

*A quarterly newsletter for technology marketers*

## About Goldberg Communications

Goldberg Communications offers copywriting and editing expertise to high-tech companies.

It's a rare writer/editor who excels in her craft and knows technology. By outsourcing your marcom projects to Goldberg Communications, you gain:

- **Copy That Sells.** Our benefit-oriented copy is designed to sell your products.
- **High-Quality Writing.** Read this newsletter. Ask for samples.
- **In-Depth Understanding of Technology.** We've written about hardware and software technologies, including networking, DBMS, development tools, ERM software, and more.
- **Quick Turnaround.** Short product cycles leave little room for lead time. Call if you need something fast.

## Inside This Issue:

Editor's Note

2

Invitation to the Webinar

2

## Marketing Collateral Do's and Don't's

*Follow these tips to create professional and effective marketing collateral.*

Whatever the state of the economy, there comes a time when every company that hopes to stay in the game must bring out new products—and create marketing collateral to accompany the launch. However, in these tough times, many companies have stripped their marketing communications departments to the bone.

The following “Do’s and Don’t’s” will help marketing experts who find themselves taking over marketing communications functions create effective brochures and data sheets. These tips are based on Goldberg Communications’ experience creating dozens of brochures and data sheets, as well as extensive

study of marketing collateral from numerous corporate websites.

**Do: Create a hierarchy.** Customers for enterprise-level products have decision-makers and influencers at many levels in the organization. A hierarchical collateral “tree” will help you provide the necessary information for decision makers and influencers at every level.

At the highest level, you’ll need a corporate overview brochure that targets CEOs, CIOs, and other executives. This brochure should describe the key challenges your organization addresses, the solution your organization provides, and your company’s key differentiators and benefits. Such collateral should focus on business benefits,



such as how your product increases top-line revenues or reduces bottom-line costs.

The next level down in the hierarchy will be a solutions overview, which should also provide business-level messages targeting high-level executives. It should describe the key challenges a particular product family addresses, how that product family addresses those challenges, the key benefits of the family, and a brief description of each product in

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Five Reasons to Hire an Outside Copywriter

*Can't afford to hire an outside copy writer? Can you afford not to?*

Recently, I made a marketing call to a marketing communications manager at a high-tech company. “Am I ever glad you called,” she said. This marketing manager—who was not a professional writer—had just finished writing the copy for the signs on her trade show booth. She had found that the process had taken her far more time and effort than she had

ever imagined.

I spoke to another client not long after that. She had written a white paper herself and was convinced that the paper brilliantly captured her company’s most salient messages. She sent me the copy for what she expected to be a final, quick copy edit. After a careful read, I determined that while she may have captured the messages, she certainly wasn’t releasing them in a manner that customers were likely

to understand.

Whether you need more time to devote to more strategic aspects of your job or the ability to more clearly communicate your marketing messages, an outside copywriter can help. Using an outside professional copywriter provides the following benefits:

### Outside perspective

While everyone at your company is intimately familiar with your products and messages,

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Editor's Note: Professional Development



This newsletter is designed to offer marketing professionals tips and techniques that can assist in a wide range of marketing communications endeavors.

But the newsletter is only one of the ways Goldberg Communications reaches out to serve the marketing community at large. We are also active members of the San Francisco Chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators, where we co-direct the Independent Communicators'

Roundtable.

In this capacity, we develop and put on a wide array of well-attended and well-received professional development programs, including "Closing the Loop: How to Demonstrate Project Effectiveness to Earn New Business," "Writing Tips and Techniques – How to Exceed Your Clients' Expectations," "Land Bigger, Better Projects – With the Help of Your Virtual Team," and many others over the past year and a half.

While all of these

programs are designed for independent communicators, most are appropriate for and often attended by marketing professionals employed by large and small agencies and marketing departments. For more information about these programs, call me, or go to [www.acteva.com](http://www.acteva.com) and search for "IABC."

We look forward to seeing you at the next event.

Cheryl Goldberg  
Editor-in-chief

## Invitation to the Webinar

*These tips can help you ensure a well-attended event.*

Click on a high-tech company's website and you're likely to find a newly ubiquitous "webinar." Also called e-seminars, webinars are online slide or video presentations in which vendors present information about their product line or offer high-level information about their market as a way to establish thought leadership.

