HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE HEADLINES

Stephanie M. Scott
Director of Digital Marketing & Strategy
REMINDERS

- Image approvals
  - Check for copyright and branding
  - Are you not sure if your image is copyrighted?
    - Use google.com/images

- Reminder of our Approval Queue process
  - In by 11 a.m. M-F and live on the website by EOD
  - Includes images approvals

- Need T4 Help?
  - Email digitalsupport@txwes.edu
  - Call us ext. 6538
TODAY’S FOCUS

- Value of headlines? In higher education
- What not to do
- How to write effective headlines
- How will headlines impact results?
- Questions
- Rockstar winners
VALUE OF HEADLINES?
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
HOW DO STUDENTS FIND ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS?

Noel Levitz E-Expectations Report 2015
WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN WRITING HEADLINES
TOP 5 DON’TS FOR HEADLINE WRITING

1. **Don’t be clever**
   - Clear, direct headlines win every time

2. **Don’t get desperate**
   - Is the headline begging for attention or does it demand attention?
TOP 5 DON’TS FOR HEADLINE WRITING

3. Don’t forget our readers
   - Always consider your audience first

4. Don’t forget social media
   - What does well on social? Ex. Top 10 lists

5. Don’t settle
   - Push your headlines, write it out
HOW TO WRITE EFFECTIVE HEADLINES
WRITE HEADLINES IN FIVE STEPS

1. Be concise
2. Use numbers & lists
3. Include your important information
4. Optimize for social sharing
5. Optimize for search engines (Search Engine Optimization - SEO)
STEP 1
BE CONCISE
Are all of the words necessary?

- What’s a good length?
  - Average 6-7 words for best results

- What are you trying to achieve?
  - Communicate your goals in the fewest possible words

- Write it out
  - Using a blank piece of paper or sketch book
STEP 2

USE NUMBERS & LISTS
SCANNABLE IS THE GOAL

- People scan on the web
  - We love lists & numbers

- Don’t make website users think
  - Make it easy

- Could your headline include these words …? 
  - Top, Why, How, Will, Best, Worst
  - If so, add it in with your number
STEP 3

INCLUDE IMPORTANT INFORMATION
What’s most important?

- Who …
- What …
- Where …
- When …
- Why …
STEP 4
OPTIMIZE FOR SOCIAL SHARING
Have you considered sharing on social?

- Make it noticeable = shareable
- Consider length
  - Are you tweeting? Leave enough space
- Don’t forget your featured image!
STEP 5
OPTIMIZE FOR SEARCH ENGINES
How to optimize headlines for SEO

- What are your users searching for today?
  - Academics: advising, degree plans, careers

- What terms are our users using in search?
  - Ask us, we can do the research

- How do I make my headline more relevant?
  - Be timely
HOW WILL HEADLINES IMPACT YOUR RESULTS?
HEADLINES & RESULTS

“On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty cents out of your dollar.” – David Ogilvy

- 8 of 10 people, 80% will see your headline only (Copyblogger)
  - Make it count

- Always test your headlines
  - Ask students, ask your colleagues, test what headlines appeal to your audience
  - Using website data

Smaller. Smarter.
NEED RESEARCH OR ADVICE?

- Contact us! We’re here to help.
- Start a project in ProWorkflow
- Don’t have an account yet?
  - Email Rueben Gonzales at ruebengonzales@txwes.edu
QUESTIONS?
ROCKSTAR WINNERS!
AND THE WINNERS ARE…

- Jacob Sanchez, 68 website updates
- Wiley Lindsey, 49 website updates
- Dennis Hall, 32 website updates
THANKS!