



Website Copy Guide (and some SEO)

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Table of Contents

- Introduction..... 3
 - Toolkit..... 3
- On-Page SEO..... 4
 - Keywords..... 4
 - Meta Data..... 4
- Copy Guidelines..... 5
 - Home Page..... 5
 - Tone Of Voice..... 6
 - Be Specific..... 6
 - Be Direct..... 7
 - Headings..... 7
- Done-for-you SEO Copy..... 8
- Copy Example..... 9
 - Page Content 9

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Introduction

The copy (words) on your website are *hugely important* to the success of your website both in terms of visibility on search engines and also for converting visitors into potential customers. The copy on each page and across the website is one of the major ranking factors that Google looks at when people are searching for your products and services. The words that you use and the tone of voice that is portrayed will also influence your visitors, help them to find out the information that they are looking for and persuade them to place an order or make an enquiry.

b:web have been building websites for 14 years and our observation is that the most successful projects are those where the copy is given priority and consideration. We are able to provide the best possible output when we have the copy prior to commencing the design. This is because we can then design around your content and really make the key messages stand out.

This Copy Guide has been prepared to help you to produce your copy.

Toolkit

In order to make the most of this guide you should also have the following resources available to you:

1. b:web SEO Migration Guide
2. b:web Example Copy Document
3. Your target keywords based on any SEO activity/keyword research assuming that you have this in place.
4. Your branding guide which should include directions for “tone of voice”
5. Planned site-map/content structure. b:web will provide you with this following the initial Discovery Workshop.

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On-Page SEO

Thinking about keywords is an essential aspect of preparing web copy. Even if SEO is not a major aspect of your marketing mix, the terms that you use on the website will need to be user centric.

Example - in the world of lighting the end consumer refers to “light bulbs” whereas the vendors might use instead the phrase “filaments”

If Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) is important to your strategy you will need to have completed some keyword research. This Copy Guide does not include all of the specifics of keyword research and SEO but does assume that you have drawn up a list of keywords that are relevant to your brand, products, services, customers and location.

Keywords

Usually a website would have 1 or 2 high level keywords (web design Surrey for example) which has primary focus and can run across all pages, usually in the footer, through the content and inbound links from other websites.

Aside from the global keywords each page on your website can only have 1 single focus keyword. This is the primary keyword that the page is focussed on, secondary keywords are usually variations of this keyword and will usually work.

You should aim for at least 150-200 words per page and ensure that the focus keyword is repeated a couple of times.

Meta Data

There are two tags that are included on all pages of the website in the code behind the scenes. The meta title and the meta description. These are often overlooked but they are absolutely essential as the title is used as a ranking factor for your position on Google and together they form your “Google listing”.

Web Design Surrey, Woking, Guildford - b:web Agency

<https://www.bwebsites.co.uk/> ▼

We create stunning and engaging websites, build complex eCommerce websites and understand about campaigns, performance and budgets. Contact us for a ...

Meta Title: Rather than just 'Home', say what you do, as well as your company name.

Meta Description: This doesn't need to be full of keywords as its not used in ranking. Keep it short (150-160chars) and make it active, for example 'Buy from our selection' or 'Browse our collection of...'

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Copy Guidelines

Writing the copy for a website is very different from writing a book, brochure or white-paper. People tend not to read from top/bottom or left/right on a web page. You can't even guarantee which of your pages they will land on first – you certainly can't guarantee that they will read the home page first or visit all of your pages. Each individual page needs to be able to stand alone as a single piece of marketing and the content needs to be planned in such a way that visitors can quickly scan and find the information that they are looking for.

As well as never really having full control over how the website content is consumed, you will also need to think about how to weave in your keywords and remember that a website is dynamic with content that can change over time.

