

The Comprehensive Copywriting Guide To Explode Your Business Post-Pandemic

Executive Summary

One lesson that COVID-19 has shown the world is the importance of a digital presence. As the pandemic spread from coast to coast, we quickly observed how some people were laid off, unable to work in a job that required a brick-and-mortar presence. Unemployment has gone from [3.8%](#) in February 2020, and now sits at [10.2%](#) as of July 2020.

Other employees have been able to adapt and work remotely from home, with applications for remote work is [up by 28%](#). Certain businesses depended on their abilities to use a digital presence supplemented with team-oriented tech like Zoom.

As the United States works to quell the number of coronavirus cases, one opportunity that seems to be emerging is the viability of remote work and the resulting importance of cultivating a digital presence.

How can business owners adapt in these times of a global pandemic? How can a business owner start to look toward a post-COVID 19 future with a new business model forged by the difficulties of this season?

One word—writing.

As businesses downsize and cut their workforce, imagine a tool that costs [62% less](#) than traditional marketing, but generates [three times](#) the number of leads. That tool is content marketing. Imagine that you don't just get more leads, but more qualified ones. Again, content marketing.

Writing, whether content marketing or copywriting, is one skill that business owners can use to build their digital presence. You can build trust, authority, and a wanting audience with the power of your knowledge, and the ability to express it persuasively through the written word.

Content marketing, for example, costs [62% less](#) than traditional marketing, but generates [three times](#) the number of leads.

This white paper will outline how business owners can use writing, primarily copywriting, to build their business during and post-pandemic. This paper will share the problems that business owners face in building their businesses, and how copywriting can be an unexpected solution that can help businesses adapt to the only landscape now available for many—a digital landscape.

This white paper will also outline 8 different types of writing a business owner can use, with writing tips for how to execute each.

The Impact of COVID-19 On Small Businesses

Since the closing of businesses en masse in March 2020, it is estimated that more than 100,000 small businesses have closed their doors because of the coronavirus. One statistic worth noting is that 55% of businesses listed on Yelp won't reopen again. A number of large name businesses such as Hertz, JC Penny's and Nieman Marcus have also filed for bankruptcy due to the pandemic.

Businesses are currently faced with figuring out how to navigate in this sensitive time period when their existence is challenged by a global pandemic. How can a business rebuild when they have fewer resources and potentially fewer customers as well?

Current Solutions For Growing Your Business

Business owners rely on a variety of methods to bring in more business and increase their customer base. From looking to your existing network to offering a free trial, these are 6 ways that business owners rely on to build.

- 1) **Tap into your network.** You've already built a certain level of trust with your existing network. With this, a business owner can identify who will be a good fit for their product or service. A business owner can also tap into their network for referrals and connect with other businesses through an ingrained trust they share with other business professionals.
- 2) **Host an event.** If a business owner belongs to a professional organization, they may host a presentation or workshop or give a speech on a topic related to their business's product or service. They can find clients or customers from the people who attend this event and develop trust through a presentation who want to work with them.
- 3) **Offer a free trial.** A business owner can offer a free trial and give a prospect a chance to test a product or service to see if it's a good fit for them. If they like the product, then they might convert and become a paying customer.
- 4) **Offer a free trial in exchange for a case study.** You can also give a free trial in exchange for a case study to have a documented piece of social proof that shows how you were able to help another person or business. Then you can use this to inspire more people that what you have can change their life in a small or big way.
- 5) **Tag team with another business.** Team up with a business that has a similar customer base but that isn't directly competitive, and you have the chance to have access to a larger base of people who could be interested in what you have to offer.
- 6) **Offer discounts and promotions.** Businesses will offer introductory offers or 2-for-1 deals to get people interested in their product or service. The idea is that it will help convert an unsure person into a customer because they have an opportunity to try it with less financial risk.

Copywriting: An Effective Solution For Rebuilding Your Business

All of the solutions mentioned are viable methods to build a business. They shouldn't be discounted, and are some of the more traditional avenues to do so. One non-traditional solution that can establish your digital presence to be functional in a best or worst case scenario is writing.

