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## TIPS FOR WRITING EFFECTIVE HEADLINES

Headlines serve the purpose of getting the attention of the reader. With a good headline, the reader gets intrigued to read the article, brochure, newsletter or ad. There are many techniques employed to produce effective headlines.

Create such a headline that it creates curiosity to the reader. This can be done by asking a provocative question or by making a seemingly outrageous statement in the headline. Using word play, alliteration and take-off on familiar phrases helps in creating eye-catching and amusing headlines. It is always better to avoid ambiguity as if the headline turns out to be difficult for the reader to read it is most likely that he or she may not read it at all!

The headline has to be coined in such a way that it provides an answer to the reader asking "What's in it for me?" Mention the primary benefit the reader gets from reading the article. Maybe, you could provide a solution to a common problem through the headline. Always keep the headline as sweet and short as possible. The ideal length for headlines is seven words or less. This is because shorter headlines are punchier and easier to read.

Never lie to your customers through the headline. It is very important that you provide an article that is befitting to the headline of the article. This is because on reading the headline, the reader will be expecting a story, and if the story produced is something completely different, it is most likely that the reader will feel cheated. Make sure that the first word of the headline is capitalized, as should all the other proper nouns in the headline. Do not develop the habit of capitalizing every word, as the uniformity of the headline is then lost.

The most effective headlines have been proven to be those that have logical sentence structures, active voice and strong present tense verb. It is the good verbs that always drive good headlines. Make it a habit of locating the headline of an article flush to the left of the page, unless otherwise mentioned. All headlines should use present tense for immediate past information, past tense for past perfect while future tense is used for coming events. The punctuation format of headlines is basically normal. Periods should be used for abbreviations only and single quotes should be used where double quotes would be used in copy. Make it a point to never split verb pieces in between lines of the headlines or ending lines with prepositions. This makes the headlines look untidy. Keep these pointers in mind, and proceed in producing effective headlines for your articles!

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