THE BASICS OF CONTENT
& COPY WRITING

—

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

SOUTH
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COPY WRITING VS CONTENT WRITING

WHAT IS CONTENT & COPY WRITING

The words 'content' and 'copy writing' get thrown around a lot these days. So what is the difference?

COPY WRITING

Copy writing is another word for marketing writing and is essentially any writing done purely for marketing purposes. This is the words that populate your 'about' page on your website, the words used to describe your tour or product on your website, ATDW listing and social media bios. Think of it as words written to sell something.
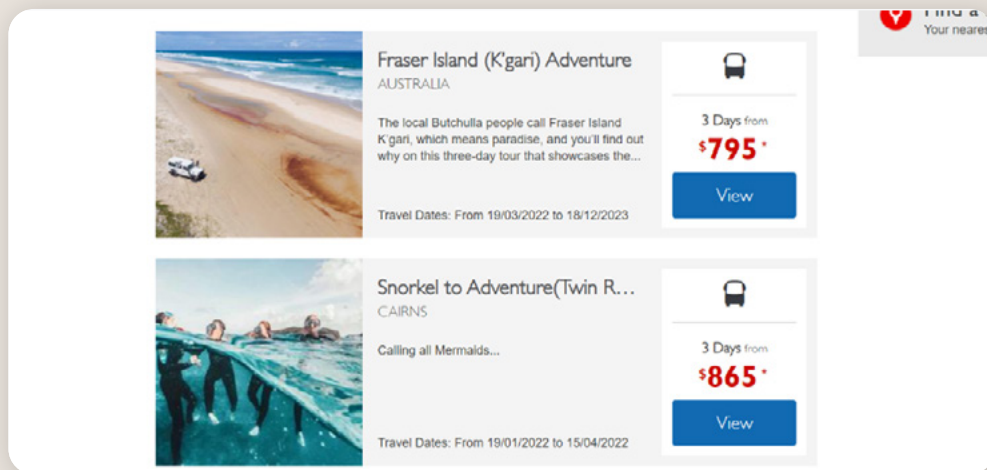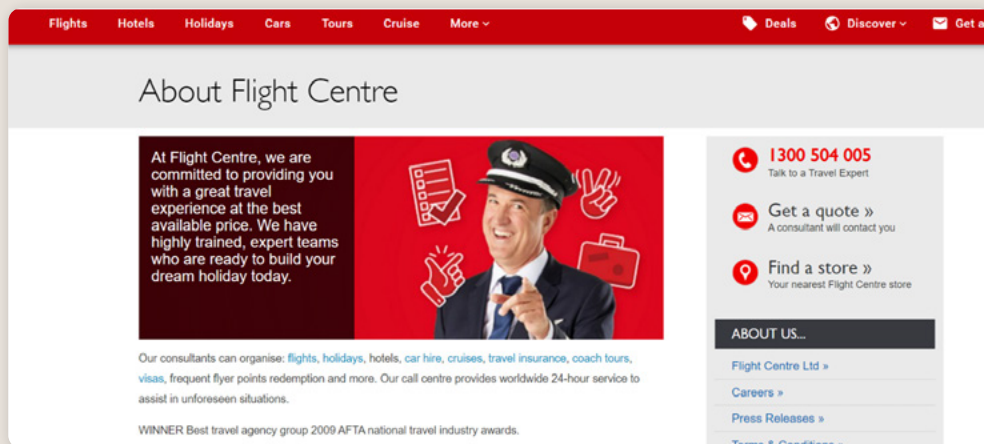

CONTENT WRITING

Is more specialised and harder to measure. This is the content you write and create to build a relationship and trust with a customer. It's not explanatory text, it's not a hard sell – it's aspirational. It is words written to engage people, to inspire and inform. 99% of the time this is an article, blog post or a long form descriptive caption on a social media post. You use content writing in the same vein as general content creation – to create an emotive connection to your brand (hopefully positive!) and to provide authority to your offering. Calls to action, product descriptions and promotional offers should not be obvious statements in content writing. Content writing is subtle, from the heart and without an obvious agenda. Copy writing is for sales talk.
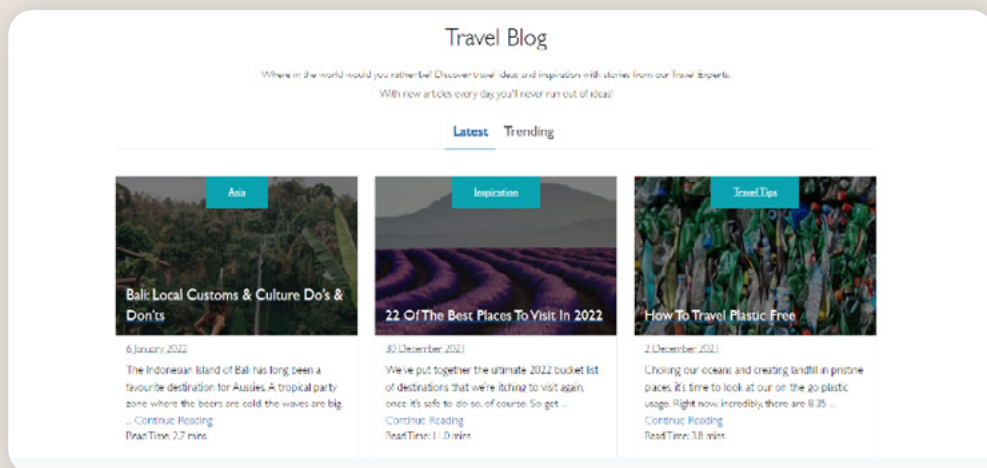
WHY DO YOU NEED BOTH?

