

NCVS Sustainable Pathfinder

Essential Copywriting

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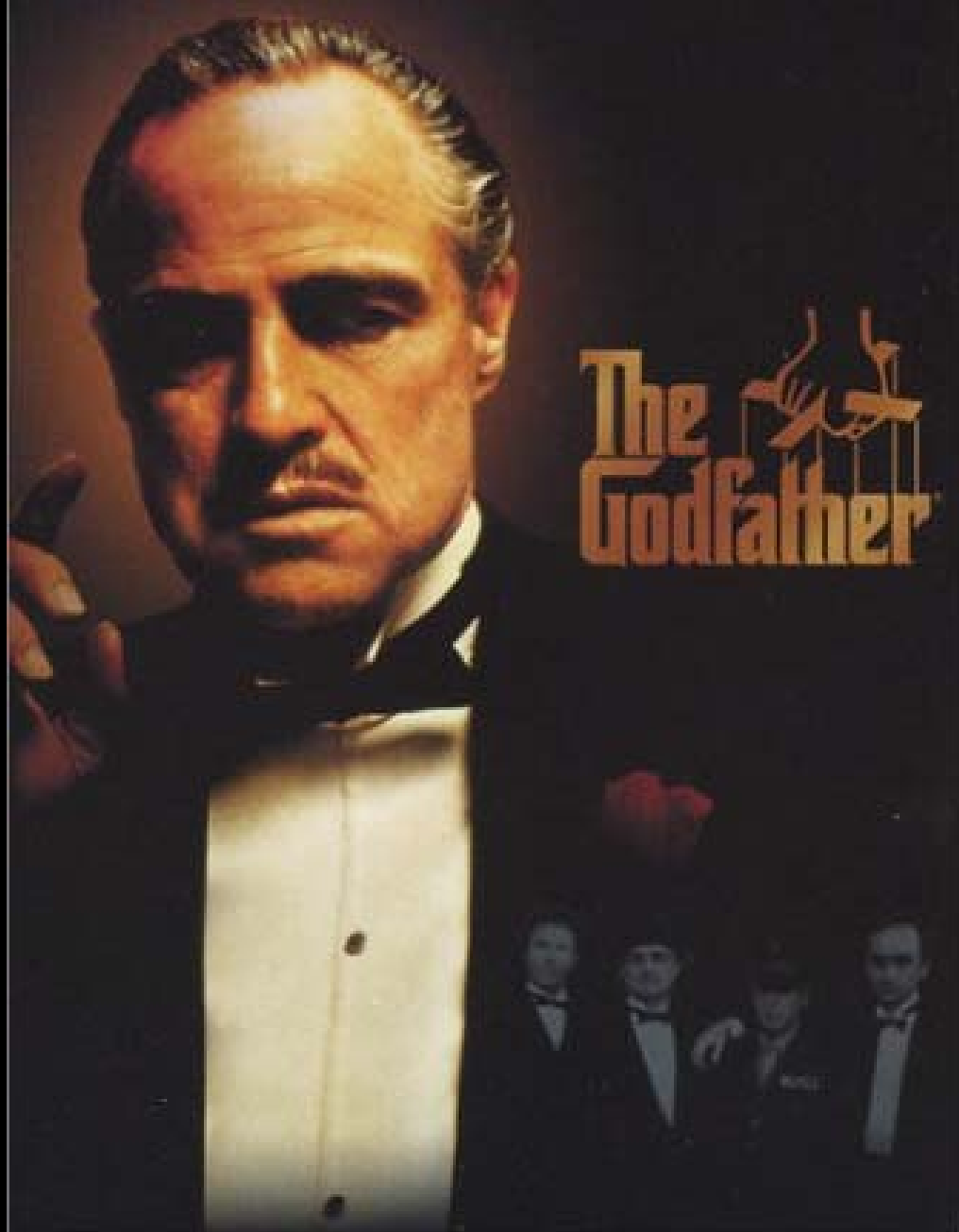
Online publishing from start to finish

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What is
effective
copywriting?



Essential copywriting

Writing in the real world

Writing for formats

Persuasive writing

Prewriting

Prewriting

1. Understand your **message**
2. Understand your **audience**

Prewriting: your message

USP

URJ

VMV

Segment your audience



Welcome to the USDA Farm Service Agency **Hay Net** website.

