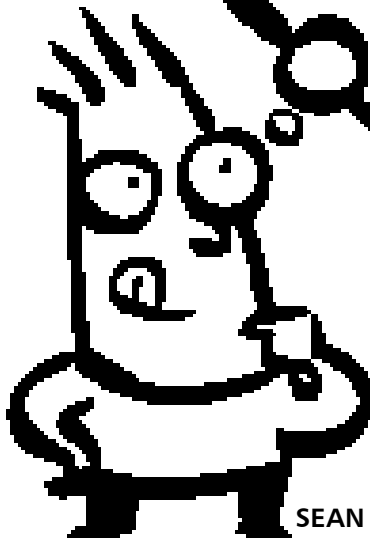
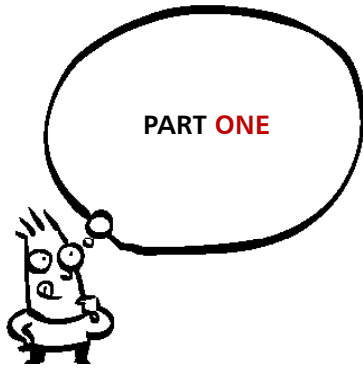


HOW TO WRITE
NEAR-PERFECT HEADLINES
IN MINUTES!



SEAN D'SOUZA



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The struggle with headlines

We struggle with headlines.
And the struggle needn't be a struggle.
The struggle starts off with clarity. Or the lack of it.

A headline at the very core, is a series of words.
And those series of words have a clear structure.

We aren't able to write a headline because we completely goof up on the structure.
And obviously, we don't goof up intentionally. We goof up, because we believe in false-gods.

We believe that headline-writing is some kind of skill (when it's not)

We believe every idiot-marketer who tells us, we shouldn't think up headlines, but just copy old headlines.
We believe that headline writing is frustrating, and it is. Until you discover the structure.

This report is meant to stop you from believing in the hoopla you've heard before.
It's a starting point. Not the whole enchilada.
It's meant to get you started on the journey towards construction. And deconstruction. So that you can become an auditor, as well as a creator.

But why take all of this trouble?

Is the headline so very important? Let's put it this way. If a customer doesn't read the headline, they are more than likely not to read any more information. So it doesn't matter what information you put in, if the customer doesn't see a headline, that's all of that information wasted.

And most people don't learn about headlines because they think headlines are for copy writers. When we want a headline, they think, we'll get a professional to write one for us. And there's where you're wrong (yup, wrong!), because a headline isn't about copy. Or advertising. Or marketing.

It's an attraction device

You need powerful headlines for email.
You need powerful headlines for a book.
You need powerful headlines for a speech.
You need powerful headlines for a presentation.
You need powerful headlines for your articles.
You need powerful headlines on your website.
You need powerful headlines when you're in an interview.
You just need powerful headlines all the darned time. And what frustrates me, is that people give up. They think headline-writing is for someone else.

Well, if you're still reading this, and I know you are, it's time to give up that silly thought.

Because the very first chapter is going to dramatically improve your thinking.
Not your headlines. Your thinking. In exactly ten minutes, you're going to literally be able to see how your thought process was all wonky. Wonky thought process leads to wonky headlines. Wonky headlines leads to wonky copy. Wonky copy leads to shonky results.

But enough talk. It's time to put some structure in place.
Turn off the radio. Turn off the TV. Barricade yourself from outside interference. You'll need the quiet.

Let's go.

Warm regards from Auckland,
Sean

Where are we off to?

Headlines are tough, only because no one bothers to explain the details. Well that situation is about to change. By the time you finish this report, you'll be able to do the following:

- 1) Recognise when a headline has too little detail, and put in the exact detail.
- 2) Recognise when a headline has way too much detail—and what causes the confusion.
- 3) How to instantly make a headline curious.
- 4) How to use the power of symptoms to remove the waffle from headlines.
- 5) How to avoid having to slave over dozens of headlines—and get your client to write the headline instead!

And that's just Part One in this headline series.

