

# The complete guide to mastering email copywriting



This isn't another “7 tips to write better emails” article you'd Google and skim through. The ideas you'll find here will likely reshape how you view email copywriting. So grab a cup of tea or coffee, settle in, and get ready.

## This is the only email copywriting guide you'll ever need.

When I first started my email marketing internship, I struggled with writing email copy... **A LOT**. Like, what should I say to make people buy? To connect with them? Overthinking every detail led me to write the most generic copy ever. And the worst part? It would take me **HOURS** to finish a single email.

My boss said something to me back then that completely changed the way I think about email copy, and it's still the first thing I think about whenever I sit down to write for clients:



“Imagine anything is possible and write what you want.”

At first, I thought... **really?** What about brand communication guidelines? What about client requests? Sure, you have to follow those. But even then, there's so much room for creativity once you make a certain shift in your brain...

**You don't just work for or with a brand. You are the brand. The brand is yours. You run it, and you pay for its expenses.**

That shift is what makes you the perfect copywriter for it. This is how you'll always know the right things to say — because you care for the brand like it's your own.

It's a bit of self-gaslighting but for a good purpose.

With that said, let's move on and make you a master copywriter.

# Know the customer

Let's cover this quickly because you've heard it a thousand times before: You need to know your customers.

## How do you learn about them?

- ✓ Browse your brand's social media (especially comments!)
- ✓ Browse reviews for your product and similar ones
- ✓ Take notes, dig deeper, and analyze patterns
- ✓ Check your brand's website regularly
- ✓ Check your competitors' websites
- ✓ Apply what you learn

**Know where they live?** Find a local holiday and build a campaign around it.

**Know they're Gen Z?** Download TikTok, scroll a bit, and use 'slayyy' in your next campaign.

**Know they love burritos?** Eat a burrito and tell them how it felt while pitching your product sale.

And voilà! You've taken the first step in knowing your customer. This is what you can do when you understand what they like and do as a person. But it doesn't stop there.

What matters even more is how they interact with you.

Someone opening and clicking your emails tells you more than knowing they live in Arizona.

**Think of it this way:** Demographics guide your topics. Actions shape your tone and message.

### Example:

You run a cat toy shop, and your customers are cat owners. Your emails? Obviously about cats.

But if someone views the same product four times, don't send "5 Signs Your Cat Loves You." Tell them why their cat needs that toy now. If a customer hasn't bought in a year, don't push urgency. Instead, spark nostalgia: "Remember your cat's first toy?"



**Although both matter, behavior beats facts in email marketing.**

# Long or short copy—which one's better?

After you figure out who you're writing to and what to say based on their journey stage, the next question is: **how should you say it?**

I've heard short copy gets all the roses while long copy sits in the corner, playing a tiny violin.

**Truth is, both have their place. Here's a general rule of thumb:**

👉 **Emails that drive fast decisions should be shorter because hesitation kills conversions.**

*Examples: Sales, Abandoned cart emails, Reminders*

👉 **Emails that build trust tend to be longer because connection needs space.**

*Examples: Storytelling, Education, Brand updates*

👉 **Hybrid emails use modular structures with clear sections so readers can skim or dive in.**

*Examples: Product highlights, FAQs, Testimonials*

However, that doesn't mean you should add fluff just to make an email longer or cut out important details to make it shorter.

**What matters more is how your copy is structured.**

# Why copy structure matters

While I'm a big fan of long copy, I don't mean copy that's one big chunk of text (though that can work for some brands, it's not a best practice).

Your customers need to get your message fast; copy (and email) structure makes that possible. Headline, subheadline, bigger text, smaller text, highlighted text, bold, italics, etc.

Our eyes naturally look for direction. We need to know what matters most right away.

**If you're offering 20% off**, that should be the first thing they see. The "for orders over \$80 only" part doesn't need to be as big.

## Tips:

- ✓ Keep paragraphs short (1-3 sentences per paragraph)
- ✓ Highlight important info with bold and italics
- ✓ Use white space effectively
- ✓ Space out your sentences
- ✓ Use subheadings
- ✓ Use bullet points
- ✓ Use emojis

Use design and imagery to your advantage.