But what if you put on a webinar and nobody came?

In order to entice potential customers to attend, you need to market your program effectively through your e-mail invitations.

### Answer the Right Questions

To create enticing invitations, you need to start by asking the right questions:

1. What is the job title of the recipient? This is the person you will address as "you" in your invitation.
2. What are the key challenges this person faces that your product/service and hence,

webinar will address?

3. How specifically will attending this web-based seminar address these key challenges?
4. How do you intend to reward this individual for the time investment of attending? Your thank-you gift should be something useful – such as a complementary report or white paper.
5. What are the specifics? This should include the when and where of the event and some basic background on your company.
6. Who will this e-mail come from? It must come from a real person. If it addresses an executive decision maker, it must come from an executive peer.

Once you have answered these questions, you will have the basic outline you need for your e-mail invitation.

### Start Writing

Now that you have your facts straight, you need to write them in a clear and compelling manner that will convince

your target audience to click on over to your event. Here's how to get started:

1. Make sure that the subject line is clear, informing recipients what the event is about and the benefits of attending.
2. The opening two sentences need to hook the reader. For an on-line event for the high-tech minded crowd, the hook is usually some kind of statement of the customers' challenge.
3. The body of the e-mail should be no more than two or three paragraphs that clearly state the benefits your recipient will gain from attending the event as well as the specifics of where and when it will occur.
4. Write like a real person. The invitation should be professional – but conversational in tone.

A webinar is an increasingly popular marketing technique. By following these tips, you can create compelling invitations that pique the recipients' curiosity and compel

## What Clients Are Saying...

*"Cheryl was the secret sauce for our consulting deliverable. Under intense time pressure and with a limited budget, Cheryl facilitated the extraction of key information regarding the technology, market, and the client's desired positioning. She then quickly and expertly crystallized this information and crafted a white paper that was spot-on technically and perfectly suited to the target audience. This deliverable completely satisfied the client's marketing requirement to create credibility and vision around the product line."*

Warren Kurisu  
Engagement Manager  
Crimson Consulting

## Better Brochures

(Continued from page 1)  
the family.

Finally, data sheets describe the features and benefits of each individual product in your solution. The data sheet can describe in greater detail how the product will work at a more process-oriented, tactical level. For example, you could use a data sheet to describe how your product's GUI and administrative features enable administrators to manage more PCs simultaneously to improve productivity.

**Do: Concentrate on Your Customer.** Corporate overview brochures are subject to "company-I-tis," in which the company simply blows its own horn. For example, one company included a brief explanation of the meaning of its name—right on the front cover of its corporate brochure. To customers, the meaning of the company's name is irrelevant. Customers, however, only want to know what your company can do for them. In other words, a brochure needs to focus on the customer's pain and how you can alleviate it. Corporate information should always come at the end as a proof point that assures customers of your ability to execute on your promises.

**Do: Use Industry-Specific Language.** Application vendors often target specific vertical industries. In cases where a particular vertical market is significant to your marketing strategy, consider creating a separate brochure that speaks to the concerns of the industry in the language that industry understands.

For example, if you are selling a portal product

into the pharmaceutical market, you might talk about pharmaceutical companies' needs to quickly bring new drugs to market—and how your product improves and speeds collaboration with partners, such as independent clinical research firms that help pharmaceutical companies test their new products.

**Do: Group Features.** Large applications have many features. To help customers more easily understand what your product does and how it can help them, group product features into a small number of categories, then list individual features within each category.

**Do: Provide a Bulleted List of Features and Benefits.** Many brochures give long bulleted lists of the features and benefits of their products. Such lists allow readers to quickly scan the features to see what you offer and whether your features match their requirements.

However, such a list may not provide enough context for readers to understand why unfamiliar features are important to them. One way to address this issue is to provide the name of the feature category, followed by a short benefit statement that puts the features in context, and finally a listing of individual features.

**Do: Use Paragraphs to Give Readers the Full Story.** When describing features and benefits in the body of their brochures and data sheets, not all companies use bulleted lists. Some use paragraphs that combine a short problem statement, a description of the product's features that address the particular aspect of the problem, and a sentence describing the

benefit. While this approach is not quite as easy to scan as a bulleted list of features and benefits, it does place features in the context of benefits.