The advice in the pages to follow has been rigorously distilled to be as easy as possible. And if you use the advice well, and ask lots of questions in the Cave at 5000bc.com, you'll soon find yourself writing absolutely superb headlines. And the 'superb-factor' is not measured by fancy words, but by the clarity of thought, and the attraction factor of the headlines.

So yeah, let's get this show on the road! It's time to learn how to write pretttty-darned-purrrfect headlines! We're off into headline land!

The root of all trouble

The root of all trouble in your headlines is understanding that headlines aren't some fancy words strung together. On the contrary, they're simple words that are put together with a clear thought. But the point where it all goes kaput, is our thoughts are kinda too vast.

What do we mean by vast?

e.g. Let's take an topic such as: 'Why article writing is the key'

But the key to 'what?'

Most writers leave out the core detail. They miss out telling you where the article is going in the first instance. And these writers don't leave out the core detail on purpose.

They just don't realise the importance of the core detail. And the core detail should usually contain what we'd loosely call a 'target.'

A 'target' is simply 'who or what are we speaking about?'

Let's me demonstrate what I mean, by doing a little addition.

So instead of: Why article writing is the key...

We say: Why article writing is the key 'to getting strategic alliances.'

We say: Why article writing is the key 'to getting clients.'

We say: Why article writing is the key 'to getting paid.'

Notice what happened when we put in that 'target?'

First, it actually gave your article a solid direction. And hey, it did even more. It created curiosity. Your la-la topic, suddenly spruced up, brushed its hair, and put on a tuxedo.

And if you're amazed at what adding a 'target' could do, let's now add a 'specific' to that headline. I'm going to replace just one word/one phrase at a time. And you watch.

Watch how the article literally swings from one side to another.

Example 1:

Why article writing is the key.

Why article writing is the key to getting strategic alliances.

Why article writing is the key to getting **'active'** strategic alliances.

Example 2:

Why article writing is the key.

Why article writing is the key to getting clients.

Why article writing is the key to getting **'higher-paying'** clients.

Example 3:

Why article writing is the key.

Why article writing is the key to getting paid.

Why article writing is the key to getting paid **'in advance.'**

So you see what we did?

We took the core topic.

We added a target.

We added one specific such as **'active'** or **'higher-paying'** or **'in advance.'**

And we instantly intensified the power of the headline.

Not surprisingly, the change in the headline did a lot more. It made the article easier for you to write. Without the 'target' and the 'specifics', the headline was weak, and the resulting article would be a soggy waffle. But as we put in the 'target' and the 'specific' it actually forced you to focus on that specific, thus resulting

in a mucho superior article. Instead of the article being general and vague, it's now specific.

You're either going to be writing about 'article writing' and 'active strategic alliances.'

Or 'article writing' and 'higher-paying clients.'

Or 'article writing' and 'getting paid in advance.'

You're most certainly not going to write about all three (not right today, at least!)

Because as you can plainly see, they're three completely different articles, going in three completely different directions. But when you have a vague headline, it's almost impossible to keep the content of the article focused. When you have a specific headline, it's darned impossible to go off track.

What's more is that your audience is more focused too, because the rest of your article is delivering exactly what the headline promised. The specificity of the headline is what drew the reader in, and it's the specificity of the rest of the article that will keep the reader reading.

And if you don't believe me, remove those measly words...

Remove the specifics. Chop off the target.

Then write your article.

The headline loses power.

The article weaves, then stalls.

What's worse is that the entire article becomes so much harder to write.

And even if you were to actually complete and publish the article, your reader would not experience a sense of clarity.

And you get that clarity with just two measly words.

The the addition of just a measly word or two, and your article is vrrroooming down the road.

And hey, in the right direction too!

Summary:

Your initial thought is incomplete, because it's too vast. It's not easy to write about a whole topic. You have to get more specific.

You get more specific with two simple tweaks. First you add a target. Then you add a specific. And tah, dah, you've now clarified the thought process. As a result your headline will be stronger, and your entire article will be focused instead of rambling all round the countryside.

Exercise: How would you make these thoughts stronger? Write at least five headlines filling in the blanks.