Copywriting will help to build your network. It can help to build a case study after you've given a free trial. It can be the copy that you use on a discount or a promotion. And more.

"Copywriting is generally an underutilized tool that business owners don't always recognize that they have. Business owners can start to use some of the elements of copywriting in a time when it's becoming more apparent how important having a digital presence can be," says Nancy Coblenz, CEO of the Minority Business Owners Association.

Copywriting is defined as writing that inspires a person to take an action. As more businesses go online, COVID-19 continues to show how important having an online presence is when an in-person presence can't happen. In this time, the opportunity lies in using written communication as a form of marketing.

First, writing in the form of copywriting (and content marketing) can help to increase leads. (Content marketing is a type of marketing that focuses on creating and distributing content online to build an audience.)

Here are some ways that copywriting can help a business. Copywriting:

- Helps to nurture your relationships with customers
- Helps a business owner build trust through valued information
- Builds engagement
- Inspires sales
- Lets a business set itself apart from the rest
- Makes your message stronger and more cohesive

As businesses are forced to reorganize and find new ways to bring in business, writing is an evergreen tool that can help build organically in this time. A business owner can use copywriting to inspire readers to take action and help realign a business owner's ability to help others and become more profitable.

How?

Copywriting can help you connect to your audience on an emotional level, and build their ability to trust you as a result. Writing can be used to help them feel something, so

they are more likely to act. 95% of purchasing decisions are based on feelings: the fear of rejection, the desire to be gorgeous, the need to belong, envy, lust, intelligence.

Words have the power to tap into these human desires and inspire action.

Copywriting Solution #1: Conversational Copywriting

Conversational copywriting is writing how you speak. You can adjust how “conversational” your writing is based on the level of formality.

“Conversational copywriting is telling enthusiastically, but in regular everyday language,” says copywriter Nick Osborne, who specializes in conversational copywriting.

Some of the benefits of conversational copywriting are that it:

- Engages a reader in a conversation without having to rely on the obviousness of advertising
- Makes it easier to describe this product to improve sales
- Can be used in email to connect directly with a reader, encouraging them to respond and continue the interaction

4 tips for writing conversationally are:

1. **Imperfect grammar is permissible.** Perfect grammar doesn't always work when it comes to writing conversationally. So to connect with a person with your words, try contractions and colloquial language. For example, try don't instead of *do not*, or “on the fly” instead of quickly.
2. **Speak to one person.** Talk to the person who represents your audience. Who are you speaking to? What are the characteristics of the person who needs your product or service? Speak to them, just them.
3. **Pay attention to formatting.** Use short sentences and paragraphs to mimic conversation in a way that more formal writing does not.
4. **Tap into psychology.** Use cliffhangers, pause fillers and questions. Cliffhangers are the open loop where people instinctively close the loop. A pause filler helps to bring the story along and mentally prepare a reader to wait for more information. Questions keep a person alert while reading by letting themselves ponder for a moment.

With nearly one in two small businesses laying off employees, businesses have to look for ways to stay solvent as they are forced to reduce their workforce as well due to the pandemic's strain on businesses. One way to take advantage of the lull is to cultivate two-way communication with your audience through conversational copywriting.

While business may be down, a business owner still stands to gain a trusting audience that will stick with you through difficult times, returning when the tide turns for the positive. Creating a two-way communication will help to fortify your foundation, a sandbag that keeps your business afloat when other parts are temporarily cut.

Copywriting Solution #2: Technical Writing

Technical writing isn't academic writing, business writing, or creative writing. Specifically, technical writing is writing about a certain subject that provides instruction, direction, or explanation. A few examples of technical writing are:

- instruction manuals
- process manuals
- policy manuals
- reports of analysis
- user manuals

Technical writing is another type of copywriting that can inform, build trust, and provide a business with a more solid foundation for profit.

“Technical writing requires more skill than writing how we speak, but it's possible to, as a business owner with no technical writing experience, to learn the basics and use them to communicate with your audience,” says Nancy Coblenz.