To populate any marketing materials such as websites, brochures, or product offerings with words – you will need a copy writer. Someone to describe your product, write out that review and essentially "fill in the gaps." To engage with your audience, create an impression online and build relationships that will have them rebooking again and again – you need quality content and that is the job of a content writer. Having both satisfies your sales and marketing needs while building a clear brand that communicates your professionalism and excellence at what you do.

Example: *Flight centre have used a copy writer to describe their tour products (such as an ATDW listing), while they have engaged content writers to populate their travel blog.*

THE BASICS OF CONTENT WRITING

We've compiled the five key steps to consider when curating content, to ensure that it meets the needs of your audience and captures your unique brand and tone of voice.

1. RESEARCH & AUDIENCE

Any article you write, or engage someone to write, should be informed by research. This can come in a variety of forms such as audience insights from Google Analytics and social media, shopping and sales habits from your customers, keyword research, Google trends and even feedback, questions and queries from customers are a great way to understand their needs and behaviours.

Consider questions such as:

- What is your data about your customer telling you?
- Do you know the popular search terms people are looking for that leads them to your business?
- Have you considered current travel trends and how your business might fit into this?
- Does your page or blog have a clear focus topic? Why are you writing this?

Keep your finger on the pulse by actively making a habit of looking at what other travel blogs, websites or tourism operators are creating and writing – could this be adapted to fit your needs?

Audience & Purpose

Before you begin writing, it's important to consider who you are writing for and the purpose of the piece of copy being produced. Remembering, copy and content are produced to meet the right audience at the right time, on the right channels.

Knowing who your audience is and who your target audience is, will help identify the tone and words used, so consider:

- Who is your target audience?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- If you're looking to start a blog, is that blog for existing customers, for potential customers, or both? Who is going to read it and how regularly are you going to post content?

Social Media

When writing content for social media, consider the demographics of your account. If you have a business account, you can see insights to give you more information to see who is engaging with your content, from where in the world and when.
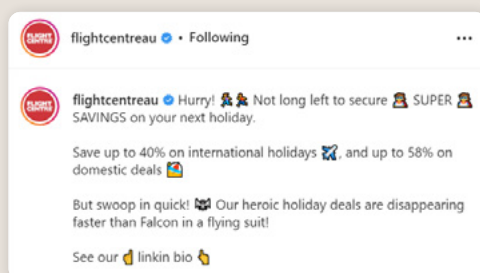
Copy writing on social media

Content writing on social media

2. DEFINE YOUR TONE

To build a continuous relationship with your customers, one that has an emotional connection and makes them feel like they know you, your business and what your business stands for (known as your business personality and soul), you need to ace your tone of voice.

Not how loud you are speaking, but the style with which you write. More often a casual, to the point tone of voice suits most small businesses ie. Writing from the perspective of a close friend giving advice.

Want to be an authority on a certain topic? Don't be afraid to make statements, but back them up with your research.

The tone of voice helps define your business personality and what the business stands for, the same way your personality traits define who you are as a person. Overtime, your brand personality helps to build your brand identity.

For example, Qantas have a clear brand message and identity, they are the 'spirit of Australia'. How is this weaved in through their copy and content writing? You can pick up this "tone" on their website through their language. Notice the use of the following words:

- Dreaming (close to spirit)
- Journey
- Believe
- Spacious
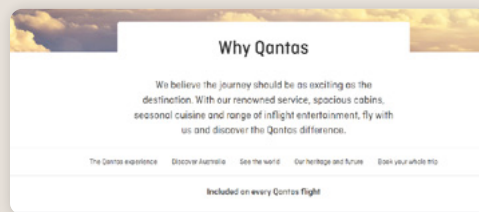
3. ANSWER THE QUESTION

Every piece of content you write should be answering a question for someone.

If you offer a tour or experience, maybe that is 'what you can expect during a tour with us,' or if it's accommodation, maybe you are putting together a 'top 10 things to do in XX region while staying with us.'