- 1) Why _____ Won't Buy Despite _____
- 2) Why _____ Won't Buy Despite _____
- 3) Why _____ Won't Buy Despite _____
- 4) Why _____ Won't Buy Despite _____
- 5) Why _____ Won't Buy Despite _____

Sean's Note: See? You should get five different thoughts. And hence five different articles. And every thought—and consequently—and article is headed in a completely different direction. Now this takes us to Chapter 2. Where we start to analyse how there could be a whole bunch of specifics. And a clear target audience. And still the headline turns to custard. How could this be possible? Let's find out.

Confusion confounded!

So how do you confuse a reader? Hey, it's really easy. You remember what we did in the last chapter? We put in a clear target, and then we added a specific, right? Well, two's company. Three's just bloomin' chaos. You're just about to find out how to systematically create chaos. So that when you do, you can chop, change and get yourself the headline that you really want.

Let's say I told you to go down to the supermarket. And I gave you directions.

Take the first left, and then take a right at the fifth corner. After which you take a U-Turn at the traffic lights. But don't miss the right hand turn, which you'll see right after the roundabout.

Huh?

What just went on there, you wonder...

You see I confused you on purpose. And you knew that. But most of the time, you're not seeking to confuse customers with your headlines. And yet, time and again, you end up writing headlines that seem to confuse the heck out of everyone.

What's worse is that you CAN fix the headline in a flash.

If you knew what to do, that is.

So let's cut the chatter, shall we? Let's look at why most headlines are confusing. And headlines are confusing, simply because we confuse the thoughts.

Huh, what do thoughts have to do with headlines?

Ok, so why were you confused when I gave you directions in the first paragraph? Yes, there were way too many thoughts involved. So while your brain was trying to hold onto one thought, the second thought stomped in, quickly followed by a third and the fourth.

So let's look at a confusing headline shall we?

Example: Is your personal services business struggling to find enough new clients because you are making these classic mistakes with your best clients?

So how many thoughts did you detect in the line above? Let's see.

Thought 1: Struggling to find enough new clients.

Thought 2: Making classic mistakes with your clients.

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaargh!

Now let's separate these thoughts and rewrite them

Headline 1: Are you struggling to find new consulting clients?

Headline 2: Are you making these classic mistakes with your clients?

But, but, but you say...

Because what I've effectively done is treated the concept as two headlines, when in fact the writer wanted to write one headline—and convey the exact thoughts above. So how do we use both thoughts without losing the gist of the concept? Why, that's easy. You don't write it all in one headline.

That's the biggest reason why you have sub-headlines.

I'll say it again. That's why you have sub-headlines. So yeah, if you're that peachy keen to get the very same thought in the headline you just go choppy chop, and split the headline down the center!

And here's what you'll get:

Are you struggling to find new consulting clients?

(How to avoid making these classic mistakes when prospecting)

See what just happened above?

We took two mangled thoughts, and separated them. We bathed them, freshened the thoughts up a bit, and re-presented it without any confusion. Confusion that begins once you start exceeding 14-16 words. Or to put it another way, your headlines shouldn't exceed 14-16 words.

Come to think of it, none of your lines should exceed 14 words.

Why? Because a line represents a thought. And when you write a line that exceeds 14 words, guess what happens? Yes, another thought sneaks in through the cracks. Before you know it, a couple or even a trio of thoughts have taken residence. And then your brain feels like a grocery list you can't remember.

Imagine having a page, full of grocery lists you can't remember

You're trying to get an idea across, but your client reading the information is inundated with multiple thoughts. And instantly, their brain starts going into shut-down mode. This of course, is the last thing you want.

And we haven't even taken the visual aspect into consideration

We are visual creatures. When we see too much, our brain presses the 'exit, exit' button and wants to get out in a massive hurry. The longer, denser, and more clumped your headlines, lines, and paragraphs turn out to be, the less it's going to get read.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that you write less. What I'm suggesting is that you do the following.

- a) Keep your headlines (and lines) focused on one thought.**
- b) Keep your lines visually short. It helps readability.**
- c) Keep adequate spacing between your paragraphs to avoid overload.**

This simple act of brevity causes your reader to focus on what you really want to tell them. Don't get intimidated with length or lack of length of your headline.