6 kinds of technical writing we'll address here are: white papers, emails and email newsletters, social media posts, landing pages, SEO copywriting and product descriptions.

White Papers

A white paper is defined as a “persuasive essay that uses facts and logic to promote a B2B product, service, technology, or methodology,” says Gordon Graham, professional white paper copywriter and author of *White Paper for Dummies*.

White papers give a reader valuable information to help them make an important buying decision. White papers are long-form pieces of content. They usually include graphics and are five or more pages. They also utilize facts and data to support their arguments.

Instead of in-your-face advertising, a white paper is a soft sell that establishes a business’s authority by showing its expertise in a particular subject, thereby setting it as a leader in their field in the mind of a reader.

There are three main types of white papers to use:

- **Backgrounder:** An in-depth overview of your offering; reviews features and benefits, functions, and the payback a person or business gets from the offering
- **Problem-Solution:** Discusses an unsolved problem, current solutions, and an improved solution in the form of your offering
- **Numbered List:** A popular format that shares questions, tips, issues or points about a given topic

Because of the popularity and simplicity of the numbered-list, you can combine the numbered-list format with either a backgrounder or problem-solution to create a more comprehensive argument.

3 tips for writing white papers are:

- **Provide useful information.** This starts with choosing a topic that you know a lot about, but also that will be helpful for others to know about as well. This also includes adding information that will be beneficial to a business in some way.
- **Use facts and figures.** Different from some blog articles that focus mainly on a person’s opinion, a white paper uses both logic and facts to prove a point. So add key statistics that can add credibility and subtly prove your points.
- **Include the visual element to the copywriting.** One thing that white papers are known for are visuals. The visual will help to sell the message, from high quality graphics to statistics shown via a graph or chart.

The 13 steps to creating a white paper are:

1. Find your team.
2. Have a conference call to discuss the white paper.

3. Develop a plan.
4. Research.
5. Write an executive summary.
6. (Note an executive summary is:)
7. Write the first draft and include graphics.
8. Get feedback.
9. Write the second draft.
10. Get more feedback.
11. Double check sources.
12. Prep the final draft of the white paper.
13. Clean any loose strings.

White papers are powerful marketing tools because instead of outwardly marketing, you're letting your expert knowledge on a particular topic market for itself. With more than 70% of B2B buyers using white papers to making a purchasing decision, they are inexpensive marketing tools that any business can benefit from.

Emails and Email Newsletters

Email is the most effective form of marketing for creating revenue, [according to Inc. Magazine. 59% of B2B marketers](#) found this to be true for themselves. What this means is that email can be a powerful resource for a business owner. Email allows you to use copywriting to connect regularly with your customers, or subscribers to your email list.

Email marketing can help a business owner accomplish their business goals.

- To encourage loyalty, share new information with your audience.
- To build brand awareness, keep your audience informed and remind them that you're there.
- To attract new customers, share basics about your business and what you can offer.

“Whether you know it or not, email is an incredibly powerful tool for relaying information—not everyone has a social media account. And with a social media account, if the platform closes its doors, that means your account with them does, too. Not only does everyone have email, but it's also a more stable platform as well,” says Nancy Coblenz.

An email consists of six components: a subject line, preheader, headline, body copy, call to action and footer.

The **subject line** is a reader's invitation to open the email, so handle with care. Clarity is also more important than being clever, but according to MailChimp X, it can still be interesting. Create a more specific message using localization and personalization. Keep the subject line to 50 characters or fewer. Try emoji for personality.

A **preheader** is the first few words of an email that you see beside a subject line. Use a preheader to summarize the email. It is another way to bring the reader closer to opening the email and is usually longer than the subject line. The preheader and subject line work together to inspire a reader to open the email.

A **headline** is optional and isn't always a part of an email. If it is, it will show the hierarchy of the page. So it will stand out and represent the content, and sometimes serve as a summary.

The goal of the body copy is to accomplish the goal you have in mind with your marketing copy. It should be clear, as short as needed and sound like a human. To help people through, use paragraph breaks and visuals.

