



HERE COMES THE CAVALRY

Top ten tips for writing a headline

1. Start with a clear central message

Before you write a headline, you need a clear idea of what it is you want to communicate. Keep this as single-minded and straightforward as possible.

2. Aim to dramatise the message and bring it to life

See how succinctly you can capture the essence of the proposition you set out to communicate. Don't just state the facts – try to communicate a sense of benefit or risk to the reader.

3. Review and cut

If your headline is longer than seems comfortable, then cut. The challenge is to use the minimum number of words necessary to get your idea across.

4. Think of the context

If the headline is accompanied by an image, it may be that the picture tells part of the story. This allows you to be more economical with the text.

5. Think of the medium

If you're writing a subject line of an email, remember that only the first 35 characters are likely to appear in a smartphone inbox. Don't waste those early words.

6. Consider splitting your headline

Sometimes there's more impact if you split a headline into two parts. It's more dramatic. And memorable.

7. Be cautious with word play

There is nothing better than a good play on words and nothing worse than a bad one. Unless your clever use of language is helping to convey your core idea, then tread carefully.

8. Read your headline out loud

Listen to the sound and rhythm of the line you've created. If it's too much of a mouthful to say, it's probably not that easy to read either.

9. Test it

Don't be shy. Try your headline out on colleagues and gauge their reaction. Or, if you're using email or AdWords, test it scientifically against alternatives.

10. Repeat the process

To find a good headline, you may need to create a *lot* of headlines. Give yourself some choice and try tackling the challenge in different ways.

Interested in developing your copywriting skills? Here Comes The Cavalry runs tailored workshops for groups of marketing and communications professionals across the UK and Europe. To discuss how we could help your business, call +44 (0) 7749 988500 or email training@herecomesthecavalry.com

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