1. Are copywriting principles relevant for bloggers or writers not selling a particular product?

*Copywriting is only relevant if you:*

- Want to convince somebody of anything, including an idea or position.
- Want to get someone to support a cause.
- If you want to sell anything, including books.
- If you want to get subscribers for your email newsletter.
- If you want to get more listeners to your podcast.
- Bottom line: we are all selling all the time, even if we are not selling a physical product.

2. What is the biggest mistake Ray sees in writing?

- Writers who are self-focused instead of focusing on the people they are writing for.
- Writers should answer this question from the reader’s perspective, “How is this going to help me?”
3. How to write with the reader in mind

- Join the conversation that’s taking place in the mind of the reader.
- Do your research; get to know how they think, what words they use, etc.
- Learn to speak their language, so they say, “Wow, he really gets me!”
- Write for the individual, not for a crowd.
- Write conversationally. People want connect with you, not your ideas.

Ray’s 5 Step Outline for Writing Reader-Focused Content

“P-A-S-T-O-R”

1. **Problem**: What is the problem your blog post, product or service is going to solve for people?

2. **Amplify**: What will it cost me if I don’t make this purchase, take your advice, change my position, support your cause, etc.?

3. **Solution or Story**: How did you arrive at the solution? We don’t always have a story, but if you do have one, tell it here.

4. **Testify**: This is where you give evidence. “This worked for me, and I think it will work for you too.” Perhaps it worked for other people as well, share their testimonials here.

5. **Offer**: After truly coming to understand your reader, his pain and his problem, you offer your very best solution to solve that problem.

6. **Response**: This is what you would like your reader to do next. It could be answering a question, purchasing something, supporting a cause, etc.
4. Headlines

- The purpose of a headline is to sell someone on reading the rest of your post, ad, letter, etc.

- It needs to capture the reader’s attention and convince them to read what comes next.

**Headline mistakes**

1. Writing with yourself and not the reader in mind. Instead, ask, “What does this mean to your reader?”

2. Writing dry or academic headlines. People are attracted to emotions and benefits.

**Headline tips**

- Be concrete and specific. (Focus on the benefit and outcome.)

- Join the conversation happening inside the reader’s head rather than trying to shift the conversation.

**Headline examples**

- “Who else wants to [blank]?”

- Try the dominant-resident emotion headline:

  - If you know your audience and know what their dominant emotions are on a given topic, you can zero in on this.

**Headline inspiration**

- Check out Ray’s book, *Writing Riches* for some great ideas.

- Go to your local bookstore (or online) and read magazine cover slug lines.
Cosmo, Wired, Fast Company, Men's Health, Weekly World all feature great headlines. (Please Note: Some of these magazines occasionally feature slug lines and content that can be questionable. Please use your discretion when searching them for inspiration.)

5. Body copy

1. Try the If-Then Open
   - If you want ____________ then this is the most important letter/post/etc. you are going to read all year.

2. Answer the “why” question. Why should someone keep reading?


4. Make it skimmable, scannable and scrollable. (e.g., use subheads, bullet points and enumerated lists.) This has proven to get better results time after time.

5. Blog posts should be between 250-500 words, unless they need to be longer.

6. No blog post/ad/sales letter/article is too long, only too boring.

7. When using stories try to write in the first person. These are the most compelling.

6. SEO

   - Write first, evaluate SEO second.
   - Use the Scribe SEO plugin for Wordpress to automate the SEO process.
   - No amount of SEO can make up for bad writing.
   - Write interesting content and people will find it, share it, and your Google ranking will go up.
7. The close

- Help your readers put your information to practical use. “This is what you should do with this information...”

- Give a next step. (e.g., “Use this, explore this, buy this, do this task, answer this question.”

- Michael says platform-builders have a rare opportunity to move people to action and influence them. It is a sacred trust that writers have been given and he hates to think that someone would squander that at the end of a blog post or book by not giving a call to action, and not asking the reader to do something.

- Ray talked the four levels of content:
  1. Data
  2. Information
  3. Knowledge
  4. Wisdom (This is the goal.)

8. On resistance and Ray’s writing rituals

- Ray says the resistance shows up for him in:
  - Email
  - Organizing his desk
  - Planning how to be more productive
  - Procrastination

- He also says that the likelihood that he is going to write on a given day decreases with each passing hour.

- When he is in the flow, he:
• Writes first thing in the morning.
• Has a clear desk that is free of distractions.
• Has no books in his office.
• Writes in silence with no music, only headphones to signal that it's time to shut the world out and write.
• He writes for 50 minutes at a time, with ten minute breaks following these periods of intense writing. He can do a max of three blocks per day.
• He only reads and answers email at the end of the day. He turns off his auto-checker to make this possible.

9. Ray’s favorite writing tools
   • He uses a 13-inch Macbook Air.
   • Ray uses Pages, Byword, Text Wrangler and Scrivener.

To learn more about Ray Edwards:
   • Check out his blog at RayEdwards.com
   • Follow him on Twitter at @RayEdwards.
   • Buy his book, Writing Riches.
   • Learn about his soon-to-be-launched membership site Writing Riches. Ray will be providing new fill-in-the-blank copy templates each month. We can’t wait!