Email and copy structure are both simple. Both are all about leading with the most important point and ensuring each section flows naturally into the next.

For reference, check out [this post by our boss](#).

# Your footer is your best friend

Let's go back to the customer once more.

Some prefer quick reads, while others want details. Some need specs to make a rational decision, while others want to see how your brand changes lives. Some look for comparison data, while others rely on social proof.

And those are just a couple of examples—every reader looks for something different in an email.

There are plenty of reader types to cater to, but you don't have to cater to all of them in a single email.

And honestly, you can't.

**And that's okay.** The website is there to do the heavy lifting.

Your job is to set the right expectations for each reader, using text, visuals, and buttons that lead to the right webpages.

Show them that you have the information they need **a click away**.

## The best way to do this?

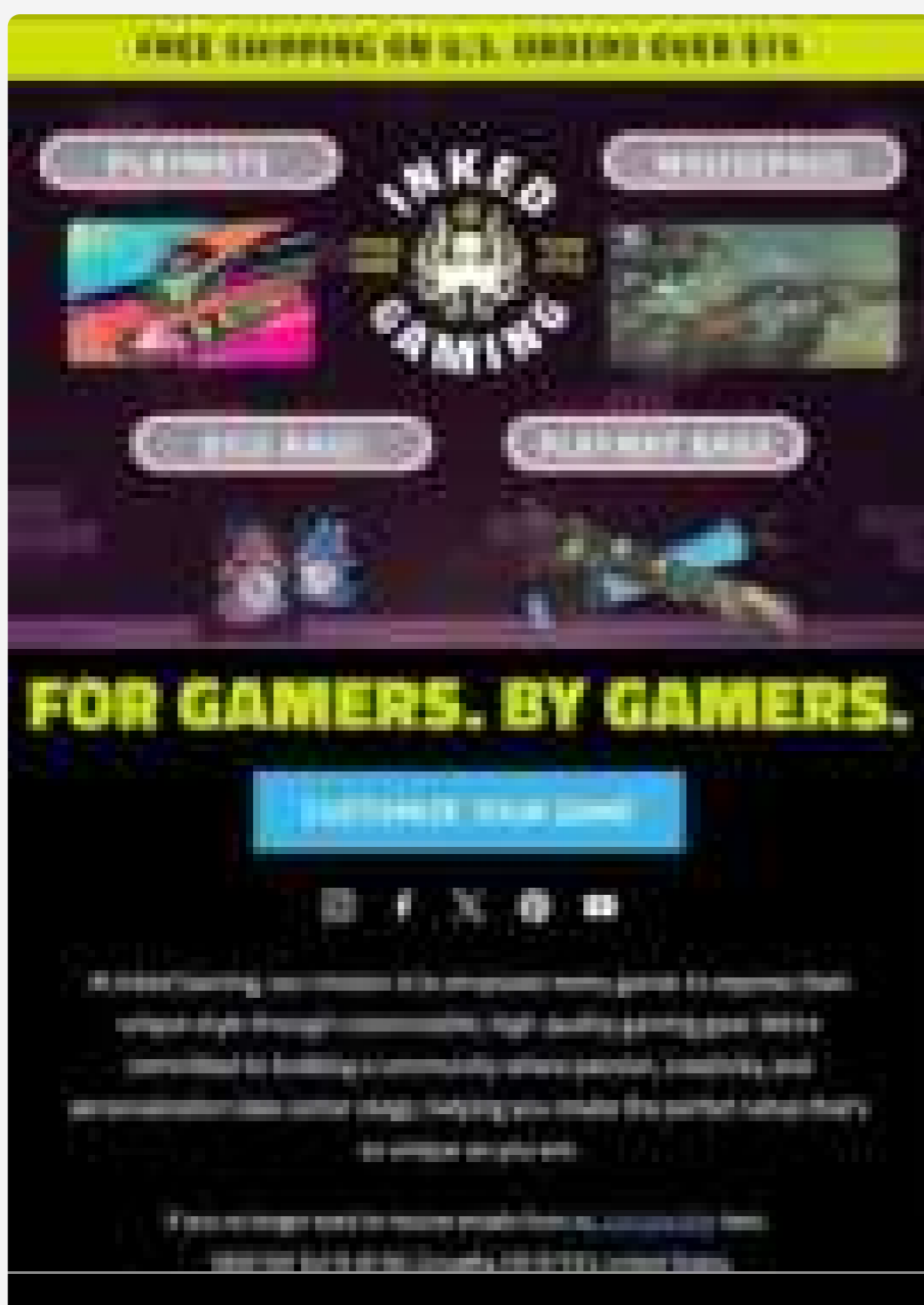
By taking the time to build your ultimate footer.

