

What Do Fountain Pens Have to Do With Copywriting?

By Will Newman

I try to keep *The Golden Thread* (and my *Circle of Success* blog) free of what might pass for endorsements of products, services, or software you have to pay for. (I make an obvious exception recommending books.)

But today I'm going to break my self-imposed rule and tell you about a company that grew from selling products from their dining room to one with a 12,000-square-foot facility, \$3.4 million annual revenues, and 21 employees ... all in just six years.

The company is Goulet Pens.

Full disclosure: I buy fountain pens and supplies from Goulet Pens. They have competitive prices, but generally they're not the least expensive. If I wanted to, I could buy from dealers that sell for less.

Why don't I choose the less expensive options?

Because – and here's why this is important to you – Brian and Rachel Goulet go far beyond selling products. *They build relationships.*

As a copywriter, you should be doing far more than writing copy. You should be building relationships with your clients. You should also help your clients build relationships with their prospects *and* customers.

How my stiff hands led me to fountain pens

I begin most of my writing using pen and paper. I guess this is because I grew up using pens, so I'm most comfortable getting ideas from brain to paper using them.

But, I have a problem. As I've gotten older, my stiff, sore hands rebel against ballpoint and gel pens. I decided the fountain pens I abandoned in 8th grade might ease the problem.

So, I bought an inexpensive, disposable fountain pen from Amazon. I loved the way it felt in my hand. I loved the way ink flowed onto the page. I loved the retro feel of using one.

But, I was not going to add to landfill with disposable pens. Knowing nothing about fountain pens, I did lots of research. Goulet Pens was the first website I landed on.

Being a novice, I didn't know what to expect. What I found was a website that perfectly reflected Goulet Pens' mission statement: "To provide writing enthusiasts (that's me!) with the most personal, online shopping experience."

What are the key words in that mission statement? "Writing enthusiasts" and "personal." Both these expressions are grounded in the core marketing concept "Know Your Prospect."

Here's why: As I immersed myself in the fountain pen culture, I became a writing enthusiast. My sister collects fountain pens, which remain uninked. My sister is a fountain pen "collector."

All my pens are inked. I have 12 different colors of ink and mix my own colors periodically.

I'm a writing "enthusiast."

Brian and Rachel knew me as a prospect ... even before I knew myself.

Making a very personal connection

So, I ordered my first pen and ink from Goulet Pens. A little under a week later, my order arrived so carefully packed it could have survived Armageddon.

But, that's not what tickled me and made me tell Linda I was going to stick with this company.

First, they included a very sturdy, attractive bookmark. "Know Your Prospect." This pen enthusiast – as, I guess, many of us do – loves to read.

Second, the packing slip contained a signed, handwritten note: "I hope you enjoy your Lamy Safari pen and Noodler's Black Ink." The signature included the name of the ink the note was written in. A nice, personal touch. But also, very subtle advertising demonstrating "Know Your Prospect."

Finally, at the bottom of the shipping box lay a mini-Tootsie Roll Pop. Okay, not a big deal. But, it made me smile. And, made me feel special. And, made me decide to buy from Goulet Pens again.

A marketing "treasure hunt" for next week

Now, my purpose in highlighting this company is not to have you rush out and buy from them. There are a lot of other good fountain pen dealers.

Instead, take a few minutes on their website (gouletpens.com) to see how effectively they market their goods.

Look at this as a game – a marketing treasure hunt of sorts. Identify five places on the site that demonstrate good marketing practices and principles you can adapt for your copywriting – and that you can use to help boost your client's marketing efforts.

Especially look at how they build relationships.

As a crib sheet, here are Goulet Pens' stated core values:

- Work hard
- Be honest
- Be flexible
- Trust is our currency
- Empower through education
- Express gratitude
- Serve with passion
- Care

No need to send these in or post them anywhere. I'll give you my five places next week. Let's see how they compare then.

But, I'd love you to tell me what you thought about your visit. You can tell us all below.

See you next week. Until then, keep writing!

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15 Responses to "What Do Fountain Pens Have to Do With Copywriting?"

