

Vikki's Copywriting Handbook

21 insider secrets
for creating copy
that captivates




communication
skills academy


refresh
marketing

Looking for proven,
powerful tactics to
supercharge your copy?

If so, you're in luck.
Because Vikki Maver –
one of Australia's
top copywriters –
is sharing 21 secrets
from her 21 years of
copywriting experience.

Whether you're a
seasoned pro or
sharpening your skills,
these battle-tested
tactics will transform
your copy and ignite
your creativity –
right away!

Where to find the good stuff

A message from Vikki	3
#1 You can't overuse the word YOU	4
#2 Break strict grammar conventions	5
#3 Stay obsessively focused	6
#4 Keep it in the positive	7
#5 Use 'good' repetition	8
#6 Write for ruthless scanners	9
#7 Exude confidence	10
#8 Be specific	11
#9 Add a little alliteration	12
#10 Beware the exclamation mark!	13
#11 Remove empty intensifiers	14
#12 Master the art of linking	15
#13 Use power words	16
#14 Write in the present tense	17
#15 Don't over-emphasise	18
#16 Never neglect the hook	19
#17 Follow a copywriting framework	20
#18 Pre-empt your reader's objections	21
#19 Use the rule of three	22
#20 Admit your weaknesses	23
#21 Finish strong	24
About Vikki Maver	25

A message from Vikki

You know that feeling when you stumble onto a piece of marketing that just gets you? It hooks your attention, resonates with relevance – and leaves you *wanting* to read every last word.

There's no magical formula behind this. (*Sorry.*) It's simply masterful copywriting.

Yet modern marketing is drowning in AI-generated goop and tired tropes. So it's time to break through the clutter and make people *care* about what you have to say.

That's why I've mined my 21 years of experience to share my most powerful copywriting secrets. With each one, you'll learn how to captivate (and hold) attention – to drive *action*.

Think of it as your personal playbook to craft messages that resonate with actual readers. Feel free to dip in and out as you write eDMs, blogs, landing pages, social posts and more.

No fluff. No filler. Just proven tactics that continue to power real results for our clients time and again.

Vikki



You can't overuse the word YOU

YOU really is the single most powerful word in the world of copywriting. That's because it:

- ▶ Forces you to place your reader centre stage and ask 'what's in it for them'
- ▶ Ensures your reader feels seen, relevant and understood
- ▶ Shows your reader you care about their needs, desires and pain points

Sometimes, even the simplest changes in your copy can make all the difference.



BEFORE

We will send promo codes to our existing customers.



AFTER

As an existing customer, you'll get a special promo code!

Break strict grammar conventions

Good copy isn't about following grammar rules to the letter. It's about sounding human.

Your goal is to mimic natural speech and achieve a conversational tone. The three little rule-breakers below also make your copy punchier by cutting the fluff and engaging your reader. Just like in a real conversation.

- ▶ Start sentences with conjunctions (And, But and So)
- ▶ End your sentences with prepositions (with, to, of and from)
- ▶ Employ plenty of fragmented (or partial) sentences

Sometimes, even the simplest changes in your copy can make all the difference.

BEFORE

Our new app, which has now launched, offers a range of features that help you stay organised. You can set reminders, track goals and collaborate with others all in one place. It's designed to save you time and make your day more productive.

AFTER

Our new app has launched. And it's packed with features to keep you organised. Set reminders, track goals and collaborate with others – everything you need in one place.

But the best part? It saves you time, so you can get more done, faster.

Stay obsessively focused

If you were to throw 10 tennis balls to someone at once, they'll catch none of them. If you throw just one? They're sure to catch it.

Your product or service probably has many benefits that you want to share with your audience. But that doesn't mean you should overload your reader.

Instead, keep your writing focused on one key message, such as:

- ▶ Your strongest benefit
- ▶ Your unique point of difference
- ▶ Your most compelling argument

BEFORE

Our eco-friendly water bottles are made from premium stainless steel. They're perfect for athletes, office workers or anyone on the go. With double-wall insulation, your drinks stay cold for 24 hours or hot for 12. Plus, they come in a variety of stylish colours and we offer free shipping for orders over \$50.

AFTER

Cold water all day long – no matter where life takes you! Our double-insulated bottles keep drinks cold for 24 hours. Perfect for active people who want hydration on the go.

Keep it in the positive

There are just a few copywriting tips based on psychology – but the overall message is a simple one: be positive!

More mental resources are needed to process negative framing, which reduces overall comprehension – and deflates your readers.



BEFORE

You will not be charged for any phone calls.



AFTER

Every phone call is free.

Use 'good' repetition

Repetition is a tried and tested method of driving home certain points.

