



The Biggest Writing Mistake

Small Business
Owners Make

by Gail Clanton



Dear Fellow Small Business Owner,

I've seen your e-letters, your social media posts, your ads, your newsletters, and your web site copy.

I know that you're working really hard to get your message out and to get the clients, sponsors, attendees, and supporters you need to reach your next level of success.

I also know you're not getting the response you deserve.

Keep reading and I'll tell you why.

Gail Clanton

The Biggest Writing Mistake Small Business Owners Make

As a small business owner, you're super excited about what you do, right? Honestly, you *have* to be in order to squeeze in the hours to do all that you need to get done. With job, family, and community responsibilities, running a small business is difficult.

But here's the hard truth...

Your audience is *not* excited about your business. In fact, they don't care about it all.

*"The first step
in being financially
successful is
knowing
you can be."*

Tony Robbins

This may be a hard pill to swallow, but think about it this way: There are many businesses out there that don't interest you one bit. They may be great entities, but because they don't "scratch your itch" or meet you where you are right now, you find it easy to ignore them. So you do. And that's my point...

The biggest mistake small business owners make in their writing is that they don't create a message that meets the needs of their audience; instead, they write based upon what excites them about their business.

It's a common mistake, I see it all the time.

But here's what you need to know...

In order to make your product, event, or service appear worthwhile and desirable, you have to present it in a way that solves at least one of your audience's most pressing problems. You have to immediately get their heads nodding, wanting to know more about what you're offering and how it can help make their lives better.

To help you get started in the right direction, and *before* you start writing...

"When your why is big enough, you will find your how."

Les Brown

Ask yourself the following three questions about your audience

1. Why do they need what I'm offering?
2. How will what I'm offering help them

in a way that they desire?

3. What words or phrases should I use (or not use) that will let them know that I know who they are and I understand their concerns.

If you're not sure of the answers to these questions, I suggest you poll your audience or speak with people who are similar to the audience you want to attract. Get a real sense of their thoughts, fears, and dreams. This will go a long way toward helping you speak their language, meet their needs, and get a sale.

Create your avatar

Another smart thing to do before you start writing is to mentally create an avatar. Your avatar represents your ideal client, customer, or supporter.

"You're going to need to disrupt everything you know to create everything you're about to get."

Lisa Nichols

Give him/her a name and think of the issues this person is facing and how you can help them. Then, when you start writing, write directly to this person. Strong promotional writing is written as if you're talking to one person, not to the masses. Make it personal.

Here are a few BONUS tips!

Bonus tip #1:

Choose your words carefully

There are words that are often used incorrectly. While it is true that these words can be confusing, their misuse makes you look unpolished and unprofessional. Here are a few of the words that need our special attention:

Affect vs. Effect. “Effect” is a noun and “affect” is a verb. Here’s an example of how the words should be used:

- *That book was very moving and really affected me.*
- *That book was very moving, it had a serious effect on me.*

"Make as many mistakes as you can, as fast as you can. Get them out of the way. No one hits home runs right away."

Chris Runyan

There vs. They’re vs. Their. This is probably the most common mistake I see, and I see it everywhere. The best way I can help you with the difference is to offer the following examples:

- *There is a light on in the room.* (“There” usually indicates a location or a fact that something exists)
- *Their dog is in that room.* (“Their”

indicates possession or ownership)

- *They're going to go turn the light off.*
(“They're” is the contraction form of “they are”)

A lot vs. Alot. Alot is not a word. You always need the space.

Every day vs. Everyday. Here's how to use the words correctly:

- I meditate every day. (meaning each day of the week)
- Meditation has become an everyday activity for me. (meaning ordinary, the usual or the norm)

Bonus tip #2:

Beware of common grammatical errors

One of the most common grammatical errors I see is misplaced modifiers. Your adjective clause or phrase should appear close to the noun that it is modifying. Not doing so can change the entire meaning of the message you're trying to share.

“Passion will move you forward, but knowledge will point you in the right direction.”

Forbes Magazine

For example:

- Incorrect: The torn woman's skirt was embarrassing to her.

- Correct: The woman's torn skirt was embarrassing to her.

See the difference? The location of the word "torn" is important because in the first example it implies that the woman was torn, when in fact, her skirt is what's torn.

In closing...

Writing is what I do, and I absolutely love it! I get joy out of working with business and brand owners to help them maximize the effectiveness of their written communications.

I'm here and I'm ready to work with you when you're in the market for a thorough, professional writer who will always keep your best interests at heart.

Til then, I wish you and your business continued success!

Gail Clanton

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Good writing is difficult to find. And while many people may have a great idea in mind, it takes skill and a great deal of practice to get that thought to translate into copy that motivates, inspires, and sells. That's where Gail comes in.

About Gail Clanton...

She holds a master's degree in journalism and has spent over 30 years working in copywriting and marketing positions in corporate America. She also blogs, edits, and does freelance writing.



While some people write because they have to, Gail writes because she loves to. Her work has appeared in several book compilations including, *The Black Woman's Book of Travel and Adventure*, *Our Fathers Which Art In Heaven*, and *Women Inspiring Nations*. She was also a regular contributor to the *Impact The World* magazine, published by Dr. Cheryl Wood.

Contact Gail if you'd like to learn more about her writing experience and how she can help you reach your next level of success.

Here's a list of some of the companies Gail has written for:

Phillips Publishing
Kaiser Permanente
Prograde Health
Healthy Directions, LLC
Marketing Sherpa
Marriage Sherpa
Andrea T. Martin, Life Discovery Expert
Stop Aging Now
Independent Vital Life
Bel Marra Nutritionals
Healthy Back Institute
Youth Infusions
Nanette Floyd Patterson, Master HIScoach and Consultant
Infusion Sciences
Sun Chlorella