

Write Like an Amazonian

Social Media and Web Analytics

Semester 1, 2022

Tip 1: Use less than 15 words per sentence

Simplify your sentences

- “Due to the fact that” → because
- “Totally lacked the ability to” → could not

Why?

- Your sentences should focus on one idea.
- Makes communication smoother.
- Short sentences help break down the info into bite-size pieces.
- Digestible info = Retained info

Tip 2: Replace adjectives with Data

“We made the performance much better”

→

The click through rate on the ad increased from 1 percent to 3 percent

Tip 3: Eliminate “Weasel” Words

Don’t use words/phrases such as:

- “nearly all customers” → 86% of accounts
- “significantly expanded” → Grew grocery selection by 30,000 SKUs.

Tip 4: Does your writing pass the “*so what*” test?

- Does this sentence add to my work?
- What does the reader learn from this sentence? Is this knowledge relevant for understanding my main points?
- Is the point of this sentence clear or too convoluted / vague?
- If I removed this word/phrase/sentence, would the meaning of my text change?
- Is this point understandable for my audience based on their knowledge level?

Tip 5: Be Objective

- Subjective Writing lacks facts and data
 - They’re supported by points of view and observation

Example:

- “I think customers are happy with 2-day shipping” ... This is a *point of view*, There is **zero proof** (in this sentence).
- Could be replaced with “We increased customer satisfaction by 95% with the addition of free 2-day shipping”

Tip 6: Avoid Jargon and Acronyms and buzzwords

- Use an acronym or jargon a reader customer doesn’t understand and you’ll lose them.
- Your attempt to sound smart went right over their head.
- A reader who doesn’t understand will move on.

Example: “CAC was reduced by 5% in Q2” → customer acquisition costs were reduced by 5% in Q2

Similar for buzzwords. Read this:

“Acme Industries today announced a groundbreaking strategic partnership with a leading solutions provider to create an exclusive, dynamic, state-of-the-art application that will revolutionize the social-media user experience.”

Now try this:

“Acme Industries launches the first tool to stop others from posting unedited photos of you.”

Which do you prefer?

Tip 7: Use Subject-Verb-Object sentences

This sentence structure increases clarity

- Who/what are you writing about?
- What did they do?
- What was acted on?

Example: “An Amazon prime member wrote a 5 star review” →

- Subject: Amazon Prime Member
- Verb: Wrote
- Object: Review

Bonus Tip: Reply to a question with one of the four Amazonian answers

Acceptable answers:

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know (but I’ll follow up with you)
- A number

Acknowledgements

These tips are developed by Amazon in their “Write like an Amazonian” workshop. The exposition of the tips in this document borrows heavily on a Twitter thread by Alex Garcia (@alexgarcia_atx)