FSA has developed this website for producers to list information concerning the need for hay or the availability of hay. Please select the appropriate link below:

[Need Hay](#)

[Have Hay](#)

Create personas [1]

What do I safely know about my readers?

What do I safely know about the circumstances in which my message will be seen?

Build up folder with real-life encounters, testimonials, quotes, complaints

Personas [2]

Give them concrete motivations

Professional needs, fears, wants

- Status
- Money
- Security
- Do a better job

Personas [3]

Personal needs, desires, fears

- Effort
- Risk and worry
- Embarrassment, loss of face, criticism
- Ill-health
- Waste of time
- ...and more besides

Personas [4]

Visualize their environment

- ◆ What time is it?
- ◆ Where are they?
- ◆ How long have they been there?
- ◆ How did they arrive?
- ◆ What else can they hear/see?
- ◆ What have they just finished doing?
- ◆ What are they going to do next?
- ◆ What else are they doing (talking to other people, eating breakfast...)?

Personas [5]

Understand the buying process

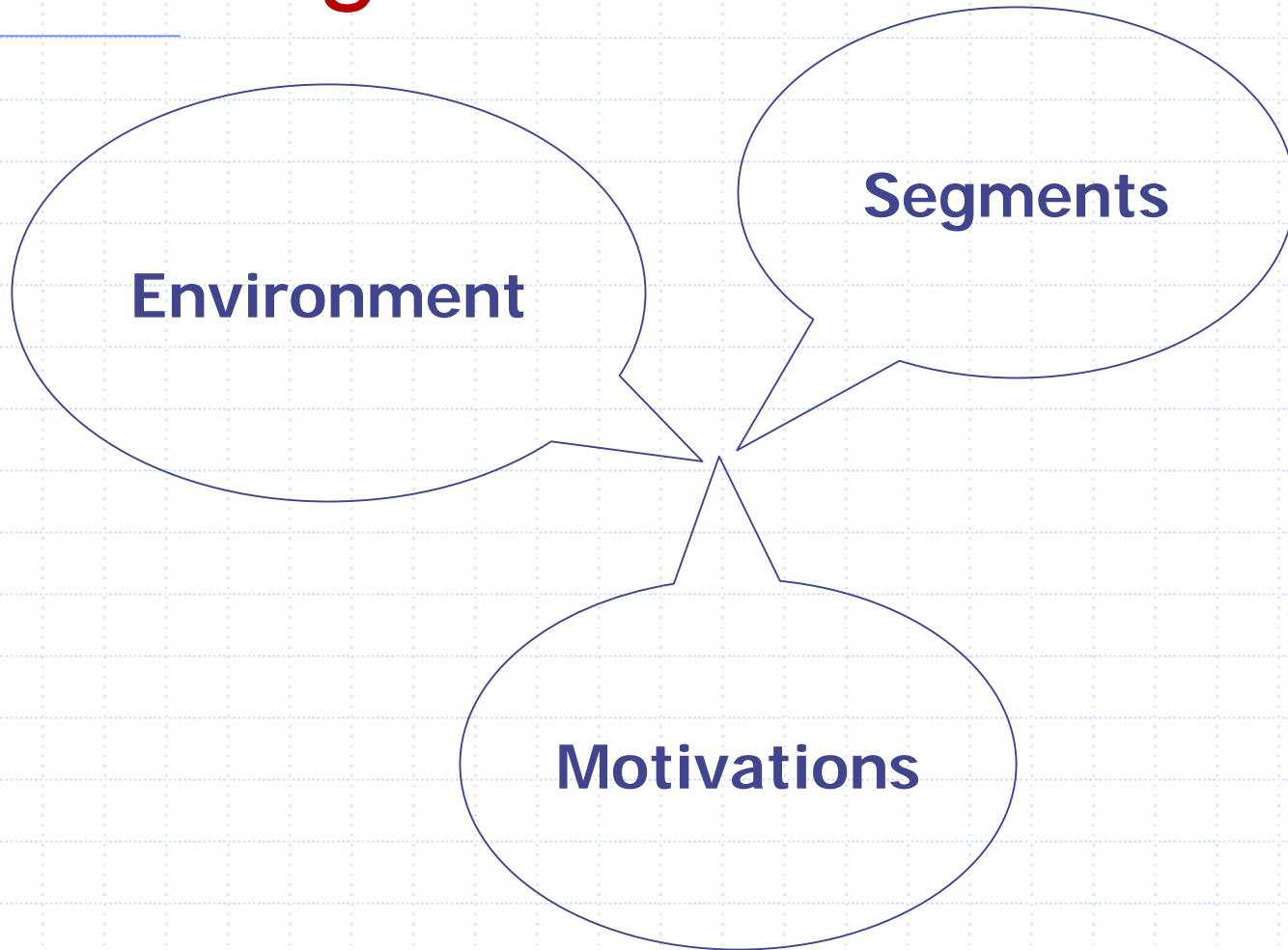
- ◆ Who else is involved?
- ◆ Who pays, or authorizes payment?