Concentrate on the power of the thought.
Um...one, one thought will do just fine!

Exercise: You can write uncomplicated thoughts if you want to. In fact you do it every single day. Want proof? If you're a member of 5000bc.com, login and then go to the Cave. You'll find it at: http://www.5000bc.com/component/option,com_smf/Itemid,90/board,2.0 (Yes, this link is live) and you'll find something really, really interesting. The headline to almost every single post seems to be so focused. So single minded. So un-cluttered. So hey, we can do this for posts. So why can't we do this when we write a sales page, or write an article? We can. It's just a matter of knowing what you're doing wrong, and then fixing it.

Sean's note: Thoughts are important. In the first chapter, we realised that the topic was way too vast, and the specifics just didn't seem to exist. Well in this chapter, you see quite the opposite. The topic is not that vast, but there are so many thoughts that not only are you, the writer confused, but the reader is totally confused. And there you have it. You can have too little. You can have too much. It can be too vast without specifics. It can be so specific that it's confusion confounded.

Ok, so we've dealt with thoughts. But are there other components to headlines? You bet there are. For instance, there's the factor of curiosity. And curiosity is one of a headline's greatest ally. So how do we make a headline super-curious in a millisecond?

The power of knew-new

Will it? Won't it? That's the power of curiosity. And once you've mastered (or even played around with the earlier two concepts) you'll now be ready to tweak your headlines just a tiny bit. And yes, mon ami, that tiny bit will send those curiosity levels sky-high. And you're probably wondering if this curiosity is possible without having to remodel your brain. Yes, it is. And I know that millisecond is up, so let's get down to the meat of curiosity'—and how you can make your headlines a lot more curious.

Headline-writing for articles is like witchcraft. You have to know the spells, and chant before you can create awesome headlines, right?

Nah!
What you really need is a factor of 'new'. And 'knew.'

So what do I mean by 'new' and 'knew'?

'New' is kinda obvious. If you have something 'new' in the headline, then the reader is instantly interested. The curiosity trigger is launched, and the reader wants to know what's next.

But if your entire headline had a factor of 'new' you'd cause anxiety, not curiosity.

And let's look at a few examples to see what I mean. Let's go back into the last century to the year, 1999. And being 1999, you've heard nothing about the iPod. Or podcasts. Or RSS.

And your headline read: *How to create RSS podcasts with the iPod.*
Aha, it's all 'new' information, if you're still stuck in 1999, right?

So why did it cause your brain to go waka-waka?

Because it's all new. And running into all new, is like running into an InDesign Toolbar with five-hundred palettes. Or a strange city where you don't quite know your way round.

Notice what I just did?

I put two scenarios in front of you:
1) *InDesign Tool Bar with five-hundred palettes.*
2) *A strange city where you don't know your way around.*

And if you know 'InDesign', you'll have coasted through both the analogies in a few seconds. But even if you didn't know what the heck 'InDesign or palettes' are, the second example of the 'strange city' would be something you could quite easily relate to.

The concept of the 'strange city' is the factor of 'knew.' And 'knew' is something you know. While 'new' is something that's kinda unknown.

So how do we use this magic spell for article headlines?

We mix the 'new' and the 'knew'. Throw a bat wing or two. And some shitake mushrooms. Et Voilà, we have a bunch of headlines that looketh like this:

- 1) *Why the 'Yes-Yes' Factor Help You Raise Prices.*
- 2) *Is There Too Much Sugar In Your Testimonials?*
- 3) *The Critical Importance of Sandwiching Your Articles.*
- 4) *How Segues Reduce Friction in Sales.*
- 5) *Why Consumption is More Important Than Attraction and Conversion.*

You noticed, didn't you?

There were 'new' elements in the copy. And there were 'knew' elements. Some things you recognised right away. And others that did drive you to curiosity. The factor of 'new' attracted you, but equally important, the 'knew' signalled what topic was being covered.

So you can clearly see that the five topics are about:

- 1) *Raising Prices.*
- 2) *Testimonials.*
- 3) *Something to do with Article-Writing.*
- 4) *Reducing Friction in Sales.*
- 5) *Something that's more important than Attraction and Conversion.*

When the 'new' and the 'knew' mix, they create dynamite

Too much 'new' and the headline is intimidating as hell.
Too much 'knew' and a yawn, and a siesta come to mind.