No more just an unsubscribe link and social media icons.

Add your USPs, a navigation menu, your slogan and mission statement, a few buttons leading to your latest offers, FAQs, reviews, and more.

This way, the footer works like a hub where customers can quickly find what matters most to them, so you don't have to fit everything into the main email content.

*Example:*



Instead, let the email's goal (which we'll cover next) guide its content.

### You might highlight:

- Product features
- Product benefits
- Success stories
- Behind the scenes
- FAQs
- Comparison data
- Social proof
- Full guides
- Celebrity endorsements
- Reasons to buy now
- Next steps
- ...and more

But never all of them in a single email.  
That's why your footer is your best friend.

# Always start with a goal

Before you start writing an email, ask yourself: What do I want my customer to do after reading it?

**ONE EMAIL = ONE GOAL**

Avoid cramming multiple topics into a single email. Keep it focused and specific. And since you've already built the ultimate footer, you shouldn't feel the need to squeeze in extra content. Right?

For example, in a product highlight email, your sole focus should be the product itself. Skip the distractions like pushing social media follows or talking about how great your brand is. **Let the product take center stage.**

It might seem limiting, but this kind of focus actually sparks creativity. By zeroing in on one thing, you can explore it fully and make the biggest impact.

# Always start with a goal

This fact often gets lost in all the data talk. Or it gets overcomplicated. You just need to tell stories about anything. **A simple beginning, middle, and end.**

And no, stories don't have to be long! Have you seen those famous two-sentence stories? They hit hard.

You can do the same in your emails. It's not always about AIDA or story structure, though those help.

I definitely recommend diving into [different storytelling frameworks](#) (check out those for [fiction writing](#) as well) and using them for inspiration.

But when you need to act fast, there's no time to map out a whole structure.

Just tell the story: what happened and how it got resolved.

Much easier when you put it like that, right?

# Use ChatGPT... and don't

Let's get one thing out of the way: if you want to work quickly and efficiently, you should use ChatGPT for email copywriting. **But you need to be smart about it.**

If you're planning a short, snappy sales campaign and you need just the right words to convey the message, let AI craft the initial draft. Then, refine it using your own taste and judgment.

Ditch things like "whether-or" sentences, em dashes, "In a world where..." beginnings, etc.

We've used them long before the rise of Gen AI, but they're now closely tied to it, so it's best to leave them behind when writing email copy.

Most customers can tell when a text is written with ChatGPT because of these cues, and they make your brand feel unprofessional. Or worse: insincere.

If you need to write a longer, more thoughtful campaign, **write a draft yourself and only then ask ChatGPT** to help improve it.