Hi Will,

Nick Osborne also mentions another company called CDBaby in some of his programs. This company also builds relationships with their customers and prospective customers in an unique way.

Sheila

Sheila – over a year ago

Thank you, Sheila. I'll look up CDBaby.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success,

Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

Hi Will, Thank you for the referral to Goulet Pens. I, too, am a fountain pen enthusiast. Being a "lefty," however, the hooded nib of the Parker 51 is the fountain pen that works best for me. I checked out the site and was impressed by not only its organization, but the friendly and welcoming way in which it was presented. I am bookmarking the site in my Pen folder. Thanks again.

Guest (Michael Kushner) – over a year ago

Hi Will,

I looked up Goulet, and even chatted with Kelsi. Very friendly and helpful people.

Clara Mae

Guest (Clara Mae Watrous) – over a year ago

Will this makes a nice case study story for Goulet Pens. I would be sold on their services based on your descriptions.

mike1000 – over a year ago

Making a special connection with the prospects is one the important elements of any business. I learned this rule when I was a teacher. Unless you develop a bond, a connection, a relationship(good one) with your students and their parents, you cannot provoke them to do as you want them to do. I applied this rule to my garment business and it works well. I always try to make the first-time customer, a customer forever. This only becomes possible by creating a personal, caring and helping attitude towards the customer.

I am sure and fully agree with Will that this golden rule is going to work in copywriting business as well. Win the hearts and let your business thrive.

Nusrat – over a year ago

Hi,

I very much like this issue of the Golden Thread. The display of the pens from Goulet Pens was very nice. I can't believe they had some which are affordable. The look to be very expensive. I really liked the different colors they have. Seems like a favorite color for everyone who might want to purchase one. They were very nice.

I really enjoyed the web site. Thank you for letting me see them all. It was a special treat.

Sincerely,

Aline Gadson

Guest (Aline Gadson) – over a year ago

Hi Will,

I enjoyed 'Meet the Goulets'. It warmed my interest and my heart. The photo including both Brian and Rachel with the other two company VIP's, their Children. HOW GREAT WAS THAT? The description in the 'Art Aficionado Package Set' paints the niche. The gift seeker can trust their artsy relative is understood. STAFF PICKS under SHOPPING GUIDES was awesome - I felt an urge to create more there.

The Blog inspired my own create for Valentines Day. Sweet! Thanks again.

-Haywood

HaywoodN – over a year ago

Thank you for your well wishes, Will.

Sheila

Sheila – over a year ago

Thank you all for your very gracious comments. While I do enjoy buying from this company, my purpose was to get my readers to look at a company that's built its success on making that all important connection with its prospects. And it's clear all of you have understood that. Haywood spotlighted one of the company's ways of doing that: by spotlighting family and staff.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success,

Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

The company is set up very organized. After viewing the site online of the company.

Guest (chantal) – over a year ago

Will, enjoyed your article -- says a lot about caring and sharing your passion. When you do everyone's passion grows. And as a pen enthusiast

(I am an old school architect) I really dig the feel when the pen hits the paper and just flows.

What I think Goulet does is provide a place of Trust for your passion. And hey, who doesn't like that.

Thanks for the article and the hot pen tip!

Richard Denzer

Guest (Richard) – over a year ago

Hello Richard,

I had to smile when you mentioned the flow of the pen on the paper. I totally understand.

And chantal, thank you for taking the time to comment.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success,

Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

I work for a multinational marketing company as a field representative for a major manufacturer. Building relationships is vital. I have a rule when it comes to dealing with the retailers I service, if I wouldn't allow someone to do it in my store, I'm not going to do it in theirs. Since I have retail management experience, I speak their language. One supervisor said I do my job unlike anyone he has ever seen. I've been MVP 11 times for my sales team. 4 times last year alone.

Brian T – over a year ago

Hello Brian,

Your on-the-ground experience in sales has been good background for your on-the-paper copywriting. Thank you for the insights.

Good luck, best wishes, and much success,

Will

Will Newman – over a year ago

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924