

Improve Your Copywriting Skills ...

How to Force Your Reader to Keep Reading – Let Me Explain ...*By John Wood, AWAI Staff Copywriter*

Oprah always tells her viewers what's coming up after the commercial break. For example, when Celine Dion was on recently, she said something like "Next, Celine Dion debuts her brand-new single 'Taking Chances.' First time ever on network TV."

All talk shows do this. It's a very effective way to keep people watching.

Many times, I've been about to turn off the TV, only to be tempted to stay tuned.

The same technique, of course, is used in copywriting. Here are a few examples:

- But there's more ...
- So read on ...
- But I didn't stop there ...
- Let me explain ...
- Now here comes the good part ...

Another way to use this technique in a sales letter is to put a very short sentence at the end of a paragraph that offers a reason for the reader to read the next paragraph.

In the "Finding a Winning 'Voice' for Your Copy" lesson in AWAI's Masters Program, Paul Hollingshead refers to these prompts as "conversational transitions."

And in *The Adweek Copywriting Handbook*, copywriting legend Joe Sugarman calls them "Seeds of Curiosity," because they make you to want to continue reading even if the copy is slowing down at that point.

Here are five different types of transitions to try ...

Transition #1: *Adding clarification or driving home a point*

- Here's the thing ...
- But here's the kicker ...
- Here's my point ...
- My point is this ...

Example without transition:

Now, of course, you can spend \$40.00 a month on a regular dating service. Select your dates from one-dimensional profiles that you can only hope are accurate. Scan through pictures that, in all probability, are five or 10 years old. Go out on date after date and come home frustrated, throw up your hands, and yell "I give up. I'll never find the love of my life." Or you could become a member of CEO Dating.

Example with transition:

Maybe you've already tried "regular" dating services. If you have, you know how frustrating it can be ... misleading profiles ... pictures of potential mates that are five or 10 years old. Not only can it be really frustrating and uncomfortable, it can be a huge waste of time.

Here's my point ...

At CEO Dating, you won't have that problem. You'll know exactly what your prospective date looks like – not 6 months or six years ago, but today. And you'll have the comfort of knowing every fact about your date has been double- and triple-checked by our team of researchers.

Transition #2: *Informing your reader that you're about to add clarity/proof to what you've just said*

- Please allow me to explain ...
- Let me explain ...
- I'll explain ...
- Here's what I mean ...

Example without transition:

At CEO Dating, we listen to your feedback. And one thing you've told us is that you want variety. Although you love candlelight dinners with vintage wine and Mozart playing in the background, sometimes you want to "get a little wild." If that's the case, you can select from one of our 105 exotic "excursion" dates. Maybe you want to take your potential lifemate to South Africa to photograph elephants or to Tibet to do some mountain climbing. Now, with the click of your mouse, you can.

Example with transition:

At CEO Dating, we listen to your feedback. And one thing you've told us is that you want variety. Although you love candlelight dinners with vintage wine and Mozart playing in the background, sometimes you want to "get a little wild."

Let me explain ...

To satisfy the adventurer in you, we've created 105 exotic "excursion" dates. Now, with the click of your mouse, you could be on your way to South Africa to photograph elephants or on a flight to Tibet to climb Mount Everest.

Transition #3: *Asking people to take a minute and reflect on something*

- Think for a moment about what that means.
- Imagine what that will mean to your life.
- Think about the value of this.
- Do you see the value here?
- Think about that for a minute.

Example without transition:

Sure, we have high standards. Some have even accused us of being elitist. But you wouldn't want it any other way. You see, few people in the world are qualified to receive an invitation like this. But you are. Your income and business acumen set you apart from 99.9% of Americans. Just like the potential dates you'll be able to choose from.

Example with transition:

Sure, we have high standards. Some have even accused us of being elitist. But you wouldn't want it any other way. You see, few people in the world are qualified to receive an invitation like this. But you are. Your income and business acumen set you apart from 99.9% of Americans.

Think about what this means.

If we're this picky in choosing you, imagine the "quality" and "refinement" of the potential dates you'll be able select from.

Transition #4: Reminding your reader of a benefit you mentioned previously

- As I said before,
- Earlier I mentioned,
- As I mentioned before,
- Keep in mind ...
- Don't forget ...
- Remember ...

Example without transition:

At CEO Dating, you'll be assigned one of our discreet, friendly, efficient customer service representatives. You'll have access to our one-of-a-kind video library jam-packed with hundreds of potential mates – all of whom make seven figures (or more).

Example with transition:

At CEO Dating, you'll be assigned one of our discreet, friendly, efficient customer service representatives.

And don't forget, you'll have access to our one-of-kind video library. Put on the hot chocolate, curl up on the couch in front of the fire, and spend some quality time with each of your potential mates – all of whom make seven figures (or more).

Transition #5: Alerting your reader that there's more (and even better) news coming up

- But there's more ...
- But it's even better than that ...
- But that's not all ...
- There's much more to tell you ...
- Here's something else ...
- One more thing ...
- But here's the best news ...
- Better still ...

Example without transition:

As a member of CEO Dating, once you select your date we feed both your profiles into our patented CEO Love-a-Tron System. The information the Love-a-Tron System gives us is simply phenomenal. First of all, it tells us how compatible you are ... how much fun you'll have on your date ... even what topics you're most likely to talk about!

Example with transition:

As a member of CEO Dating, once you select your date we feed both your profiles into our patented CEO Love-a-Tron System. The information the Love-a-Tron System gives us is simply phenomenal. First of all, it tells us how compatible you are ... and even how much fun you'll have on your date.

But it gets even better ...

The Love-a-Tron System actually generates a list of the topics you'll most likely talk about on your first date!

No question, "Conversational Transitions/Seeds of Curiosity" are a great way to make your copy flow effortlessly from one idea/benefit to another.

But don't overdo it.

As Paul says in his "Finding a Winning Voice for Your Copy" lesson ...

"They're like manure. A little can green the grass nicely, but too much can stink up the town."

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2 Responses to "Improve Your Copywriting Skills ... How to Force Your Reader to Keep Reading – Let Me Explain ..."

This is fantastic! I'm happy to see this "spelled out"--- I generally read through some of these without even realizing it. Thanks for a great article!

Carla A – over a year ago

Since I'm writing my Sample Direct Response Copy "Puptastic Naturals"...I am thrilled to have come across this helpful article.

Robert A – over a year ago

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