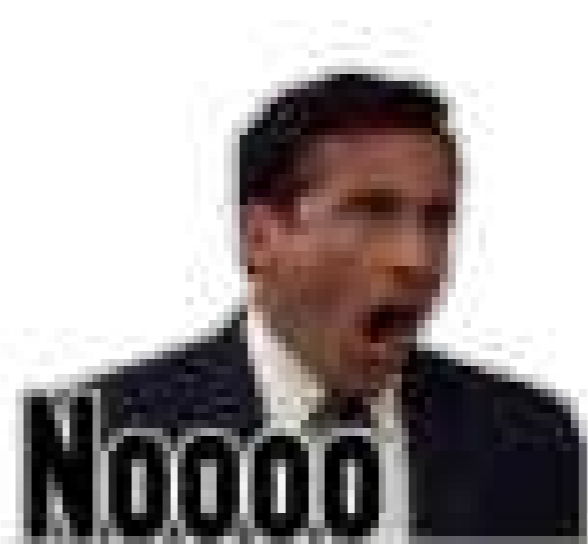
Again, rely on your own judgment to make sure it sounds like something your audience would actually want to read.

Personally, I use AI mainly to suggest grammar improvements or to help with phrasing when I can't find the right words, especially since English isn't my first language.

## Here are some prompts I often use:

- ✓ Tone down the language
- ✓ Improve the flow
- ✓ Add more hype
- ✓ Say this better
- ✓ Edit grammar
- ✓ Shorten this

The bottom line is that the ideas should come from you. AI can write a first draft or polish your final copy, but **it can't create great copy by itself.**



# Use emojis intentionally

Emojis are meant to highlight a mood, **not replace it**.

Inbox providers don't like emails packed with emojis, and neither do people. **It's cheap, it's boring, it's insincere.**

This isn't social media where you need emojis in every sentence to grab attention.

Your copy is already part of a design (unless it's a plain text email—those should be kept as short as possible), so there's plenty of visual guidance at play.

Overusing emojis can even make your brand look scammy, trigger spam filters, and lower your brand image.

Use emojis sparingly and with purpose. You don't need them in every sentence, especially not two side by side. That's just sinful.

Zero to five emojis per email is usually enough for the brands I work with.

## Pro tip:

Want to make the most of your emojis? Use them to replace punctuation. Instead of a dot or comma, add an emoji to bring energy and tone. Using both just adds clutter.

*Example:*

There is nothing wrong with that, of course 🙌  
During such times, we find reassurance in the hundreds  
of testimonials we've received so far - all of them  
reminding us of our big "why".

# Nail the subject line

Your subject line and preview text have two jobs:

- Spark intrigue
- Show what the email is about (duh...)

That's it. No need to overcomplicate. Write them fast, check with an online tool if you're unsure (I use [this one](#); it gives solid advice), A/B test, and trust the process.

**Some general tips to keep in mind:**

## Avoid sounding like a scammer

Stay away from all caps, excessive symbols and emojis, and spammy phrases like **“100% free,” “Act now,” “Win \$\$\$,” or “Click here.”**

Inbox providers don't like them, and neither do real people.

## Be clear on the topic

Make sure the tone of your subject line matches the email itself. Nothing kills trust faster than bait-and-switch tactics.

If your subject line says, “Tragic news: X has happened,” and the email inside says, “SHOP EVERYTHING –20% OFF,” **guess what?**

You've just earned yourself an unsubscribe (or worse, a spam report).

## Don't forget the sender name

This is equally important as your SL and PT.

The best approach is to **use your brand name or a friendly variation** like Name from YourBrand (e.g., Sarah from PROGS).

Using Marketing Team, No-reply, Support, or anything similar is too impersonal and can make you seem unapproachable.

# Features and benefits

Which one is better to list: **features** or **benefits**?

Waterproof phone case OR Stress-free beach photos

Portable media player OR 1000 songs in your pocket

25 GB of cloud space OR All your files in one place

While the second option might sound better, and some email marketers argue that benefits are all you ever need, it's important to know when to use them and when to focus on features instead.

It depends on the email's objective and where the customer is in their journey. Here's a general guide:

## Focus on features for:

### ■ Product launches

When introducing something new, customers need to know what it is and what makes it special.

### ■ Tech-savvy audiences

If your buyers care about specs, details, and comparisons, highlight features.

### ■ Higher-priced or complex products

More expensive or technical items require more details to justify the purchase.

### ■ Upsells and cross-sells

When customers already own a product, showing additional features of a related one can convince them to buy more.

