Case Study Copywriting

- It's Time To Go With the Flow!

Case study copywriting is all about delivering the ultimate testimonial. Why then would a company want to devalue one of its biggest assets by writing case studies that are little more than formulaic lists of sub-headings?

Surely it makes for a better read if the text is free-flowing and more like an article than a recipe? The addition of quotes at the appropriate stage will further humanise what is a very human marketing tool.

One of the main reasons for taking the 'formulaic' approach towards case study copywriting must be that it makes life easier for whoever is tasked with the job. Writing a free-form case study is no job for an amateur copywriter!

The 'writing-by-numbers' approach does have the benefit of making sure that all the important bits are included and the reader can scan the piece quickly. Unfortunately, it won't engage or enthuse them - which is clearly the object of the exercise.

An editorial-style case study can, and probably should, be broken down with the use of two or three sub-heads, depending on the length of the piece. The best way to avoid the 'bullet-point' type of case study and introduce a more journalistic style to the process is to make sure

the writer has all the facts available before a single word is written. It is then a simple matter to check if anything has been missed out after a first draft has been written.

So what's the best way to acquire all the facts needed to write a convincing and appealing case study? It goes without saying that a business-to-business case study must contain all the right facts about the product or service being discussed.

The user benefits must be prominent in the text - and that doesn't just mean the benefits that are available to any and every customer or client. It's crucial to highlight how the 'mainstream' benefits generated even more value and rewards for the needs of the client in question.

A case study copywriter has several ways of acquiring the information needed - personal or telephone interviews, for instance, are a good starting point, as is looking at marketing literature and the company website. For writers who are less confident of their on-the-hoof journalistic prowess, a foolproof way of sourcing similar information is to use a standard questionnaire.

These are popular with both writers and clients alike. For writers, they know that all responses will be pre-qualified by a customer who may not be very good at answering questions in a live situation. The questionnaire gives customers time to think, and removes the pressures of artificial scenarios.

Completed questionnaires also form a secondary starting point for supplementary questions which may not otherwise have arisen in a time-limited interview situation. By providing prompts, a more natural flow of ideas and opinions will follow.

It shouldn't be forgotten either that questionnaires provide a permanent record of what's been discussed, and may even be useful at a later date to provide facts for a similar case study from the same source.

It's an often-overlooked fact, but anyone coming to the task of case study copywriting armed with accurate, first-hand information will find their job much easier. More importantly, a free-flowing case study that includes a human dimension will always be more effective as the 'ultimate testimonial'.

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