

# How to write persuasive copy

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# INTRODUCTION

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**As charity professionals, we're often tasked with writing copy that needs to inspire action. How do we make our copy compelling so that people take the action we want them to take?**

**Whether you're writing copy for a web page, an email or a social media post, here are some tips to make your writing persuasive.**

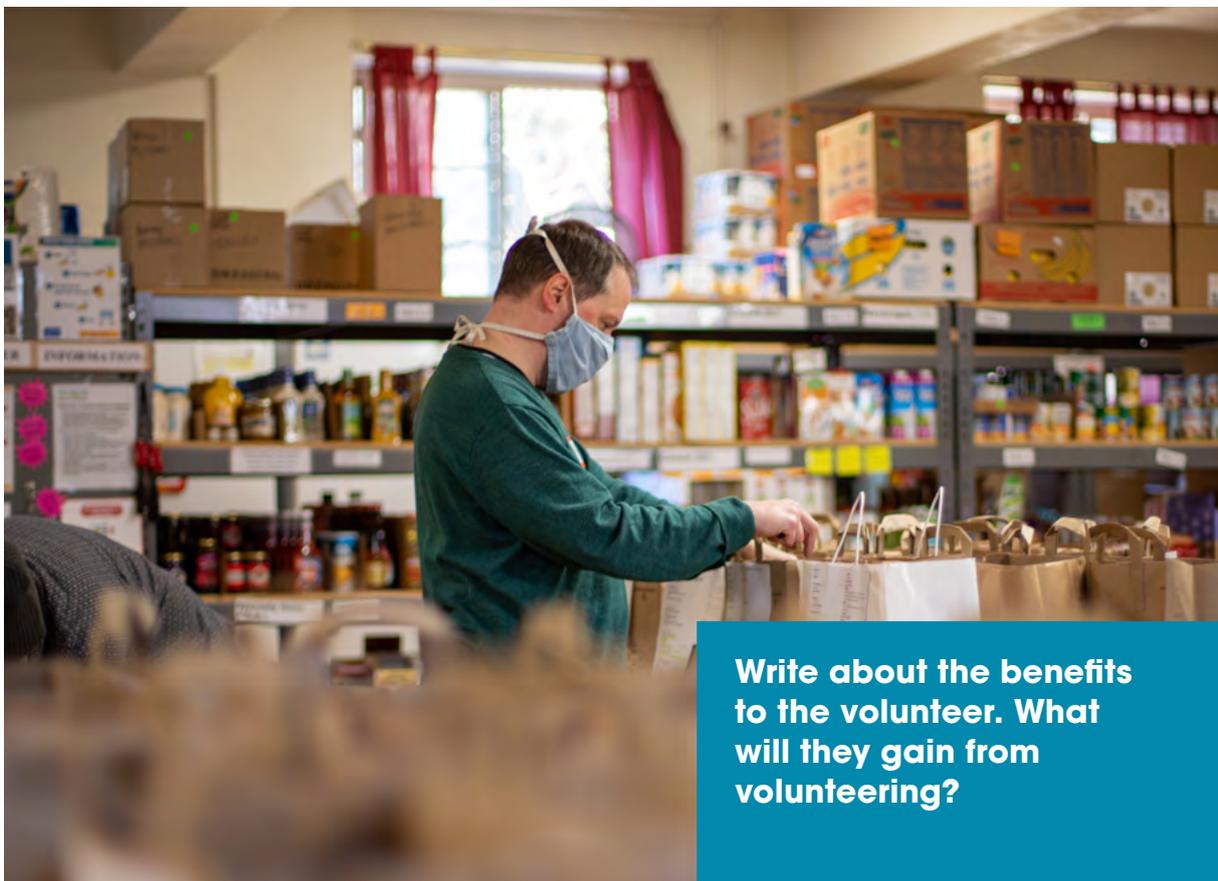
## ► Know who you're writing for

When writing copy, who are you writing for? It's so important to tailor your copy to a specific audience if you want them to engage and take action. Don't write for everyone.

## ► Sell the benefits, not the features

Too often charities write what they want the reader to know, rather than thinking about what the reader's needs are.

Take volunteering as an example. If you're writing copy to inspire people to volunteer their time, don't list the benefits to the charity or the features of volunteering. Write about the benefits to the volunteer. What will they gain from volunteering? They may learn new skills, meet new people and gain experience.



**Write about the benefits to the volunteer. What will they gain from volunteering?**

## ► Write in the active voice

The active voice means that the subject of the sentence comes first and performs the action that the rest of the sentence describes. Whereas the passive voice is when the object and the action comes first. For example:

**Active voice:**

Volunteers planned the event.

**Passive voice:**

The event was planned by volunteers.