To help readers absorb your marketing message more quickly, add a bulleted list summarizing features and benefits at the beginning of your brochure or data sheet.

**Don't: Use Vague Language.** Some product brochures present information at such a high level that they lose all meaning. For example, one brochure studied for this article said the following: "XXX company uses advanced semantics and information management with everyday human work patterns. The result is that intellectual capital is gathered as a natural by-product of personal and workgroup productivity. The work that individuals do to enhance their own work performance ultimately benefits the entire group, without strict enforcement from the top down." Even to someone familiar with knowledge management products, this paragraph is vague. It is critical that you state what the product does and how it works clearly.

**Don't: Dwell on the Problem.** One product brochure studied for this article spent six paragraphs describing the challenge the product addressed. This is way too long no matter how complex the problem. Spend no more than a paragraph or two describing the customer's problem, then move directly to your company's solution.

Using these tips, you can create brochures that effectively communicate your company's messages to better help you sell your products. ■

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*"A brochure needs to focus on the customer's pain and how you can alleviate it."*

## Outside Writer

*(Continued from page 1)*  
 your customers are not. Your inside marketers may become so close to your product and messages that they may be unable to view your communications from the perspective of an intelligent lay reader. A good copywriter makes it his or her business to be an advocate for the reader—and to make sure you present your messages in a way your audience will understand.

### Clarity

Most technical experts are extremely knowledgeable and articulate about their products and the underlying technology—when you speak with them in person. All too often, however, that brilliance gets lost in the translation to the printed page. A good copy

writer can ensure that your printed materials are easy for readers at all technical levels to understand.

### Conciseness

I recently wrote a solution overview brochure, basing my work on the corporate messages the client had developed. After careful analysis, I determined that many seemingly different messages were really saying the same thing in different ways. Through careful combining and pruning, I reduced a bloated eight or nine key messages to a trim and precise five messages. Today's customers are extremely busy. Keeping your messages concise demonstrates your respect for your customers' time and gives you a better chance of capturing their attention for the messages you want

them to hear.

### Reduce time and effort

When a non-professional writer must produce marketing copy, he or she often spends considerable time staring at the page, wondering where to begin, how to organize the piece, and whether it is any good once it's complete. In contrast, professional copywriters write copy all day, every day. As a result, they learn to quickly determine critical content, as well as how to structure and package that content into an effective marketing piece.

By working with a professional copywriter, you simply spend an hour or two of your time in interviews with the writer to produce a marketing communications piece that might take you ten or twenty times longer to do yourself. You

gain time for the more strategic tasks of developing your marketing plans. And the overall project will be completed more quickly and effectively.

### Boost sales

Ultimately, the reason for all marketing communications is to improve sales of your product or service. Professional copywriters are skilled in using language to effectively communicate messages that motivate customers to buy.

Yes, it is possible to create marketing materials without the help of a professional copywriter. But a professional copywriter can get your piece out the door more quickly and effectively—without the need to sacrifice time from your other strategic marketing efforts. ■

## Services

<p><b>Writing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articles</li> <li>• Backgrounders</li> <li>• Brochures</li> <li>• Customer Stories</li> <li>• Data Sheets</li> <li>• Press Releases</li> <li>• Training CDs</li> <li>• Web Content</li> <li>• White Papers</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fees</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hourly or by project</li> <li>• Call for a free estimate</li> </ul>
<p><b>Editing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repurpose Existing Materials</li> <li>• Reorganize Content</li> <li>• Polish Text</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hourly or by project</li> <li>• Call for a free estimate</li> </ul>

## Customers

Goldberg Communications' satisfied clients include Actuate, Adaptec, Anderson Solone, Annuncio, Asera, Atomic Tangerine, BroadVision, Cadence, Ceon, Corio, Crimson Consulting, eB2X, E.piphany, Everypath, Exodus, Inprise, Intraspect, Keynote, Lucent, Mercado, MindSteps, NEC Technologies, Netro, Oblix, ONE TOUCH, Oracle, PeopleSoft, PlaceWare, Ponte, Resonate, Siebel, Sterling Communications, Sun, Sybase, TAB, VeriSign, ViaNovus, Vitria, Zantaz.com, and Zone Labs.

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