the Offer, the Close is simply another way of wording what the prospect is getting for the money. To help you get started, finish this phrase, "So to recap..."
2. Remind them about the cool bonuses.
3. Remind them about the scarcity.
4. Let them know they are super cool for taking action now.
5. Add 1-3 Post Scripts (P.S.s), each with a compelling Call to Action and an Order hyperlink.

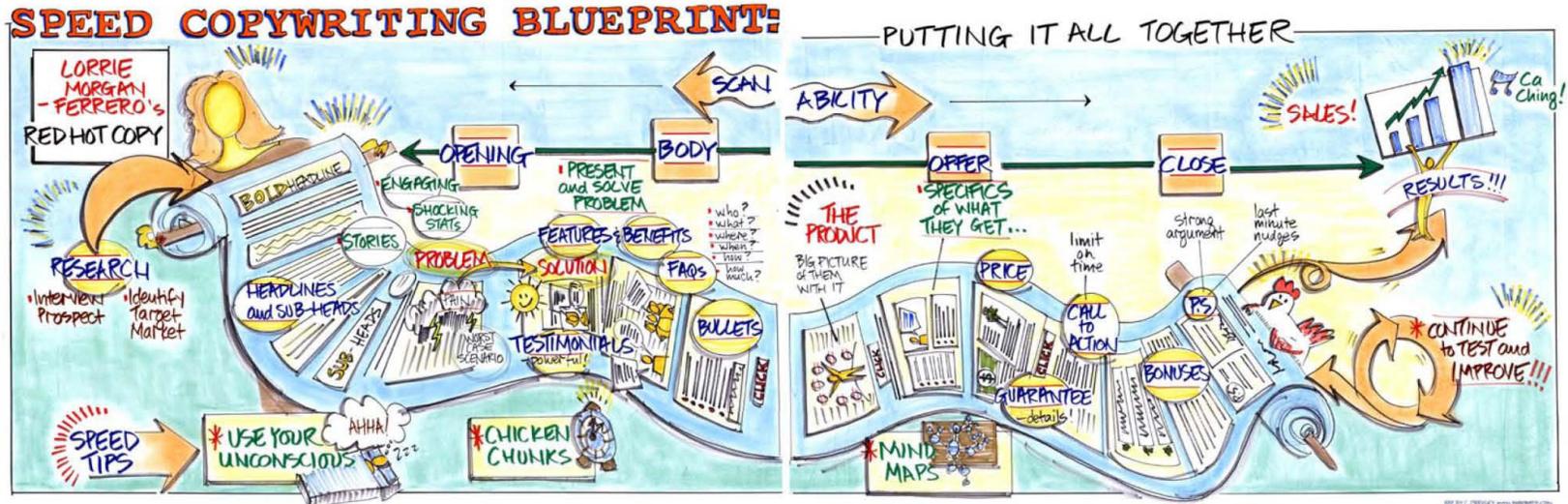
So there you have it! The never-let-you-down On-line Copywriting Checklist.



The next page has a killer visual on it that puts Long Copy into perspective. People have begged me in the past for this graphic, but it's only been available in high-priced products...until NOW!

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**RED HOT COPY**

This **\*Long Copy Sales Letter Blueprint\*** is an exclusively detailed graphic created especially for Red Hot Copy by Christina Merkley ([www.MakeMark.com](http://www.MakeMark.com)) for a live event. This graphic breaks down the copywriting process visually using three different channels of instruction. Here's how to read this graphic...

1. There are three rows you follow from right to left
  - a. Read the top row of the tan squares, Scannability, Opening, Body, Offer, Close (S.O.B.O.C.) Each of these areas is a chunk to be evaluated separately.

- b. Middle graphic of scroll should start at Research then follow across to end beyond the chicken to Results & Continue to Test & Improve. This is the 10,000 foot view of the content of a long copy sales letter.
- c. Final row are Speed Tips for writing faster. (Note: The "Chicken Chunks" reference is all about using a timer while writing copy. I prefer segments of 15 minutes. Give it a try!)

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### MEET LORRIE MORGAN-FERRERO

**Lorrie Morgan-Ferrero of Red Hot Copy is an industry trailblazer in the world of copywriting.**

Her background as a journalist and an actress prepared her for the level of wordsmithing and psychology necessary to persuade in print. She takes established copywriting formulas and adds her own spice to the mix for proven increases in conversions.

Lorrie's words have sold products and services in a variety of industries including the female market, publishing, real estate, day trading, professional speaking, the seminar business, hypnosis, health & fitness, nutritional supplements, biz op, entrepreneurial services and more. This "fiery redhead" knows what it takes to build rapport for long-lasting relationships. And more importantly, she knows how to SELL with copy!

Want Lorrie's help with YOUR copy? Visit her site at [www.RedHotCopy.com](http://www.RedHotCopy.com), follow her on [www.Twitter.com](http://www.Twitter.com) - @RedHotCopy, and like her on FaceBook at [www.Facebook.com/RedHotCopyFan](http://www.Facebook.com/RedHotCopyFan).



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