A **call to action** is a button or a link encouraging you to buy something, RSVP, or read something.

A **footer** can include a mailing address, website URL, unsubscribe link. Any anything quirky or unique that fits your brand.

3 tips for writing emails are:

- **Be consistent.** Decide on how often you'll send an email newsletter. Will it be once a week? Twice a week? Once every other week? After you determine the frequency, send out emails consistently to your list.
- **Improve the odds of them opening your email.** A few ways to do this are to send an email with your name in the "From" instead of a business. It's more personal. Write nice subject lines. And write with transparency and value—help them to trust you.
- **Keep the email short and simple.** Everyone has a story, but an email might not be the place to tell the many details of it. Instead, use information that serves an end goal of building trust and speaks to your business goals. Your emails should be short and simple.

When you finish your email, proofread by reading out loud. This will help you to hear if the sentences flow well, any grammar errors, and how the wording sounds. Does it sound like something your audience will hear like you're speaking to them, or does it sound academic? It should sound like a conversation.

Landing Pages

Unbounce, an online platform that builds landing pages, describes a landing page as a web page that is created for marketing purposes. A landing page stands alone without a navigation bar for distraction. It is where a person “lands” after clicking on an Internet ad (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Bing, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter).

The landing page has one focus, and that’s to get a person to follow through on a call to action. This focus can help to increase conversion rates.

“A reader is more inspired to see the message on a landing page because it doesn’t compete with any other writing on the page—again, another way to draw focus to your message, or a specific offering,” says Nancy Coblenz.

What’s the difference between a landing page and a home page?

A home page doesn’t have the goal of converting traffic immediately into customers. From a home page, a customer can go to a blog, services page, contact page and anywhere on the site from a base page. A landing page doesn’t have this navigation and doesn’t have this primarily so it can convert as many page visitors as possible into paying customers.

3 tips for writing landing pages are:

- **Get rid of the bloat.** Make your point without the extra wording. This will make for a clearer message. And a clear message means that a person will understand your product or service more easily. The better they understand, the better chance they have at determining if the product or service is for them.
- **Don’t ignore long-form content.** Studies show that long-form content can be useful for customers that need as much information as possible to make an informed decision.
- **Add social proof.** You need people to believe what you’re saying, and one way to do this is to use testimonials, case studies or anything that shows how others have used your product or service and benefited from it.

Once you finish, try a split test. Maybe you’re worried about how a longer landing page will perform versus a shorter one. Why not write both and split test them to see which version has the best reception?

Social Media Posts

Social media might not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think of copywriting. It's unique in that it doesn't require as much writing as other kinds of content. Yet writing often blended with to get someone to take action is important.

The benefit of copywriting in social media is that you center your focus around your audience, and can build more engagement as a result.

"Part of the communication is the image, but writing is just as important too," says Nancy Coblenz.

5 tips for writing social media posts are:

- **Do a soft sell.** The majority of your posts should focus around content that your audience wants to see, hear or read. For a minority of the time, introduce a product or service openly.
- **Place benefits over features.** Emphasize the benefit. In most cases, a benefit is more audience-focused and gives an audience an emotional attachment or reaction—happiness, a sense of belonging, feeling of being loved, etc.
- **Use a CTA.** In Instagram, this might be "Click the Link in the Bio." In Facebook or Twitter, tell the reader what you want them to do. Click, read, retweet, share, buy, try.
- **Try PAS (Problem-Agitate-Solution).** This is popular copywriting formula that can be done with social media posts as well. First you highlight the problem. Then you make it worse to help the audience feel the pain more. Then you offer a solution, a safe harbor. For example, you can't sleep (PROBLEM). When you can't sleep, you're irritable the next day and don't function as well throughout the day—it's horrible (AGITATE). The Mattress Delight will help you to sleep better.
- **Use power words.** Use emotional words to connect emotionally to a reader, viewer, or scroller. An emotional connection can be a powerful way to drive engagement. Examples: Ignite, special, limited, improved, mainstream.