## Focus on benefits for:

### ■ Welcome emails

New subscribers need to understand what's in it for them before caring about product specs.

### ■ Abandoned cart emails

A reminder that reinforces how the product will improve their life works better than just listing features.

### ■ Emotional purchases

If people buy based on desire rather than logic (fashion, beauty, luxury, or gifts), focus on how the product makes them feel.

### ■ Sale emails

When you want a quick response, emphasizing how the deal benefits them is oftentimes more powerful than listing features.

However, I'd say the best approach is to mix both. You never know who's reading your email or what they need to make a purchase.

# Write pure content (Sell without selling)

I've sent plenty of content campaigns without mentioning the product or showing a single picture of it. And guess what? **They work.**

You're not barging into customers' inboxes with a sales pitch; you're just sharing something with them. It's their choice whether to buy or not.

Some email marketers think a content campaign is wasted if it doesn't end with "P.S. Everything is 15% off."

But if you care about long-term results, you know that's not true.

Content campaigns actually contribute to higher results during sales periods.

Because you're warming up the audience, building connections, and staying on top of mind.

Giving first, asking later.

It's the "Jab, Jab, Jab, Right hook" principle.

People say nobody likes being marketed to. I'd argue differently.

- ▣ **Nobody likes being marketed to poorly.**
- ▣ **Nobody likes being marketed to randomly.**
- ▣ **Nobody likes being marketed to without a real connection to the brand.**
- ▣ **Be brave and write pure content.**

# Use pop culture references

I **LOVE** this advice, and I can't believe how underrated it is! Seriously, it never gets talked about enough.

Staying on top of mind is one of the main goals of marketing. Pop culture references are your best friend when it comes to it (sorry, footer 📄).

People love associations. And associating your brand with other positive things, even if they're not related, is a big ol' green flag.

For example, one of my clients sells heated apparel. I can't even count how many times I've mentioned Gilmore Girls. Cozy vibes? Endless cups of coffee? It just fits.

Another brand I manage has a gaming audience. One of their flow emails starts with "Stay awhile and listen...". If you're not into gaming, this line means nothing to you, but for most gamers, it's instantly recognizable as a legendary phrase from the online RPG Diablo.

And even if your audience doesn't get the reference, you're still being original. A win is a win. Every brand can benefit from pop culture associations. And if you can't think of any, just dig into what else your audience loves. **Watch their favorite shows, read their favorite books, and you'll start making connections in no time.**

*Example:*



# Adding testimonials to your emails



My first and only rule for testimonials is to **never EVER edit them**.  
Copy and paste them as they are.

No fixing grammar, no tweaking wording, no “improving” anything. It’s okay to quote just a piece of a larger text, but I forbid you to do the rest mentioned.

If a testimonial is so bad that you feel the need to edit it, you’re better off without it.

Yes, well-written reviews tend to be more persuasive, and in a way, how they’re written reflects the brand. But at the same time... does it really?

**The more human you appear, the better.**

It's the same reason why you shouldn't lose sleep over the occasional typo (yes, solid QA is important, but life goes on).



# Great copy isn't written. It's discovered.

I read that from one of my favorite content marketers, Vassilena Valchanova.

“Great copy isn't written, it's discovered. The best marketers know that the art isn't in writing the perfect line—it's in recognizing it when you see it.”

And she's right. She goes on to say: **“Your customers are already writing it for you.”**

Lots of insights are packed in that post of hers, so I recommend reading it [here](#).

So what did I do with her idea?

**I trained my eye to discover great copy by:**

📁 Spending more time reading customer reviews/comments and even copying some by hand.

📁 Searching social media for real pain points and concerns and then turning those into campaign angles.

📁 Using customers' exact words in my copy.

‘But hey, there's more,’ I say in my email marketing voice.

What do you do when you come across a great line of copy (even in your own writing)?

- ✓ Highlight it.
- ✓ Use it as a headline.
- ✓ Rewrite your entire text around it.
- ✓ Bookmark it and reuse it after a while.