Create personas [6]

◆ Safety first

- Beware of being patronising
- Beware of assumptions
- Use the “across the table” test
- Keep revising

Prewriting



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Persuasive writing

1. Beat the blank page blues
2. Create rough draft
3. Organise into persuasive structure
4. Apply the 7 transformations
5. Increase impact
6. Check quality

Beat the blank page blues

Write down:

- ◆ Call to action!
- ◆ Who, where, what, how, when
- ◆ How much, ISBN, contact details

You now have a rough draft.

Persuasion

You have
persuaded
me



AIDA

A persuasive structure: AIDA

Attention

- Role of (sub)headings, graphics etc

Interest

- Plenty of benefits
- Clear proposition

Desire

- Offers – “free!”, volume discounts...

Action

- Call to action is a *command*
- Ideally, should be able to obey there and then!

Another persuasive structure

The story:

- ◆ Hook
- ◆ Conflict
- ◆ Pay-off

Seven transformations

Me → you

Features → benefits

General → specific

Timeless → urgent

Negative → positive

Passive → active

Closed → open

Me → you

Me (us): centred on your organisation/
your product

You (them): centred on the prospect and
the benefits to them

Features → benefits

Feature: aspect of product

“Every route is accompanied by a colour map.”

Benefit: match with need

“Detailed colour maps make it easy for you to find the right turning, **so** you can relax and enjoy the view.”

General → specific

General: trying to appeal to everyone

Specific

- Focusing on the real prospects (personas)
- Applying a single creative idea consistently
- Identify features specifically
“Chapter six will show you how other people have approached...”

Timeless → urgent

Timeless: *But why should I act now?*

“Order now using the coupon below.”

Urgent: compelling reason to act now

“Order before X to earn an extra discount.”

Negative → positive

Negative: “dis...”, “mis...” and “un...”
“You won’t be disappointed...”

Positive: “will”, “can”, “now”, “free”
“You’ll have every reason to to be pleased...”

Passive → active

Passive: less fluent, longer

“Examples are also given of how ICT development can be encouraged by trustees supporting managers.”

Active: direct, punchy

“Chapter Six contains real examples of how other trustees have encouraged ICT development by supporting managers.”

“Read real-life case studies of trustees supporting managers and encouraging ICT development.”

Closed → open

Closed: answered “yes”/”no”

“Do you want information and support to help your organisation run more effectively?”

Open: tickle reader’s curiosity so they read on

“How can you run your organisation more effectively?”

Impact



Saxons

Think like a Saxon

Short

Everyday

Concrete

Earthy

Saxon

Verbs!

<http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/A-Z.html>

Think like a Saxon [2]

Cut word count:

Think like a Saxon [3]

Avoid:

- ◆ Verbing a noun
- ◆ Nouns as verbs
- ◆ Indigestible noun chunks
- ◆ “-Ing”-ing

Be concise

- ◆ Bullets and lists
- ◆ Chop noun clumps
- ◆ Sufficient, not comprehensive

Quality control

AIM

Knowing when to
stop!

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Formats

Newsletters

Brochures

Emails

Flyers

Direct mail

Websites

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Copywriting in the real world

Space and time

Writing for reuse

Feedback

Simple or simplistic?

Other people's words

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