SEO Copywriting

SEO, or Search Engine Optimization, is the process of improving search traffic to a website through organic search results. In other words, the frequency of certain words or phrases in a blog post or article can influence how the blog post or article ranks on a Google search. Will it be #4 (Page 1) or #404 (Page 31)?

Writing with SEO in mind can give your web pages and content more visibility, bringing more visibility to your business and brand.

“Knowing the basics of SEO for something like your website or a blog post can bring more attention to your business, as it helps that page to perform well in a Google search,” says Nancy Coblenz.

SEO copywriting consists of the following elements. Use all five when writing with SEO in mind.

- **Keyword research:** Research words or phrases that a person might use to look up your business. The idea is that the words reflect what your business does. The phrase should be popular enough that you have a chance of being found in the search results, though the most competitive phrases may be difficult to rank for. An example of a keyword phrase is “24-7 plumber in Atlanta.”
- **Title:** Optimize your title by including the keyword or phrase, and then placing the keyword toward the front to immediately highlight in the search results that your content has the answer that a person searching is looking for.
- **Meta-description:** The meta-description is the description of the article or piece of writing that appears along with the search result. Keywords in this section don’t matter as much, but using them will show a reader that they’ve come to the right place. Keep the description to 165 characters or less to ensure the full description shows up in the search results.
- **Content:** Include keywords in your content, which should center around the word or phrase. Short articles or pieces of writing don’t rank as well on Google, so your blogs, articles, etc. should be at least 300 words.
- **Keyword Frequency:** Find the sweet spot between repeating a keyword too much to the point of spam, and too little. A keyword density of more than 5.5% could look like keyword stuffing, or filling a page with keywords just to rank. Keyword density is the ratio of # of keywords on page to the total number of words.

- **Linking Out:** Link to other pages of authority online, as well as to pages throughout your website. This shows Google that you are connected to the web and are an authority yourself when it comes to providing information for a certain keyword or phrase.

Product Descriptions

A product description is copywriting that markets a product or service. It describes the product and shares why a product is worth buying. Rather than simply describing a product and what it does, a product description should bring to life the product relative to how it can impact a person's life.

An accurate product description helps to solidify trust in your business. A good product description also lets a reader see, feel and experience a product so they can imagine themselves with it. Again, writing can be a tool to build a stronger foundation for your business.

"You'll want to take a reader's hand and let them envision a product or service as their own. That's the power of a good product description. A person gets to experience a product in their mind, and build a connection with it that inspires them to want what you're selling," says Nancy Coblentz.

4 tips for writing product descriptions are:

- **Define your buyer.** Picture your ideal buyer and speak to them. If you try to speak to everyone, you'll speak to no one. Instead zone in on who your target customer is, one person, and have a conversation with them. Imagine how you'd speak to them face-to-face. Use *you*, and anticipate questions they have by how you describe your product. Envision how they speak, and incorporate this into the description.
- **State features but emphasize benefits.** For most people, it's not what you get, but what you can do with what you get. So if you're selling printer paper, the benefit is communication, the chance to be understood and connect through words or images you print, for example. The features will be that it's 8.5x11, white or in-color, acid-free, biodegradable. Highlight the benefits, and let the features support them.
- **Write with enthusiasm.** Find the enthusiasm for your product so that you can paint a more vivid picture that also inspires others. Imagine that when you write, you're helping the reader to experience in their minds the excellence of your product or service and what it can do for them.

Tell a story. You won't be able to write a novel, but a mini-story that shows how someone used a product, or a brief origin story, can talk through a person's aversion of being sold to, or "persuaded."

Copywriting Solution #3: Journalistic Writing

Journalistic articles are another type of writing that you can use to grow your business. Being a guest contributor can get your name and business in front of a larger audience. A guest contribution in *Forbes*, *The Huffington Post*, or even a popular blog can put your expertise before a larger audience, and bring more visibility and possibly customers to your business.

“Journalistic writing is valuable because you get to take an opinionated stance on a topic, or share what you know from the pulpit of a respected publication. You simultaneously build your authority and credibility, while getting more visibility from people who trust you because they trust the publication your piece is published in, too,” says Nancy Coblenz.