Don't make it go unnoticed.

# “Skip editing, you must not.” - Yoda

To write fast and keep the creative juices flowing, don't waste time staring at a blank page. You've got strategic work to do, too, remember?

**Just write. Even if it makes no sense, get it out there.**

Great copy is often achieved somewhere in the second or third draft.

Dump writing keeps your words genuine and human. This is the best thing to have in a first draft, and you want to keep that feeling even in the final version.

The editing stage helps you polish the copy, tone it down, or hype it up and give it more depth.

Right now, as I'm writing this, I'm allowing myself to just get the main idea onto the page. I'm not worrying about clarity, grammar, or structure. **That comes later with edits.**

But you can still feel my character shining through. I'm Gen Z, obviously.

Even if you think your copy is perfect on the first try, run it through ChatGPT with one of the prompts I mentioned a couple of points ago. Show it to a coworker. They might find things you're missing.



*P.S. This article got soooo many edits.  
I'm so tired, guys.*

# Become Captain Hook

Have you noticed something similar about how I start each point?

I started this one with a question – **that’s a hook**.

I started another with “Let’s.” And another with “So,” – **those are hooks**.

I started most with something personal, and that, my friend, as you can guess, **is a hook**.

Start your sentences with a bang 📣 It doesn’t have to be some perfect, world-changing, soul-crushing sentence: “It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.”

It just needs to grab the reader’s attention. That’s all.

And there’s actually a very easy way to get the reader’s attention and keep it. See what I did here?

Forget what your English teacher told you for a moment and start your sentences with transition words:

So
But
And
Besides
Because
Normally
You know
Therefore
Of course
That’s why
By the way
Let me guess

It will make your copy flow so much better 📄

# Developing your writing style

Still not tired of this guide? Great, because I've got some extra tips for you.

Developing your writing style takes time and practice, but here are a few key things to keep in mind to speed up the process:

## Avoid both purple and beige copy

You might have heard of purple and beige prose in fiction, but the same concepts apply to copywriting.


**Purple copy** is overly elaborate and flowery, prioritizing ornate language over clarity. It can feel excessive, melodramatic, and hard to read.


**Beige copy** is dull, generic, and uninspiring. It lacks personality, emotion, and a strong voice, making it forgettable and ineffective.


If you guessed your writing should fall somewhere in between, you're right. Good copy is clear, engaging, and easy to read. It's neither pretentious nor lifeless.

You don't want to sound like an epic fantasy novel, but you also don't want to be so stripped-down that your words leave no impact.

*Example:*

 To weave an email is to compose a sonnet of persuasion, a lyrical embrace that beckons readers forth, guiding them through a labyrinth of emotion and intrigue until, at last, they arrive at the hallowed gates of conversion, their hearts alight with the irresistible allure of the call to action.

 Write good emails.

 Great emails tell a story, keep readers engaged, and deliver value without fluff.

### To avoid writing purple/beige copy, make sure to:

- ✓ Write like you talk to a friend
- ✓ Use active, not passive voice ("Our team solved the problem" is stronger than "The problem was solved by our team")
- ✓ Strive to be clear, not clever
- ✓ Remove unnecessary adjectives and adverbs (instead of "an incredibly stunning and breathtaking sunset," just say "a breathtaking sunset")
- ✓ Use simple words ("Use" beats "utilize.", "help" beats "facilitate")

The best way to test this? **Read it out loud**—if it sounds forced, unnatural, or too flowery, revise.

## Describe using the five senses

This won't make your copy purple, I promise.

When describing your product, ask yourself:

- What does it sound like? Relaxing. Whisper. Rustle.
- What does it taste like? Buttery. Creamy. Savory.
- What does it look like? Radiant. Glowing. Clean.
- What does it smell like? Fresh. Earthy. Smoky.
- What does it feel like? Soft. Velvety. Icy.

This helps your reader enter your world and experience the product.

Let them imagine holding it, feeling its texture, noticing the details. If it's food, they should almost taste it. If it's fabric, they should sense its softness.