The information should be additional to the copy you have already provided on the website and should be written for the consumer/customer and not for your business interest ie. You are not trying to obviously sell them something with this, but rather help them out. Think of it like the difference between going to a car salesman for help with selling your car (copywriting on your website – clearly trying to sell you something, give you information about a particular product) and asking a close friend who collects cars their opinion on the best way to sell your car (More impartial, the best interests of the reader is being considered – this is content writing).

Blog content that works well:

• Itineraries
• Top 5/10 lists
• Bucket list trips and must dos!

If you're stuck for blog ideas, often a great source are the questions that consumers are regularly asking – 'Hey, where's the best place to grab coffee around here?' 'We're staying here for 3 days, is there anything you recommend as must dos whilst we're in the area?'

Answer the public is also a free resource that allows you to discover what people are asking about different topics. This paired with your own keyword research and insights is a game changer.
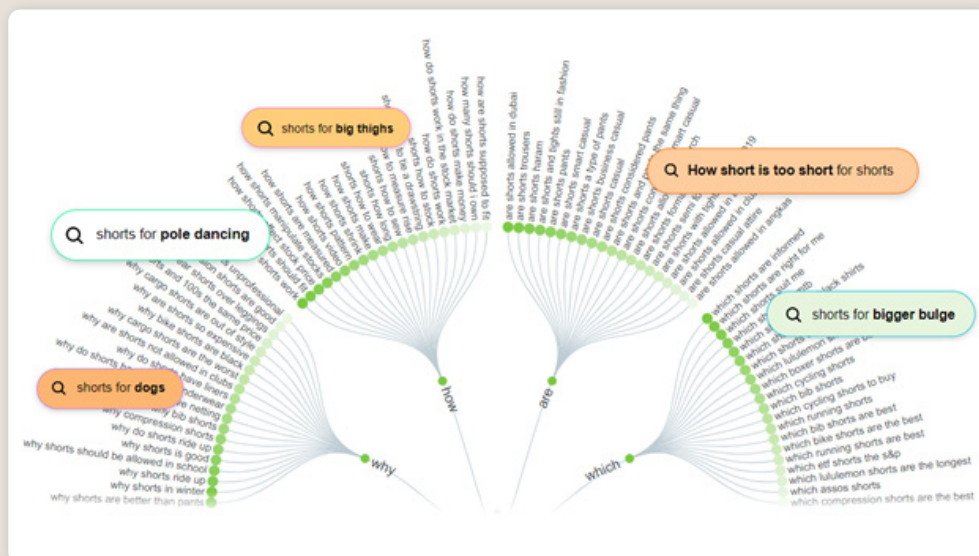
4. ENGAGING HEADLINE & FIRST PARAGRAPHS

All your headlines should be intertwined with keywords that will help your content appear in search.

Keyword research can be undertaken with a marketing company, and helps you learn what people are searching for on search engines such as Google.

The first paragraph of your blog should get people hooked and give them a reason to keep reading. Answer the basics in the first three sentences – who, what, where, when and why. Or as many of them that are applicable.

Break up your blog with subheadings to make the journey of reading and consuming your content easier. This will also help optimize your content for search engines. Content also performs best when accompanied by high-res imagery that gives people a sense of place and character. These methods are called 'content delivery variation' and help optimize your content in a digital space.

Consider the below when building your content:

- Try and use the target keyword throughout your writing
- Keep your title between 40-60 characters long
- Keep the description section of your page / blog to 120-155 characters long
- To best optimize your content for SEO, try and reach at least 600 words

5. PROOFREADING

It is always best to proofread your work, and/or have someone proofread your work before putting it out there for the world to see. Spelling and grammar mistakes will undermine your professionalism.

Word comes with inbuilt proof-reading software, or there is an online writing assistant called Grammarly that will proof your document and give you tips on clarity, correctness, and engagement. This is a digital tool and is not going to know your audience and tone of voice the way you do, so take the suggestions with a pinch of salt.

Quick questions to guide you

- What platform am I writing this content for? A blog? Social media?
- Why am I writing this content – do I have a clear focus topic?
- Is this topic answering a question for my audience, tapping into a current travel trend or otherwise add value to what I am doing as a business?
- Do I have a clear focus audience? Who are they?
- What do I want my tone of voice to be? Am I going to achieve this by hiring a content writer, or having the same person writing my content consistently to maintain this tone of voice across my content?
- Have I researched search trends, terms and keywords? What keyword am I going to use in this content so that it is search friendly?
- Have I used this keyword throughout my content?
- Have I checked that the title, meta tags, description and architecture of the content (ie headlines, images) are presenting well for readers, make my content easy to digest and optimized for search engines?
- Have I checked the URL of my website page or blog and made sure that it is simple and easy to read for people?
- Does this URL use that same target keyword you have identified so that search engines can find it?

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