Journalism writing includes the following tenants.

A **lede** is the first sentence of a news story that gives the most important information, the who, what, when, where, why and how.

The **angle** is what your focus is on the story. What’s the point of you sharing the information in the first place? It helps to know who your audience is, and why they should care.

Your story should have **structure**. Structure the story in the form of an inverted pyramid, with the most important information first.

The writing should be **reader-focused**. Write with your readers in mind. Write with facts and an unbiased perspective. Keep words simple, and sentences short. Add background information to explain if it’s needed. Write for your readers, not yourself.

Use **AP Style**, a special style guide used for news writing. It’s used by journalists and streamlines the format and style for writing a news story.

The following six steps will also help you pitch an article to a desired publication. **To make an article pitch:**

1. **Make a list of publications you’re interested in writing for.** See if the publication accepts guest posts. A publication’s website will usually share this information.
2. **Decide on the publication you want to write for.** Look at newspapers, magazines or popular blogs to see which ones you’d like to write for. Find ones based on what topics you are knowledgeable about, and which publications fit your business goals best.

3. **Research.** After reviewing the publications, find topics that you have expertise with. Brainstorm a list of topics and the unique angle that you bring to them, your opinion. Review the publications to be sure the topic is covered or alluded to. Make sure it is a good choice.
4. **Figure out who to pitch to.** This could be an author or an editor. Review what they've written to show that you know who they are before you want them to publish something for you.
5. **Send a pitch letter** that acknowledges the work of the person you're writing to and that asks if your article would be a good fit for the publication. Acknowledge your familiarity with their work.
6. **Wait and see.** Rejection is possible, but so is acceptance. If you are rejected, pitch somewhere else. If you're accepted, then congratulations.

There are different types of articles that you can write for publications. One is an op-ed, which lets you share a specific point of view, sometimes controversial, about a particular topic of expertise. You can also write informative pieces as well, sharing valuable information in a journalistic style with a publication's audience.

Conclusion

Small businesses have been impacted significantly by COVID-19. Whether being forced to close its doors for months, or reduce the number of employees, small businesses have been faced with the reality of less business and fewer customers because of safety measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Businesses have no choice but to adapt to an evolving landscape. Remote work is currently the norm with many employees working from home. This has made evident the importance of having a digital presence, and the adaptability to any work environment of such a presence.

One way that business owners can make the most of this shifting landscape is to find a way to connect with an audience base that is evolving with the impact of the pandemic as well. Writing is one tool that can meet an audience where they are and speak to them from an informed and honest place.

Writing does not require additional employees or a physical place of business. It requires simply an investment in time, and an openness to share knowledge. Copywriting in particular can help a business owner start to rebuild a trusting base, helping to guide them in a new direction of a product or service offering.

This white paper explored the current problem that businesses face with the pandemic, and traditional means of building a business. This white paper also explored how copywriting can serve as a solution to helping to lay a foundation to regain business lost.

This white paper explores seven kinds of copywriting with additional explanation and tips how to use each type of writing to help rebuild a business. The kinds of writing are: conversational copywriting, technical writing (white papers, emails and email newsletters, landing pages, SEO copywriting and product descriptions), and journalistic articles.

A small business owner can use these types of copywriting (and journalistic writing) to nurture and grow an audience that can be converted into customers.

Call To Action

Do you want to build the writing skills to build a new foundation for your business and grow to new heights in the midst of a difficult time period? Then visit the landing page of the Sales and Marketing Course to learn more. (Register for the Sales and Marketing Course.)

About the Company

Minority Business Owners Association helps to cultivate the business acumen of the country's best minority and minority ally business owners. MBOA helps business owners develop solutions to challenging problems, one currently being growing a business in the midst of COVID-19. Expert instructors, who have launched over \$400 million in products and services globally, mentor minority business owners. MBOA supported and advised over 1000 small business owners and entrepreneurs with launching, growing, and scaling their companies to become the future of the American Dream.