When you write with the five senses in mind and use vivid expressions, your product comes to life before your subscriber even owns it.

## Write buttons like a pro

Your buttons or CTAs should match the tone and content of your copy.

*Examples:*

- An informational email ending with **[Read more]**, **[Learn more]**, **[Visit FAQ page]** makes sense.
- A gaming email urging you to participate in a challenge ending with **[Bring it on]**, **[Let's do this]** makes sense.
- A sale announcement that wants to hype you up for margaritas on the beach ending with **[Yaaaass 🍹]** makes sense.

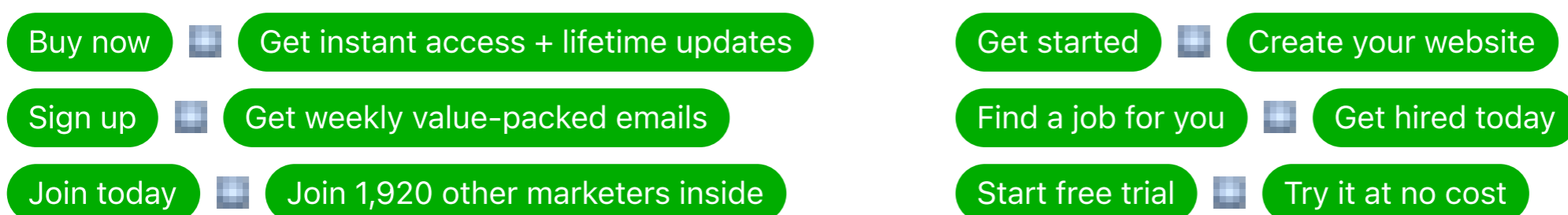
Imagine crafting an emotional, gut-wrenching email only to end it with a bland **[Shop Now]**. Blah.

**[Shop Now]** and **[Buy Now]** aren't dead—you can absolutely use them. Sometimes, clarity and familiarity are exactly what your customer needs.

But other times, a stronger CTA can achieve more by offering a specific benefit or reinforcing your message.

The goal isn't to be unique, actually. It's to make the next step clear and logical.

**If you want to go even further, switch your buttons from action-oriented to result-oriented:**



And hey, here's a little secret—the copy line right above your CTA is just as important as the CTA itself. It makes or breaks it.

## 🟢 A great writer is a great reader

**Read everything**—books, articles, social media posts, ads, even the text on your shampoo bottle. Just read constantly and a lot.

Inspiration can strike from the most unexpected sources.

## Good products make good copy

Everything said so far won't matter if the product you're writing about is bad. You also won't make sales if people only buy it once a year and don't need it more often.

Or maybe the product is amazing, but the owner's actions ruin the brand's reputation. These are things to consider before calling yourself a bad copywriter.

Good copy can't outplay a bad brand or a bad product.

What to do with that info?

- 🟢 Pick your battles (the brands you work with).
- 🟢 Try the product—even if it's not your cup of tea, put yourself in the shoes of someone who enjoys it.
- 🟢 Get closer to your client. Spend two minutes in meetings asking how their weekend was.

If the product and brand are genuinely good, and you truly believe in what you're writing about them, nothing can stop you from becoming the world's greatest email copywriter.

And then writing a better article on the topic than this.

# Good products make good copy

**Trust yourself that with time, you'll get better.** Your copy doesn't need to be perfect from day one. If your messaging is clear and your grammar is fixed, stop staring at it trying to make it better.

Overthinking sometimes leads us to make changes, not improvements, and that's a waste of time. Close the laptop and move on with your life.

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Everything I've shared comes from my experience, but that doesn't mean it has to be yours.

I'm an email copywriter for eCommerce, and some of these tips might not apply to B2B or other types of businesses.

Perhaps the best advice came in the beginning, and my boss said it best: write like anything's possible.

So I'm leaving you with that.

Write copy like anything is possible, and it will work.

My boss really nailed it, didn't he? That's what he does: drops great insights (I'm totally getting that promotion, guys).

Bye bye!

