



Do's and Don't for great copywriting

- Do stick with a single theme or message in each piece of copy.
- Do write to the pace people talk, not the pace at which they read. Include pauses in the copy for natural delivery.
- Do use straightforward language that doesn't require a dictionary to understand.
- Do write a GREAT first sentence. The opening line of a spot IS the headline. Grab people's attention immediately and they won't tune out.
- Do give yourself multiple edits and remove unnecessary words. Economy of words is extremely important.
- Do repeat the important details, such as calls to action, website or phone number, so they stick in the listener's mind.
- Don't write overly complicated sentences with multiple clauses linked together by commas. Simple sentence structure is key.
- Don't include lots of lists, statistics and numbers.
- Don't use weak attempts at humor. Humor can be a powerful tool to engage listeners but use it sparingly and intentionally.
- Don't start your copy with a question to the listener, which can tempt people to tune out.
- Don't try to be overly clever or you'll lose the clarity of the copy.
- Don't talk about yourself and ignore the listener. Instead, turn every statement into a listener benefit if you want to hold their attention.
- Don't be boring or lazy. Push yourself to write well. Good enough is never good enough.



Before you're done writing a piece of copy, ask yourself these questions:

1. Did you attract the listener's attention? Take a look at that first line of copy and read it out loud a few times. Is it clear, compelling and enticing? Do you think someone would want to hear what comes next?
2. Did you appeal to the listener's self-interest? A common mistake is to write copy that is all about YOU instead of highlighting the benefits to the listener. The copy will be most effective if it identifies a need, desire or issue that will be resolved for your audience. Also, remember not to use yourself as a one-person focus group. Be inclusive, talk to the audience, not yourself.
3. Did you paint a picture? If you think about it, radio is a visual medium. Listeners convert the sound of your copy into a mental picture that can inspire and motivate them to act upon your words. Choose those words carefully to paint a picture for the listener that evokes emotion.
4. Were you so clever or creative that you forgot the point of the copy? It happens to everyone. A good spot is not one that makes people laugh - it's one that motivates them to act or feel. Make your message clear. Don't bury it in a clever idea.
5. Did you give the listener specific instructions? Some copy is intended to drive specific action, such as tuning in for a particular show, buying tickets to an event or listening to the station through an app. The copy should reach active listeners who are looking for that particular content or service as well as passive listeners who may be unaware or on the fence. Don't assume everyone who hears that copy will already know what to do. Be specific.
6. Is your copy full of tired cliches? Most cliches are meaningless and empty and take up precious time in a short piece of on-air copy. Find a way to say it differently and freshen up your copy.
7. Did you write too much copy? Avoid this common pitfall by getting in the habit of reading your copy aloud in a normal conversational pace and time yourself. If it takes YOU :45 seconds to read it aloud, what makes you think your host or production person can deliver the same copy in just :30 seconds?