

Headline Help

Ideas from Pioneer SVP Content Leon Espinoza

5 Ks of good headline writing

- Keep it simple ... you are not telling the whole story.
- Keep it real ... be conversational.
- Keep it short ... average attention span is 7 seconds.
- Keep it up ... headline develop over time.

When you are ready to roll

- Start with the dream ... write the header you would if room were no object, then pare it. Play with AI to see if it can help you with shorter and snappier.
- Hide the pickle ... don't give it all away in the header, tease me in.
- Evoke something ... stir an emotion within me.
- Write headlines from the reader's perspective ... Why does it matter to them? Why should they care?
- Play off the image. Let the image lead the headline.
- How would you describe the content to your best friend? ... play with those words. Don't use headlines—words often seen in headlines that nobody uses in real life.
- Ask what's the headline even before content is created ... it provides a focal point.
- Use verbs ... action words rock.
- Use Here's, How, Why & What words so readers know what is in it for them.
- Ask yourself, does the story make readers smarter? If so, focus on how.

(Headline) Writers' block?

- Make it a team effort ... brainstorming works.
- Talk a walk ... aha moments can happen.
- Spin the pen ... spinning can stir creative juices.
- Tap your online thesaurus when the right words elude you.
- Look for inspiration in what others have done ... but mimic, don't copy.
- Use A1 as a helper, but not the sole creator. Make sure the helper's info is accurate!

The don'ts

- Don't steal from the lede or the killer quote at the end.
- Don't overcomplicate things.
- Don't make your headline a sentence or summary.
- Avoid boring labels ... The Doll Lady. The Wine Man.
- Avoid For the Love Of headlines ... it is an uninspired way to say someone has a hobby.

Upping your game

- Do crossword puzzles and other games where you play with words.
- Thumb through mags & websites ... which headlines grab you? Ask yourself why?
- Keep trying and swinging for the fences ... you'll grow that muscle & surprise yourself!

Learn how our co-op was built to share your story at pioneer.coop.