It can draw more attention to your overall message and form coveted long-term memory links, which are essential to elicit action.

(But repetition of words or sentences isn't always welcome. It becomes bad when it makes the copy redundant and full of fluff.)



BEFORE

This course is a 100% hands-on course and has no lectures, exams or assessments.



AFTER

The course is 100% hands-on.
No lectures. No exams.
No assessments.

Write for ruthless scanners

Sorry to break it to you, but people don't read every precious word you write. They scan.

Let's face it. We're all impatient – and bombarded with content from every direction. So, if your copy isn't scannable, your key messages will get lost in a sea of text.

How do you write for scanners?

Here are some strategies to get you going:

- ▶ Craft a compelling headline or hook to seize attention
- ▶ Fall in love with white space – let your text BREATHE
- ▶ Keep your paragraphs (super) short
- ▶ Turn long sentences into bulleted lists
- ▶ Scatter with subheadlines to signpost longer pieces

Exude confidence

When your words show conviction, your audience pays attention. (If you're not confident in what you're saying, why should your reader be?)

Confident copy positions your brand as credible and worth following.

But confidence isn't just about bold claims. It's about writing with precision and clarity. So ditch any language that creates doubt – or slows down your message. Here's how:

- ▶ Write in the active voice
- ▶ Cut the filler words
- ▶ Ditch the hedging phrases



BEFORE

It is generally believed that our platform can be used to improve productivity.



AFTER

Our platform boosts productivity – overnight.

Be specific

Vague writing doesn't stick. If your copy is too broad, your message gets lost. And so does your reader's interest.

Specificity adds clarity, credibility – and makes your writing more persuasive and memorable. Your goal is to turn generic promises into sharp, actionable ideas that connect with your audience. Here's how:

- ▶ Use concrete numbers
- ▶ Include names and details
- ▶ Choose precise adjectives

Specific copy paints a clear picture. Your audience knows exactly what to expect and is more likely to trust (and act on) your message.

BEFORE

This amazing dog toy keeps pets entertained and is made from durable materials, so it lasts a long time wherever they play.

AFTER

Our chew-resistant ball will keep your pooch entertained while you're at work. It's tested to withstand 550+ chomps for the toughest of chewers. It's made from non-toxic rubber. And it won't crack, tear or fade – even after months of outdoor play in the sun.

Add a little alliteration

Alliteration is when you repeat the same sound at the start of two or more nearby words. Brands often use alliteration in their taglines – such as:

🔊) *Maybe it's Maybelline*

🔊) *Slip, Slop, Slap*

🔊) *Better buy Bega*

Yes, they're fun to say. But more than that, alliterations are a go-to tool for crafting memorable, mood-driven copy – because they:

- ✔ Catch the eye
- ✔ Stick in memory
- ✔ Set the tone (soft sounds like 'S' and 'M' are soothing, while hard sounds like 'B' and 'K' convey intensity – as shown in the two examples below)

SOOTHING



BEFORE

Our candles smell amazing and create a relaxing mood.



AFTER

Our candles bring a soft, soothing and serene glow to your space.

INTENSE



BEFORE

Our grill is powerful and cooks food quickly.



AFTER

Our grill delivers a bold, blazing and blistering heat.

Beware the exclamation mark!

Exclamation marks can inject excitement into your copy. But tread carefully.

Using exclamation marks is like adding pepper to a dish. Too much of it will overpower every other flavour and result in no one enjoying the meal! 😞

So use them sparingly – and for emphasis only.

You might use them to:

- ✔ Convey genuine excitement about an offer, event or product
- ✔ Encourage immediate action and add urgency
- ✔ Highlight a big win or milestone

Otherwise, delete them – and use powerful words instead.



BEFORE

Our sale is amazing!!!



AFTER

Discover jaw-dropping deals on our best-sellers.

Remove empty intensifiers

Empty intensifiers – words like very, really, absolutely or extremely – add noise without meaning. Instead of amplifying your copy, they water it down.

Here's why you should ditch them:

- ✘ They TELL instead of SHOW
- ✘ They make your copy weaker, not stronger
- ✘ They waste precious space and dilute your impact

So, replace intensifiers with precise, powerful language that paints a vivid picture.

✘ BEFORE

It's a great course.

✔ AFTER

This course is a staff favourite – a 100% sell-out every year.

Master the art of linking

Links in your copy are more than just URLs. They're pathways for your audience to take action, learn more or engage with your content.

But how you present links can make or break their effectiveness.

- ✔ **Make links actionable:** Use active, compelling phrases to describe the action readers will take. Instead of 'Click here' – try 'Learn more about our courses'.
- ✔ **Keep anchor text specific:** Generic phrases like 'here' or 'this link' can feel lazy. Instead, craft anchor text that clearly conveys the link's value.
- ✔ **Limit the links:** Don't overload your copy with too many links. Focus on quality over quantity and prioritise the most relevant actions.