Writing in the active voice makes your sentences shorter and easier to read. It's also more natural and mimics how people talk, making your copy more relatable.

## ► The power of emotion

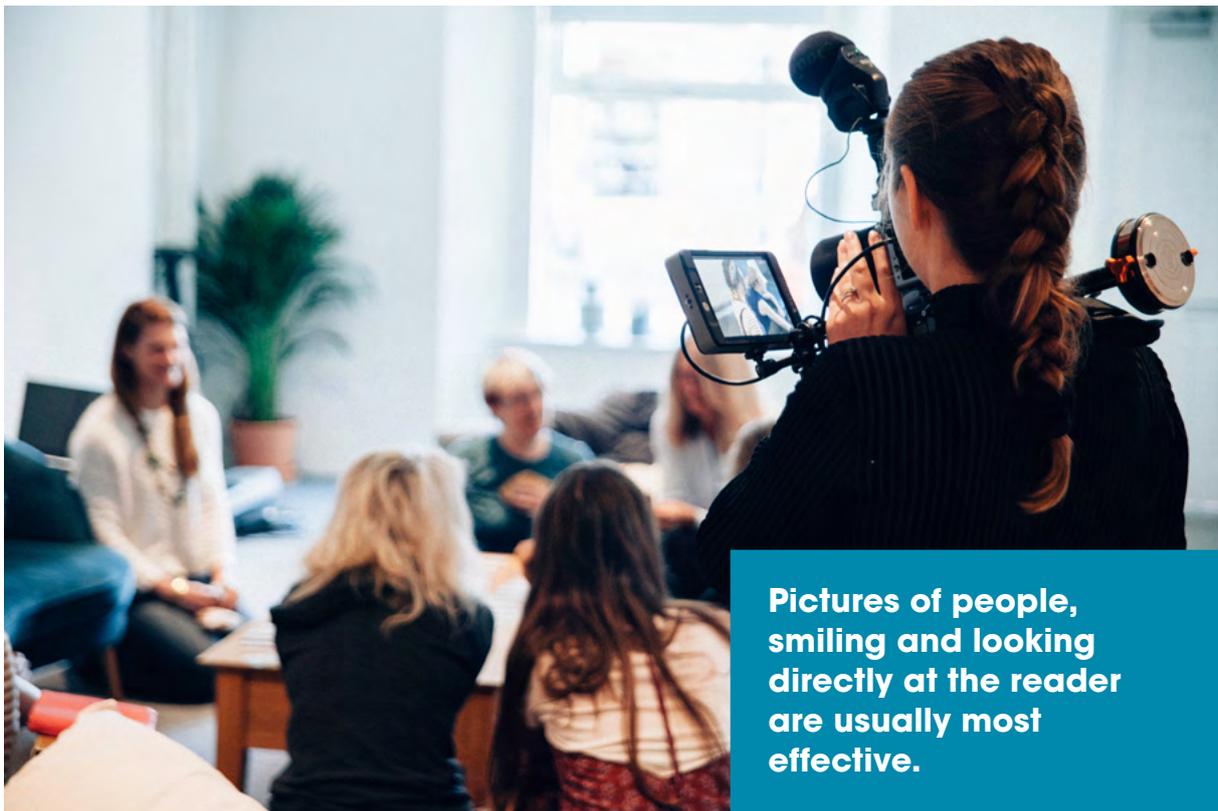
For people to take an action, such as making a donation or signing a petition, they need to be moved emotionally. Think about what emotion will inspire them. Is it joy, pride, anger or sadness?

Test which emotions work best with your audience. They may, for example, respond better to copy that makes them feel joyful, rather than copy that evokes sadness.

## ► It's not just about the copy

Your copy needs to be emotive and compelling but it's not just words that will inspire people to act. Think about what image, images or video could elevate your copy.

Pictures of people, smiling and looking directly at the reader are usually most effective. Or, draw the reader's eye to one of your key messages through clever use of imagery.



**Pictures of people, smiling and looking directly at the reader are usually most effective.**

## ▶ Have one call to action

If you really want someone to take action, it's important that there is only one, clear call to action in your copy. Research shows that when you present people with choice, they often won't choose either.

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## ▶ Placement is key

Where you place your call to action is really important. Don't place it at the end of your copy as not everyone will read to the end. Instead, place it within the first paragraph for email and web copy.

## ▶ Don't be afraid to repeat your call to action

With longer copy, place your call to action more than once. Include it at the beginning, in the middle and the end. Give people multiple touchpoints to take the action.

### Persuasive copy checklist:



Identify the target audience



List the benefits



Convey the emotion you want people to feel



Write in the active voice



Have compelling images or video



Have one call to action



Make your call to action prominent



Place your call to action more than once (email or web copy)

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