But the question will no doubt arise: Do you need to write every headline with 'new' and 'knew?'

And the answer is no. This article isn't a formula for every article headline. There are other ways to get curiosity. And a smart way to write article headlines is to mix and match.

Headlines with a 'How To' factor do really well.

Headlines with questions do really well.
But headlines with 'new' and 'knew' have a certain magic, and cast a spell.

But use the spell sparingly, ok!

Exercise: Take any headline you've written. Drop in a new. Drop in a knew. Stir well.

Sean's note: So who'd think curiosity was that simple, eh? Well as you can see, it is. You've gone from too few thoughts in a headline, to too many and then we've tweaked those thoughts to intensify the curiosity. And hey, you've done quite well, and you haven't yet broken into a sweat. Well, we may have done all of the above, but there may still be some waffle in your headline. Waffle? Yes, waffle.

Waffle-free headlines

You may believe you're being specific, but in reality, you're just using jargon. And it's jargon you think your audience can understand, but in reality they can't.

Headline writing is an art, right? No it's not. But you can't have waffle. So how would you define waffly-headlines? Waffly headlines have terms like this:

Does your office have workplace-stress?

So what's waffly about that headline? Well for one, what's the meaning of stress? The word 'stress' doesn't trigger off any specifics in my brain. Intellectually, I can work out what stress means, but if you get specific, then I know 'EXACTLY' what you mean.

So let's say you deal with workplace stress.

What does workplace stress mean?

Does it mean that people are screaming at each other?

Does it mean that everyone seems to send BCCs on every email and 'cover-their-you-know-whats'?

Does it mean that the staff seem to take too many days off for no apparent reason?

Stress is like 'crime'. What is 'crime'?

Is it murder, or arson, or rape, or burglary? If you're not specific, and you said the crime rate is going up in the neighbourhood, then I understand that the crime rate is going up.

But if you said 'arson' was a problem, then I'd make sure I have sprinklers and fire extinguishers.

If you said 'burglary' then I'd have a burglar alarm installed. If you said 'murder' then I'd probably leave the neighbourhood.

Of course, each of the examples are just an example, but understand what's happening.

Each situation is bringing up a different response. And so it is with stress. If you say stress, you get a response that's general. And non-specific.

But if you say something specific, then it makes a world of a difference.

What you really want to get across to me is the symptom. Something I can really measure.

So people in the cancer business don't say 'cancer.'

They first isolate the cancer. For instance, 'skin cancer'.

Then they literally talk about 'moles.' And how to inspect moles.

People can intellectually process the word 'cancer', but they can see a mole and how it changes.

I can understand a mole. I can see how it relates to cancer. And I can either act on it, or ignore it, depending on my/or the doctor's diagnosis.

But writers who don't understand this concept of waffle, continue to waffle.

They use words like 'stress,' or 'cancer', or 'pain', or 'crime' or whatever. Which I can understand, but can't act on. And the action, aha, that's what you want from the customer.

So how do you cut the waffle?

You simply ask: "But what does it mean?"

Workplace stress: What does it mean?

And when you get the answer, ask, 'what does that mean?' And then 'what does that mean?'

And you can use the 'what does it mean' concept several times, till you get to the specifics.

Just because you've been writing copy for a while doesn't mean that you're getting the waffle out of your

headlines. It's only when you specifically drive home the 'what does it mean?' for EVERY headline, do you get headlines that get customers to react, and act.

Waffles are for breakfast. Keep them out of headlines :)

Exercise: Look at your headlines. Yup, go and audit them. Do they have words like 'stress?' Now, now, we don't need waffle. Go right down to the symptom. And you'll find that customers respond to a headline with a clear symptom a whole lot better.