Before you start to put pen to paper (or more likely finger to keypad!) take some time to remind yourself of the following questions:

1. **Who will be reading the web page?** The answer may well be different from page to page which is why you should think about “pages” and not the entire website. For example on one page you might be introducing a high-end (expensive) services for corporates and on another you could be showcasing a solution for the domestic market.
2. **What is the customer journey?** This is not about how people are travelling through the website but more about where your readers might be in the customer life-cycle. Have they just seen you in a pitch and very close to signing up? Are they doing research right and the start of their purchasing journey? Have they landed on your page because they have received a mailshot?
3. **What do they need to know?** You now know who you are addressing and why they might be visiting the website which makes it easier to understand what they need to know. What information do they need and what do you want them to know about you. *For example, they might want to know your prices but instead you want them to know that you are very high-end and that prices are provided on the basis of an enquiry.*
4. **What do you want them to do next?** We are referring here to the Call To Action (CTA). Ideally each page will have a purpose and a specific consequence in mind. For example the purpose of the home page is to direct people to the most relevant sections of the website and therefore the CTA are links to your main service offering. Similarly the purpose of another page might be to generate an enquiry in which case it will need an enquiry form.

When you are clear about who is reading your content, why they are reading it and what you want them to do next, the more likely it will be that your content will have the right perspective.

Home Page

The home page is often difficult to pin down because the purpose of the page is generally to introduce the reader to your business and to help them to find more information.

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As a guide the home page should address the following:

1. **What products/service do you offer?** Often the answer to this aligns itself quite nicely with your keywords but the trick is to be specific. Visitors will want to know quite quickly that they have landed on the correct website and that your offering matches closely to what they are searching for.
2. **Who do you provide your products and services to?** Visitors won't want to waste time on your website if they are not the best match for you. They also don't really want to spend too much time finding out this information. It's, therefore, best to be upfront and if you serve a specific sector or customer type then let them know.
3. **Why do they need you?** This is where you can start to introduce your USPs and the value that you add.
4. **Is your offering any good?** If your visitor is still on the page (1-3 above will have been established in about 10 seconds!) they will need to be persuaded to stay and to find out more about you. Think about using social proof/testimonials/awards to very quickly let them know that you are really very good at what you do.
5. **How do visitors find out more about your offering?** The home page should sign-post to the next most relevant sections of the website. This will be different per business but you might want to let people explore based on their sector (relevant if your services are different for different sectors) or but product/service type.

Tone Of Voice

Many companies spend a great deal of time planning logos and visual branding, but not always so much on Tone of Voice (TOV). TOV is a natural extension of your brand and getting it right will help your business to stand out, make you more memorable and your copy will be more persuasive as it will resonate more with the reader.

Consider your company's brand values. What do you stand for? What is important to your customers? Try to boil these down to a few words and phrases that best describe your company, such as professional, efficient, frank, friendly, quirky, knowledgeable etc.

Be Specific

Being specific is usually best for the reader and also for search engines. By being specific you will naturally reduce duplicating messages, incorporate more keywords and keep pages concise and "on topic"

This is a real example of copy that has been provided as the introduction text on a recent home page.

BEFORE

“(COMPANY NAME) Ensures corporate excellence

Having completed large scale projects at prestigious buildings and places of national interest, achieving highly satisfactory end products. Providing measurable outcomes that are tuned to customer expectations.”

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You could read that 10 times and each time come to a different conclusion about what the company actually does – are they architects, building maintenance, cleaning suppliers... ? It's impossible to tell from the copy what the company does and if people can't understand the messaging you can be sure also that Google will equally be confused.

AFTER

“(COMPANY NAME) – Security Systems Installers, Management and Consultancy

Large scale security solutions for leisure facilities, retailers, schools, prestigious buildings and domestic dwellings in London, Surrey, Essex, Kent and Hertfordshire. High end solutions delivered from a trusted family business.”

In the “after” example the same amount of words have been used to deliver absolutely loads of information. We now know from just a few sentences what the company does, who they do it for, where they do it and the last sentence hints at the price point and provides some details on the USP. Its not only specific but it's friendly and very informative. The copy also includes lots of keywords yet still reads as natural and friendly.