A strong link doesn't just tell readers where to go. It shows them what they'll gain by clicking.

BEFORE

[Click here](#) to book into our workshop.

AFTER

[Book your spot](#) in our workshop today.

Use power words

Power words are emotionally charged words that grab attention, inspire action – and make your copy irresistible.

Why do they work?

Because they tap into universal human emotions and what people care about most – whether that's solving a problem, finding happiness or avoiding pain.

Use power words:

- ✔ In headlines: to create curiosity or excitement.
- ✔ In body copy (sparingly): to emphasise key points and stir emotion.
- ✔ To match the emotion of how you want your reader to FEEL (safe? excited? curious?).



BEFORE

Our program helps you save money.



AFTER

Steal our secrets to unstoppable savings.

Write in the present tense

Why tell your reader what you did yesterday – when you can tell them what you’re doing TODAY?

Writing in the present tense pulls readers into the here and now, bringing your copy to life, creating immediacy and excitement. It also:

- ✔ Creates urgency, driving fast decisions
- ✔ Adds energy, pulling readers into the action
- ✔ Enhances relevance, aligning your message with your audience’s current needs

The future and past have their place. But the present is where persuasion lives.



BEFORE

We offered discounts during our holiday sale.



AFTER

We offer unbeatable discounts during our holiday sales.



BEFORE

Customers raved about our exceptional service.



AFTER

Customers rave about our exceptional service.

Don't over-emphasise

When everything screams for attention, nothing truly stands out.

Overusing bold, italics, colours or highlights in your copy is like shouting every word in a conversation. It overwhelms your audience and dilutes your message.

Here's how to pair good copy with intentional design:

- ✓ Decide what's most important and emphasise just that.
- ✓ Use a clear visual hierarchy to guide your readers naturally.
- ✓ Keep it simple – less clutter means more clarity.

And remember: whitespace is your best friend – it helps your message breathe and shine.



BEFORE

Our **NEW** product is **OUT NOW!!!** It's **REVOLUTIONARY, INCREDIBLE,** and the **BEST YOU'LL EVER FIND!**



AFTER

Discover our new product – a revolutionary way to simplify your life.

Never neglect the hook

A hook is the attention-grabbing opening of your copy that reels your audience in. Without it, even the most polished copy risks going unread.

A strong hook speaks to your audience's needs, piques curiosity – and sets the tone for the rest of your message. To write an effective hook, you must:

- ✔ **Understand your audience:**
What keeps your audience up at night? Determine their goals, pain points and desires – and address these directly.
- ✔ **Keep it short and focused:**
Hooks work best when they're sharp and specific. Don't overwhelm readers. Intrigue them.
- ✔ **Start strong with emotion:**
Stir excitement, curiosity or urgency right out of the gate.

3 powerful hook types

- 1 Ask a question that resonates deeply with your audience.
- 2 Start with a quick, relatable story to set the stage for your message.
- 3 Share a surprising statistic or fact to intrigue your audience.



BEFORE

Our course can help improve your marketing skills and boost conversions.



AFTER

Struggling to write headlines that actually get clicks? Discover how our course helps marketers like you turn words into results.

Follow a copywriting framework

Powerful copy doesn't happen by chance. It's built on proven frameworks that guide your writing and maximise its impact.

Google 'popular copywriting formulas' and you will be inundated with options and ideas. But, in my experience, one formula is a standout.

The PAS formula: Pain, Agitate, Solve

This simple yet powerful structure focuses on your audience's problems. Heightens their urgency. And positions your solution as the hero.

- 1 **PAIN:** Identify your audience's problem – the specific issue they face to build relatability and demonstrate understanding.
- 2 **AGITATE:** Dive deeper into the frustration, inefficiency or missed opportunities caused by the pain point.
- 3 **SOLVE:** Show how your offering resolves the issue effectively and quickly.

The best things about PAS are its simplicity and versatility. You can use it easily in your eDMs, social copy, sales pages and even pitches.



BEFORE

Our fitness program includes unique workouts and expert guidance to help you get in shape.



AFTER

Pain: Struggling to stay active and energised with your busy schedule?

Agitate: The daily grind leaves you drained and squeezing in time for fitness feels impossible – let alone knowing what actually works.

Solve: Our fitness program fits seamlessly into your life, offering efficient, guided workouts that keep you energised and feeling your best.

Pre-empt your reader's objections

Every potential customer has doubts.

- 🤔 Is this worth it?
- 🤔 Will it work for me?
- 🤔 What if something goes wrong?