So yeah, thoughts, more thoughts, less thoughts, knew-new, and and yet there's still trouble in paradise. Because when you slide over from writing headlines for articles, to writing headlines for sales letters, the dynamics change a bit. How they change would take a mini-workshop, but what you do need to know is that there's a distinct difference between writing headlines for articles vs. sales letters. And it's when writing sales letters that we end up trying to write tons and tons of headlines. In the hope that one of those headlines will work. Well let's do the sliding across and take a look at how a sales letter headline (and this headline can be used for websites, or direct mail or brochures) work. Or rather why it's such a %\$^#\$\$%^%\$ chore to write headlines for salesletters.

Let's continue and do some more spelunking in the world of headlines. Spelunking, did I say? Well not really. Headlines hate dark places. They love spotlights. Ok, so then let's give our headlines the light they deserve. Let's move over to

200 headlines, anyone?

One headline may work fifty times better than the next. But how do you actually know which headline is really going to work? Shouldn't you be testing? Oh golly, you should be testing, but what if you had just one shot at sending out a salesletter? How could you make that shot really count? Let's find why most copywriters goof up, and goof up consistently.

Ask any copywriter how many headlines they write for a single sales letter or ad, and they'll come up with a fanciful number.

Something like 75 headlines.

Or 150 headlines.

Or worse, 200 headlines.

So pray, why would you need to write 200 headlines?

I'll tell you why. You need to write 200 headlines, because you don't have a clue who your audience really is. Ooh, did I say audience? I didn't mean to say audience. Because when you start to think of your customer as an audience, you've already mucked up your headline writing.

Because the concept of target audience is a myth

And yet, every single day a discussion between copywriters and clients goes like this:

The writer (stupidly) asks, "Who's your target audience?" And the client (stupidly) says: "Mothers who juggle home with a growing business."

And then (stupidly), they go about merrily writing headlines for 'young mothers who juggle home with a growing business.' And this exercise seems perfectly logical, until you start to slice and dice that so-called audience.

Are we talking about Lisa?

Are we talking about Aditi?

Are we talking about Gulnar?

Are we talking about Katie?

Are we talking about Britney?

Because Britney (as in Britney Spears) is indeed juggling home with a growing (or shall we say, dwindling) business. And so is Lisa. And so is Aditi. Not to speak of Gulnar or Katie.

And when writing that headline they'd all be clumped together

Which of course, is a mistake. Because while they form a tidy demographic of young mothers juggling homes with a growing business, they're not at all alike.

They don't exactly have the same problems, and most certainly don't have the same priorities. And yet, like dumbos, we're off to write a headline that encompasses the lot. We're writing for 200 mothers. Is it any wonder we have to write 200 headlines?

Ok, so how do we get to writing a single headline?

We dump the 'target audience' concept, that's for sure. And we look at 'target profile' instead. So instead of Lisa, Aditi, and yada, yada, we look at one person. Like Katie.

So instead of looking at every single mother who'd wander into that category, we'd look at just one. And we'd see what's important to her. What does she want from life? What does she want from her business? And when we start to look at this one person, the fogginess goes away.

Because we've stopped looking at this 'fictional audience' of nameless, faceless people, and are now concentrating on one person.

A person we know.

A person we can talk to.

A person we can relate to.

And more importantly, a person who can shoot down our headline in a millisecond.

Because we could go to Katie and ask her:

Would Katie take a 20% cut in profits to spend 20% more time with the kids?

Would Katie not tolerate any cut in profit, and still want to spend 20% more with the kids?

Would Katie be quite happy to concentrate on her growing business and grow it by 20%, or even 50%, knowing it will be better for the kids later on.

Aha, now we aren't tramping around 200 headlines are we?

Because Katie would tell us. She'd tell us what she really wants. And then she'd go so far as to tell us what her specific problems are. And instead of sitting in our nice, fuzzy headline brain, we'd actually be talking to a real person, with real issues, that a million Katies would respond to.

A million Katies?

Yup, uno million! Writing a headline just for Katie seems like marketing suicide, but actually it's quite the opposite. Because a million mothers with the very same problem will look at your headline and say, "That's me! This is exactly the service I wanted."

Weird, huh?

You write for one, but gain the attention of squillions of 'Katies'. Because while the problem may be universal, the terminology that Katie uses will hit the hot buttons of um, squillions of mothers just like her. And when they see that 'specific product or service', they'll instantly realise the 'specific product or service' is just what they wanted.