Be Direct

Talk directly to your reader instead of using a passive voice. You will want to make your reader part of your copy so that they can identify with you. Speak to them directly as if they are directly in front of you and are your ideal customer.

Use 'you' as much as you can, for example 'This will give you...', 'This will help you...', 'You will be working with..'. Avoid writing sentence after sentence that says “We do this...”, “We work with...”, “ We help...”

Avoid wishy washy statements like “we aim to be the best supplier of XYZ...” and instead use direct phrases like “You will receive....”

Your customers also want to be understood, they want to know that their suppliers understand the issues and pain points that the services/products fix. Making statements like “Our Customers tell us that...” or “We understand that...”

Headings

Incorporating keywords into your heading will help with SEO but also reassures readers that they are on the right page and helps them to decide where to focus their content. Headings are super useful, Google considers heading (H1, H2, H3 etc) as key indicators of the subject matter of your content.

Readers generally scan pages to search for what they are looking for rather than read every word. Readers are likely to focus on headings, subheadings, bold text and links. Keep your sentences and paragraphs short and concise as possible and break up your text as often as you can using headings and subheadings.

Avoid headings like 'Welcome to our website' and instead use the most important keywords/messages.

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Done-for-you SEO Copy

As part of our website packages we are really happy to answer any questions that you may have about how to prepare your website copy. We can often provide some general feedback about the content and search engine optimisations.

We can also offer the following services

- **Content writing from scratch:** We will complete all of the research and prepare the copy including meta title, meta descriptions and relevant calls to action.
- **Hand-holding:** This is suitable for business where the draft content exists or can be produced but further assistance is required to provide the final copy in the correct tone of voice. We will improve your draft copy and produce the meta titles and meta description.
- **Keyword strategy:** Whether you are writing the copy or us, the keyword research is essential if you would like to increase visibility on search engines. We will research 100's of keywords manually to find the terms that your customers are using and provide a strategy for leveraging this insights. Keyword research provides direction for the copy and also for the overall website structure.
- **SEO Migration and full on page SEO:** (please refer to the SEO Migration guide)

Usually the activities should be completed in conjunction with the website design, please contact mark@bwebsites.co.uk if you would like a quotation.

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Copy Example

Page Name: Home www.website.co.uk

Page Meta Title: MAR Ice Gritters – Keeping your ground safe from snow and ice hazards. Covering most of the south of England and Wales

Page Meta Description: MAR Ice Gritters – Pay As We Grit ice clearance, snow clearance, ice clearance and replenishing salt and grit bins. Established since 1985 and fully certified.

Page Content

Word count: (220)

Marketing Messages

1. Keeping your grounds safe from snow and ice
2. Pay As We Grit
3. New snow clearance for gritting customers

H1 – Heading MAR Ice Gritting Services - Keeping your grounds safe from snow and ice

Main Body

MAR Ice Gritters provide gritting and snow clearance services to the corporate, educational, leisure and manufacturing sectors in order to comply with BS32247. Established since 1985, we know that our clients appreciate our pro-active and quality services delivered with minimum fuss.

We offer: Salt spreading, Snow clearance, Replenishing salt and grit bins, Pay As We Grit

Our modern vehicles and hand pushed gritters are efficient and highly manoeuvrable to service the most inaccessible areas. All equipment is well serviced allowing us to head out at a moment's notice. Our fleet have built-in-cab control units spreading precise volumes of grit relative to the conditions and our tracking facility provide our control centre with real-time data.

Nitty Gritty : Landowners, landlords and employers all have legal responsibilities to prevent danger from snow and ice (Occupiers Liability Act 1957, The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992).

Testimonial/Quote

1. Keep your car parks, grounds and access routes safe to avoid disruption, potential injury and financial loss
2. *To be provided*
3. *To be provided*

CTA: to be provided

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