If you ignore these concerns, you risk losing their trust and attention. By addressing objections head-on, you build confidence and remove barriers to action.

Here's how to do it:

- ✅ Understand your reader's top concerns or hesitations about your product or service. Common objections include price, time, risk or relevance.
- ✅ Use your copy to acknowledge and resolve these concerns – using transparency to build trust.
- ✅ Show how your offering overcomes the issue by flipping the narrative to make your solution more appealing.

It's all about seamlessly weaving answers into your copy to make the benefits shine while neutralising doubts.



BEFORE

Sign up for our online course and start learning today!



AFTER

Worried about fitting learning into your busy schedule? Our online course is designed for flexibility, letting you learn at your own pace, anytime, anywhere. And if it's not for you, enjoy a 30-day money-back guarantee. No questions asked.

Use the rule of three

Welcome to this timeless principle in communication, storytelling and persuasion. It's based on a simple truth:

Humans process and remember information better in patterns of three!

Why? Because three is the smallest number that forms a satisfying rhythm and conveys a complete message. This makes it incredibly effective for writing copy that sticks!

Three ways to use the rule of three:

- ✔ **Write 3-part lists:** Highlight three key points to make your message clear and digestible.
- ✔ **Use triadic sentence structures:** Add rhythm and impact by grouping ideas into three parallel elements.
- ✔ **Structure stories or arguments in threes:** Stories with a setup, conflict and resolution resonate deeply. Similarly, arguments with three key points feel complete and persuasive.

Whenever you want to make your copy memorable, concise and persuasive, ask yourself: How can I say this in threes?

✘ BEFORE

Our restaurant offers delicious food with fast service.

✔ AFTER

Our restaurant offers expertly crafted dishes, speedy service and a cosy atmosphere perfect for unwinding.

Admit your weaknesses

Being persuasive isn't just about shouting your strengths. It's about earning trust.

Acknowledging your limitations demonstrates honesty, relatability and confidence – making your audience more likely to believe the promises you DO make.

Here's how to apply this approach:

- ✔ Be transparent about challenges upfront instead of letting readers imagine the worst.
- ✔ Frame the weakness in a way that highlights your commitment or values.
- ✔ Acknowledge the downside – then pivot to what makes your offering worthwhile.

Admitting a flaw makes your claims more believable. After all, we all know that no product or service is perfect.

BEFORE

Our eco-friendly packaging is perfect for any situation.

AFTER

Our eco-friendly packaging isn't waterproof, so it's not ideal for heavy rain. But for reducing plastic waste in everyday use, it's a sustainable choice you can feel great about.

Finish strong

Use your closing words to leave a lasting impression and inspire action. Whether it's an email, ad or sales page, a weak finish can undo all the work of your opening hook and engaging copy.

So be sure you always end strong to ensure your reader remembers you – and takes the next step.

- ✔ **Craft a clear call to action (CTA):** Tell your reader exactly what to do next – and make it irresistible.
- ✔ **Reinforce the key benefit:** Remind your reader of the value they'll get by taking action.
- ✔ **Add a memorable close:** Leave your audience with a positive emotion or a thought-provoking statement.

Never let your copy fizzle out. A strong close isn't just an ending. It's a springboard to action.

BEFORE

Thank you for reading. Click the link to learn more.

AFTER

Don't wait to take control of your health. Start today and see the difference in just 30 days. Join now!



About Vikki Maver

Vikki is the Founder of two businesses: Refresh Marketing (RM), Australia's longest-running copywriting agency – and Communication Skills Academy (CSA), a dedicated communications training business.

With qualifications in psychology and marketing, Vikki was a senior marketer in the corporate world for over a decade before becoming a copywriter and then embarking on her entrepreneurship journey in 2003.

Since 2008, Vikki has also been Australia's leading writing skills trainer. She is the trainer of choice for some of the world's leading brands, including Ralph Lauren, GE, AMP, Nine and McDonald's.

After the successful launch of CSA in 2024, Vikki is more dedicated than ever to enhancing the clarity and impact of workplace communications nationwide.



CSA is a dedicated training business. In a world where AI is doing more of the heavy lifting, CSA is all about arming professionals with killer communication skills.

Want even more copywriting nuggets?

Enrol in our public copywriting course today. Or upskill your entire copy and content team with a tailored inhouse course.

[Public Course](#)

[Team Course](#)



RM is Australia's longest-running copywriting agency. Our talented team crafts copy that connects with readers, builds brands and grows businesses.

Otherwise, turn to the experts!

The copywriters at RM can create a content strategy and craft copy for your business. Let's chat about your content needs.

[Copywriting Services](#)