But did you notice I said 'specific product or service?'

Don't make the silly mistake of building your entire business around one person. You can only build ONE specific service or product around that person. Why?

Because let's assume we took Katie into consideration. Let's assume she chose to spend 20% more time with her darlings, and was quite happy to take the 20% pay cut, as long as the business stayed steady.

Well, the Katie of the year 2007, isn't the Katie of 2008. And neither is she going to be the Katie of 2009. And we see this with Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple Computers as well. If you gave Steve an iPod in the year 2002, he'd want a completely different iPod in the year 2005, and quite a different one in 2007.

In effect, Steve Jobs isn't Steve Jobs

Katie isn't Katie. And your customer is not the same customer, year after year, after year. Which means you need to sit down with every one of your products. Every one of your services. And allocate specific 'target profiles'. And these 'target profiles' should be real, live people.

If you're writing for Aditi, you should know Aditi. If you're writing for Gulnar, Gulnar better be around. If you're creating a product or service for Steve, you'd better be getting Steve's input.

And then you won't need 200 headlines

Or 75 headlines. Or whatever. Because 'Katie' will tell you exactly what her problem is, and how you can solve it. And that my friend, is the only headline you're ever going to need.

Exercise: When you're writing your next ad, brochure or salesletter, pick a person. A real person. Not just any person who's a figment of your imagination. A person who can sit in the room with you and eat chow-mein off your dinner table. That's the clarity you need. And that's the person you need to talk to for a few hours. Because they'll literally write your headline for you, when they speak.

Summary

And that brings us to the end of Part One of the Core of Headline Writing. You'll get some more pretty darned soon. Aha, what's pretty darned soon? Specifics, eh? Well, you'll get the next installment in two weeks time. So go ahead and implement this information into your headlines. And come back in two weeks for more.

So let's summarise: What did we cover?

1) We started out with the classic vague topic, which makes your headlines weak. Headlines like: The problem with article writing. Well, that's too big a topic to cover. If you're going to cover a topic, you're going to need to add a target + specific, so that you make your headline far more niche, yet far more effective.

2) We then stepped into gooey confusion. Where there were several thoughts in one headline. And we saw that's where sub-headlines could come to the rescue. But first we had to rescue the headline from the mangled mess of two or three thoughts. We needed to get one thought across. And when we did separate the thoughts, we got headlines that were clear, clean and really effective.

3) Having cleared up the headline thought-stuff, we decided to fine tune the headline, and sharpen the curiosity factor. And we saw that headlines with a new-knew factor instantly got the attention of the reader. And it did so because the 'new' pulled the reader in, while the 'knew' gave the reader a context.

4) We then headed right through waffle. What's waffle? What's stress? What's chaos? We think we're actually getting across to a customer, when in fact we're not. Words without symptoms mean nothing. So instead of writing: *Do you suffer from stress*, you should be writing: *Do you have sleepless nights and wake up tired?* Now that's a symptom. And that's what works for me as a reader.

5) And finally we crossed over to a classic sales letter headline situation. And saw that the problem lay not with the writing of the headline, but the lack of understanding of your target profile. This target profile isn't some weird audience, or some figment of your imagination. It's a real person. Ask that person real questions, and get real answers. Those real answers become the headline for your sales letter. And that's what makes the headline really powerful.

Ok enough blah, blah. Time for you to polish your headlines.

Send me an email, about what you did with this report. Or send me your questions. Any questions. Who knows I may even give you a bonus! Send your email and your questions to sean@psychotactics.com—and expect a response. :)

P.S. You may also want to consider (and I strongly recommend this), going to <http://www.psychotactics.com/marketing-strategy> and subscribing. You will understand in a comprehensive manner why most people don't get marketing right. And why marketing is such a bloomin' pain. When you understand how simple concepts work, it makes a world of a difference to what you do—and more importantly, how you do it!

Why do some great headlines attract customers, but fail to convert to sales?

Isn't it time to find out why? Find out more details at this page and [judge for yourself](#).

<http://www.psychotactics.com/products/wordtracker-special-bonus>